



THE DESIGNER VIVIANO SUE. PHOTO BY GAKU KATO

FUTURAMA

Mission speaks to three of today's formidable young fashion forces, whose views reflect the relentlessly changing landscape of the fashion industry.

By ELLA O'GORMAN

VIVIANO SUE
“I’ve realized that growing plants and making clothes are very similar.”

After graduating from Tokyo’s renowned Bunka Fashion College, Viviano Sue established his eponymous label, Viviano, in 2016. Now a fixture on the Japanese capital’s Rakuten Fashion Week calendar, the Chinese American designer’s collections modulate between couture and ready-to-wear, or are sometimes a seamless incorporation of the two principles. Each season, his creations are enriched by some of the striking multicultural motifs that resonated with him during his formative years spent living in Shanghai, Tokyo, and L.A. “The things I encountered as a young person in these different places have had a really important impact on my designs,” he shares. “These influences can seem invisible, but if you peer closely at the clothing, you can see the collision of all of these cultures at play.” Take, for example, his subversion of traditional garments, such as the kimono, offering a flamboyant, contemporary alternative to his clientele instead.

Among the myriad visually arresting reference points Sue distills into his seasonal pieces, the natural world is the most pronounced. The designer is infatuated with ecosystems, the peaceful coexistence of flora and fauna and the broad spectrum of colors found in nature, amalgamating aspects from each into his abstract drawings and design patterns.

Specifically, his garments often follow a decidedly floral theme. Each collection from the past five years has been punctuated by allusions to flowers of innumerable varieties, taking shape through sculptural silhouettes adorned with three-dimensional blooms, or via vibrant floral prints emblazoned across floor-skimming gowns. “Approaching the release of my Spring/Summer 2025 collection this past September,” he says, “I came to the realization that growing plants and making clothes are very similar. All things come from life, and everything I see in the outside world can be a source of inspiration, so bearing this sentiment in mind, I designed a collection called My Garden.” Unveiled in Tokyo at Ogasawara-Hakushaku-Tei, the former residence of the head of a samurai clan, the ensembles displayed rose-themed ornamentation rendered through tufts of tulle and thick jacquard, with the garments adhering to an earthy color palette that included mossy greens and petal-toned pinks. The collection also included Viviano’s first foray into menswear, affording us a glimpse into the sharp tailoring and monochromatic suiting that we can expect to see much more of in the future.

According to Sue, the ongoing “conversation between nature and life” within his work allows him to indulge in the cultivation of fabricated flower embellishments and prints alongside real-life examples to use as inspiration. “I genuinely love all kinds of plants and I grow many varieties of roses myself!” he exclaims.

As an artistic and imaginative child growing up in Shanghai, Sue “started drawing at a young age” and always expressed a desire to

work within a creative sphere. He just wasn’t sure what that path looked like yet. However, after studying the work of illustrious fashion designers in his spare time, he was galvanized into pursuing a similar direction. “Everything changed after I learned about the work of legendary creatives such as Alexander McQueen, John Galliano, Issey Miyake, and Rei Kawakubo,” he declares. “So after graduating from art school with a degree in graphic design, I came to Japan and trained to become a fashion designer at Bunka Fashion College.” Which is ultimately what led him to where he is today, with a brand that is showcased biannually at Tokyo Fashion Week and his designs worn by Chinese celebrities such as Angelababy and Sui He.

“Each season presents new challenges,” Sue admits, but some aspects of his creative process endure, such as his love of tactility and his penchant for pairing sweeping, romantic silhouettes with gauzy, diaphanous textiles. “I enjoy mixing different fabrics and I use tulle a lot,” he says. “I love ruffles, and tulle works beautifully for them.” Sue is also intrigued by haute couture techniques and is eager to incorporate them into his collections and “adapt them for everyday wear.” This concept of “wearable haute couture” is a recurrent theme in his work and manifested through meticulous draping, hemming, and hand-stitching—techniques best appreciated in person while gazing at the models as they sway down the runway ensconced in Viviano’s delicate fabrics, dainty floral prints, and layer upon layer of ruffles rendered in exaggerated proportions.

According to Sue, what truly distinguishes his label from its counterparts is his brand concept: “Chaos in shimmer through the veil of order,” a phrase that encapsulates the sense of whimsicality and ambiguity that pervade each of his collections. The designer’s daring implementation of a bold color palette, sculptural dress shapes, and a sumptuous textile selection only add to this. “What sets us apart is how we consider ‘chaotic’ elements and transform this sense of fantasy and theatricality into wearable, quotidian attire,” the designer says.

Sue’s vision for his label is clear. He hopes that when people think about the brand, they can personally identify with his designs, not just perceive them from a superficial standpoint. “I want people to remember that Viviano is not just about the gorgeous clothing you see on the runway, in magazines, or on the red carpet,” he says. “It can just be the clothing that elevates your everyday experiences—meaningful items that are significant to you as a person and not just as a consumer.”

