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## Caring for creativity

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*From August to October this year fashion retailer Joyce showcased four new designer brands selected by HKDI. The pop-up boutique project at PMQ was called "Talent Shop" and aimed to provide young designers with a concrete business platform to showcase their work.*

*DANIEL JEFFREYS reports.*

# CARING FOR CREATIVITY

The innovative fashion label Wan & Wong, founded in spring 2013 by Kelvin Wan and Joyce Wong, make garments that are cut with a pared down aesthetic and simple monochrome lines. The minimalist and utilitarian designs portray an intimate understanding of the millennial's preoccupations – call it flair with functionality.

Yet the simplicity of Wan & Wong's designs belies an unexpected agenda. Sustainability is at the core of the duo's work. Their clean architectural shapes and basic silhouettes are crafted from recycled material and produced using sustainable methods.

"Our most recent collection had patterns that were inspired by the way pollution affects the colour and texture of the ocean," says Wong. "In Hong Kong sustainable fashion is not really popular and people don't yet understand it."

Wan & Wong was among four emerging fashion brands founded in whole or part by alumni from HKDI that were featured at the 'Talent Shop', a pop-up store hosted by Joyce Cares at PMQ this autumn.

With the motto "We Share, We Care, We Contribute" Joyce Cares is a philanthropic arm of Hong Kong fashion-power house Joyce, committed to nurturing upcoming artists and designers and promoting sustainable and responsible design.

All four ready-to-wear labels were selected by faculty from HKDI for review by Joyce's management team. Alongside Wan & Wong were The World Is Your Oyster, A Tentative Atelier and Modement.

Calvin Chan and Joyce Kun founded the World Is Your Oyster in early 2014 and their classic tailoring with contemporary urban styling delivers collections of wardrobe



RIGHT  
WAN & WONG'S  
LOOKBOOK  
OPPOSITE KELVIN WAN



essentials. The fledgling designers create a sense of drama with their work, which they hope will now be known by a wider audience, something that young Hong Kong designers often struggle to reach.

"Most people in Hong Kong don't really appreciate the creativity of young designers," says Kun. "Those who have the opportunity to set up a fashion label in London or New York get more exposure and have a better environment to succeed in."

Like the other three labels in the project, Chan and Kun benefited from HK\$10,000 of financial sponsorship from Joyce Cares, as well as a swift injection of market expertise. Joyce Cares pledged to unleash their full array of fashion business acumen on the emerging designers. Assistance included operations, visual merchandising, and marketing for the rising talents at each of the four brands.

This level of support underlines Joyce's commitment to provide young members of the industry with a fertile platform on which their creativity can germinate, plus some of

the capital and tools they need to thrive.

The collaboration with Joyce serves to nurture individual designers and brands at the most delicate stages of their development, while encouraging diversity, innovation and social responsibility.

For example, A Tentative Atelier's lines are created by a breed of artisans and machinists in Shanghai who were at risk of extinction. The label's engagement and the support from Joyce Cares gave the artisans a new lease on life. The label's creations have recently won applause during shows in Paris.

Modement offer a unisex line with bold silhouettes that evoke Hong Kong's multifaceted

« MOST PEOPLE IN HONG KONG DON'T REALLY APPRECIATE THE CREATIVITY OF YOUNG DESIGNERS. »

culture. Both subtle and oblique references to the gritty Hong Kong landscape and to the vernacular food culture are engrained in the clothing.

"The Concept for Modement S/S 2014 collection is 'Emptiness', the idea that people in our society are lost in the material world suffocated by broken relationships, distorted values and virtual promises," says fashion blogger Tim Wong, who is a fan and supporter of the brand. "Many pieces in this beautiful collection use glow-in-the-dark materials which highlights the silhouettes worn at night."

The "Talent Shop" gave four of Hong Kong's rising talents a unique opportunity to get funding and expert advice to boost their brands. Such initiatives are another step down the road toward Hong Kong become a major power in the fashion industry – not as a passive importer of expensive imported European brands but as a producer and consumer of home grown talent. 

MODEMENT'S LOOKBOOK



« PRIDE IS A  
PERSONAL  
COMMITMENT.  
IT IS AN ATTITUDE  
WHICH SEPARATES  
EXCELLENCE  
FROM  
MEDIOCRITY. »  
WILLIAM BLAKE