

Javier Valencia, Designer, immigrated from Ecuador to the United States in 1965. He settled in East Harlem with his family, where he still resides today. In middle school, Javier received a full scholarship from A Better Chance (ABC) to attend The Birch Wathen Lenox School. While still in high school, he first developed his passion for art and fashion by sewing and experimenting with the deconstruction and construction of garments. He was accepted into college at Cooper Union where he further developed his talents, refined his work ethic and set out a course to become a designer.

Javier embarked on his professional career in 1990, beginning on Seventh Avenue as a production assistant to the late designer *Fabrice Simon*. *Fabrice* was known for his intricate bead work and high end evening wear. His clientele ranged from socialites to movie stars. Javier was involved every aspect of production.

He also worked with *Eva Chun*, a high end sportswear brand. Again, he began as a production assistant but within a year was promoted to production manager. Javier was responsible for processing, manufacturing and delivering all orders on time to vendors which included *Bergdorf Goodman*, *Saks* and *Neiman Marcus*.

For Javier, December 2018 marked his 20 year anniversary working with *Koos Van den Akker*, where he began as production manager and for the past 15 years worked as a designer. At *Koos*, Javier learned the art of mixing different prints, colors and textures to create one-of-a-kind designs.

The common thread connecting his experiences and the workplaces where he has flourished has been the trust and support he has received. Javier can transform an idea into an actual product given the skill sets he honed as a pattern maker, designer and seamstress. When *Koos Van Den Akker* closed at the end of 2018, Javier decided to take this opportunity to establish his own atelier where he can provide couture caliber garments to all his current, new and future clients and emerging designers at SoHarlem.