And Sue’s plans for Viviano, moving forward? The aspirations yet to be achieved? “We have performed very well in Asia right now and we hope to go international next,” he reveals. “Our goal is to present at Paris Fashion Week and then sell Viviano products around the world.” Only time will tell what the global market has in store for this ambitious designer.

@vivianosue on Instagram



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIVIANO STUDIO

EVREN ALEXANDER NELSON
“I don’t think fashion always needs
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Following his mentorship with the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) and the Swarovski Foundation, Evren Alexander Nelson produced an impeccable graduate collection at Parsons School of Design in New York this year. Entitled Die Neue (The New), it heralds the beginning of the young German creative’s burgeoning career and firmly cements his status as one to watch.

The menswear designer from Wiesbaden began his studies at Parsons Paris during the pandemic before transferring to the school’s prestigious New York campus. It was there that he was encouraged to reflect on his German heritage, and so he started studying his country’s art movements to discern the features he could use to imbue his own minimalist designs with a powerful sense of identity. Delving into German Modernism and the work of pioneering architects such as Marcel Breuer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, he extracts ideas from each and embeds them into the creation of his polished and pragmatic collections.

“My design process begins with practical thinking, where I assess how I can execute designs that are both purposeful and aesthetically appealing. I view garments as functional objects that play a vital role in everyday life, so when designing I often have to ask myself, how do I want the wearer to feel?” Nelson says of his creative approach. “I strive to balance emotional depth with function in my collections. I don’t think fashion always needs to be so theatrical or trendy—I just want to create collections that rise above the fast-paced fashion system and encourage mindful consumption. Just as one cherishes a well-made decorative object, I think people ought to see that clothing too should be treasured and not just seasonal.”

This ethos is echoed in Nelson’s curation of textiles, with the designer opting for “deadstock natural fabrics like wool, twill, canvas, cotton shirting, and denim, all sourced locally in New York City or Germany.” His commitment to sustainability is also evident in his collaborations with eco-conscious fabric manufacturers such as Knitup and Thindown. “Moving forward, I’m also eager to increase my use of knitwear and print so that I can create a more multifaceted body of work,” Nelson shares.

Inspiration comes in waves for the designer, from introspective reflections of the present to fully realized storied concepts. “Studying the past and imagining the future lets me reinterpret what we know,” he says of this dichotomy, “and this combination is crucial to me in the creation of garments that strike a balance between the familiar and the unfamiliar.” Nelson’s cultural background also provides him with a strong foundation for his design narrative. “Growing up in Germany with an American

German father and a Turkish mother exposed me to diverse influences,” he recalls “There’s a common belief that German design is cold and mechanical, but I like to romanticize its balance of straightforwardness and elegance. The ‘less is more’ philosophy—where simplicity and intention speak volumes—resonates deeply with me and I aim to embody these values in my designs, translating them into the collections and garments I create.”

The diligent designer is eager for his collections to stoke serious conversations, prompting people to connect over his clothing. For Die Neue, he focused on “reducing traditional menswear to its most basic elements” through the contextual lens of Wim Wenders’s 1987 romantic fantasy film, *Wings of Desire*. Using a visual reference board to conceptualize his ideas and examine classic patterns, he took inspiration from prominent characters in the movie to create his collection’s initial silhouettes. A trench coat, for example, has a “pleated, wing-like lining,” a direct nod to the film’s angelic protagonist.

As someone who finds guidance and comfort in “the concepts of past German architects and designers,” he created pieces that also reflect his admiration of these ground-breaking figures. “In this particular collection, I was greatly inspired by Marcel Breuer’s use of steel piping in his furniture designs and I developed prints influenced by the studies of Josef Albers.” And Nelson’s addition of rich contextual layers to his designs have not gone unnoticed: last year he was honored with the CFDA + Swarovski Foundation Re: Generation Innovation Scholar Award for his Modul project, which incorporated insights from the German industrial designer Dieter Rams’s famous design philosophy.

“As a recent graduate stepping into a fast-paced, trend-driven industry, finding a unique voice can be challenging,” Nelson confesses, but through his technical prowess and thorough implementation of avant-garde design principles, he has already started to build a brand that feels intrinsically individual. Nelson is currently interning at a luxury label in Antwerp, Belgium, where he is “gaining hands-on experience across all aspects of design—from conceptualizing a collection to overseeing production and presentation.” He views this as a crucial stage in his transition from higher education to the fashion industry, believing that the opportunity will endow him with logistical insights and develop his business acumen, both of which are imperative for those planning to launch their own brand. Naturally, his greatest aspiration is to “take the leap and launch a namesake label,” and although many fashion graduates share an identical dream, Nelson’s refined design philosophy, strength of vision, and intricate understanding of how culture can inform craftsmanship set him apart. With these tools at his disposal, Evren Alexander Nelson is poised for enduring success.

