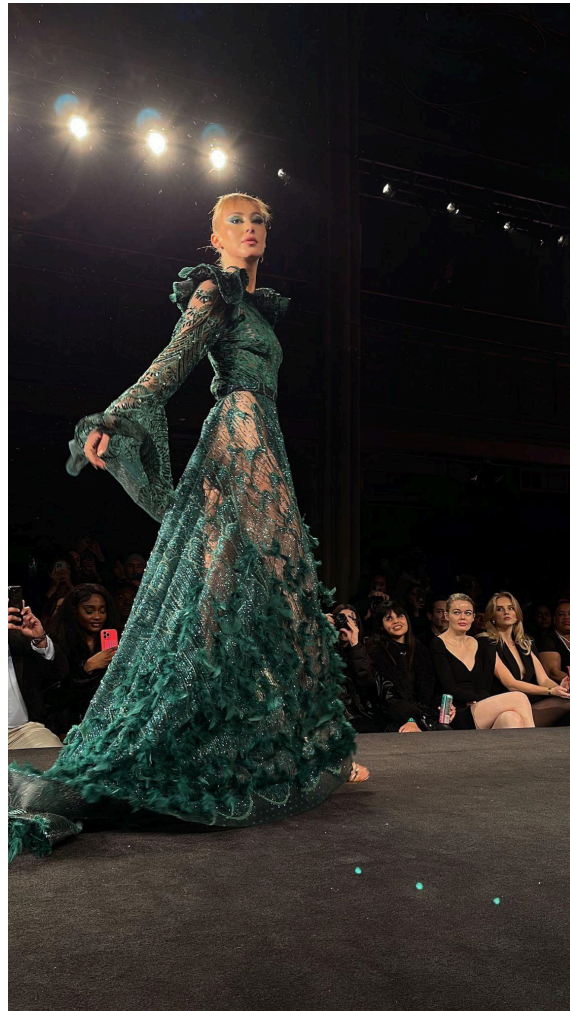


ART HEARTS FASHION 'GRAND FINALE' NYFW SHOW
By Tiffany Del Valle

The Angel Orensanz Foundation in Lower Manhattan was packed and the music vibrated the floors of the old synagogue– the 'Grand Finale' Art Hearts Fashion show was about to begin.

Socialites, influencers, and models gathered alike with cocktails in hand until the lights dimmed signaling to get seated. The DJ did not announce the first designer as usual. Instead, the screens alongside the runway projected Usher's awaited Super Bowl LVIII halftime show.



Dress by Danny Nguyen - Photo by Tiffany Del Valle

The audience mouthed (and some shouted) Usher lyrics and squealed at Usher's steamy performance of "My Boo" featuring Alicia Keys– and the volume of squealing intensified at his shirtless performance of "U Got It Bad." As Apple Music concluded Usher's halftime show, the DJ assured that the show would be starting in five minutes.

Keeping up with the music-performance high, came the first show: Mexican Designer Ricardo Seco made his mark on the runway with his studded, leather, snakeskin designs. The style seemingly draws from industrial, gothic, and greaser influences. The final walk was kicked off with a rap performance by Alemán who was also sporting Seco's studded designs.

The models went backstage and the screen went black. The sounds of a Chinese two-stringed fiddle blazed through the speakers and the screens flashed beautiful red dragons. Danny Nguyen Couture presented his new Spring/Summer 2024 collection, *In Full Bloom*, inspired by his mother's beauty. The designs were vibrant and elegant and incorporated beautiful sheer and lightweight fabrics. The runway shimmered of gold detailing on the gowns.

House of Byfield found its place on the runway with several floral suits and black and white garments. The collection consisted of waist-cinching silhouettes such as jumpsuits and the addition of harnesses and belts. The models were striking and the crux of the show was the sporty, yet carefully detailed men's blazers and other apparel.

The next show was previewed on the screen with flashing black, white, and red lights paired with hypnotic imagery. The visuals continued to speed up in pace and so did the chanting of the words: "Tell The Truth". When the sound cut out, the first model with his caveman-like walk clothed in earth tones, crocodile print, and a belt around his neck. The models were wearing oversized sleeves, boxy silhouettes, and satin textures.



For the finale of this show, we are introduced to a man dressed in black, a cameraman, and a woman in a robe. The dramatic unveiling of the woman who is nude with exception of black tape censoring her bikini area and nipples. The Black Tape Project got a standing ovation for Drakhan Blackhart (formerly Joel Alvarez) and his countless models taped and jeweled in body art. Blackhart puts on a show with putting tape in different intricate designs on bodies– and even does so blindfolded for the audience.