

VCUQatar Presents its Fifteenth Annual Fashion Show ‘Center Front’

Doha, Qatar - Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar Virginia presented its Fifteenth Annual Fashion Show, ‘Center Front’ to full houses on 15, 16 and 17 April, 2014. The event was hosted by Salam at The Gate Mall.

‘Center Front’ showcased the work of VCUQatar fashion design sophomores, juniors and 16 seniors – Ahmed Malalla, Aisha Al Naemi, Alanoud Al Nuaimi, Alexia Thomas, Douha Al Jozali, Fatima Maki, Hisham Dawoud, Imelda Jurasova, Maha Al Saad, Maha Khalifa Al-Subaey, Marianne Bermejo, Munira Da Silva, Nada Taha, Noor Abdulla Hamad Al-Thani, Noor Rashid Al-Thani and Rayah Al-Meghaisaib - featuring a range with components of the ethnic, handcrafted, modern, eclectic and glamorous.

The show also featured senior fashion design students – Jame’t Jackson, Joey Zuraf and Noela Tian – from the VCU Richmond campus as guest designers.

The senior thesis collection was an eclectic mix of day to evening looks and consisted of a minimum of 10 looks that reflected the individual aesthetic of each student and reinforced their individual vision, creativity and styles.

Malalla said he imagined his collection on the runway and this allowed him to decide the silhouettes, and he started sketching after he surrounded himself by the things he loves. Al Naemi said her collection was inspired by jazz of the busy city of New York and focused on evening wear with her take on the unforgettable perfect dress. Al Nuaimi, a double major (interior design), said her collection was influenced by the underground punk style as well as 80s heavy metal fashion and the bold colors and prints of street graffiti.

Thomas’ collection *Processed Memories* was inspired by everything from her tailor-made clothes for her dolls to her mother’s shoes and lipsticks, grandmother’s paintings, the Caribbean and the right now. Al Jozali’s collection, combining alluring Asian themes with a modern take on Asian silhouettes, was inspired by geishas and is a homage to the strength of women. Also a double major (interior design), Maki mixed today’s trends with a touch of her culture with the purpose of inviting Qataris to live their culture in today’s means.

Dawoud enjoys making garments that grant the wearer a sense of whimsy, confidence and act as a form of physical and mental reinvention and presented garments he believes are an extension of himself as a designer. Jurasova’s collection was inspired by the most profound characteristic of Qatar’s nature – the desert sand dunes. Al Saad magically explored the beauty of red and pink paired together, since they are always dismissed as a fashion crime. Al-Subaey’s *Evil Genes* collection represented a dark, sleek sophistication and a devil-may-care glamor.

Bermejo’s collection reflected the combination of two distinct elements: her passion for plush toy animals and Japanese harajuku street fashion, making it a fresh expression of her personality. Da Silva’s bridal wear collection was inspired by extravagant decorative chandeliers that add a sense of drama and boldness, and the graceful jellyfish. Taha’s

inspiration came from her Egyptian identity and the history of ancient Egypt, and her individual pieces were related through a repetition of gold prints and custom embroidery.

Noor Abdulla Al-Thani's collection was based around the concept of natural form and organic objects reflecting German philosopher Ernst Haeckel's illustrations in her textiles. Noor Rashid Al-Thani's color palette consisted of pastels which symbolize purity and new beginnings and were aimed at all women who embrace their femininity. Al-Meghaisaib's collection mimicked the delicacy of flower petals, aiming to transform, not shock, society with clothing that respects her culture and is almost as indescribable as her love for fashion.

The sophomore children's wear collections showcased under the theme *Happy* were a play of color, patterns and design features. The collection focused on incorporating basic design elements to showcase a pleasant assemble of dresses, pants and jackets. Their interpretations of the little black dress were the perfect pairing for the finest of jewels. Taking androgyny as the starting point, the junior students moved away from the stereotypical clichés of the theme to bring strong individuality to their collections.

Sandra Wilkins, chair of the fashion design department, announced the awards on the last evening of the fashion show. VCUQatar's Golden Needle Awards, given to the most outstanding students in the fashion design department, were presented during the show to the students – Samia Mohammad for Best Children's Collection, Mahnoor Ansari for Most Outstanding Sophomore, Noor Al Mannai for Best Black Dress Collection; Kinda Morshed for Best Junior Collection, Dylon Sergei Adonis for Most Outstanding Junior; Imelda Jurasova for Most Outstanding Senior, and Alanoud Al Nuaimi and Marianne Bermejo for Most Outstanding Senior Collection.

Special Recognition Awards were presented to two seniors from the Richmond campus Noela Tian and Joey Zuraf, and Special Recognition for Outstanding Leadership was presented to Nada Taha. Wilkins also announced Alanoud Al Nuaimi, Fatima Maki and Noor Abdulla Hamad Al-Thani's collections were chosen to be showcased at VCU Richmond.

For the fourth consecutive year, the W Doha Hotel and Residences sponsored the W Doha Fashion Award, presented to the most outstanding and innovative VCUQatar fashion design student of the year. Clara De Lama, director of marketing at the W Doha, presented the award to Alexia Thomas. The award includes the opportunity to use W Doha, and another W Hotel around the globe, as a platform to showcase her collections at various events happening throughout the year.

The Salam Fashion Award, introduced last year by Salam International Investments Chairman and CEO Issa Abu Issa, to support a graduate's transition from student designer to a career in design was presented to Maha Khalifa Al-Subaey. The award includes mentoring in the development and design of two bespoke collections which will be sold exclusively within a dedicated space in Salam Stores, Doha.

The fashion show is part of the annual activities of VCUQatar's fashion design program, to develop the country's growing fashion industry, with support from Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. 'Center Front' was the culminating academic project for Fashion Design students at VCUQatar, and every aspect - from the jury-

selected student designs and model try-outs to show production - reflected their academic and creative efforts while launching senior fashion students from student life into successful careers. This celebration of fashion brought together spectators, friends, and fashion enthusiasts from the region, not only to judge and/or admire the collections of the students, but also for the unique atmosphere of this grand défilé.

Note to Editors:

About Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar:

VCUQatar is the Qatar campus of the prestigious Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond, Virginia. Established in 1998 through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, VCUQatar offers students the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fashion design, graphic design, interior design and painting & printmaking, a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history and a Master of Fine Arts degree in design.

Through all its programs, research projects and community activities, VCUQatar continues toward its vision of a Qatari society that innovates through art and design. In addition to a comprehensive annual public events program that includes a wide range of exhibitions, lectures and fashion events, the University hosts the biennial international design conference Tasmeeem and the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Islamic Art Symposium, attracting globally recognized designers, academics and thinkers while fostering sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of Qatar. For more information please visit www.qatar.vcu.edu

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community. For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>

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