



10
new labels
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Secret Sartorial Sensations

The 10 new labels you don't know, but should.
By Terry Ong

With the inaugural Men's Fashion Week just over and another big fashion parade, the Asia Fashion Exchange (AFX), just around the corner, style is the word on everyone's lips. And with more accomplished labels like Harsel, alldressedup, Nicholas, Sifr and Woods & Woods having already made their mark in the local fashion arena and overseas, it's only a matter of time before these newer and more underground local upstarts parallel those successes. Here are 10 of Singapore's most promising and interesting emerging style mavericks.

Clockwise from top left:
AWOI, By Invite Only, Ling Wu, Milet, Mae Pang.

Ling Wu's photo by Darrell Chung



READY-TO-WEAR



Mae Pang

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WHAT IT IS: Drawing inspiration from multi-label international fashion greats such as London's Dover Street Market and Paris' Colette, Mae Pang touts itself as the "first local fashion-angled concept label aimed at providing exclusive unique designs with the

ultimate goal of increasing the local consciousness towards design and creating a strong community of Singaporean designers across all disciplines." (Whew.) Indeed, since her first collaboration with local label Woods & Woods in 2009, chief designer Ai Mei has gone on to establish the womenswear label as one of the most edgy and contemporary: A trippy series of hybrid mesh tanks and maxi dresses built from a series of sharp angular cuts married with billowing layers of pleated neon mesh and chiffon, topped off with reflective optical lenses for that futuristic edge. This is a must for bold and statement-making style seekers. **LOOK OUT FOR:** Its Cruise Collection for the upcoming **Blueprint Emporium** show (details on next page), where Ai will present her latest collection inspired by a hipster music playlist comprising Beach House, Dragonette, Yeasayer and The xx, with graphic images culled from Pink Floyd's iconic album *The Dark Side of the Moon* thrown in for good measure. Expect to pay \$99 for a tank top and \$309 for a maxi dress.

Mae Pang's current Spring/Summer collection is available at **A Curious Teepee**, #02-24 Scope, 2 Orchard Link, 6820-1680.



Dzojchen

Dzojchen

WHAT IT IS: First established in New York and finally making its way back home, Singapore-based American designer Chelsea Scott-Blackhall draws from a confluence of influences, mainly travel, music and various cultures. Which explains the label's concept of paradox and duality, with materials sourced from all over the world: selvage fabric from Japan, leather pelts from tanneries in Spain, threads from the UK, and denim from specialist mills in Japan, India and the US. This results in a hodgepodge, wearable collection for men and women who love quirky, hand-tailored and relaxed pieces that won't break the bank, especially the quality denim collection and tailored-jackets priced between \$200-\$350. "Like the brand, I live by paradox, contradictions and an amalgamation of unexpected qualities," says Scott-Blackhall. "Knocking out details, washes, textures and cuts that are anchored in the elements of my 'moments'."

LOOK OUT FOR: The 2011 Fall/Winter and Cruise collection that will be showcased at the **Blueprint Emporium**, featuring innovative uses of signature outseam and inseam, fused with a waistband curve to create carefully tailored and modern silhouettes. "I've brought a clean twist to a harder edge this season," she adds. "Pieces that marry the era of classic rock with charm for more dapper detailing. Think David Bowie marries Iman."

AWOL

WHAT IT IS: Melding creativity and practicality to beautiful effect, the latest womenswear label AWOL a.k.a. All Walks of Life by veteran Alfie Lee (previously Flag, Capsule and Ming) marks his comeback to contemporary fashion with a twist. Designed for the busy working professional, the clothes are infused with sophisticated detailing and cuts that won't look out of place in a business meeting. The color palettes of white, grey and black may be stark, but look closer and there are various clever mixes to behold: Cut-and-sew fake lapels attached to blazers, big irregular pins which tuck blouses and pants like stacks of paper overlapping each other, draped asymmetrical linen bias cut dresses with big folds over backs, vests which drop down to hip length and wind up making their way back to the shoulders—this is one of Lee's most inspired collections yet. "All the details are technically and carefully twisted from the impression of a return to basics," he says. "Silhouettes that are fitted but also away from the body simultaneously... the indication to be free, defining a state of being stress-free, craved by all modern women today."

