

# Interview

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## BLAME IT ON THE RAIN AT COSTELLO TAGLIAPIETRA



While those in attendance for the Costello Tagliapietra show Friday night at Milk Studios decried the downpour that had put a damper on Fashion Week Day 2, the designer duo took a contrarian stance they presented a Spring 2010 collection designed around the concept of "making beautiful things" from raw, natural elements. Of the 21 floriform dresses shown, the duo say that they sewed and "abstracted" the origami-like folds and pleats so that the pieces could be read as "walking flowers." Muted tones—mossy greens, dusky roses, ash, and "doe"—comprised the palette, which was created using an AirDye technology, an innovative, eco-friendly fabric dyeing process that reduces unnecessary water waste. "When you realize how much energy and water is saved just making one garment, it is mind-blowing," Jeffrey Costello and Robert Tagliapietra told me after the show.

The inspiration behind many of the collection's organic elements comes from a watery origin—and not an entirely pleasant one at that. The dewy prints seen on many of the collection's softly sculptural dresses were conceived during the "the extremely wet spring that we had in New York," they said, adding that one particular experience during that notoriously rainy season proved to be a creative boon. "At the end of the day there was a strange light that came down over our neighborhood. We snapped some digital photos of the sky and of it shining on the water in Brooklyn."

Those shimmering textures translated loosely into the twinkly crystalline patterns seen on some of the collection's standout numbers, including a taffeta dress in a "lake print" and a low-cut, tie-waisted jersey dress the color of smoky water. Swarovski Crystal details on the dresses added to the coruscating effect, as did the new necklaces Costello and Tagliapietra introduced this season. "We liked that the Swarovski crystals felt like they were growing off the necklace through layer upon layer of crystal much like something you might find on a nature walk," the designers noted. It turns out you can add gemology to the list of Costello and Tagliapietra's earthbound interests: they are now designing jewelery on a made-to-order basis. "There has been a nice response," they confirmed.

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