

BY DAVID YI

FASHION WEEK — NO ROOM FOR THE FASHION WEAK.

Just ask any of the designers behind these four promising young houses. As one of the most important weeks of fashion kicks off Thursday, these up-and-comers — among the hundreds of established brands in New York — have to deal with the mounting pressure to show a successful collection. But with one-of-a-kind esthetics and vision, and absolute passion, each is bound to graduate to the big leagues with collections that everyone will soon be talking about, if not wearing.

the new class

Ann Yee

annyeecollection.com

Ann Yee says she was itching to start her own clothing brand since she was young.

"I really just want to express my creative voice, and doing it through clothing was natural for me," she says.

Such passion for design led her to work for Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, where she helped to launch Elizabeth and James. After also working at knitwear brand Duffy, Yee decided she'd branch out on her own and launched her eponymous line in 2009.

"To me it's about being effortless, easy to wear, versatile. The woman who wears my brand has a sense of humor, doesn't take fashion too seriously, and is definitely willing to invest in core pieces in her wardrobe."

Playing with architectural lines juxtaposed with fluidity, each of her pieces in her next season are romantic, slouchy and comfortable — all with a slightly dark edge.

Now sold in boutique stores like End of Century and Eva New York, Yee has found a solid fashion following. She was even chosen to show her line with Gen Art Fresh Faces of Fashion, which discovered Phillip Lim and Rodarte, among others.

Gen Art Fresh Faces of Fashion will be held at the Grand Ballroom of the Manhattan Center at 7 p.m. on Friday. To purchase tickets visit genart.org.

ON ANN: Navy dress, Ann Yee; shoes, Marc Jacobs at Bloomingdale's; necklace and ring, Christine J. Brandt at ChristineJBrandt.com/sterling. **ON WIDIKA:** Gathered top and maxi skirt, Ann Yee; shoes, Marc Jacobs at Bloomingdale's; bracelet and cuff, Pamela Love at PamelaLoveNYC.com

Creative directors: David Yi and Dot Szemiot; photographer: Rick Kim, rickkimphotography.com; stylist: David Yi; assistant: Alexandra Finkel; hair: Andre Rodman and Eddie Ngai, Rita Hazan Salon; makeup: Jenny Smith and Magda Ogbe, NARS Cosmetics using NARS; models: Sofia and Widika, Ford Models

