Wang, Burch and Rodarte headline NY fashion

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Designer to the stars Vera Wang perfected the latest trend for structured fashion Tuesday by sending down the runway wool peplums, evening wear decorated with glass pearls and airy ruched skirts.

Most famous for her wedding and red carpet gowns favored by the likes of Chelsea Clinton and Hollywood royalty, the New York designer rarely deviates from black and white on the catwalk and this was no exception.

Spring/summer 2017 was all about power, craft and mystery she told AFP after the show, which was watched by Tony-winnino actress Cynthia Erivo and suspended Russian tennis ace Maria Sharapova.
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The effect was a blend of French romanticism, Chanel and classic American sports slouch that only someone of Wang's pedigree could pull off after nearly 30 years as a designer.

"I wanted a very powerful woman," she explained.

"The second thing was the craft," she said. "I want to feel as though they were very, very beautifully executed."

"The third thing was a sense of mystery -- it is dark, no question, dark and light, but mostly dark."

Structured gowns have been seen on the catwalk this season at Zac Posen, Jenny Packham and Vicky Zhang. Wang told AFP that she used all kinds of tailoring tricks to hold the clothes up.

Paired with strict blazers and the distinctive peplums that looked like belts or micro skirts, were long, airy skirts of ruched georgette, plus spookily long sleeves and vertiginous stilettos.

She described the sleeve as "almost like a new kind of glove."

"It fell down and it just trailed so it's part of the romance I think of the collection and its darkness and the movement but mostly powerful," she said.

For evening, there were black and white dresses covered in hand-made glass pearls that rustled beautifully when the model walked the runway.

"Maybe I was thinking of Chanel and I didn't realize! I was looking at the clothes, and I said 'black, white, noir, blanc and des perles' -- that's Chanel," she said slipping into French.

Other highlights on day six of New York Fashion Week were:

Spain, bees and Janis Joplin

Rodarte, the California-based label run by the Mulleavy sisters found inspiration from 1973 Spanish movie "The Spirit of the Beehive" about fantasy childhood in the time of Franco, and Janis Joplin.

The Spanish influence was clear in ruffled shoulders and skirts, and a flash of stomach conjuring up the flamenco spirit.

It was a more wearable and focused collection than last season, and included a masterful black dress in gold sequins with sails for sleeves crafted to look like a bee.

The sisters also branched out into leather, showcasing biker jackets in white and in black with pants, both tasseled and metallic inlay.

Coast to Coast

Tory Burch presented a colorful, wearable collection for her global affordable luxury brand -- a witty interpretation of East Coast hostess chic and the free-spirit beach towns of the West.

She summed it up as "quintessential American style."

Burch, who created a fitness tracker with Fitbit, said she was excited about further developments between fashion and technology having just appointed a chief technology officer.

She also signalled that the brand was likely to shift more towards see-now, buy-now in the wake of others such as Tommy Hilfiger and Tom Ford.
"It's a pretty herculean shift so I want to take it slowly," she told AFP. "Our collections are pretty seasonless anyway... eventually I think it makes a lot of sense to go there."

Burch was one of a select group of designers who attended a Fashion Week fundraiser on behalf of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

"I just admire her and the work she's done," Burch told AFP. "I think her support of women and her just general understanding of foreign affairs is something our country could be proud of."

**Mystical Rome**

Alice and Olivia designer Stacey Bendet transported her fans into a mystical world inspired by the Bomarzo gardens in Rome, 18th century tarot cards and the sun.

Models stood, sat or reclined on a lavish park set complete with fake moss, statues and bird cages dressed in striking reds, retro white jumpsuits and oversized sunglasses.