

Good Times

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THE OBSERVER

Our Fashions

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Fashion world deals with issue of diversity



Chanel Iman, seen above in DKNY, and at right in Terexov was one of the few faces of diversity at New York Fashion Week last week.



At left, Eugenia in Edwing D'Angelo.

A different kind of color for spring

By MIKE CHAIKEN
EDITIONS EDITOR

Thank goodness for designer Edwing D'Angelo.

D'Angelo was not part of the fashion madness at Bryant Park for New York Fashion Week. Instead he was a couple of blocks away at the Westin

Hotel, near Times Square.

He offered a beautiful collection of menswear and womenswear for Spring 2009 called "Aquatika." The nearly all white collection of sleek modern lines was inspired by his concerns for Antarctica and global warming. It was a polished collection, a kind of 2008 take on "The Great Gatsby."

However, D'Angelo's design sense is not the only reason for his significance. D'Angelo offered an all ethnic model cast for his collection.

"I wanted to make a bold statement, not only with the clothing, but also with the casting of all ethnic models. As a designer of color, I felt a sense of responsibility to honor the beauty and diversity of eth-

nic men and women. From the all black issue of Italian vogue, to the Democratic nomination of Barack Obama, this show is an extension of an evolving industry, an evolving country and an evolving perspective on

what we deem beautiful."

D'Angelo probably had more black models in his show on Sept. 5 than all of the runway shows at Bryant Park of the shows seen by The Observer this season. And it seemed as if Chanel Iman was the go-to girl for every designer looking for a black model. There definitely appeared to be more ethnic color this season but the overwhelming look was white and East European.

With a black man running for president under the Democratic ticket, and the possibility of a stylish first lady of color in the White House, the pale color of fashion still reigns in

New York, which is probably one of the nation's most diverse cities.

The issue of diversity in

See DIVERSITY, page 29



MIKE CHAIKEN PHOTOS

At left, Tracy Reese offered a diverse line-up of models. Center, most models such as this one in Reem Acra were white. At right, Lela Rose's runway show.

Our Critters



It's not fair for these 4 month old kittens to grow up in a shelter. Archie and Popeye are the sweetest, most handsome and playful little guys. They also have a sister, Olive. You can adopt them from the Animal Rescue Foundation, 366 Main St., Terryville Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.



Millie thought if she put on her prettiest smile somebody would surely want to adopt her. She is about 8 years old, full of zip and personality. Please come to see her at the Animal Rescue Foundation, 366 Main St., Terryville Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m.

Do you have a favorite pet photo you'd like to share with us? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Readers' photos will be published on our pets page. Please include name of pet and owners.
Original photos will be returned if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.
U.S. Mail: Pet Photo, The Observer, 213 Spring St., Southington CT 06489 or e-mail at mchaiken@BristolObserver.com.

Diversity: Out of 1,584 slots for models, only 200 went to minorities at Fashion Week

From page 25

fashion made headlines in recent months when such black celebrity models as Tyra Banks and Tyson Bickford offered some very loud criticism of the state of affairs in fashion. Called to the carpet on the matter, several of the fashion magazines took note of the issue and made efforts to

be more inclusive. Pop star Rihanna appeared on the cover of InStyle replacing Gwyneth Paltrow for a change. Banks appeared on a recent cover of Harper's Bazaar. And Italian Vogue published an all black issue, which Banks celebrated on the streets of New York.

If the question of booking of black models is qual-

ity, the D'Angelo blew show that away. Male models and female models alike in the Aquatica show all had runway quality and appeal. In fact, one of the models Eugenia was a top three finalist on Tyra Banks, "America's Next Top Model" two cycles ago.

How bad is the situation?

Patrick Huguenin, a

columnist for the New York Daily News, compiled statistics about the shows held during Fashion Week in February. In a press release issued to the media just before the September shows, Huguenin reported that in February "Eighteen designers had no black models in their shows."

Huguenin wrote in his release that there were 70

shows in Bryant Park in February, with a possibility 1,584 slots for models. Of those slots, just 94 places went to black models, 17 slots went to Latina models, and 95 slots to Asians.

Huguenin wrote, "In the six months since, the question of runway diversity has been firmly in the spotlight."

Huguenin said: "Some

designers postulate that they are seeing an increase in diversity this season. But the alarming stats from the Daily News survey are shining a bright white spotlight on this season's fashion week as the fashion community waits on pins and needles to see if designers have really increased the use of nonwhite models."

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