

YEOHLEE AUTUMN/WINTER 2008-9



Yeohlee Teng on her autumn/winter 2008-9 catwalk
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YEOHLEE

INSPIRED by the design and values of the Shakers and SANAA (the architectural firm helmed by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, which is responsible for the just-opened New Museum of Contemporary Art on New York's Bowery), **Yeohlee Teng** sent out a spare, sculptural collection this evening that paid homage to her seemingly disparate sources while remaining firmly rooted in her own aesthetic. And how to describe said aesthetic, which, it must be said, has always been spare and architectural in nature? Geometric, boundary-pushing, tactile and deceptively complicated is probably a good place to start - though complicated not in appearance or accessibility (for Yeohlee prides herself on making comfortable clothes that adapt to the wearer's needs), but complicated in the sense that while her garments may appear simple to the naked eye, the construction is anything but. The show took place at the Toby Devan Lewis Sky Room on the top floor of the... Wait for it... New Museum of Contemporary Art - the sweeping views obscured by the rain and turning downtown New York into a black, charcoal and cement-hued backdrop, which mirrored the colours of the collection itself. The cheery "Hell Yes!" rainbow sign on the building's exterior greeted guests arriving at the show, which opened with a quilted navy bonnet followed by a quilted navy capelet followed by a quilted navy capelet coat followed by a quilted navy belted cape, making it feel as though one were watching the initial bonnet sprout shoulders and then a body in a sort of real-time movie. The effect, if must be said, was very cool. The designer revisited the mobius wrap for which she is famous and this, and all of the other pieces, were worn with plain black jersey leggings or bodysuits, which looked especially dramatic when topped with a quilted olive *cube* (as the designer dubbed it), which hovered around the models' turtlenecked shoulders like a PVC cocoon, or when worn beneath a plum *cube* skirt or *arc* tunic, both of which stood stiffly away from the body like an armoured taffeta shell. (And really, who doesn't need a little protection these days?) Less successful was the space itself, which was accessed by a single gigantic elevator that opened periodically throughout the show, its glossy apple green interior distracting the audience from the more somber-hued collection on the catwalk. The styling, on the other hand, was spot-on. The models were totally unadorned - no makeup, no jewellery, sleek low ponytails and flat black boots - which was a perfect complement to the clothing. (February 1 2008, PM)