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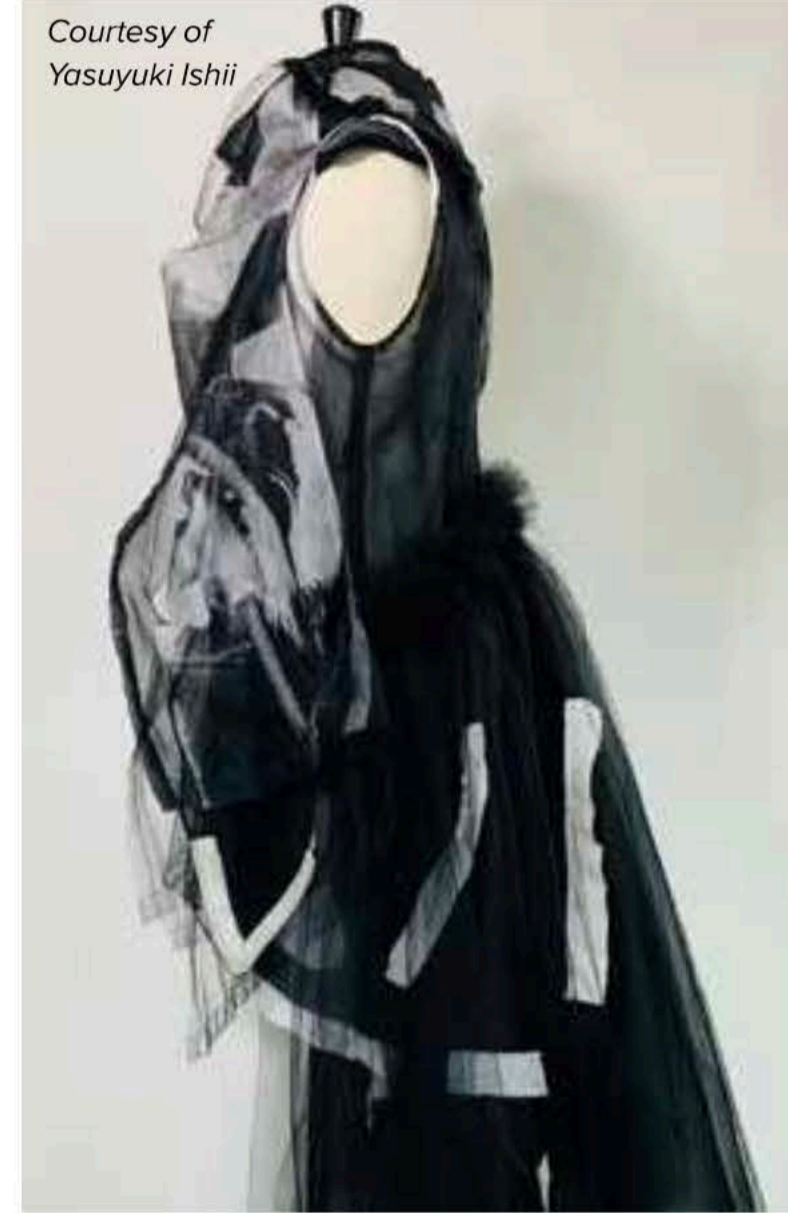
The Eastside's vanguard of global fashion sits down with Bellevue Lifestyle

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Yasuyuki Ishii



Michelle Tsau
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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MICHELLE TSAU & THE DESIGNERS

Michelle Tsau, Eastside resident and Founder of Avant Gardist, is an intrepid leisure traveler. Born and raised in Hong Kong until the age of 14, when she moved to the US, her forays into Japan, Romania, Taiwan, and more have led her to encounter many unique independent designers across the globe. Her "curious quest to discover undiscovered treasure," motivated her to start the company in 2019 as a fashion e-commerce platform - a hub for sourcing distinctive, unconventional fashions not found at the usual shopping meccas.

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When abroad, Tsau scours fashion districts for independent designers, and engages when she finds them to determine if they're on the same page with regard to values and vision. Her ethos around sustainable and ethical design and production is an important factor in choosing partners. She looks for opportunities to highlight little-known designers, like serving on the panel for the 2022 Futures Initiative from the Smithsonian Museum to celebrate its 175th anniversary. Avant Gardist invited three of its designers; Vincent Li, Phenotypsetter and Yasuyuki Ishii; to showcase their futuristic designs at the event.

For Tsau, the best part of the job is finding new talents and being the first to shine a spotlight on independent designers. "Avant Gardist is about bringing the sense of discovery back into fashion, and democratizing fashion," she says. An Avant Gardist pop-up shop is planned for Seattle in mid-September. You can find more information on avantgardist.com where you can sign up for the newsletter, and follow along on Instagram @avantgardistinc as well.

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Courtesy of Lunar Laboratories