

Shopping

What's in store Chicago Fashion Incubator Pop-up Store



A few coats of white paint—this large display table used to be neon green—and donations from the 900 Shops, including mannequins from a shuttered storefront, seating and a cash wrap, go a long way.

Black-and-white paintings by JC Steinbrunner dress up the neutral space. "He's sort of already been in the fashion scene in Chicago," Miller says, "and [this piece] has a sense of fabric."

It's your last chance to check out dozens of locally designed wares under one roof. By **Jessica Herman**
Photographs by **Nicole Radja**

For the past two years, most of the Chicago Fashion Incubator program—designed to nurture emerging fashion designers—has taken place behind Macy's closed doors. This season kicked off by placing the designers directly under the spotlight with a month-long pop-up shop at the 900 Shops. In addition to offering anywhere from 50 to 100 items from 17 alumni designers at any given time, the shop's neighboring space hosts weekly events ranging from runway and trunk shows to art gallery-esque exhibits. Somewhere in between assisting this year's class in the Macy's studio and working on her own eponymous line, the program's executive director, **Lara Miller** (laramiller.net), squeezed us in for a guided tour of the shop.

The CFI Pop-up Store (900 N Michigan Ave, fifth floor) is open Thursday through Sunday through April 17.



Merchandise is grouped by designer and arranged according to target audiences. For instance, Nora del Busto and Agga B Raya's architectural, higher-end lines flank both sides of the room's entrance while the younger-skewing Anna Hovet and Lidia Wachowska collections hang side by side in back.



In addition to drawing her loyal fan base with ready-to-wear and custom-fit classic women's shirts and blouses, Kate Coxworth of Kate Boggiano introduces her foray into outerwear with this feminine raincoat.

Among the three designers from the class of 2010 who are showing a few pieces (including Christina Fan, C/FAn, and Miriam Cecilia Carlson, M.C.C.), Jonnie Rettele took inspiration from her husband to launch a menswear line—starting with woven shirts and pullovers—under the name Nonnie Threads.



"Jess [Audey] uses upholstery fabric. She was at 1154 Lill Street, and they had all this extra fabric—she says it's the fabric no one wanted to use for purses—so she made a few dresses for display windows," Miller says. "People started coming in saying they wanted to buy the dresses."

