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As Usual, the Extroverts Get the Show Rolling



Philip Greenberg for The New York Times

Fashion wrestling, just one of the ways the Paper Project raised the blood pressure.

They Just Want to Have Fun

The goal was to "inspire, energize and raise the blood pressure" of the fashion world, Kim Hastreiter, the editor of Paper magazine, said of the Paper Project, an all-day art and fashion event in SoHo.

Few would dispute that the fashion world has lately looked anything but hypertensive. Image recycling is so widespread now that magazines resemble picture books of Bartlett's quotations. Many midcareer designers seem in need of a nitroglycerin jolt. And the art world has so effectively moved in on fashion's twin territories of narcissism and materialism that often you can't find the clothes for all the piercing critique.

Where's the fun? Saturday it was at Deitch Projects on Grand Street, where

Paper played host to a "fashionpalooza" of artists, cartoonists, hairdressers, oddballs and visionaries whose approach to fashion is no less serious for being a hoot.

Take Andrew and Andrew, two Queens-based designers who go by the same first name and who sew labels into other designers' clothes, thereby making them their own. The labels carry one of two legends: Respect Me (ready-to-wear) or Respector Moi (the couture line). "People are too passive about fashion," explained Andrew (or was it Andrew?) on Saturday as a seamstress stitched the large, handsome labels on shirt fronts. "It's about validating your personal style," added Andrew (or Andrew?), who also sells the labels, sewing included, at Fiorucci for \$50.

In a separate room of the gallery, a hairdresser/artist called Nelson (no last name) gave free haircuts to anyone who agreed to have his mouth and eyes taped shut and the process recorded. Oddly, there was no shortage of volunteers. A Punjab-born designer called Waris (ditto above) wrapped people's heads in custom turbans. And, at the rear, groups of fully, and fashionably, dressed women in pairs and trios hourly leapt into a ring to perform "fashion wrestling." The show this writer saw was won by a woman called Audrey ("just Audrey"), who claimed an advantage that Stone Cold Steve Austin might envy. "I'm wearing the Yama-moto boots," Audrey said. "I won before I got in the ring."