

Get to Know Phoenix Fashion Brand, Hues of Ego

Written by Alyssa Tufts

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Phoenix-based fashion designer whose collection was shown at Phoenix Fashion Week in October explores the changing roles and expectations women have set and the ones they set for themselves.

One-woman show Natasha Duran, designer of Phoenix-based brand Hues of Ego, used art and her roles as a wife, mother and designer to create the brand name, Hues of Ego. Duran says there are many expectations of her within each of her titles in different settings. Duran says she designs for the multi-faceted woman. "There are many different hats you wear," Duran says. "You kind of have multiple personalities, like an alter ego."

The collection Duran showed at Phoenix Fashion Week was inspired by that concept of an alter ego and married three ideas, Duran said, Avery Anne, who is the people portion of the collection, Duran says, "She's an everyday woman trying to always be who she thinks she should be. She loses herself and she starts becoming her alter ego," the second idea, which is demonstrated in black clothing, and incorporating leather and lace into the collection for more of an edgy feel.

The last part is 'Zoey' and she loses herself between the two personalities and ends up in the asylum, Duran says, which represents the third idea, constriction in white clothing with belts and straight jackets. Duran says she plans to update the collection she showed at Fashion Week for her Spring/Fall 2015 collections.

Phoenix Fashion Week is a way for emerging designers to get exposure in Arizona and be able to learn about resources to help them transform their ideas into a comprehensive collection and build their businesses.

The Hues of Ego designer won the T-shirt design contest in 2011 for Phoenix Fashion Week, was a top four finalist for the Little Black Dress Challenge for Phoenix Fashion Week as well in 2013 and was one of the fourteen emerging designers competing for designer of the year for the seventh annual Phoenix Fashion Week in October 2014.

Before becoming a fashion designer, Duran was architecture major at ASU for three years but quit school before she got her degree. The designer began fashion school in 2009 at Collins College. Duran went to Scottsdale Fashion Week and was intrigued with the shows, the chair director for Collins college had a booth there and Duran started fashion school a month afterward. "I felt like I had my calling; it was easier than architecture for me."

Her first big break was when one of three students selected to show her wearable pieces she designed for a school project at Scottsdale Fashion Week just three months after she started school. Duran currently is still pursuing her degree in fashion design at Collins College, her inspirations include Chanel, Elie Saab, Balenciaga and Frank Lloyd Wright to name a few. Her skills led her to Phoenix Fashion Week where she participated in the emerging designer of the year program.



The Phoenix Fashion Week team which includes six directors for operations, hair and makeup, social media and designers and buyers facilitate bi-weekly meetings with the designers to discuss their homework from the previous weeks. "It pushes you to think about the business portion because it's going to make you a better designer," Duran said, "You can't just be the creative person you are in the fashion world anymore, it

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isn't going to be enough, you have to know how to run a business."

Delora Fuglem, fellow Phoenix Fashion Week designer of the Phoenix-based brand Kismet, said she and Duran are good friends, "I have always had a great relationship with Natasha. From the beginning of PHXFW we connected, and we were there for one another throughout the four months," Fuglem says.

The designer said she also admires Duran's organization and business skills, "[For each meeting] Natasha always came in with her neatly put-together notes and binder. Because of this she was always on top of the homework, and had a very strong idea and understanding of how to move into manufacturing."

Maya Johnson-Brown, who has been a close friend of Duran's since 2001, said Duran is more of an introverted person, but when fashion is concerned, she comes alive.

"When she believes in something, she knows how to speak up for it and make her case known and get stuff done," Johnson-Brown says.

Johnson-Brown has supported Duran by attending the all the events leading up to and including when Duran's collection was shown at fashion week, including the model announcement and shop garment district-where a few pieces of the designer's collection were shown.

"I can't even sew a button a shirt," Johnson-Brown said, "That someone can take yards of fabric and make something out of it amazes me. It's definitely an art and it's something that not anybody can do."

Duran said her ultimate goal is to inspire people. "I never got into the fashion industry to have a well-known brand," Duran says. "I want people to appreciate my stuff, understand me and the artistic part and love the brand for that."