



MEDIA RELEASE

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Raffles' fashion grad wins internship with Akira

Raffles College of Design and Commerce fashion graduate Jong Min (Gabriel) Lee has taken out top honours at the spectacular Raffles College Graduate Fashion Collections show at Carriageworks with his extraordinary "mille-fleurs" dresses.

The 22-year-old won a coveted internship with leading Australian fashion designer Akira Isogawa – who was on hand at the fashion show in December to present the award.

"I'm so happy and excited to work with Akira," says Gabriel. "Hearing him compliment my designs meant a lot to me. It was a great night and meeting Akira made me so happy."

Isogawa said he was very impressed by the show and how much hard work the students had put into their designs. He said he "hoped to teach (Gabriel) the realities of the fashion industry, but also to help inspire him to pursue his vision".

Gabriel spent hundreds of hours on his collection which featured more than a thousand hand-sewn organza flowers, creating an inspired, voluminous look. He says working with organza – a sheer fabric which is difficult to sew and often shrinks, has been his biggest challenge.

"The standout piece was a very simple, short cocktail dress," says Gabriel. "It featured about 500 small flowers and took over five weeks to make."

Gabriel's collection drew inspiration from both natural disasters and an ancient Japanese people called the Ainu who were indigenous to Hokkaido and northern Japan. It consisted of three evening wear garments and two cocktail garments.

At the same time as he was preparing his final collection for graduation, the South Korean national was developing a parallel 5-garment collection to enter into the international Aquafina Pure Fashion Awards in Asia. Gabriel was named the Australian finalist and jetted to Ho Chi Minh City late last year for the final judging where he won 'Best Collection'.

Raffles College's Program Director, Fashion Design & Fashion Marketing, Robert De Giovanni said, "Gabriel created not only a superb major project, but simultaneously entered the Aquafina Pure Fashion Competition in Vietnam which meant double the workload for him. This may have deterred lesser talents, but not Gabriel. He rose to the occasion with remarkable grace under pressure, and the



showstoppers, as well as commercial pieces which were paraded are a real testament to his excellent work ethic as a designer.”

The talented graduate would like to start his own label in time but says his immediate ambition is to head to London for further study.

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