

HEARD & SCENE

At Art Parties, Making and Breaking a Scene



Clockwise from top: As part of Kate Gilmore's 'She Bangs,' five women in pink cocktail dresses and black-patent leather open-toed heels smashed eight-pound sledgehammers into plaster blocks that broke and flew into the air and onto guests. Among the guests: Carmen and John Thakur, Ali Kraus (left) with Rosalie Benitez and Barbara Gladstone; Linda and Andrew Salvan and Helen Rockefeller.



By MARSHALL HERTMAN



If you could give a name to the last seven days on the social circuit, you could call it The Week of Kind-of-Edgy-but-Also-Pretty-Accessible-Art-Parties.

First out of the gate was the Art Production Fund's Good & Plenty benefit, in support of the organization founded by Yvonne Force Vilareal (who made it to the three parties to be discussed herewith) and Doreen Ramen. This took place at the Park Avenue Armory, and there were some really lippy things going on.

On the way up the stairs to the cocktail area, guests were offered temporary tattoos illustrated by the artist Nate Lewman. One of those tattoos was a very realistic bullet hole. "So far, it's the most popular one," said the woman applying the temporary tattoos, Marilyn Minter got three of them on her upper arm. A reporter had a bullet hole placed on his inner wrist. Later, someone suggested it might have been more amusing on his forehead. He agreed and wished he'd thought of that.

There were all sorts of wacky hors d'oeuvres catered by David Burke: Good & Plenty black licorice, push-pop salmon mousse and smoked goats' testicles that waitresses carried in trays on their heads. Later, cotton candy was passed from hanging vinyl shoe bags.

"What exactly is Art Production Fund anyway?" asked one guest rather loudly.

That's easy: It's devoted to creating public art and expanding art awareness. One of the ways they did this at the party, which raised about \$300,000, was by inviting the performance artist Elaine Fournier over from the United Kingdom to do her thing. Ms. Fournier was dressed as a satyr. She was covered in white paint and had a line of red blood dripping from her mouth down to her navel. During dinner, she sat high atop a ladder and wrote notes on a pad that she then dropped to the ground where guests hastily picked

them up.

"We wanted to have plenty of good art," Ms. Force Vilareal answered when asked about the evening's theme. "We already have next year's. It's called Ab Fab. You could take that to mean abstract impressionism, showing your abs, or dressing up like Edna and Fatsy."

At the old Dia gallery on 22nd Street, Fairfax Dorn and Virginia Lebermann were among the hosts for a benefit for their organization, Ballroom Marfa from Texas. With the help of some chilaquiles on the menu and a performance by the Swedish indie pop band Millie Snow, the party raised \$750,000 that will go to support projects including the first drive-in produced by a nonprofit cultural arts space.

"That's a lot of money for an organization that's not based in New York," Ms. Dorn said. Ms. Dorn added that, to evoke a Texan feel, cowhide rugs and Peruvian blankets were slipped in from Marfa and Casa Dragones tequila was being served throughout the night to accompany the aforementioned tortilla dish and the chicken mole.

"Everyone said it was just like Marfa," Ms. Dorn remarked.

On Thursday, the Public Art Fund hosted its annual benefit, The Sculpture Factory, at Skylight SoHo. This one had "interactive installations."

The artists Ryan McNamara and Michele Abeles assembled a green-screen shoot complete with two experimental dancers and odd props. After making a video, the evening's co-chairwoman, Holly Lipton, called the experience "totally mortifying and fun at the same time."

As part of Kate Gilmore's "She Bangs," for more than an hour, five women in pink cocktail dresses and black-patent leather open-toed heels smashed eight-pound sledgehammers into plaster blocks that broke and flew into the air and onto guests.

Attendees could also make sculptures at their dinner tables. Centerpieces included clay, wood, glass, straw, string and scissors. The concept continued to the dessert buffet,

where paint tubes filled with frosting allowed guests to design their own cupcakes. Chocolate bars were canvases upon which they could express their own inner Jackson Pollack.

This whole "sculpture" theme, it turned out, was a nod to a current project by the Public Art Fund called "The Andy Monument." This is a representation by Rob Pruitt of Andy Warhol erected outside his original Factory in Union Square. It is finished in chrome and "depicts Warhol as a ghostly, silver presence; a potent cultural force as both artist and self-created myth," says the website.

Mr. Pruitt was, indeed, at the Sculpture event. He said it reminded him less of Mr. Warhol's heyday and more of Santa's workshop. The night

before, Mr. Pruitt had been at yet another benefit—this one for Bard College—where the artist Rachel Harrison told him she'd be making a statue of Valerie Solanas pointing a gun. She planned to install it next to his of Mr. Warhol.

"I woke up this morning not knowing if she was serious," Mr. Pruitt said.

He added that before going out to events he listens to an hour of NPR. Otherwise, he explained, "I have no idea what to talk about." When asked if he was a bit fatigued from all this art-related hoo-bah, he sighed.

"If I told you the truth it would be really horrible. I really hate every moment of every one."

—With contributions from Lizzie Simon



From left, Rachel and Ara Hovanian, Lisa Perry, Beth Sweifford with Daniel Kruglikov and Renee Rockefeller with Richard Dupont at the Art Production Fund's Good & Plenty benefit at the Park Avenue Armory.



From left, Art Production Fund founder Yvonne Force Vilareal with Casey Fremont and Doreen Ramen, Aaron Young with Laura Herland Dubrel and Amy Secco with goodies at the Good & Plenty benefit.