



Gen Art: Savvy, Chic and Salable

Eschewing the runway for an installation-like presentation made for a welcome change to this year's Gen Art show, now called The New Garde. How delightful, for example, was Geren Lockhart's charming vignette of la vie Parisienne? For her Geren Ford collection, each model held court in a series of open, French-inspired apartments, where the clothes oozed the same city-chic nonchalance: blousy dresses, belted knits and terrific leather outerwear. Chishabana's Chris Habana, meanwhile, offered up a decidedly darker tale — one that channeled the sci-fi and horror genres.

Abstract blood drops covered one hooded dress, while a seemingly sweet Empire frock was trimmed with, yes, real human hair. The strongest showing came from Jerry Tam and his Form collection, executed this time with the same design savvy with which it was launched two years ago. After a few underwhelming seasons marred by the designer's penchant for the overly conceptual, he toned down the avant-garde factor in favor of real, salable clothes: fur-trimmed jackets, beautifully fluid tops and dresses, plus a few sculptural numbers evocative of protective armor, all in a palette of blacks and purples. "It's the idea of protection," Tam explained. "We've been beaten and bruised by the industry; we're recovering and coming back."

