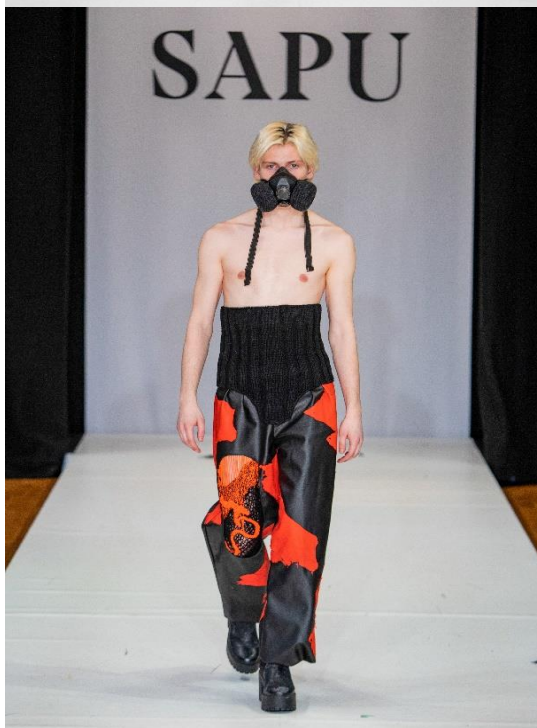


Sri Lanka shines and makes mighty splash at the Cracow Fashion Week 2022 in Poland



Sri Lanka's sustainable fashion designer Natharlea Hewage -Yahampath of the Academy of Design (AOD) presented an impressive repertoire at the prestigious and Poland's well known Spring/Summer March fashion show, the Cracow Fashion Week 2022 (CFW2022) .

Natharlea's participation at the CFW 2022 was one of the major outcomes of the successful collaboration established last November, between Poland's Krakow School of Art and Fashion Design (SAPU) and Sri Lanka's AOD.



Natharlea's knit and recycled leather- "The Poison" collection - on the ramp at the CFW 2022

Ms. Hewage-Yahampath's environmentally inspired collection themed, "*The Poison*", was in perfect sync with the CFW's 2022 theme - "*Towards Sustainability*"- focusing on promoting sustainable development and environmental protection through responsible fashion.

Inspired by the tallest tree and the brightest orchid in the Amazon rainforest and, conscious of the ever increasing and damaging assaults on mother nature, her collection featured at the CFW 2022, was all about ecological preservation, regeneration, renewal and sustainability. Hand crafted garments, using factory leather waste as material, and alpaca yarn and birds' feather for the knit wear, the young designer's extraordinary artistry was all about up-cycling and up-styling. The Sri Lankan sensibility was subtly captured in the elegant creations that were presented.



Natharlea's 'The Poison' alpaca yarn/birds'feathers knitwear collection on the ramp at the CFW 2022

The Sri Lankan designer adds new meaning to social responsibility and gender empowerment by giving visibility to the artisans behind the hand crafted garments. Natharlea pointed out that the entire creative process was embedded in each of her items, and at the core of that process, was the artisanal community that was very much integral to the success story of “The Poison” collection. Her family of artisans in KALARO, are based in Kaluthara, Kollonnawa, Bandarawela, Balapitiya, Panwila, Pitipana.



Members of KALARO – stakeholders of Natharlea’s creative process and success

As Poland’s well known Spring/Summer fashion show, the CFW 2022 provided the Sri Lankan designer networking opportunities with personalities in fashion design from across Europe. Her presentation caught the attention of audience members and special invitees, some of who were keen to don their favourite item from the Sri Lankan designer’s portfolio.



A Cracow fan of "The Poison Collection"

Ms. Hewage-Yahampath's sustainable designer wear also had resonance among the fashion audience at the CFW 2022, with potential export offers to Poland. The dividends of that future success would indeed accrue to her family of artisans of KALARO based in different parts of Sri Lanka.

Recognising the Sri Lankan designer's creativity and the unique narrative of her collection, the French worldwide magazine *Elle*, will feature an account of the Natharlea in its upcoming issue. Circulation of *Elle* in France alone is 335,025 and, it also has wide circulation in the UK and China, among others.

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Warsaw, considering the success of its efforts to promote Sri Lanka's creative economy in Poland, has already discussed with Ms. Hewage-Yahampath, plans to launch a designer collection incorporating Sri Lanka's traditional batik art. The Mission has identified this new area for bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Poland, as we mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries this year (*since 1957*).



Sri Lanka's sustainable fashion designer Natharlea at the CFW 2022

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Warsaw was among the sponsors of the CFW 2022, but Ambassador Dhammika Kumari Semasinghe was unable to attend the event as the guest of honour, due to the evacuation of Sri Lankan nationals from Ukraine.

Establishing the SAPU-AOD partnership was one of the key Sri Lanka promotional efforts undertaken by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Warsaw in close collaboration with the Krakow-based FMCG LIVEE's Chief Operating Officer Magdalena Miszczak.



L-R SAPU's Joanna and Jerzy, LIVEE's Magdalena Miszczak and Sri Lanka's Ambassador Dhammika Kumari Semasinghe (January 2022)

Sri Lanka Embassy Warsaw
28 March 2022