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Charleston Fashion Week Announces the Winners of its Emerging Designer Competition: Southeast

January 14, 2009 – **Charleston, South Carolina** – After an exhaustive search for the region’s next top fashion designer, *Charleston* magazine’s Charleston Fashion Week is pleased to announce the nine finalists of its Emerging Designer Competition: Southeast, who will show their collections during the March 24-28 event. Charleston Fashion Week has created an extraordinary platform for established industry professionals - including buyers, press and notable designers - to meet and discover aspiring newcomers.

Hailing from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, the aspiring designers were chosen from a pool of more than 30 applicants by a prestigious panel of judges, including Clewis-Reid designer, Art Institute of Charleston teacher, and 2008 CFW Emerging Designer Competition finalist Ashley Reid; *Charleston* magazine style editor Ayoka Lucas; Emmy Award-winning costume designer Dana Campbell; Lacoste CEO Bob Siegel; and accessories designer Mary Norton. After reviewing the sketches, finished pieces, and videos for the applicants’ spring 2009 lines, the judges have selected the following six semifinalists: Swapnali Ahire (Blythewood, SC), Caroline Baker (Charleston, SC), Emily Bargeron (Statesboro, GA), Amanda deLeon (Wilmington, NC), Shan Keith (Atlanta, GA), and Jonathan Nigel Moore (Raleigh, NC). The three finalists are Lindsey Carter, Alena Fursova, and Maria Dobrzanska Reeves all from Charleston, South Carolina.

Winning designers will show their collections on two evenings: Tuesday, March 24th will welcome the six semifinalists, and on Saturday, March 28th, the three finalists will present their lines to the spectators and judges (including *Project Runway* finalist Mychael Knight) for the chance to win the grand prize of \$1,000 presented by the Art Institute of Charleston, a runway show at CFW 2010, and a free 10’x10’ booth at AmericasMart® Atlanta Apparel Market in August – the largest apparel market on the East Coast, among other gifts. Acclaimed top designer Cynthia Rowley will announce the winner at that evening’s Finale Gala.

The third annual Charleston magazine’s Charleston Fashion Week is a five-night celebration of the city’s flourishing retail and design community featuring runway shows from local retailers, the bridal couture show, and the debut of emerging regional designers. With nearly 100 designers presented, chic after-parties, and a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Charleston chapter of Dress for Success and the Medical University of South Carolina’s (MUSC) Children’s Hospital, this year’s Charleston Fashion Week will be the “haute”-est event of the season. CFW 2009 has been named as one of The Southeast Tourism Society’s Top 20 Events in March and will be held March 24-28 under the tents in Marion Square in downtown Charleston. Visit www.charlestonfashionweek.com for more information on the designers, schedule of events, sponsors, tickets, and more.

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