

TV Review: NBC's 'Fashion Star' Comes Apart at the Seams

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 13, 2012 - 8:51am

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CHICAGO – NBC's "Fashion Star" could technically be considered the first highly-promoted infomercial on primetime TV. It didn't even dawn on me until halfway through this annoyingly produced reality disaster that the show probably came into existence as the answer to how to advertise clothes to people who fast-forward through commercials. With cheap production values and lackluster judges, "Fashion Star" would be the first one "out" on "Project Runway."



TV Rating: **1.5/5.0**

"Fashion Star" is weighed down with recognizable faces in an attempt to disguise its incredibly thin and generic nature or just the fact that it really doesn't provide much justification for its existence outside of commerce. And so, we get a hostess in the still-beautiful Elle Macpherson and three celebrity judges who don't do much actual judging in that the actual winners move on to their potentially notable careers. One of the "losers" is saved by the trio of judges but it feels like a meager reward. We want judges who can help guide us or some other voting body to a winner, not merely ones who can save a loser. And so Nicole Richie, John Varvatos, and Jessica Simpson hope to fill the pop cultural roles of so many trios of reality show judges but come off like just more unnecessary ingredients in this overcooked stew.



Fashion Star
Photo credit: NBC

The reason that Richie, Varvatos, and Simpson feel like nothing more than window dressing is because they don't make the actual decisions in this odd hybrid of "Project Runway" and "Shark Tank." All that really matters to the designers who participate in "Fashion Star" is the judgment of three buyers — Caprice Willard of Macy's, Terron E. Schaefer of Saks Fifth Avenue, and Nicole Christie of H&M. After the runway show and the aforementioned judge's comments, these three reveal whether or not they're willing to stock the clothes they just saw at their stores and how much they're willing to pay. If there are two offers, the losing bid is allowed to adjust to out-bid the winner. And then you can buy the clothes the next day. Designers who get no bids will be sent home unless the judges save them and give them another chance for

next week.

It's not a bad idea at all to make a fashion reality show built around more accessible fashion than what is seen on programs like "Project Runway" and "America's Next Top Model." But everything about the production of "Fashion Star" feels mediocre and cheap. The human interest stories that offer brief glimpses into the lives and workrooms of the designers are rushed and usually thin. We don't get to know these people at all. You know "Runway" contestants more completely before Tim Gunn even welcomes them to the show. "Fashion Star" is just poorly produced, edited, and put together.

And then there's the runway show, which looks like a nightmare exhibition in the middle of the Mall of America. Dry ice, strobe lights, bad music choices, awkward models — none of it looks professional. There's potential in the concept of "Fashion Star" but it comes off like a design that worked on paper but was poorly constructed in the manufacturing machine of bad television.

"Fashion Star" stars Nicole Richie, Jessica Simpson, John Varvatos, and Elle Macpherson. It premieres on NBC on March 13th, 2012 at 8pm CST.



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