

VOGUE

SPRING 2019 READY-TO-WEAR

Moon Choi



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by MONICA KIM

Bravo, Moon Choi! Today, the New York-based South Korean designer touched down with her first presentation on the official women's Fashion Week schedule, and it was a strong showing. First the venue: The Refectory, a soaring, cathedral-like wing tucked in the back of The High Line Hotel's cloistered 19th-century grounds. Guests crossed a courtyard through the midmorning drizzle and climbed stone stairs lined with white votive candles to find a group of models arranged around the room like sculptures.

The collection was titled "Specimen 19": Choi began with the mental image of a 16th-century cabinet of curiosities. "By creating this sort of museum, I can show

more of my learning and design process,” she said. “These aren’t just pretty pieces, but my own exploration.” That sensitivity permeated the room. It all felt neat and ordered, yet warm and sentimental, much like a treasured collection of curios would. Between the models you might find a pleated scrap of silk, say, or a suspended trio of jackets that displayed Choi’s draping methods.

Last season, this reviewer expressed concern that Choi’s collections, though lovely, played it too safe and risked repetition. She pushed through her boundaries today, expanding her design vocabulary without straying from her foundations. First, there was color: olive green and muted lilac, powder blue and lemon yellow. It lifted the collection. Tailoring and deconstructed suiting remain at the heart of Choi’s work, as does the blurring of gender lines. Yet this season, she wasn’t afraid to bring in more feminine to counter the masculine.

Hence the silk dresses, whose seductive high slits were balanced by strong shoulders and demure mock necks. Choi also added corsetry and a few darted bustier tops as easy separates, paired with silk midi skirts. Ruching was scattered here and there, notably as a scrunched black velvet rope through a well cut cream duster coat. The designer also added sculptural resin jewelry—earrings and pins, used to close two pointed-collar tops—and pillowy bags, tucked under the arm.

“I wanted to take it in a more elegant direction,” Choi said. Her collection hit the sweet spot of soigné clothes that can be hard to find, at a friendly price point, for all genders. What’s not to like?

<https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2019-ready-to-wear/moon-choi>