

RUNWAY

LATEST SHOWS >

SEASON >

DESIGNER >

FALL 2019 READY-TO-WEAR
Barbara Tfank



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COLLECTION

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by JANELLE OKWODU

Barbara Tfank's journey into the world of Elizabeth Taylor feels like destiny. Though she already created a tribute collection back in 2011, after the Hollywood legend's passing, and subsequently collaborated with Taylor's trust to preserve her fabled wardrobe, Tfank found herself back in the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* star's orbit this fall. After sending out fashion week invites with her usual location listed, she was approached by Maison Gerard owner Benoist Drut with a unique venue: The Elizabeth Collective, Taylor's six-story townhouse on West 56th Street. The tony address proved too good to resist, and it gave the former costume designer an opportunity to match the mise-en-scène with the mood of her collection.

As soprano Sydney Anderson belted out an aria on the spiral staircase, models walked through the space in Stephen Russell's estate jewelry and opera coats covered in celestial swirls. The Paris-salon vibe was a throwback to the days when fashion shows were a refined experience, but Tfank did more than trade on nostalgia: Her juxtapositions of texture and technique were distinctly modern, with clashing patterns and bold metallics replacing spring's hothouse flowers. Don't expect a foray into casualwear anytime soon, but Tfank's puff-sleeve bronze dress for day provided a sultry new verve, as did an olive number with a portrait collar and hourglass proportions.

Fall also saw the introduction of a new category. After years of having clients request her wares for their nuptials, Tfank decided the time was right for a bridal capsule. For inspiration, she looked to Taylor and the ever-evolving style of gowns she chose for her eight ceremonies. Delivered in shades of cream and gold with long trains, Monvieve veils, and Watteau backs, Tfank's take was decidedly dramatic. The best of the bunch veered far from tradition. Who wants the standard when you can have gold tulle and a bordeaux sash? Of course, the irony of debuting in the home of a much-married superstar wasn't lost on Tfank. "I like that we didn't just do white," she shared post-show. "You can almost think of these as dresses for the second wedding."

