

A Night with Raul "Rulli" Torres

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As part of the NorthWest Arkansas Community College's 25th anniversary celebration, the College sponsored a fashion show Nov. 6, which featured designs from Gatsby's Boutique of Fayetteville, Cinderella's Boutique of Rogers, and designs from Raul "Rulli" Torres, an NWACC graduate. The show took place at the Springdale Civic Center, and all proceeds supported NWACC's General Scholarship Fund.

The event had a satisfactory attendance, from the designers' friends and family, to NWACC staff and faculty, and members of the community. Campus organizations like the Student Government Association and the Student Ambassadors and Activities Board volunteered as ushers during the event.

Torres' collection ranged from bridal to formal and avant-garde pieces. He kept the color scheme simple, limiting himself to black, white and red pieces. Most of his work has a Victorian feel; Torres used materials like lace and satin to give his pieces a romantic and refined look. On his avant-garde pieces, a mix of materials and plunging thigh slits provided a "wow factor" for the audience. We had a chance to chat with Torres before the show and this is what he shared with us.

EV: When did you know you wanted to be a fashion designer?

Torres: When I was five years old. My mom was a seamstress, and she made most of my sister's clothes. Also, my teachers would take me to see dramas like "Evita" and a lot of theater, and so what caught my attention was the entire wardrobe. I was like "Oh my God!" It was amazing to me as a kid, but it kind of started fading away because, you know, my culture or whatever, it's like a man is not supposed to be sewing or any of that sort of thing. So my mom wanted me to do something else, instead of being a designer. Plus, we moved from California to Arkansas in 1995, so here in Arkansas I thought there was no way that I could

make it in the industry, that's why I have to sacrifice a lot of that.

EV: Now that you've shared the challenges you face in your profession, what is your favorite part about being a designer?

Torres: I would say my favorite part is whenever I finish a collection, the end product, the reaction that I get from everybody that sees my final pieces. It's worth every single party that I've missed. It's worth all the sacrifice.

EV: What does it mean to you as an alumnus to be a part of NWACC's 25th anniversary celebrations?

Torres: It's very important to me because I feel like there are not many colleges that still continue to support you even after you've graduated. For them to invite me to come back and participate is truly an honor, to be part of this celebration.

EV: What were your inspirations for the pieces you created for the show?

Torres: There's a Mexican actress who was compared to Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe. She was in the Mexican Golden Era in the early '40s and '50s. Her name is Maria Felix. I actually have the trend board in the back. One dress

inspired the whole collection, except for my avant-garde pieces. As a Gemini, I will always have a crazy side and a classy, elegant side and those are my signature pieces which people have come to expect from me.

EV: Which is your favorite piece from the collection?

Torres: Oh my gosh! There's so many! Probably the black dress, the final piece. The silhouette is very classy and the dress is probably like 25 or 30 yards of fabric, so it's going to be pretty long. Everybody loves that piece.

EV: How would you describe your personal style?

Torres: I think I have, like, two personalities. I would compare myself to Alexander McQueen and Jean Paul Gaultier and then the other side would be like Valentino or Dior. Those are the two sides that are not fighting within me. I will create something crazy and then something classy, like a compliment between those two forces.

EV: If your brand could have any celebrity spokesperson, who would it be?

Torres: Oh my goodness! I would probably pick Beyonce, Sofia Vergara, or

Heidi Klum. One of those top models.

EV: Do you have any advice for our readers who might want to start a career in fashion design?

Torres: If it's truly what you love to do, the rest is not really going to matter. Like, I haven't slept at all because I wanted to have everything prepared for the show. Everyone is telling me to get some rest, but they don't get it, I can't sleep right now. It's an industry in which, if you love what you do, it won't even feel like you're

killing yourself.

EV: Any closing thoughts?

Torres: Well, I'm very lucky that I got to go to NWACC because the professors, executives and staff saw my potential, and they saw something in me that they just pushed out of me.

I think everybody needs that little push every now and then, and I honestly don't know where I would be right now if I hadn't gone to NWACC. NWACC was the best thing that ever happened to me.



Photo Courtesy of Victor Chalfant
Torres dresses a model's hair backstage.



Designer Raul "Rulli" Torres and the models pose for a group photo at the red carpet.

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