@evrenalexander on Instagram



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVREN ALEXANDER NELSON

JOSHUA EWUSIE
“I want people to remember the message beyond the work.”

Few designers have the capacity to juxtapose past and present as tactfully as Joshua Ewusie. Bridging his Ghanaian heritage with contemporary references informed by growing up in London, the BFC (British Fashion Council) Scholar and recent MA graduate from the U.K. capital’s Central Saint Martins is an up-and-comer we strongly suggest you keep on your radar.

Describing his design philosophy as one that draws from different “life experiences and research that come together to support a narrative,” he creates collections that strike a satisfactory balance between commerciality and creativity. The innovative designer’s imagination is ignited by his ceaseless curiosity and willingness to experiment, or in his own words, when he “begins to question something.” Detailing his process and what it entails exactly, Ewusie tells *Mission*, “When I have gathered enough research, I go into a process of generating ideas, draping, textile sampling, styling, reacting to said research. The final outcome is an edit of these explored ideas.”

A hallmark of Ewusie’s work is the considered integration of his Ghanaian British background into his designs. It is the fusion of ethnic motifs and subtle allusions to his culture, combined with his forward-facing approach that makes his craftsmanship so compelling. This celebration of his individualistic heritage stems from the influence of his grandmother, who emigrated from Ghana to London in the 1960s, and while speaking to Ewusie, it quickly becomes evident that family and culture are of paramount importance to him. “Having grown up in quite a traditional Ghanaian household it’s natural for my culture to influence my work,” he shares. “However, being raised outside Ghana, in a multicultural environment such as London, I’ve had to develop my own relationship with my culture, and my work explores that.”

Gazing at his impressive array of designs, it’s difficult to imagine him in any other vocation, but what exactly led him to fashion? “I’ve always been interested in the arts,” Ewusie says. “Growing up I’ve always had a craft project I was working on. It was in my late teens that becoming a fashion designer became a serious career path for me, after learning about legendary creatives whose work inspired me, realizing how narrative-focused fashion can be, and drawing inspiration from how storytelling can be a major influence in the design development of a collection.”

Portraying a narrative through clothing is a technique that Ewusie employed to a great extent in his BA and MA graduate collections, one enhanced through his past placements assisting the designers Maximilian Davis and Jonathan Anderson. His BA collection, entitled Pressure, took notes from British tailoring and displayed his technical prowess, as well as his ability to splice together unexpected textile and color combinations. The

traditional Ghanaian prints he used acted as an ode to his West African roots, while a leather minidress was a precursor for a lot of his work that followed.

“My recent MA graduate collection, You Don’t Fear the Cold, is a conversation between generations,” Ewusie says. “The phrase is something my grandmother would say to my sister when she would go out clubbing in London in skin-revealing outfits.” It is also representative of a metaphorical type of cold, one that underscores the hostility and discrimination immigrants face—and a harsh reality that Ewusie recognizes his grandmother would have been confronted with when she moved to London, as opposed to his sister, who was born and raised in the city.

Simultaneously polished and experimental, the young designer’s latter collection homed in on this multicultural sensibility and combined it with references to the U.K. garage music scene in the Nineties, photographic research, and an elevation of his already impressive technical rigor. “With my master’s collection, I really took what I had learned into practice,” Ewusie reflects, “using laser cutting and etching techniques and referencing West African leather crafts to create innovative textiles.” The supple black leather in question, provided by Chanel, has become synonymous with Ewusie’s designs. In this instance, it was masterfully manipulated into oversized outerwear. “I’m known for my leatherwork,” he says. “There is so much you can do with it.”

In addition to that fabric, his final collection also had heavy draped coats, “referencing traditional Ghanaian wraparound dressing,” a gleaming burnt-orange co-ord, and a reworked “vintage silver glass-bugle-beaded minidress,” which concluded the presentation. Complemented by intricate red and black beading across its bodice, it also captured the attention of the stylist Harry Lambert, who dressed Emma Corrin in the glitzy piece this past summer.

Ewusie’s success is a testament to what can happen when you offer talented, dedicated individuals the support their work merits. Bolstered by the backing of Chanel, through the house’s offer of a studio space and its donations of high-quality textiles, the designer is fortunate in the sense that he can bring his ideas to fruition without encountering financial adversity.

After expanding his sartorial horizons in two consecutive design degrees, what’s the next big step for Ewusie? “I’m focused at the moment on defining the woman,” he says. “My ultimate goal is to create something more than a fashion brand and I’m collaborating with amazing creatives who can help me make this happen.”

And for those who simply can’t get enough of Ewusie’s designs, he bears good news: “I’m also working on my next collection, which will be released in 2025.” We’re waiting with bated breath.

@e.w.usie on Instagram



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOSHUA EWUSIE