



Better late than never: Chicago makes a habit of fashion

I've been a fashionista and shop-a-holic my entire life but it wasn't until I began my wardrobe coaching business that I heard about independent fashion designers, great ones even, living and working right here in Chicago. Fashion designers living and working in Chicago? The same city in which I've lived and shopped daily since 1998? I had questions. Where do they work? Who are their friends? Who wears their designs? Do I have to join a secret club to buy them?

The more I thought about it, the more a fashion industry in Chicago made sense to me. Chicago is well known for its presentation and design, from the creative menus and beautiful food presentations at its many famous restaurants to its detailed architecture, efficient city planning and notable beautification efforts on which every visitor I know has commented. The city itself is beautiful and inspirational, not to mention one of the best places in the world for shopping. So why can't it be fashion-forward too? The problem is that the local fashion industry has been overshadowed by the city's focus on sports and business. Until now, that is.

Allow me to introduce Habit (1951 W. Division St.), a design collective dedicated to promoting emerging design talent. Habit is a unique place

where customers can find well crafted men's and women's clothing and accessories, and where under-the-radar designers from across the United States can introduce their work to an untapped Chicago market. Local designers compose over half of Habit's inventory.

Inspired by the New York boutiques she sold to while starting her own clothing label, owner/designer Lindsey Boland provides a pleasant modern environment for designers to showcase their talent.

It appears that even the mayor of Chicago, Richard M. Daley, is following Habit's lead. According to a recent article in the Chicago Tribune, Daley, whose father was on national best-dressed lists during his mayoral tenure, announced on June 7, 2006 the creation of a Fashion Advisory Council to unite local designers and fashion leaders in what has been a fragmented industry. The council wants to persuade local designers to stay here rather than move to New York City or Los Angeles. Both Boland and emerging design talent, Cyndi Chan, left New York to make Chicago their design home. Other local designers like Anna Ehrler and Wanda Cobar are committed to Chicago and look forward to seeing what the Fashion Advisory Council will accomplish.

You can find Anna Ehrler's fun and funky designs for adults at Habit along with owner/designer Lindsey Boland's clothing line, 'Superficial, Inc.', clothing that expresses a woman's individuality, playfulness, and artistic vision. Designs from Cyndi Chan's 'Ori'en' line, described as "Sex in the City couture for a new generation of city smart women", can be found at Casa de Soul (1919 W. Division St.), and designs by Wanda Cobar, including sexy, one-of-a-kind garments with unique flair, can be found at Prizzy Pbela (1425 N. Ashland Ave.). All are located in Chicago's hip Wicker Park neighborhood, a haven for boutiques and fashion-conscious shoppers.

Thanks Eileen for coming up with a great Fashion Story idea and great photographs!

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Clothes by Lindsey Boland - Superficial Inc.
Photography and concept Eileen Molony.
Models, Tamara & Izabella.
Hair & makeup Melissa Messer
Wardrobe styling, Bridget Smith.

Clothes by Anna Ehrler.
Photography and concept Eileen Molony.
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Clothes by Cyndi Chan
Photography and concept Eileen Molony
Hair, makeup and wardrobe styling, Promoda Chicago.
Models, Inesa Slepkovalite & Oyla Ogura.

Clothes by Wanda Cobar
Photography, concept and styling Eileen Molony
Makeup by Krista Gobeli.
Models, Angie and Alexandria Mae.

