

A rising star in Tibet's fashion world

Tibet is not just about Buddhism and spirituality. It's also about flaunting a vibrant and colourful culture. Kelsang Tsomo, a Bangalore-based Tibetan fashion designer and image consultant, has added her name to the list of rising stars in Tibet's fashion world.

Tsomo's passion for a career in fashion designing evolved during her extended travels. Her love for glamour and colours pushed her into the career and her talent for drawing and sketching helped mould her profession.

'When I look at Madonna and Jennifer Lopez I think: 'Why can't I do it?'' Tsomo told IANS. The designer says she wants to be an alpha female - physically perfect, influential, inscrutable, shrewd and intelligent and a high achiever.

'Fashion,' says Tsomo, 'is about the desire for expressing who we want to be. It's about communicating and reflecting the complex levels of who we are.'

Her definition of 'image' includes 'clothing, grooming, tone of voice, vocabulary, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and etiquette'.

Tsomo's first solo show coincided with the celebrations for Losar, the Tibetan New Year, in the first week of February, at Bylakuppe in Karnataka as part of the concert organised by Gonpo Entertainment. She presented her contemporary Tibetan fashion line with the help of some 20 young Tibetan college students.

The embroidered blouses for women worn underneath the chupa (traditional Tibetan dress) and men's shirts with Tibetan drawings were the real eye-catchers. Her evening gown collection clearly reflected her international skills and professionalism.

Giorgio Armani is Tsomo's favourite designer. 'The way he rose from being a buyer for a department store to build a fashion empire whose name is plastered relentlessly on every street in the world really inspires me,' she said.

Fashion is not merely a career for her. 'I want to take Tibet out there,' said Tsomo. 'The beauty of our exotic culture could help people understand that Tibetans are not just about spirituality. We are a talented lot and have a breathing, living culture.'

Tsomo is a second generation Tibetan born and raised in a typical Tibetans-in-exile settlement in Kollegal village near Mysore. She moved to Shimla for two years to complete her schooling and graduated from Mysore College.

She held her first show barely a month after completing her training from Anna Singh academy in Mumbai.

Her fashion line will target young urban Tibetans. She also plans to expand her range to jewellery and accessory designing and is planning to open a boutique in Bangalore.

Her message to young Tibetans: 'I see a lot of young Tibetans wearing nice clothes. What they need

to do is to walk with their heads held high. Each piece created by my fashion house will carry the tag 'Designed and made by Tibetans'.'

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