

Central European Fashion Week illuminates Budapest landmarks

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Petra Kubikova

Hungarian fashion and design agency

Ahead of major fashion weeks starting this month, the Hungarian fashion and design agency (HFDA) hosted highly creative presentations in four iconic Budapest buildings: the National Dance Theater; the Hungarian National Museum; the Ethnographic Museum; and the ELTE University Library. Since its launch in 2018, the HFDA organizes twice a year the Budapest Central European Fashion Week, the main fashion event of the Central European region.

Aeron Budapest store

Aeron

For this 11th edition of the Budapest Central European Fashion Week, a new advisory board of industry experts provided support, including: Violetta Fedorova, editor of *Ukrainian VOGUE* (the first issue since the war will appear this spring); Aleksandra Szol, creative director of MODIVO; and Péter Baldaszi, co-founder and CEO of Vanguards Group (Nanushka, SUNNEI, Aeron).

Exhibition 'Klára Rothschild, fashion queen behind the Iron Curtain' 2021

Pasztilla or Attila Terbocs

The textile clothing industry is one of Hungary's oldest industries. In the mid-19th century, Alter & Kiss was one of the dominant fashion houses in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Central Europe. And in the 1930s, the Fischer fashion house was considered an important trendsetter, putting Hungary on the European fashion map and making the front pages of French fashion magazines. In the 1960s, Klára Rotschild was considered the "Coco Chanel of the Eastern Bloc", while designer Tamás Király was an early proponent of upcycling in the 1980s with his "clothing sculptures" made from materials such as fishing twine and kitchen supplies.

The Danube River, Budapest

Paul Allen/Andfotografie2

In addition to showcasing local fashion talent and making Budapest the region's fashion capital, a major goal of the Hungarian Fashion and Design Agency today is to build on the country's textile history and make the city an attractive destination for travelers interested in fashion and design. who will travel there specifically to source products from Hungary's creative industries. Judging by this season's fashion design lineup, they're well on their way to achieving this goal. Among the fifteen Hungarian and four regional designers who presented pieces from their Fall-Winter 2023/24 collections, there were several standouts.

Borbála Ferencz from Romania presented her designs at the National Dance Theater showing the best of upcycled fashion. Her eponymous brand Borbála was born from creating beauty out of waste, using upcycling and DIY fashion techniques. Each item is handmade in a small workshop using domestic sewing machines, DIY and experimental techniques. The ready-to-wear collection on display in the theater was colorful and cheerful.

Petra Kubíková, an award-winning, up-and-coming fashion designer based in Bratislava, Slovakia, uses simple shapes inspired by Japanese culture, especially the hustle and bustle of Tokyo. She works with natural materials such as wool, cotton and leather. In 2018 she received the NOIZZ Fashion Award for the most popular designer in Slovakia. Striking looks in the autumn/winter collection are a beautiful gray pinstripe suit with a linen dress and jacket and long overcoats with a built-in cape.

The Hungarian National Museum provided the beautiful backdrop for the designs of Budapest-based designer Boglárka Bódis. Mrs. Bódis has a degree in economics, but she preferred fashion and launched her women's clothing brand Elysian. The Hungarian brand is characterized by refined tailoring, craftsmanship, flowing fabrics, self-designed digital prints, hand pleats and transparent layers.

Abodi at Central European Fashion Week in Budapest, February 2023

PAUL ALLEN/ AND PHOTOGRAPHY2

Abodi, the only contemporary high fashion brand from Transylvania, prides itself on having a low impact on the environment and being animal friendly. They have never used real fur, exotic leather or materials of unverified origin. They use traditional Transylvanian textiles and sustainable fabrics with a natural composition, such as cotton,

wool, silk, rayon and linen. The prints, embroidery and applications are all custom made. The brand also has fans outside Hungary, with shows at Milan Fashion Week, with a showroom in New York City and worn by celebrities such as Lady Gaga, Gwen Stefani and Janelle Monáe.

Since 2014, Budapest-based Cukovy has been making puffer jackets, coats, cardigans and accessories, under the direction of Nicaraguan Hungarian Flora Popradi's lead designer, in collaboration with local artisans and suppliers. The brand brightened up the halls of the Museum of Ethnography with their latest collection of outerwear in popping colors and bold, handmade prints. The eco-friendly products are sustainably made and designed for durability. There is also a playful element, with the interchangeable elements of the puffers – sleeves and hoods.

Szczygiel at Central European Fashion Week in Budapest

Paul Allen/And Photography

The Polish recently graduated designer Ania Szczygiel makes everything designed in accordance with the zero waste rules. Her pieces are limited edition and one of a kind, made in her London studio from small batches of fabrics, deadstocks, recycled fabrics and materials from thrift stores and studio scraps.

Virag at Central European Fashion Week in Budapest

Paul Allen/And Photography

The ELTE University Library housed the latest collection of the Hungarian designer Virág Kerényi. She studied and did an internship in fashion in Hungary, Denmark, San Francisco and Amsterdam. Her designs have been seen on catwalks as well as in the Hungarian State Opera and many Hollywood film productions. Her clothing and accessory designs, often with rich embellishments, are unique, eco-friendly and usually limited edition.

Rad Duet at Central European Fashion Week in Budapest

Paul Allen/And Photography

Polish fashion designer duo Rad Duet often incorporates history and political themes into their edgy collections. The designs for autumn/winter 2023/24 are inspired by Poland in the 1970s and compare it to today's unstable political and economic situation. An embroidered denim shirt is a symbol of freedom, youth and invincible faith. Other pieces are largely made from recycled fabrics, referencing the clothing worn by shipyard workers.

The next edition of the Budapest Central European Fashion Week will be in September 2023.

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