First Fashion School In Sri Lanka Celebrates 13 Years In Operation



LIFT (Lanka Institute of Fashion Technology) commenced a new semester of fashion studies on September 14, 2013.

Having launched in the year 2000 as the first institute to offer students the opportunity to study fashion, LIFT celebrated 13 years in operation while forging ahead into the 14th year. Expressing her thoughts on this milestone Niroshani Leanage, Managing Director – LIFT said, “in Sri Lanka there are no fashion schools that has an in-house boutique to promote their own labels. Even in the international arena that is a rarity. However, at LIFT we have our own boutique and brand. This could be done mainly when the school is run by a designer and LIFT has that advantage.”

The courses offered through LIFT include advanced diplomas in Fashion Design, Textile Design and Footwear and Accessory Design. All these courses could be completed in two and a half years on full time basis. After completing the advanced diploma, depending on the need of the student, he/she can either go onto complete a third or final year for degree completion or look for employment. Comprising of five semesters, each semester is six months long. The first semester is dedicated towards introducing the fashion industry and the world of design while focusing on teaching students about creativity. The second semester encompass pattern cutting and manufacturing where the student can delve deeper into the technicalities associated with fashion. Semester three involves integrating the notions learnt in the previous two semesters while understanding customers and Semester four requires the student to select a path to specialise in. In semester four students can undertake an internship for a month to experience the real fashion world. With this newly gained experience the students can then step into the final semester where they are required to write a dissertation of 5,000 words while creating six special outfits along with a designed portfolio that will be evaluated by both internal and external, mainly British, examiners.

LIFT also offers a diploma course that could be completed in 18 months. This offers the opportunity for students to evaluate whether they want to continue studying fashion and if they opt to do so they can steer their focus into the advanced diploma leading to a degree after 15 months of diploma coursework. Such students will be awarded nine months of exemption from the advanced diploma.

“Industry needs are growing,” said Niroshani Leanage. “And our employment rate has been very good at 99 percent. We promote our students through our shows and students can find employment not only in the garment industry but in the apparel and retail sectors as well. Therefore a designer who earns his/her qualifications through LIFT can go into the design department in a garment factory, be involved in product development, merchandising, work as a fashion illustrator, a computer

illustrate designer, pattern maker and a visual merchandiser.” She further added that the most advantageous point of studying fashion designing is the ability to become a self employed individual. “They can design their own brands and build their own career. But to do so, you really need to have a passion as it is not an easy path.”

Another aspect of the fashion diplomas at LIFT includes Fashion Photography where students are taught the technicalities that are on par with photography sessions done for international magazines. Niroshani Leanage further affirmed, “students gain the experience of a full designer’s career before they leave. Furthermore, with our boutique and the launch of our mass production line with Glitz, students have more opportunities that no other school in Sri Lanka can offer. Here at LIFT we mould them into becoming an international designer.”

LIFT is also involved in conducting fashion shows for charity, such as Camouflage for Viru Daruwo and brand launches where students get to design and go through all phases involved in fashion designing to enhance their experience.

