

FASHION / DESIGNER AND LUXURY

Catching Up With Ms Min, Facetasm and Idism

The three designers showed as part of Centrestage Elites last month in Hong Kong.

By [Bennett Marcus](#) on September 7, 2018



Idism RTW Fall 2018
Courtesy Photo

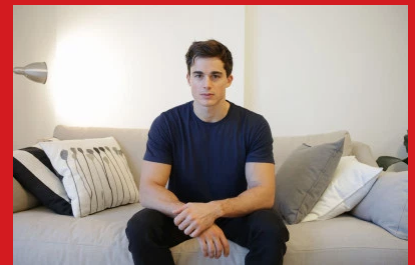
HONG KONG — The third edition of Centrestage, Hong Kong's annual fashion trade expo, kicked off last month with 40 events, fashion shows and panel discussions. A highlight of the program was Centrestage Elites, a runway show featuring the latest collections from three noted Asian fashion labels. This year's were [China](#)'s Ms Min, Japan's [Facetasm](#), and [Hong Kong](#)-based Idism.

Here, WWD talks to the designers behind those labels for a bit of insight about their fashion journeys.

Ms Min

ESSENTIALIST

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COLLECTIONS

Min Liu took an unusual path by launching her women's wear line Ms Min solely online, on Chinese mega site Taobao, in 2010. After graduating from the London College of Fashion, Liu interned at Viktor & Rolf in Amsterdam, then returned to [China](#), where she took a job at Ports 1961. Meanwhile, she photographed herself in vintage masks that she had collected, opened a shop on Taobao, and it instantly went viral. "It was the favorite of the fashion girls, and the customers found her, so by the time she was ready to launch the brand, she already had a quite astute fashion following," explained Liu's husband, Ian Hylton, a former Ports executive who now runs the company with her.

A milestone occurred in 2013, when she was one of three Chinese designers selected by Sarah Rutson for Lane Crawford's new Shanghai store, its first in China. Rutson mentored her, encouraging Liu to expand with dresses, coats and pants to test the waters as a full collection. "When we launched in Lane Crawford, we were contemporary and after one or two years we changed to the designer area," says Liu, who was shortlisted for the LVMH Prize in 2016.

Now the moderately priced line is sold exclusively online, and the high-end designer line is available only at retail stores, which now include many other outlets in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada, Lebanon and the U.S., including Saks Fifth Avenue and Opening Ceremony.

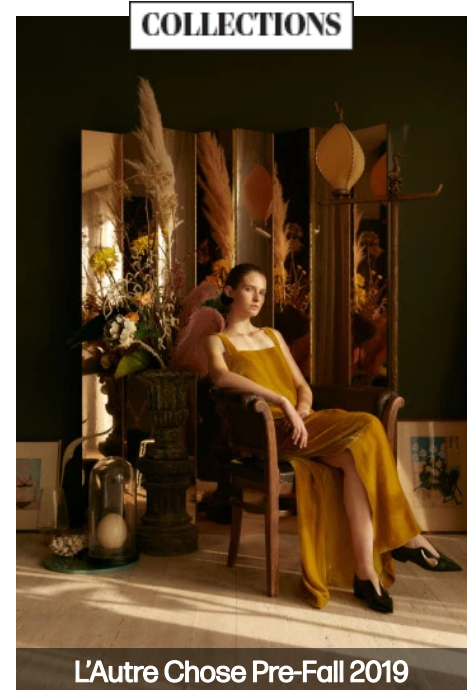
In 2015 they opened the first Ms Min store, in Shanghai, and expect to open three more in 2019. Recent collaborations with MAC and Birkenstock were very successful, but for now they are concentrating on the core business. "We just had a baby, so I think that's about as much collaboration as we can deal with this year," Hylton joked.

[FACETASM](#)

Hiromichi Ochiai spent eight years working for a textile company before launching his streetwear label Facetasm in 2007. His own label was something he'd aspired to ever since his teen years, and he went on to study at Tokyo's Bunka Fashion College. "In Tokyo, it's common to want to have your own label, every designer thinks this way," he said.



Dior Men's Pre-Fall 2019



L'Autre Chose Pre-Fall 2019



The name is inspired by “facets,” he strives to show the many different aspects of an idea. That’s the concept of their co-ed collections – evolving to reflect new ideas with each. Ochiai said he doesn’t focus on men’s or women’s, he just creates a mixture, a “genderless aesthetic.” He tries to give a new definition to traditional pieces; for instance, a biker jacket lined with colorful lace and opened in the back with zippers. “This is a key look of my brand.”

