



California alternatives

LOS ANGELES — The best of California's contemporary designers kicked off the spring season with a week of showings here before heading to New York, where they will be through Nov. 18.

Masako Takahashi showed a capsule group for spring and summer from her versatile Origami collection. Once again, the theme is based on the Japanese art of Origami paper folding, but this time out her pieces have more control and less extravagant imaginings.

Once known almost exclusively for silk habutai and brightly colored silk crepe de chine, Masako heads in a more earthy direction with yards of what she calls Trinidad cloth — a cotton gauze-like fabric heavier than sheer gauze and patterned so that it is lightweight with body and texture. Her Trinidad colors of seafoam green, dusty grape, white and natural all work well together and look especially nice when teamed with her silk jacquard separates and dresses.

Masako also uses a sheer raw-silk knit lace (Held) in natural and camel, which she teams with pongee separates and bulky raw silk reversible knit tops and jackets.

The only weakness of the current collection is that it lacks the pizzazz of previous collections partly because of the darker colors and the monochromatic naturals.