LOOK OUT FOR: The Cruise collection, premiering at the **Blueprint Emporium**, comprising linen blazers, Capri pants, silk cotton dresses and even sequin shorts for the more adventurous, priced between \$45-\$350.



Jason

Jason

WHAT IT IS: Certainly one of the most intriguing local labels to emerge out of the fashion woodwork in the past six months, the debut **Jason menswear** collection by JR Chan (who previously helmed Cloak & Dagger) first made its mark at the recently concluded Men's Fashion Week. The collection, with its bold silhouettes and experiments such as men-skirts and eye-catching jumpsuits, will surely prove a hit with the young and very trendy. "That debut collection is inspired mainly by Suprematism, referring to the Russian abstract art movement developed by Kazimir Malevich, which is characterized by simple geometric shapes associated with ideas of spiritual purity," says Chan. "It's also a mix of Jason's peculiarity for details with reference taken from Zaha Hadid's renowned architectural designs. It aims to dress the individualists, the working class heroes, and the like-minded urban men with an absolute mindset who are not to be bound by trends and rules."

LOOK OUT FOR: An extremely layered and billowy collection fusing geometric forms with contrasting colors, but cut according to the Asian man's figure and designed for warm Asian weather (read: No wool). A simpler piece like a basic tank top starts from \$89, while jackets, vests and jumpsuits are priced between \$300-\$500.

Available at **Blueprint Emporium and Hide & Seek**, 176 Telok Ayer St., 6222-2825.

Mileti

WHAT IT IS: It's not just in the cut-and-sewn department that our emerging designers are excelling. For those looking for something a little sexier (or skimpier, rather), try on something from new local swimwear label Mileti for size. Born from the love of the outdoors and aquatic life, creators and designers Min (a former banker) and Letizia (also an art gallery owner) conceived a collection that is "chic, feminine and sexy." Say the duo, "The bright and bold hues of street art are the main inspiration for the color palette... we both love the bold colors of Balenciaga bags and we wanted this collection to have that kind of visual impact." But it's not just the hues and sexy designs that make Mileti tick. Quality Italian fabrics made from the newly-developed high-tech Revolutionary Mild fabric are used in each piece, making them breathable, quick to dry and resistant to sand and piling. That said, nothing wrong in looking wet in this one when the cuts are sooooo flattering.

LOOK OUT FOR: Chic, deceptively simple and well-cut tops and bottoms (\$50-\$90) and intricate one-piece suits (\$140-\$270) that will make you look like you just stepped off the set of *Temptation Island* or the *Côte d'Azur*.

Available at **Antipodean**, 27A Lorong Mambong, 6463-7336 and **AVANA**; #01-07/08 Pacific Plaza, 9 Scotts Rd., 6737-4042.

Noel Caleb

WHAT IT IS: One of the more playful and accessible new labels around, womenswear brand Noel Caleb specializes in easy, wearable pieces coupled with quirky accessories. The indie label derives its name from the words "Christmas" and "Devotion" combined, which also explains the various names allocated to its collection, including the Alexandrite dress which comes with smart paneling like a metal stud detail at the cuff and a metal buckle at the waistline, and the Jasper, a single-buttoned three-quarter-length sleeve crop jacket in gemstone colors. "Our design inspiration is to dress the woman up into a person who has inner strength, yet with outer gracefulness and feminine," says chief designer Shannon Lee. "We design the pieces with the idea of the woman wearing mix-and-match pieces of each collection in a versatile manner, from Mondays to Sundays, and still looking unconventional and stylish."

LOOK OUT FOR: Their latest Spring/Summer collection dubbed "Honey in a Rock," showing at the **Blueprint Emporium**. Girls who are looking for that extra sparkle in their wardrobe can go for the Onyx, a sleeveless shell top with captive cascading drapes down the right, or the Iridot, tailored knee-length shorts with single front pleats, double back pockets, cuffed hems and tarnished metal studs, priced between \$108-\$168.



Noel Caleb