

Fable fabulous

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At the end of James Ferreira's show at the Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week recently, the models, as usual, walked in for their applause round. Without warning they moved aside and the designer himself stepped forward, clad in black shirt, long coat and, well, denim shorts. Grooving sportingly to 'Sheila ki jawani', the adorable Mr. Ferreira might have accidentally drawn away attention from the collection he showcased. If he did, it's unfortunate — because the clothes were really, really good.

James Ferreira's Autumn/ Winter 2011-12 collection drew from Aesop's fable about the hare and the tortoise. While in the literary sphere the fable has been subject to its share of dissections, arguments and counter-theories, here it has been interpreted more literally. To be more specific, while the tortoise has been represented by a dominant tortoise shell print, rabbit fur has been used in the form of bibs, other exaggerated neckpieces, and brooches.

Explaining the concept that draws from the idea of responsible foundation, Ferreira said about the theme, "Hare is a fur that's freely available for us to use because of the rate at which rabbits multiply. The tortoise, on the other hand, is an endangered species; we only speak of the tiger as an endangered species."

In a well-choreographed show, a fluid drape-based silhouette that came on cocktail dresses (printed and solids) was countered by structure in the form of heavy wool capes, long coats and jackets. The colour palette included moss green, teal, champagne and black (on the woollies), all paired with neon tights that seemed the flavour throughout the Week. Leather yokes and piping lent edge to otherwise-delicate silk dresses. In the end, both the tortoise and hare won.

For this collection, Ferreira has tied up with Italy-based Veryta Foundation started by Stefano Pilati, creative director of Yves Saint Laurent, and Filippo Binaghi, managing director of silk-weaving company Lorma SRL. Ten per cent of the profits go towards the Foundation, which will use it towards educating

children in Andhra Pradesh and Mumbai. In fact, the fabrics and prints used in the collection have been developed by Binaghi.

Ferreira also plans to open a school for fashion technicians — tailors, embroiderers and cutters. “No designer can stand alone,” he said.

SHALINI SHAH