

One to watch: Georgian label Situationist hits Milan fashion week

Emerging Georgian label Situationist, which counts American model Bella Hadid among its fans, landed its first catwalk show at Milan's prestigious fashion week late Friday.

Designer Irakli Rusadze, 25, is part of a group of Eastern European designers now grabbing the fashion spotlight -- in his case thanks to cult items like a T-shirt with a Georgian flag print that went viral last year.

Hadid's decision to sport two Situationist outfits during Paris fashion week in January got style bibles like Vogue talking.

Most fashion gurus who think of Georgia will think Demna Gvasalia, who rose through the ranks at Louis Vuitton to found Vetements and is now the creative director at Parisian label Balenciaga.

Rusadze, who began his label in 2015, has a lot to compete with -- but stands out for his subversion of classic silhouettes and his riffs on staples of the post-Soviet uniform such as ill-fitting jackets.

"I grew up surrounded by Georgian women, who were facing the same challenges of a post-soviet Georgia on a daily basis, so the concept of femininity is strictly connected to women's inner strength," he said in the notes to the show.

"This is the reason why my clothes aren't about the shape of the body -- it is the shape of the personality I'd like to show."

His debut in the north Italian city as star guest of White Milano featured suits with oversized beige and long coats with double lapels and small chains.

Some were overalls in green leather, beige neoprene and burgundy wool, worn with white boots.

Suit trousers were high-waisted, others were all-in-ones cut off at the knee and bare-backed.

Black trousers worn under a long trench featured a vertical white strip down each leg -- a play on piping and visible seams seen elsewhere this week at the shows of Italy's top fashion houses.

The collection was made in Georgia and Rusadze follows the process through from conception to cut on clothes and footwear.

His fans may say the daring creativity which has made his items popular so far was toned down for what was his first Milan appearance.

Rusadze is just pleased to have got here from a post-Soviet country where materials can be hard to find and being a designer is not an easy career path.

Georgia may be coming into its own on the international fashion scene, but he says elderly people in the suburbs of Tbilisi still threaten lazy school-children that if they don't knuckle down and study they will "end up like a tailor".