

An ode to fashion

by Mahes Perera

Sri Lankan Ashani Madola has every reason to be happy. She returned home to meet her parents having successfully displayed her collection at Fashfest 2014 in Canberra.

She launched her brand All Eyes On Us which in itself is catchy and makes you curious as what the brand could provide. The Fashfest she told us required

all 24 designers to provide 10 designs for the catwalk and any wonder as it always happens to fashion designers, she worked late, late nights to have her collection ready for the Fashfest, her ode to fashion.

Question: When did it all start for you, this venture into a highly competitive field?

Answer: When I was young I loved drawing. I never got a chance to study art in school. I used to draw on all the walls at home on whatever piece of paper I could lay my hands on. After my A Levels I read this article about a designer in a magazine and my interest was kindled.

I wanted to acquire a degree in fashion, so I enrolled in LIFT.

But unfortunately they prepared you for a diploma, so I ended up acquiring the diploma. But with my parents blessings I enrolled in Raffles in Singapore to acquire my degree.

In between I did an internship in MA for one year in Ratmalana and then went back to Singapore to cover my last year. I graduated from Raffles in 2009 and then moved out to Dubai to work for the Kamal Osman Jamjoom Group (KOJ) who were well known for their brand Nayomi.

Q: How did

you feel working for KOJ as a designer. Did your vision widen with a new phase of creativity which inspired yourself confidence?

A: KOJ is an established group in the Middle East and I worked as a designer for them. I had the opportunity to go to Paris to represent Nayomi. Yes my vision really widened.

I stayed with them for 3 years, got married to Chanaka Herath and ended up going to Canberra in 2013. I decided to launch my own brand.

There was an ad for a fashion show. I gave it a shot.

I had to do a huge collection – drawings, sketches for the organisers' preview and got selected.

I launched my own brand All Eyes On Us at the show and made it to the lead page of the Canberra Times. It was hard work. It took me two-and-a-half months to have my collection ready for the show.

Q: Undoubtedly your influence in designing must be based on international designers. If so who are they and what categories do you concentrate on?

A: Alexander McQueen is my lead influence. His shows were out of this world, it was dramatic especially the clothes.

I concentrate on evening wear. I'm targeting independent elegant women who are powerful enough to carry a long dress and show off bright colours.

Some of the women don't want to wear bright colours. I fashioned my own bridal dress. That's the only time I put my hands on the bridal and the



Ashani Madola

