

Connoisseur's Guide

Ones To Watch

Syl Tang 09.15.06, 5:00 PM ET

From New York's Fashion Week, five big spring trends for women and men, plus the designers to keep an eye on.

If a few extra pounds plague you after the holidays, spring 2007 will be your favorite fashion season.

While most of us aren't pondering next year's wardrobes yet, the fashion world certainly is. At the just-wrapping-up Olympus Fashion Week in New York, designers showed their concepts for spring, which will determine what will be on the racks in a few months.

Though there was a hodgepodge of shows and looks, several trends and talents shined through. To make it easy, we pinned down five trends each for men and women, and five designers whose careers you will want to keep an eye on.

Trends For Women: Big And Bright

For women, simpler lines and forgiving shapes and patterns dominated. Everyone from rising independent stars like [Michon Schur](#) to ladies-who-lunch favorites like [Thakoon](#) turned out smocks, trapeze lines and bubble-shaped dresses. Now we can all look like we have a body that's--well, somewhere under there.

Stripes are going to be more forgiving, as the horizontals have been muted. From ombre shading to just a few here and there, it's gone elegant. Even the normally textile-crazed Turkish designer [Atil Kutoglu](#) sent model Karolina Kurkova down the runway in a relatively simple mauve and cream striped gown.

Project Runway alumnus and audience favorite Daniel Franco created a collection that also featured striped dresses. Franco put a surprising political spin on the news: "The fact of global warming is a call to action from designers to re-imagine luxury; we must re-evaluate garment construction, removing all excess weight, [choosing] purely natural fibers, and tailored goods should be sleek and modern."

If you're fond of color, there will be plenty to play with--laser-bright lemon and outrageous orange are back. At Richard Chai, dresses combined two of spring's big trends: a one-shoulder number in notice-me orange. Over at [Willow](#), an orange dress with crochet trim sailed down the catwalk. Tracy Reese made her yellow dresses a bit more toned down and featured a standout mustard spaghetti-strap number.

Floral also made a splash, with many designers sending out peony-happy numbers. At Kate and Laura Mulleavy's [Rodarte](#), the flowers were silk on top of a white shift dress, whereas Jill Stuart's took the form of Asian-inspired bubble suits and trapeze baby dolls. The most subtle, Thakoon's peonies, appeared on A-line shift dresses.

The key swim buy for spring will be from the era most beloved by [Marc Bouwer](#): the '80s. From the voluminous hair to the Robert Palmer-esque lipstick, it's most evident in the plethora of one-shoulder cut-out swimsuits stomping down the runway. Design collective FORM had theirs under a silver lamé cardigan. Perennially vacation-apropos Tibi's one-shoulder swimsuit featured a Trojan horse.





Five Designers to Watch

FORM

Nothing shows tailoring skills quite so well as a blank canvas of white. This dress proves the chops of design collective FORM, headed by Zac Posen alum Jerry Tam, ex-Helmut Lang exec Kelly Andrews, architect Eric Werner and stylist Jamie Rosenthal.

Designers To Watch

Jerry Tam's **FORM** is a New York-based design collective of four that includes Tam, who worked for Zac Posen and Patrick Robinson; former Helmut Lang exec Kelly Andrews; editorial stylist Jamie Rosenthal; and architect Eric Werner. Their show included a mixture of textures, silhouettes, draping and geometry not ever seen before on the runway. Architectural elements were in the mix, as well as touches such as metallic mesh hair nets, snake vertebrae earrings, bubble necklaces and kabuki makeup. This is what fashion is meant to be.

Project Runway alumnus **Daniel Franco** recently found big-time backing in Nikon. He won a standing ovation for his organic fabrics and tailored silhouettes, and his packed front row may mean this designer will soon surpass even the winners of the television competition.

Verlaine started as a Belgian family-run label. Designed by Veerle Goyvaerts and Marlies Verhoeven, an alumna of Martine Sitbon and Guy Laroche, this line is not yet available stateside, but Jeffrey's in New York was seen checking them out. The spring 2007 collection features a collaboration with Jeffrey Fulvimari, who illustrated Madonna's children's book and is an LVMH guest designer.

From Motown to downtown, **Tori Nichel**, a Fashion Institute of Technology graduate, began her career at Dana Buchman and Kenneth Cole. Now, her structured, tailored separates have attracted the interest of buyers at places such as Girlshop.

Academy of Art University M.F.A. graduate **Mari Matsumoto** collaborated with Korean textile designer Kyung Min Kim; graphic prints turn their draped and looped skirts and one-shoulder dresses into wearable art.

Finally, whether in menswear or women's wear, for 2007, Down Under designers are driving the trends. A huge percentage of the collections-- from Lincoln Mayne to Sass & Bide, Willow to Toni Maticevski, and newcomer Josh Goot-- all hail from Australia. Perhaps they have a seasonal advantage, as they're six months ahead. After seeing this week's collections, one might even be tempted to hop on a plane to get a jump on spring.