

# RIYADH FASHION WEEK

**WWD**


The Femi9 show took place at the foot of the Kingdom Centre Tower.



Mirai on the runway during Riyadh Fashion Week.



A dress by Ashwaq Almarshad.

Mona Alshehbil was "the top-performing brand" at the event and will be back in the department store's womenswear edit in 2026. Also joining will be Abadia, whose "strong show this week reaffirmed our interest in the designer from last year's short list," Crane said.

There were some new finds as well for the retail executive. "Mirai was a top new discovery of the week," Crane shared. "The humorous Not Boring 'bodega-inspired' merch shop was another highlight, with T-shirts cleverly boxed with games and stickers alongside baskets of baseball caps." Crane said Selfridges is "keen" to plan activations with both designers in 2026.

"We felt energized after a few days at Riyadh Fashion Week. We continue to be interested in sharing a global perspective through our fashion offer, in a way that is meaningful both for a global and local Selfridges customer," he said.

"What's happening here is incredible – the energy, the engagement of the designers," agreed Brenda Bellei, chief executive officer of White Milano as she escorted Uberta Zambeletti, founder of Milanese store Wait and See, around the three-level showroom.

Bellei trumpeted a strong rapport between price and quality among the Saudi collections on display. "Buyers are no longer looking for something expensive," she stressed.

For example, Manel's Aboudaoud said her average selling price for an evening gown is about \$750 despite her use of top fabrics, a tactic to help her six-year-old label grow.

The showcase had a notable Italian accent, with Italian brand Amen parading its latest collection on the runway, and Italian jewelers L'Eight Studio and Coppola e Toppo showcasing their wares in the showroom, the latter securing a sizable order from an Italian retailer attending the week.

For first-time visitors to Riyadh, it was an introduction to its lively local fashion scene, where dressing-to-the-nines is the norm, and

female-led and designed brands rule, especially in the couture space.

"It's been something that many women in this country aspired to, it was an open space," said Burak Cakmak, CEO of the Saudi Fashion Commission. "They were able to build their businesses and directly sell to their audiences here – other women in the country. It made it even more intimate and easier in private settings, because they didn't even have retail spaces."

Cakmak sees that as a "big opportunity" given that Saudi female designers understand comfort, the body and "what women want to look like." In addition, they understand the lifestyle of Saudi women when at home and traveling.

"As a result, they're able to introduce products at the right time for the right occasions, which any international designer, man or woman, might struggle to understand," he said.

Meanwhile, a new crop of ready-to-wear brands is emerging like Abadia, which "understands the mindset around how women from this region want to dress, which is very much translatable to the rest of the world," according to Cakmak. "Anyone, anywhere in the world, at any age can feel comfortable in it."

When Abadia did a pop-up at Galeries Lafayette in Paris, it attracted attention and purchases from American and European women "just because it's a new brand they're discovering, without knowing that it was even Saudi brand," Cakmak said.

Meanwhile, young men dominate the burgeoning streetwear scene as traditionally, few Saudi women designed clothes for men.

"But even then, in the streetwear space, we have several brands that are female-owned, and they are aligned with global trends, designing for both men and women, as many brands are now moving into both gender in all their products," Cakmak said.

Fahad Al Jomiah, CEO of a streetwear brand 1886, called its participation a milestone moment.

"We wanted to showcase how far Saudi fashion has come and how it can proudly stand on a global stage," he said. "The response was beyond expectations, both locally and internationally. For us, it wasn't just about presenting clothes; it was about presenting confidence proving that Saudi design today is ambitious, relevant, and ready to compete globally." ■

## Saudi Fashion Commission, White Milano Ink Partnership

The partnership aims to promote Saudi designers globally, offering mentorship and international showroom access. BY ANDREA ONATE

Another fashion week has come to a close, this time in Riyadh, marked by significant deals and moments.

The Saudi Fashion Commission announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding with The Circle Platform company's White Milano, marking a strategic partnership to drive the global growth and expansion of brands while opening up new perspectives for the fashion industry.

This collaboration will give a boost to the development of national talent and the enrichment of the creative sector in the Kingdom as the chief executive officer of the Saudi Fashion Commission, Burak Cakmak stated that "this partnership with White Milano reflects our ongoing commitment to building platforms that empower local talent, expand

international collaborations and enrich the creative economy."

Brenda Bellei, CEO of The Circle Platform-White Milano, said: "With our strong international experience in the fashion sector and our well-established network, we are ready to bring our know-how to Saudi Arabia, beginning with the organization of the official showroom during Riyadh Fashion Week, which took place from Oct. 16 to 21. This project aims to promote creative talent through a structured strategy of global promotion and positioning."

Through this agreement, White Milano has established the first international showroom in the Kingdom, showcasing Saudi and international brands and serving as a creative hub in the region. The partnership has offered and will continue



The first showroom during Riyadh Fashion Week.

to offer Saudi designers access to White Milano's international platforms, including mentorship programs, workshops and training courses to support local talent and share best practices in areas such as design, branding and sustainability. This collaboration will enable international brands to tap into previously unexplored channels and help bring Saudi designers to the global stage, offering them a new

global platform.

The agreement was also presented by Massimiliano Bizzi, founder and president of White Milano, at the Saudi Italian business forum in Rome on Thursday. Bizzi outlined the aim of the partnership, stating that "we will operate in Riyadh with a permanent structure and a calendar of events, as well as for the development of retail business."