Facetasm has shown in Milan, and now shows in Tokyo and Paris. After being named a finalist for the LVMH Prize three years ago, Ochiai made a lot of contacts in the city, and it just seemed like a natural step. The brand has its own stores in Japan, and is available worldwide at outlets like Hypebeast, Dover Street Market, Barneys New York, Harvey Nichols, Ikram and Jeffrey.

Ochiai did a recent collaboration with Schott, and expects to unveil more soon, and he’s mulling concept stores, with something in addition to clothing, like a salon or a bar.

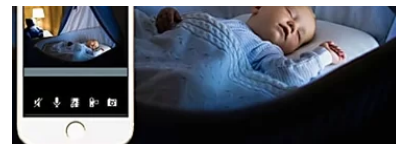
IDISM

The newest of the three featured brands, Cyrus Wong and Julio Ng launched their women’s wear label Idism in 2016. The Hong Kong natives both studied in England — Wong at Central Saint Martins and Ng at the London College of Fashion, and both trained at London design houses before starting their label.

They showed their very first collection in Paris through a program with the Hong Kong government. “It’s kind of how we debuted our brand, so the expectations were very high from everybody,” Ng laughed.

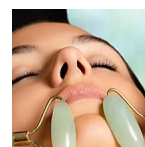
Two weeks before that first show, they were struggling, running out of cash, living on instant noodles. “Two weeks later, after we show, we’re interviewing with the media, so glamorous,” Ng said. “That always reminds us to keep our feet on the ground, no matter how good you are.” In 2017, Idism was selected as one of Vogue’s Talents.

The name is based on the psychological term. “Id’ stands for a basic human need and desire, so it’s like a movement for us to create garments that people need instead of those for social



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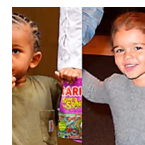
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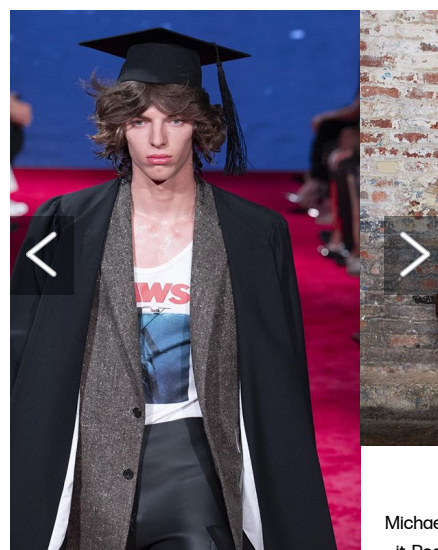


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el Chirico told investors on a conference
ay morning that he's taking swift action to
st the brand direction, which the Belgian
ner skewed too fashion forward and too
sive for its core consumer. "For holiday
ve are shifting more of our media spend
lo marketing to more commercial digital

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media,” said Ng. They want their clothing to interact with people. “You can just kind of pull the drawstring, or button the jacket in different ways, and this is a way to communicate with people through our garments.”

Much of their design process is based on art. A print with a lot of orange and yellow came from a light installation they made; the color of the light changed when it hit the sculpture, and they captured that to create the print.

They now have about eight retailers in China, plus others in London, Amsterdam, Japan and Canada. This season, the two are very happy to be showing in their hometown, since no local shops carry the label. “We’re based here, and we want to see our clothes in Hong Kong,” Wong said. “We need to tackle that.”

cial media advertising,” said Chirico. “We
ped the frequency of our posts on social
ns like Instagram and we are increasingly
ig micro influencers and hosting local
ation to drive meaningful engagement
cularly with Millennials and Gen Z.” The
es to the brand’s marketing comes after
reported this week that sources indicate
n Klein might be making a change in its
otographers, hiring Glen Luchford to
graph the spring campaign, rather than
anderperre, who has worked closely with
ns since he took over the helm as chief
tive officer in 2016. More on WWD.com
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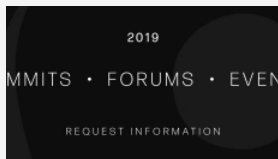
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