



The sixth successive Dress Designer of the Year contest, which has by now become a regular and keenly awaited event in the haute couture calendar, was held on May 29 at Hotel Lanka Oberoi in front of a large fashion conscious gathering.

Competing for the prestigious title were nine amateur dress designers whose creations made solely out of fabric produced by the sponsors, Pugoda Textiles were paraded by experienced fashion models who were allotted to contestants by drawing of lots.

The contestants who were required to present their dresses in six different categories seemed convinced that the trends for the immediate future tend to be more elegant than even the present. While in most of the categories, the individualistic quality of the ultimate winner's creations stood apart, almost all designers had given their best efforts to the last item: evening wear which had some exquisite creations complete with sequins, slits in the front, back and sides and deep necklines.

The panel of judges comprising among others the former Mrs of the World, a leading actress and some established names in the fashion trade adjudged Renuka Dissanayake as Dress Designer 1989, whose creations were also chosen as the best in the categories of morning, evening and beachwear and she shared the prize for best office wear outfit with the first runner-up, 17 year old Dinesh Chandrasena, the only male contestant.

The chief aims of this event were to bring hitherto unexposed talents and resources to light and promote careers in dress designing. While these objectives were realized in an ample measure much beyond the initial expectations the contest exposed to the world of haute couture the richness and vividness of local material and the ingenuity of indigenous talent.

If a representative selection of materials of just one leading firm is anything to judge by, there is no question that we in Sri Lanka have the mastery, dexterity and perhaps with foreign collaboration, the technology to produce the finery which will satisfy the most sophisticated and discerning amongst the designers.





