

Now You Know: What It's Like to Be at Honolulu Fashion Week

By Eric Wilson | Updated Nov 25, 2015 @ 12:45 pm



PHOTO: HONOLULU MAGAZINE

In honor of [Thanksgiving](#), I'm taking a few days off this week, so I asked my friend Lynne O'Neill to fill in for this week's column. O'Neill, if you don't know, is a veteran fashion show producer whose commanding personality inspired a similar character portrayed by Margaret Cho on an episode of *Sex and the City*. She's off working in Honolulu these days, as executive producer of Hawaii's big fashion week event, so I asked her to send us this postcard of how it all went:

[Honolulu Fashion Week](#) was so much bigger this year. Not only were we able to shine the spotlight on Hawaii designers, like Kaypee Soh, with more fashion shows on the runway, but we also shared the collections of international designers, including Todd Snyder from New York, Ellery from Sydney, Lie Sangbong from Seoul, and AULA from Tokyo. People could shop right here as well, with more than 50 designers in the marketplace.



PHOTO: HONOLULU MAGAZINE

It's the only fashion week that officially starts with a blessing of water and ti leaves from a Hawaiian *kahu* (reverend). And there were flower leis just about everywhere, including a custom-made body lei created by New York-based Hawaiian jewelry designer [Bliss Lau](#), who is known for her dramatic body chains, and Hawaii-based designer Meleana Estes (*pictured, above*).

The behind-the-scenes action felt just like [New York Fashion Week](#), because our production team from New York brought a #NYFW-style runway to the islands. The only difference was the *aloha* spirit. The team we worked with from *Honolulu Magazine* welcomed everyone into their *ohana* with open arms, so the experience was very special and unique.



PHOTO: HONOLULU MAGAZINE

We saw a lot of *Hawaii Five-O* actor Alex O'Loughlin, who was backstage with his surfer-model-swimwear designer wife Malia Jones. Heatherette designer Traver Rains showed up for the show and ran into Fern Mallis, the creator of [New York Fashion Week](#), who was a special guest. Harold Koda flew in from N.Y.C., just after opening his final exhibit as curator in charge of the [Costume Institute at the Met](#) (*pictured, above, between O'Neill and Mallis*).

RELATED: InStyle's 2015 Style 100: The Year in Fashion Hits, Misses, and Hashtags

For me, the most stressful part of a fashion show are the moments leading up to it—when the models arrive, the casting, the fittings, finalizing the lineup—because everything only comes together in the final week. Once I'm there for the show, that's when I have fun—that's when we see our vision come to life.



PHOTO: HONOLULU MAGAZINE