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fashion

Styles with a

■ Right, colour pop springs: April Lunch, www.aprillunch.com

■ Below left, origami: Joanne Randall, www.joannerandalldesign.co.uk

■ Below right, tie-dye prints: Rebecca Ball, www.beccifashion.weebly.com



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special local inspiration

One of the best elements of Norwich Fashion Week is seeing collections from fashion and textile students and graduates on the catwalk. Fashion editor **EMMA HARROWING** recalls some of the looks from the catwalk that are made in Norfolk. Photos: Emily Norris.

With a BA (Hons) Fashion course at Norwich University of the Arts and fashion and textile classes at City College Norwich, as well as fashion and textile courses at many colleges and sixth form centres in Norfolk, it comes as no surprise that Norfolk is once again designing and making fashion.

And Norwich Fashion Week is the time of the year when you can see some of the best of these aspiring designers take to the catwalk at The Designers Show.

There was a heady mix of aspiring designers on the catwalk this year, ranging from sixth form textile student Rebecca Ball who created a 70s-inspired tie-dye effect on silk collection to designers and makers who are regulars to the Norwich Fashion Week stage such as milliner Siofra Connor, to Norwich University of the Arts graduates Veronika Marshall (aka April Lunch) and Joanne Randall.

When it comes to international fashion weeks such as London, Paris and New York, all eyes are on the designer shows as buyers and retailers discover what will be the fashion trends for the coming seasons. At Norwich Fashion Week the emphasis is on what is hot right now, with collections at the shows already available to buy from designers and the shops. So The Designers Show offers something a little different.

While some designs such as Joanne Randall's origami dress and Hannah Smith's pastel faux fur and plastic combos look more like works of art than wearable fashion, all nod to current looks – the origami dress shows how fashion is moving towards more structured and detailed couture wear, while pastels, faux fur and transparent clothing is currently a big trend on the high street.

Other designers showcased exaggerated versions of their designs to make an impact on the catwalk, such as Amy Green with her colourful April Lunch label. Her colour pop spring accessories would usually be worn as a headpiece, necklace or bracelet, but for

Norwich Fashion Week the designs were worn all over the body and made to a larger scale to create more of a statement. For many, this led to a desire to own such pieces, with many asking if there are smaller pieces available that they could wear to jazz up a top or dress. Being made by a local designer the answer is probably yes, as many designers in Norfolk are happy to take commissions.

Other designs on the catwalk were more wearable. Rebecca Ball's uniquely printed crop tops, skirts, trousers and a cape wouldn't look out of place in many high street collections, and the annual eclectic outfits from Cocoon – a label designed each year by fashion and textile students at City College Norwich – contained pieces that you could easily wear right now such as the deconstructed white shirt and khaki culottes.

Then came the more experimental designers who showed how fashion can push boundaries, such as Veronika Marshall with her collection that challenges the female silhouette through the garments cut and shape.

As with any show there were a few surprises too. This year it was the launch of fashion label CYL (changing young lives) by the charity Break that caused a ripple in the crowd. Highlights from the collection included a skirt made from blue, pink, black and white zips made by Lesley Leigh, retail business manager for Break, and a skirt with braces made from an old lamp shade by Sue Mullan, assistant manager at the Break shop on Queens Road.

It just goes to prove that inspiration for fashion design can come from anywhere.



■ Prints: Veronika Marshall.
Facebook: Veronika Marshall

■ Faux fur and plastic: Hannah Smith.

■ Elegant cuts: Cocoon – the fashion label from fashion and textile students at City College Norwich. Facebook: Cocoon-Fashions

■ Don't miss the Norwich Fashion Week 2016 big review in the April issue of Norwich Resident magazine. Online from April 5. www.norwichresident.co.uk

