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Zorya print presents richness of Ukrainian art

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Fashion watchers expected Brian Reyes to present fall looks with his signature Colombian-sensuality-meets-American-moxie style. His Bryant Park "Invierno 2010" runway show delivered that cultural fusion with an unexpected new element: the refreshingly witty Ukrainian sensibility of contemporary artist Oksana Mas, as revealed in his "Zorya" print collection. The collaboration began last September. Reyes credits Zorya Fine Art founder, Zorianna L. Altomaro, with introducing and unleashing the kindred spirits. "Oksana and I were busy creating our individual work, unbeknownst to one another," says Reyes. "Zorianna had the vision to see how our sensibilities might combine to produce something amazing. As usual, her instincts were right on." The artists sketched together during several marathon sessions at Reyes downtown studio. Odessa-based Mas set to work producing three paintings reflecting the duo's shared, impulsive love toward both Man and Mother Nature. Reyes then transformed these works into the fluid, elegant prints featured in the Zorya collection. He also recruited Mas to design the staging for its debut. "Oksana and I draw so much inspiration from nature," says Reyes. "Her ideas have that palpable energy that's hard to find anywhere but the natural world." Altomaro, Reyes and Mas announced the Zorya print project last fall at the opening of Mas' first New York solo show, *When Stars Align*, presented at the Ukrainian Museum. "Zorya means star in Ukrainian," says Altomaro. "It's an incredible privilege to forge links between such passionate, creative stars in their respective fields." The gallerist sees the new Zorya print collection as a brilliant realization of Zorya Fine Art's mission: to introduce new audiences to the richness of Ukrainian art. That distinctly Ukrainian perspective has attracted surging interest from critics and buyers alike. At Sotheby's London last June, works by Ukrainian artists including Oksana Mas far outperformed estimates as recession-worn collectors grappled for a piece of the intellectually savvy, irrepressibly spirited art. Mas says she hopes the Zorya print collaboration will encourage New York fashion lovers to take a closer look at Ukrainian history and customs. "Zorianna and I like to bring Ukrainian traditions into contemporary contexts so that we can share our cultural puzzles with the global community."