

CHITILS

its at Bryant Park and beyond, *The Observer's* intrepid impressions of the spring 2005 collections: n. (Sorry, Oscar, we overslept)

thursday • september 9

Carolina Herrera, 10 a.m.
Olivia Chantecaille, co-founder of Chantecaille cosmetics, was sitting in the front row in a black Prada accordion skirt and crisp white Calvin Klein blouse. She said she was particularly fond of a pink Herrera halter gown. "When I wear it, both men and women comment. But they say 'You look pretty' rather than 'Your dress is pretty,' which means that dress is fabulous but the rest of you looks like *crap*," Ms. Chantecaille said. Further down the row, *Vogue* editor in chief Anna Wintour twisted her gams like a braided pretzel stick under her Louis Vuitton navy and ivory print dress. "With Carolina, you realize how focused she is on a woman like herself—cultural, understated," Ms. Wintour said. "She doesn't worry about what the rest of the world is doing. It's not vulgar. Too much falling out, transparency." She curled her pink lips upward in a shy semi-smile. "Of course, sexy has a place too."
Sylphs legged down the runway in a subtly seductive collection that seemed to indicate a worldly woman who is difficult to woo, but worth every penny. There were mosaic dresses and floppy skirts, in ivory and espresso, disks sewn in what Herrera calls "floating crystals," a combined effect of light reflector and stained-glass sunflower, a ruby dress with semi-precious stone embellishments; an emerald bikini; shoulder-baring frocks with fringed horizontal aqua and ivory lines; embroidered sweaters with cuffed ivory shorts; and short-sleeved silk blouses, called "camp shirts," in a signature print of female divers with white swim caps, evocative of Esther Williams' cinematic pool dancers in the 40's.

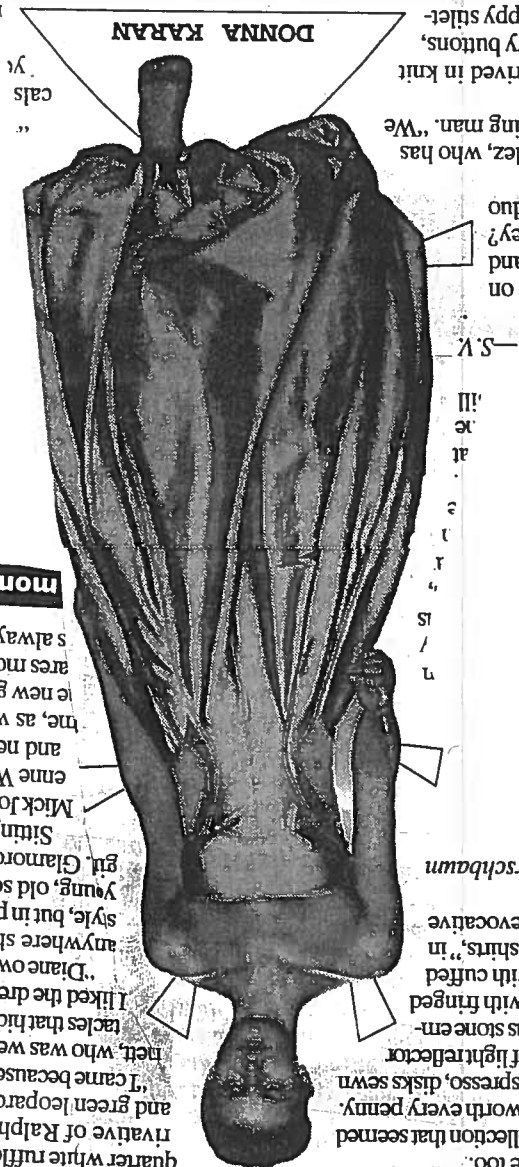
Proenza Schouler, 5 p.m.
There weren't many celebrities at the Milk Studio on West 15th Street, but designers Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez didn't seem to care. Why should they? Barely two years out of Parsons School of Design, the duo have become editorial darlings. "We don't have a specific muse," said Mr. Hernandez, who has the way dark hair and laughing eyes of a classic leading man. "We design for our friends."
One girl claiming to be Mr. Hernandez's friend arrived in knit navy shorts and a white Proenza Schouler top with navy buttons, and four-inch-high lemon-yellow Manolo Blahnik strappy stile-

