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STYLE | NEW YORK FASHION WEEK



TIFFANY & CO.

INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

New design director adds 'uber-modern' touch to Tiffany & Co.

ALEESHA HARRIS
VANCOUVER SUN

Boasting 177 years in the business, Tiffany & Co. was due for a bit of a change. And for the American jewelry purveyor, it came in the form of an ambitious new design director named Francesca Amfitheatrof. Amfitheatrof, who is the first woman to bear the title of design director at the company, is only the eighth person to hold the role since the company was founded in 1837. "It's the most amazing job (and) it's the most incredible challenge," she said at the company's flagship store in New York City. "When you arrive at somewhere new and at a company of this importance and this size, the learning curve is huge ... It has been really exciting." Since taking the post in September 2013, Amfitheatrof — and her much-anticipated first collection — has been surrounded by a buzz of excitement, but surprisingly little press. "When I first started talking with the teams here, we all agreed that we didn't really want to do too much press," she said. "People were expressing interest for interviews and profiles. We were like, 'No, no, no. Let's wait until we have a collection to show.'"

Well, the wait is finally over. While the rest of New York City bustled with the breakneck pace of New York Fashion Week, Amfitheatrof was settling into a plush velvet couch set inside a sparsely decorated — but beautifully lit — ballroom on one of the several floors situated atop the 727 5th Ave. store for back-to-back press appointments. While Amfitheatrof undoubtedly fielded countless questions about her relatively brief time with the company, the other stars of the meeting were the delicate designs crafted from silver and gold that glinted in the generous light streaming in through the 57th Avenue-facing windows. The precisely arranged pieces make up Amfitheatrof's first offering for Tiffany & Co., titled the Tiffany T collection. And truth be told, they have been worth the wait. "It's kind of like the coming-out party," she said of the press meetings. "We have the collection and I've been travelling with it around the world. It's exciting to talk about something concrete." The new collection, which include bracelets, necklaces, rings and more, is "clean, machine-age, uber-modern," according to Amfitheatrof. In short, it's a bold departure from the classic Tiffany & Co. designs. "This collection speaks very clearly

that something new — an evolution — is happening at Tiffany," she said. "But it's still rooted in all its elegance and Tiffany style." Inspired by modern women living and working in New York, Amfitheatrof set out to create a collection that would be iconic now but remain relevant in 10 years. "New York women have a way of dressing and a way of being that, even though they are elegant and put together, there is a casualness or sportiness that you wouldn't necessarily see in Europe," she said. "And when I say casual and sporty, I don't mean trainers. I mean that they can jump in and out of cabs and subways, and go from day to night with a sort of effortlessness, which is very New York." The result? Cool, modern adornments that would look perfectly at home mixing and mingling alongside the pieces in virtually every woman's jewelry collection. "The modernity of this collection spoke so much about how women are today and the kind of pace of life," she said as she took the time to walk, piece-by-piece, through the display. The collection was designed with women in mind, but it has also garnered praise from male customers. "It's not a feminine-feminine collection," she said. "It has to be on the



MARTIN CROOK

Francesca Amfitheatrof, Tiffany's new creative director, launched her first designs with the T collection (top).

cue of where it becomes too masculine, that point where if you tip over it can be a bit masculine and aggressive, but if you just hold the balance, it's actually just about great design." "You fall in love with it, and whether it's men or women, young or old, it's more about an attitude than a gender or an age."

CONTINUED ON D2

THIS WEEK

STAGE



Dancers Dancing: 20.20.20

What might the corner of Davie and Denman look like as portrayed in a dance? Dancers Dancing artistic director Judith Garay celebrates 20 years of working in Vancouver with a work for 20 dancers, inspired by 20 intersections in the city — the architecture, people and vibe — at Broadway and Granville, Gore and Main, Water and Carrall, and the like. The replication of urban life to stage reveals the city's stark dichotomies. Expect the work to be both exhilarating and thoughtful, lush and minimal, set to a kindred soundscape by Stefan Smulovitz.

Sept. 24 to 27, 8 p.m. | SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts
Tickets: \$20 to \$25 at dancersdancing.com



Spiritually Incorrect: An Evening with Alan Clements

Vancouver-based spiritual maverick Alan Clements is a former Buddhist monk who in his words, has "probably spent more meditative hours on my ass than anyone else." One day on his sore bum he had an epiphany: True understanding is being in life rather than outside it. So he scrapped the path to nirvana and has since joined struggles for freedom in Burma and Bosnia, written powerful books and delivered comedic romps on the myth of enlightenment. Video clips of his one-man shows are deliciously irreverent as they challenge dogma, indoctrinations and the politics of war.

Sept. 27, 8 p.m. | Revue Stage
Tickets: \$35 at worldddharma.com



The Truth Hurts

From Australia, the droll, laid-back half of award-winning cult comedy duo Fear of a Brown Planet, Aamer Rahman, performs his debut solo show, serving up more boldly funny insights into politics, race and comic books.

Sept. 26, 7:30 p.m. | York Theatre
Tickets: \$30 at thecultch.com

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