



The Archana Kochhar collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York.



From the runway, a message of empowerment

Most fashion shows have beautiful clothes on display. Not many have an important social message behind them, and fewer still have a powerful spokesman walking the runway. Thursday's show by Indian designer Archana Kochhar had all three. Its very first model, Reshma Quereshi, is the survivor of an acid attack in India; she walked the runway to send a message of courage and empowerment to other victims of such attacks in her country.

"This walk was important to me because there are so many girls like me who are survivors of acid attacks, and this will give them courage," Quereshi said in an interview, speaking through a translator. "And it will also go to show people who judge people based on their appearance that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover - you should look at everyone through the same eyes." Quereshi suffered severe burns to her face at age 17 in an acid attack in 2014 by several male assailants as she was walking with her sister. She lost her left eye, and her face was deeply scarred.

She said Thursday that she was thrilled to participate in the runway show; she wore a long ivory dress embellished with colorful embroidery in pink, red, green and other hues, and a sparkly tiara in her hair. "I never thought in my wildest dreams that something like this would happen to me," Quereshi said, "and that I would be coming to such a big place to walk on such a big stage."

The collection, called "A Tale of Two Cities," was "inspired by the breathtaking Taj Mahal and the rich, buoyant colors of magnificent India," according to the designer. The prints evoked not only the Taj Mahal but the lotus flower and royal elephants. Silhouettes included bellbottom trousers, cropped tops, capes, and jumpsuits. To offset the colorful embroidery there was a lot of ivory - evoking the ivory marble of the Taj Mahal.

Honoring one of their own

Usually the photographers aren't the ones dressing up at Fashion Week. On Thursday, though, IMG, which owns NYFW: The Shows, outfitted more than 75 photographers and videographers with simple blue work jackets like those worn by the celebrated New York Times fashion

photographer Bill Cunningham, who died in June at 87.

The tribute to the much-loved Cunningham took place at the Nicholas K show, according to a statement from Catherine Bennett, senior vice president and managing director of IMG Fashion Events. "Though he's no longer with us, Bill Cunningham's legacy lives on," she said. "We see his influence every day on the streets of New York, and we miss him." — Agencies



Models walk the runway during the Adam Selman presentation at New York Fashion Week.