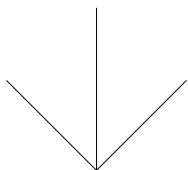


HIGH VOLT-AGE

A detailed preview of the Twin Cities' biggest fashion show.

by mary o'regan



Fall fashion week happens in late February and early March for the rest of the world, but here in the Twin Cities, we work at our own pace. This spring's MNfashion Week kicks off Apr. 16 (or even earlier, if you count the ENVISION: Artopia fashion show at the Graves 601 Hotel on Apr. 10) with Voltage: Fashion Amplified, the biggest rock 'n' roll fashion show of the year.

Made up of 10 runway designers, seven band wardrobe designers and 15 accessory designers, this year's show—held once again at First Avenue—promises to knock your socks off. The fashion consists of a welcome mix of avant-garde, vintage-inspired, super accessible and, uh, WTF? (Because no runway show is complete without a few batty garments.) Read on for a peak at what to expect.

● **For the boys**

It's always refreshing to see locally made menswear in a scene dominated by womenswear designers, and this year we have two dashing dapper dudes tearing it up on the stage. [Raul Osorio](#) has created



a collection of mariachi- and military-inspired jackets with corresponding slim-fit bottoms and draped t-shirts, perfect for the fashion-forward gentleman who's sick of living in an Ed Hardy world.

At the other end of the menwear spectrum, knitwear designer [Kevin Kramp](#)—who's studied in London and worked with Victoria Beckham—has put together a striking

array of highly conceptual, oversized jumpers and separates. Think Yo Gabba Gabba meets Dolce & Gabbana. In a good way.

● **Feminine frocks**

We're in love with the clean, simple dresses, tops and skirts by Parson's grad [Frances Zerr](#) and Minneapolis staple [Carmichael Claith](#). This is the type of clothing that sells well

among the average girl browsing the local duds at Cliché or Design Collective.

While still maintaining a feminine edge, [Elena Mercurio](#), who studied in Finland, and [Brianna Jones](#) of Kelson, have cultivated more of a graphic, rocker feel for their Voltage lines. Mercurio created bright geometric designs with surprising cutouts and touches of texture,

while Jones went for a comfy-yet-bold aesthetic, working in leggings, billowy tops and stretchy knit dresses.

Many of the designers this year have incorporated elements from past eras into their collections, but it's most noticeable in [Danielle Everine's](#), whose equestrian-inspired pants, blouses and vests echo old-school menswear. Paired with elegant hats

◀ Designer [Danielle Everine](#) "reclaimed" men's fashion and turned it into highly functional womenswear for her 2010 Voltage line. Modeled by [Tearra](#).

by Angie Sandifer, Everine's designs hint at the oppression of women in an urban-chic way.

● **A dose of glamour**

Comfy and casual looks may sell better at the boutiques, but we're willing to bet the show-stopping, glamorous looks from previous Voltages were the most fun to make. This year, expect nothing less than rich, gorgeous fabrics, unexpected forms and loads of drapey goodness from newbie designer [Emma Berg](#), Voltage alum [George Moskal](#) and seasoned pro [Pafoua Thao](#) of PFT Couture. With only a couple runway shows under her belt, Berg is one to watch as she's consistently put out pieces that mirror what we're seeing on international runways. Moskal and Thao, meanwhile, have construction and materials in their favor, as both designers are impeccable tailors with an eye for expensive-looking fabrics.

● **I'm with the band**

Those who are lucky enough to get tickets to the show before it inevitably sells out should pay close attention to the bands' wardrobes: Former Voltage designers [Calpuria Peach](#), [Laura Fulk](#), [Anthem Heart](#) and [Kerry Riley](#) of Red Shoe Clothing Co. will be outfitting the local rockers, in addition to [Steve Kang](#) of St. Paul's BlackBlue boutique. Add that to a stellar runway lineup and you have the makings for an unforgettable night. Just don't forget to plan your own outfit accordingly. +