

# NYC's real estate elite gets weird at annual chashama gala

by Ann Imperatore June 09, 2016 02:09PM



Anita

Durst (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

<http://www.llnyc.com/49599-nycs-real-estate-elite-gets-weird-at-annual-chashama-gala>

Last evening chashama held its annual gala on the fourth floor of the Conde Nast building in New York City and *LLNYC* was in attendance.

Chashama, a Farsi word meaning “to have vision” is a non-profit art organization committed to nurturing artists by turning unused property into affordable work and exhibit space. Started by daughter of real estate titan Douglas Durst, Anita, in 1995, the annual gala is known to be one of the more over-the-top and avant-garde events in the city. A combo of immersive art gallery, and carnival freak show, past years have included aerial acrobats, a kissing booth and a doll-filled comedy club.

This year certainly didn't disappoint. Honoring Dustin Yellin, an artist and founder of Pioneer Works, Artistic Director Durst greeted guests in full “girl on fire” gear wearing artist Flambeaux Fire's “Gown of Fire” — a full ballgown made of lit candles with wax that burns for six hours.

Once inside, crowds – over 400 people were in attendance — were plied with champagne and a variety of other libations, and allowed to wonder through a labyrinth of exhibits, each a bit odder and more flamboyant from the last.

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Over 100 artists in total showed works. Much of the work was participatory; guests were invited to become part of certain exhibits, crawling into rooms, doing acrobatic stunts, answering thought-provoking and existential questions on notecards and grabbing a candle and walking through a narrow, winding maze to view a gallery of small works in the dark. After taking a number, guests who wanted custom head pieces were seated and transformed. Others lined up to do makeshift photoshoots, having their picture snapped with performance artist Muffinhead in the "Fotoboop."

For the more timid who preferred to see the art and not be the art, there were a variety of sound performances throughout the event. These included, Aaron Taylor Kuffner's Gamelatron, a sound producing kinetic sculpture presented by See Me. Kit Lagreze's "You Love Someone," a live collaborative installation involving numerous floral arrangements, was also a must see.

In addition to being culturally fed, guests were literally fed a huge dinner buffet, provided by Aureole, in the space's Frank Gehry-designed dining hall. It included a variety of salads, grains, mini-burgers, chicken and beef skewers and even homemade marshmallows, including elaborate S'mores creations. In addition to drinking in musical performances during dinner, others simply drank in the booze which was free-flowing throughout the night from four bars.

Probably the most notable thing in the area was the mashup of art and food — sushi and prosciutto and melon being served on naked bodies. Some brave attendees reached over and ate the art, while others shyly snapped pictures of the food-clad bodies from a distance. This exhibit gave new meaning to the phrase "food porn"!

Because with Chashama, you really have to see it to believe it, check out more scenes from the event below:

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(Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Tony Bechara, Anita Durst (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



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Stewart

Lane, Bonnie Comley (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



Harris

Bulow, Aric Trachtenberg, David Bomke (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Flambeaux, Anita Durst (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Flambeaux (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



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Anita Durst (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Darsie Alexander, Crystal O'Brien, Annica van Starrenburg, Heather Durst (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



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(Photo

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Bill

Shanahan, Jessica Gussin, Dechelle Damien, Ben Spradley, Randi Berry, Darcy Stacom (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



Anita Durst, Dustin Yellin (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Douglas Durst (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Tanya Minhas (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



Dechelle Damien, Bill Shanahan (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)

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Gabriel Hernandez, Monica Townley (Photo credit: Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com)



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