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Fashion As An Outpouring Of Nature. Who Knew?

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by AMY TA



Carmen Wu

Carmen Wu is a senior at Parsons: The New School for Design in New York.

Here’s a question we often ask ourselves but can’t always find a quick answer to: *what am I going to wear today?*

I honestly don’t think about this for too long. I just wear what’s practical for the weather, what abides to an occasion’s dress code, or what my sister gives me. I was never into fashion. Clothes are just practical things to keep me covered. Or so I thought.

As I spoke with aspiring fashion designer Carmen Wu during a pre-interview for today’s conversation, she gave me different view of fashion — it’s like art and anthropology. And I’m totally into those things.

Wu is a 24-year-old senior at Parsons: The New School for Design in New York, and recipient of a \$25,000 Geoffrey Beene Designer Scholarship. In June 2010, the Council of Fashion Designers of America issued three of those scholarships to students of Asian heritage – as well as top design awards to Asians: Jason Wu, Richard Chai and Alexander Wang. Ethnic coincidence? Wu says *maybe*. Maybe because the luxury market has shifted toward Asia, and Asian designers are bringing a different, unique aesthetic to the industry. In that case, I’m definitely proud of my fellow Asians.

But what really got my attention was when Carmen Wu described clothing as a means of human expression and connection. She says her muse is a Buddhist woman living in a metropolitan area, who’s sitting at your everyday Starbucks and wearing a knit that is beyond definition. It’s not a dress or shirt or jacket. It’s a creative outpouring of nature – or in Wu’s own words, a “vomit of nature.” *Wow, this is like a whole different world*, I thought. Clothes aren’t ordinary cover-up objects here.

“Fashion is fantasy,” Wu says. *Imagine that.*

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