



Talking Shop Kev Yiu Couture

Nick Chan speaks to the ambitious local evening wear and wedding dress designer Kev Yiu

Local designer Kev Yiu's design philosophy has less to do with following trends and more to do with finding his own voice. Originally named Sovereign Romance in 2006, the now renamed eponymous label Kev Yiu Couture strives to create classic gowns and wedding dresses with a contemporary twist. Think of Yiu as Hong Kong's Vera Wang. His signature feminine aesthetic can be seen through his dreamy, evening wear gowns that are embellished with embroidery and floral accents. Noting the Russian rhythmic gymnast Anna Bessonova as his muse, Yiu's success lies in his sense of movement and grace that is apparent through beautiful displays and manipulation of materials.

For Yiu, his path into fashion started during the last three years of his secondary education, when his mentor encouraged him to pursue fashion at Amersham and Wycombe College in England. In 2007, he participated in the Fashion World Talent Awards to see whether

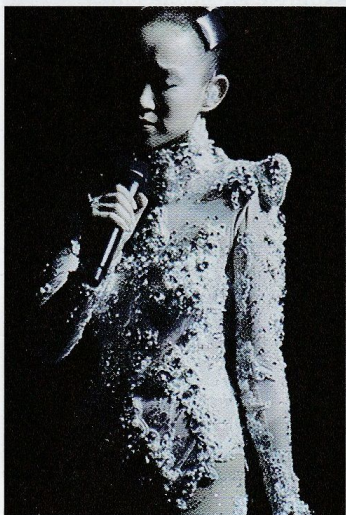
he had what it took to be the next 'it' designer, but unfortunately he was eliminated in the first round. "I wasn't discouraged though," says Yiu. "I was still determined to create my collection."

Slowly but surely his hard work paid off and over the next seven years he gained local celebrities such as Myolie Wu, Fiona Sit, Ivana Wong and the iconic diva Sammi Cheng as some of his loyal customers. Yiu recounts his chef d'oeuvre that hangs proudly by his studio entrance – a stunning display of over a million Swarovski crystals designed for Ivana Wong's first concert at the Hong Kong Coliseum. "It was a momentous occasion that marked my first appearance at a local institution where people started taking notice of my designs."

From then onwards, his presence has been well documented in the local media, which has helped his label gain recognition. "Media is an important part of a designer's success," says Yiu, "It's a necessary tool that goes hand in hand with your garments. It's wishful thinking to believe success can be achieved simply with a collection."

Having said that, Yiu is now focused on the technical side of designing with a ready-to-wear and menswear line set to be launched next January. For Kev Yiu Couture, his goal is to hone his craft and to ultimately gain international recognition. "What is most important is to have my voice heard while staying true to my aesthetic."

Nick Chan



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