FRTI

a week! As designers, edit
FASHION FILLIES
flouncy bows

—Susan M. Kirschbaum

and green leopard print frocks. "I came because I have some friends that work here," said the actor Josh Hartnett, who was wearing a gray railroad-conductor cap and silver-rimmed spectacles that hid his big chocolate-colored eyes. "It's my first fashion show and I liked the dresses."
"Diane owns New York," said the actress Marisa Tomei. "But she owns anywhere she would go. She's just somebody to emulate, not only in style, but in philosophy—this *grande dame*. And she's got this great young, old soul at the same time. She's a woman, not pretending to be a girl. Glamorous, smart and spiritual—everything."
Sitting diagonally across from Ms. Tomei was Foreigner guitarist Mike Westwood and his wife Ann, wearing a slim three-quarter gold brocade Vivienne Westwood jacket and jeans. "I think Diane represents the old and new guard," she said. "She was incredibly innovative in her time, as well as being beautiful and social. And she's different than the new guard because she doesn't care that much about money. She cares more about creating.... Diane's like a beautiful racehorse that always jumps another fence with pleasure."
—S.M.K.



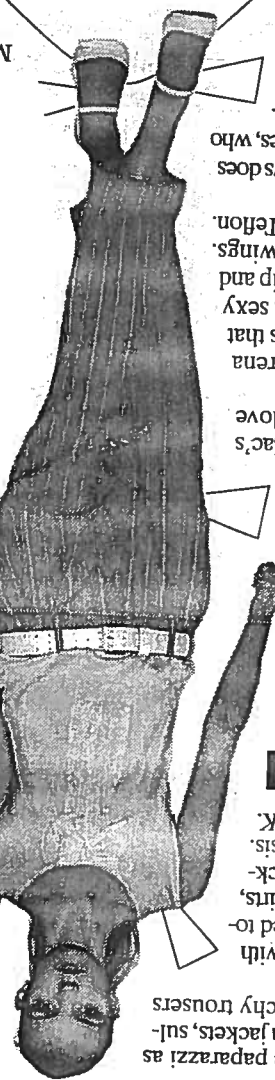
DONNA KARAN

calls
" "

sunday • september 12

Diane von Furstenberg, 6 p.m.
For Barry Diller, the fashion show of his wife Diane von Furstenberg, at her West 12th Street studio, provided more of a chance to mingle than to examine clothes. "I'm in the *ancien régime*," said Mr. Diller. He was wearing a white shirt with vertical navy pinstripes. "I have no fashion sense. She gives me advice about everything except how I dress. I make a lot of noise."
Ms. von Furstenberg showed her signature printed wrap dresses, as well as three-quarter white ruffled prairie skirts and matching billowy shirts (which were derivative of Ralph Lauren), marigold splashed halter dresses, cuffed shorts and green leopard print frocks.
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MARC JACOBS



friday • september 10

Zac Posen, 8 p.m.
The stars and sycophants who followed Zac Posen after his packed runway show resembled a tribe following Joseph and his Technicolor dream coat. Mr. Posen himself wore a tweed jacket, and while his sleek white suitings and bum-hugging dresses in kaleidoscope mosaics inspired crowd frenzy, Sean John (P. Diddy) Combs—his financial backer—strolled backstage with his head high. "We're going to put some heat under Marc Jacobs' ass," said Mr. Combs, who was carrying his own fashion accessory—a Maltese called Sophie—dressed identically to his master in a white Sean John shirt and black cashmere pullover. "I think it's obvious where Zac's trying to go. I'm more than happy with my investment.... Zac makes love to a woman in his dresses."
Row one—which included Claire Danes, Bernadette Peters, Serena Williams and Paris Hilton—appeared genuinely awed by print frocks that married Missomi and psychédélic, ruffled dresses, fitted blouses with sexy tailored shorts, white trousers with trains attached to the arms which lifted like wings. (Mr. Posen even went as far to spray the white jackets and trousers with Teflon. He claims this prevents any kind of stain.)
"It's like he's thrown stardust on his clothes," Ms. Peters said. "He always does something—a ruffled shoulder, no back, you feel really different." Ms. Danes, who was sitting opposite Ms. Peters in a Zac Posen white halter dress, agreed. "That's what's so genius about him. He thinks that fancy, imagination, art and glamour is appropriate always, ya know?"
—S.M.K.