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Seeking a Gala Runway

The two quintessential New York worlds of fashion and real estate collided at the Real Estate Board of New York's Residential Deal of the Year Awards and Charity Gala at the Metropolitan Pavilion on Thursday night.

The 24th annual event—which raises money for REBNY's Residential Member in Need Fund and honors the best residential brokers of the year—included dinner, dancing, and a fashion show featuring the Spring 2013 collection of New York designer Cesar Galindo.

It was the first time Mr. Galindo had seen his spring collection on the runway and he said it was a thrill to show it to an audience less jaded than the average Fashion Week attendee. "They clapped and stood up. That doesn't happen very often," he said.

While the real-estate professionals were mingling over cocktails, Mr. Galindo was backstage with hair and makeup professionals, putting the finishing touches on the models.

The models strutted down the catwalk in beautifully tailored dresses, pants, tops and skirts, adorned with bold vintage jewelry (courtesy of Jane Hruska). Several of them carried Galindo-designed handbags—appealing to the busy, fashion-forward broker, perhaps.

"This is exactly the high-end clientele we want to reach," Mr.



Vince Collura / Gotham Photo Company

Cesar Galindo with an assistant in one of his creations.

Galindo's business partner, Christine Dente, said of the professional crowd.

Asked about the connections between real estate and fashion, Brian Phillips, a broker for Douglas Elliman Real Estate—clad in a suit and bow tie—said: "I always dress to the nines at an open house. It's the time when buyers and sellers evaluate you the most. And sometimes brokers don't realize that."

Mr. Galindo himself drew his own parallel between the fashion industry and real estate.

"In New York City, your showroom is all about location, location, location. And these brokers understand that more than anyone."

He cited his own real estate woes throughout the years, which included a court battle with a landlord who pushed him out of his West Chelsea studio and showroom years ago. "It's not always easy to live and work here in the city," he said, "but when you live in New York City, you have to be a survivor."

—Lucy Blatter