

ALTERNATIVE FASHION WEEK '94 - NO JEI-LAG ON THIS RUNWAY!

by Tanya Dewhurst

The press release promised that "the look is uber-casual, neo-groovy, semi-soft, reel-ruff, fiercely futuristic, without android overtones and jarringly unbalanced in the most lucid of ways."

Feeling like the anti-christ of fashion, I could only hope that Dom Casual's press team was not referring to a resurgence in mohair covered ugg boots and hand-woven

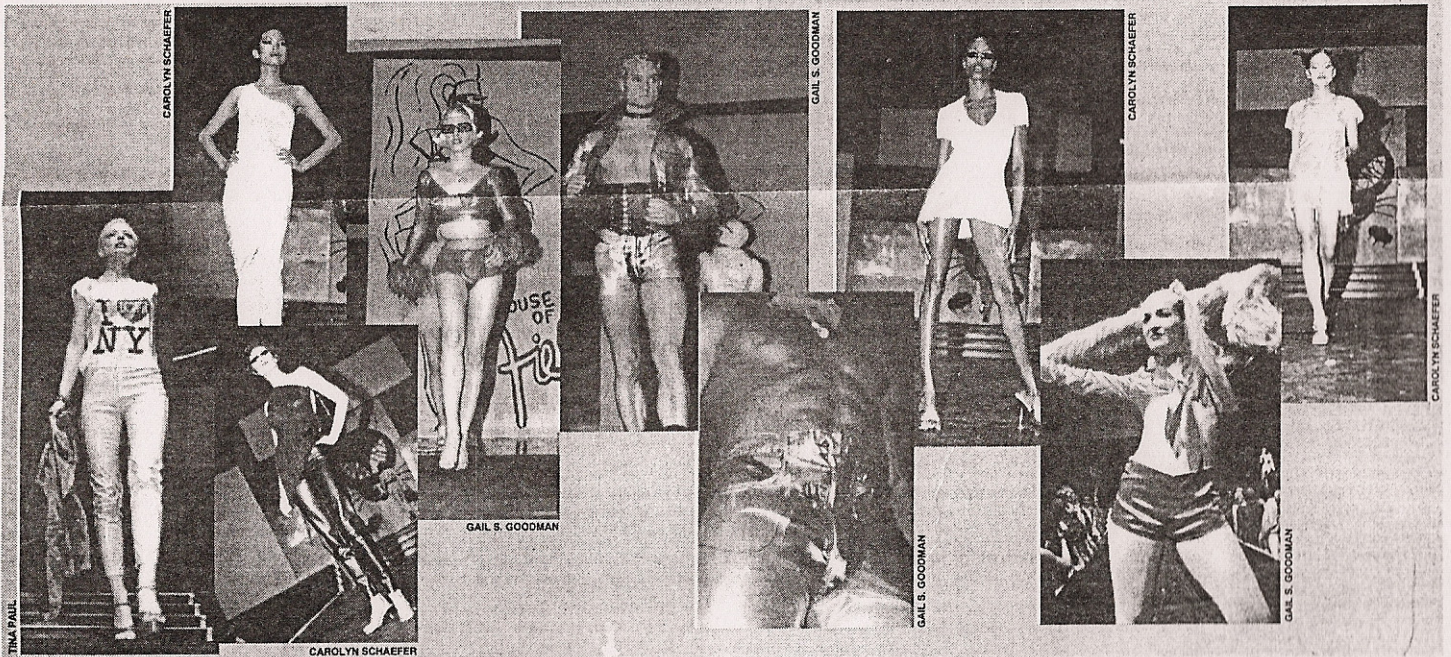
Seventh Avenue", says Webster Hall publicist Martin X. "It's an illustrious spectacle highlighting the enormous style and talent in downtown design houses." I knew that.

