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Bora Aksu

One of the stars of London Fashion Week pushes through to the new

London-based Turkish designer Bora Aksu, whose continues to woo such fans as Keira Knightley, Sienna Miller, Kirsten Dunst and Liz Jagger, will be presenting his tenth collection at this year's London Fashion Week. Dubbed as "the star of the show" by The Independent, The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian, Aksu has been awarded the Top Shop New Generation Award several times in a row. The designer's collections, which include everyday objects such as striped duvet covers, tea towels and granny underpants reworked into fresh and funky feminine shapes, caught the attention of big names like Domenico Dolce and Stephano Gabbana, who purchased pieces as inspirational items for themselves, and leading department stores, including Liberty, Selfridges and Barneys.

How did you first discover your talent for design?

I never thought I would become a designer. I have been drawing since I was little but I think it was during my late teens that I realised it was a passion and I decided that if I wanted to do this with my life, I needed to take it seriously.

Was it hard to climb up the ladder as a designer from Turkey?

Not at all. I love living in London. London is a very important creative source with such different cultural references and artistic movements. It's a city that is known as a nursery for new talent. It offers freedom to individuals and constantly feeds me with unpredictable surroundings.

What will we see on the catwalk this year?

Well, to start with, pushing the limits of everyday objects to invent the New is the idea behind each collection: hand details and seams used in unexpected places, complex cutting, easy flowing material, a blend of silks, chiffons and tulle with distressed cotton t-shirts and underwear details.

What is different this year?

Individualism is becoming the new trend. Everyone has a different approach to fashion, which makes the whole dressing concept much more interesting. You see, trends and fashion used to be dictated, but now people are much more aware of who they are. I believe fashion is more of a way of expressing someone's individuality rather than a means of covering up. It is a unique language which has a visual voice.

Inspiration?

I always start out with something very personal, like childhood reminiscences. Then other elements follow. I find ways to completely mix unrelated elements to create a collection. For example, I have mixed a pinch of punk, a pinch of Edwardian and a pinch of memory to create a garment. I believe in contrasts because in real life you always have contrasts, which adds colour. Anything and everything can be inspiring - a movie, something found at a car-boot sale, even a t-shirt that you've been wearing since you were 10.

What does design mean to you?

Designing is a passion. Designing is something that I absolutely love and can't do without. Time flies when I am working. It's fun. It's my hobby, not just a job. Creativity is a very sensitive and personal way of expressing yourself. It's like a unique language you use to communicate with the world without using words. My design language is based on seeking the right balance point between different weights of fabrics. It's a personal way of constructing. There are many different ways to achieve this. Through cutting, knitting, hand stitching, wood carving or leather ornaments, finding the balance of the garment and making it work is the key challenge.

Do you work alone?

No, collaboration is an important part of my work.

Who do you work with?

Last A/W season I met with artists who work only with wood so that we could have wood inserted into the garments for the London Fashion Week show. For this season I will be collaborating with artists who work with leather.

Describe the modern woman of today as compared to the past?

Fashion, and women's approach to it, has changed dramatically in the last decades. Women today are much more aware of who they are and what they want to achieve in their lives. I don't really believe fashion will ever become the kind of statement it was in the 50s or 1950s. The world is changing so quickly and women are more aware of who they are and what they like, so they don't blindly follow main stream fashion trends.

What is it you try and bring out in your clients through your designs?

I do not like to dominate my clients in the way they dress. My designs or how I put them together during a fashion show are just ideas. It's completely up to the woman to decide how she would like to wear a garment. I love the way they add their personalities to an outfit and bring it alive.

Do you ever go back to Turkey?

I love Istanbul. It is such an amazing city with such a strong cultural heritage. It's funny because when you actually live in a city for long you start taking things for granted. It's good to actually get out from time to time. After I've been away from Istanbul for a long time, it's amazing to go back and see everything with a totally fresh pair of eyes. Now whenever I go back, I see it as an unopened treasure chest. ●