

■ Norwich Fashion Week 2016. The Designers Show. Designer - Sophie Amelia Rose.

Pictures: ANTONY KELLY



■ Designer - Gloria Termini.

Designs for life from new local fashion talents

Crushed red velvet, an oversized faux fur hat reminiscent of Dr Zhivago, steampunk-inspired goggles complete with lights, a lion jumpsuit complete with tail, and a circular multi-coloured outfit that looked a bit like a giant cookie from Willy Wonka's chocolate factory - it can only mean one thing - the Norwich Fashion Week Designers Show.

There were more wearable designs on the catwalk. Cocoon, a fashion label set up by fashion and textile students at City College Norwich, is a NFW regular. As usual they showcased their eclectic style with digital prints, mixed with monochrome, deconstructed white shirts, leather embellishments and quirky neck pieces. Stand-out pieces from the collection included a beautifully structured dress with a house landscape print, a brightly coloured 60s inspired shift dress with geometric print on the hem, and a pair of tailored khaki cullottes.

Hannah Smith, another NFW regular known for her pretty dresses and elegant ball gowns, has



It's probably the most creative show of Norwich Fashion Week, as Norfolk designers and makers showcased complete collections on the catwalk at The Designers Show - and this year the show was more inspired than ever before, says fashion editor **EMMA HARROWING**.

gone in another direction with an edgy collection for 2016. Metallics, faux fur, plastic and pom-poms created a contemporary collection that was again wearable. New designers to the show were Becki Ball, one of the youngest stand-alone designers, who impressed with her delicate silk collection of tops, skirts and dresses in vivid colours, and Norwich University of the Arts BA (Hons) Fashion graduate Veronika Marshall proved that Norwich has what it takes to create high-end fashion, with her 'insect inspired' collection that challenges the traditional feminine silhouette.

Sophie Amelia-Rose (S.A.R.) combined this year's trend for monochrome with pops

“Stand-out pieces from the collection included a beautifully structured dress with a house landscape print

of rich reds, and perhaps a less wearable lion jumper suite complete with tail (although many on the Frow murmured that they would definitely wear it), and Coddess' map print coat made it to the fashionistas' lust list.

Then came the outfits that caused a stir.

NFW show regular April Lunch brought back her colourful spring accessories to the catwalk. This time larger and brighter coils were used as bodywear and headwear, as well as jewellery. Gemma Hyde returned to the catwalk with her second paper collection for NFW,



■ Above, designer - Veronika Marshall. Left inset, designer - Cocoon.

this year pillbox, mini top hat and disc hats with matching clutch bags all made of paper provided a statement.

Siofra Connor Millinery, a NFW veteran designer after clocking up four years of showcasing as part of the week, created a new collection of bold, geometric headpieces in black, gold and red. And Joanne Randall who took the award for creating the best showstopper for 2015 might have retained her crown with her fluorescent collection that featured outfits made from origami, crisp packets, giant concertina

tubes and a paper mache dress that resembled a giant cookie.

Designers making their debut at NFW also rose to the challenge to stand-out on the catwalk. Gloria Termini of Secret Garden London styled models in Pierrot clown masks with an elegant monochrome collection that created a serene and strong look, and charity Break collaborated with NFW designer Coddess to create an eclectic collection for the show. All pieces were created using recycled charity shop clothes - a big trend for NFW 2016 - and featured items such as a



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■ Above, designer - Gloria Termini. Left, designer - Gemma Hyde.



■ Designer - April Lunch.

skirt made from sewn together zips and gold elephant adornments on a skirt.

Surprising as it may seem elements from these more artistic outfits can be incorporated into everyday wear. Bright colour, geometric shapes and prints,

monochrome and upcycling charity shop clothes in a less obvious way, can give a fresh look to 2016 wardrobes. That's the beauty of catwalk shows, it is a place where you can find inspiration to experiment with your own individual look.



■ Designer - Sophie Amelia Rose.

Grace Corne



In the countryside
Sisland

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Blackbirds are uncommonly interesting

At the beginning of the year there was the usual influx of blackbirds, and as always they were hungry. We put food out every day and usually the birds are eating before we are back indoors. However we noticed that one bird was different for it had only one leg. We watched it each day with the idea that it would not survive for long as nature can be ruthless in ridding itself of creatures which are not quite perfect, but we were completely wrong. The bird has come through the winter well, its plumage black and glossy and its bill bright orange. Whether it has a mate we cannot tell because hen blackbirds are nowhere to be seen at the moment.

Blackbirds are naturally argumentative and this does not always work to their advantage. They will not share a food source and very often they spend so much time and effort to protect it that they find another bird has eaten it while they were fighting. However they are very welcome in the garden, particularly for their beautiful singing early in the morning.

In the areas where blackbirds flourish the wildlife is usually quite well protected. The blackbirds will sit on 'sentry duty' on a prominent branch and issue a very loud 'pik, pik, pik' warning if danger threatens. Unfortunately this does not always protect the sentries themselves from the attentions of sparrowhawks.

In the colder weather blackbirds work extremely hard in an attempt to feed themselves. Every fallen leaf will be picked up and turned over, and on a frosty morning there is a constant rustle as they forage. They are opportunist feeders and in addition to what is available on bird tables they are known to eat insects, worms, beetles, grubs, caterpillars, ants, earwigs, spiders, apples, pears, gooseberries, blackberries, and berries of cotoneaster, holly, rowan, currants, hawthorn and probably much more.

Blackbirds are unusual in other ways. They are one of the few birds which can develop feathers of the wrong colour, usually white, and they certainly have a habit of nesting in unusual and often really inconvenient places.