Those designers divesting their '95 Spring/Summer collections at Webster Hall included Kanae + Onyx, Kitty Boots, Corrugated, Maya, Dom Casual, Cesar Galindo and the notorious Patricia Field, whose clear vinyl evening wear

Teddy Girls Collection: lurid purple and pink teddy boy suits with spiv lapels and black velvet cuffs topped with "Teddy" sequined across t-shirts. Her xxx-girl vinyl rain coats, micro shorts and pencil skirts are primary red and yellow colored, but thankfully not a rainbow in sight. Here, emphasis is on naughty girl rather than bad girl with tattoo as fashion accessory # 1.

Kanae + Onyx presents **Return To Glam-**

to see pretty boys model pretty clothes for women, which will undoubtedly be worn mostly by pretty boys. The outrageous monk-look skirts for men, mod-squad jackets and pink big-bird coats are offset by a hip home-boy line for men which even the maw of big-haired straightsville can swallow. Patricia Fields, long known for pushing those trans-gendered buttons, combines



ponchos. Even if the garments are stitched from tangerine fun-fur.

Actually, much of the clothing premiered during Alternative Fashion Week, (held in the last days of October, at Webster Hall,) was surprisingly wearable, and in the case of Dom Casual's **Bush** collection - dubbed the "Future Artificial Bar-B-Q" - was also aimed at those "with or without the dough".

Unlike 7th. on Sixth Fashion Week, where deities of the fashion fraternity like Marc Jacobs, Todd Oldham and Anna Sui vie for The Godship, Alternative Fashion Week is produced for the downtown set whose predilection for garments which are-not-yet-fashionable (as opposed to unfashionable) invariably instigate the trends for what will soon become fashionable. In other words, much of Seventh Avenue gleans their ideas from designers hanging out below midtown.

"Alternative Fashion Week isn't a parody of

(for men and women) left the late-night straight boy plaid flannel shirt crowd (and their Sharon and Tracey girlfriends dancing around their handbags) pop-eyed.

Thank Armani that fashionists are almost over the seventies (although I do love Kanae + Onyx's platform biker boots) and haute couture has regressed even further back to the fifties, juxtaposed with sixties-style minis, of course. In the nineties' fifties, Marilyn meets the Jetsons and glamour is liberated from the boredom of natural fibres by the potential of limitless fabrics such as astro-turf, neon and upholstery.

Cesar Galindo gives us navy crepe halter swing dresses with satin trim, liquid metal tops (lots of tit) and Swiss Dot flirty dresses. The Wilma Flintstone hair pieces and Doris Day tunes invoke summer country drives through a black and white B-movie.

London ex-pat, Kitty Boots introduces the

our with full fronts and no backs, sleek halter dresses, white leather halter mini suits and terry-toweling bathing costumes. Kanae + Onyx, whose clothes have berobed RuPaul, Prince and the B-52's, offer glam without pretention; sexiness for the sake of it.

Terry-toweling also features in the **Bush** collection of Dom Casual. Designers Walter Cessna and Simone Colina offer bikinis, shifts and skirts made from towels stolen from hotels and handed down from Granny. Apart from a splash of chrome yellow, Dom's uber-casual colors are pepto-bismol, margarine and nude. Particularly fun are the Moon Man and Moon Maiden black and white ultrasuede suits replete with plexi windshield facemasks and cannabis leaves sprouting from the hair.

House of Fields blends fifties, sixties and seventies with micro minis paired with hot pink boas, fishtail evening gowns and silver sequined skirts. It's such a pleasure

feather, fun-fur and frills with turquoise, lime and leopard skin to trounce any notion that fashion is staid, ugly or for the ordinary.

Although much of this year's Alternative Fashion Week was aimed at mainstream press, Martin says that the show will deliberately remain in the realm of alternative, with emphasis on the audience as wearers and users, rather than industry moguls. "For next year's Spring Collection showing in March, we'll probably hold an Alternative Fashion Day," says Martin. "Over 100 downtown designers will be able to expose their lines to the general public, and a small cover fee will enable the event to be a benefit for AIDS organizations. The day will be more of a fashion festival - a pageant of style."

Well, I can't wait. For my next BBO, I'm going reel-ruff and uber-groovy in a blood engraved linoleum zip front vest and matching mini. Roll on the 21st. century. □