L’Wren Scott: Leaving an Impression
By CATHY HORYN

In one way or another, clothes designed by women reflect their personalities and body types, but this seems especially true of L’Wren Scott, a former model and stylist. Season in, season out, she designs a long-legged pantsuit, a pencil skirt for a frilled blouse or one of her (widely copied) cardigans, a gown primed for snaking down red carpets. And prints have become a specialty, too. Her sense of femininity feels very self-contained, and so can be rattling to others. But it has become her signature look.

On Sunday, as the London shows continued, she found a natural context for her fashion in Japanese folding screens from the late 16th century known as Tagasode (“Whose sleeves?”), which show elaborate garments draped on stands. According to various sources, one idea is that these garments become all the more suggestive and powerful because the wearer is absent—hence the expression “whose sleeves?” Ms. Scott’s clothes also involve an appreciation of feminine beauty, but one never thought of a Japanese parallel. Well, it makes sense.

She’s always done fluted sleeves. There’s a sorcery quality to her evening dramas. And her embroideries and colors can lushly evoke a kimono.

She has those elements in her collection, along with ankle-strap platform sandals. In the past, her models have tended to be somewhat curvy; this time, they were tall spikes finished off with parasol hats. It was all extremely well done, with allusions in lace to fans, belted waists and a crisp silhouette. Although it was a ready-to-wear collection, Ms. Scott approached couture with the quality of her embroidery. Yet, in some ways, the eye kept returning to those crisp day looks in summer tweed or cotton, the mostly V-neck dress designs with a contrasting jolt of red or the lacy detail of black beads tracing a collar and belt on a white dress.