

# Love and Warhol

Spanish fashion queen brings her Andy-inspired styles to the Big Apple

By SUSAN M. KIRSCHBAUM

**A**GATHA Ruiz de la Prada — arguably the pop fashion diva of Spain — has officially arrived. She opened her first American flagship, featuring womenswear, baby clothes, towels and bedding, in SoHo last weekend. And she was clearly the darling of the recent Fashion Week in Madrid.

Ruiz de la Prada — wife of Padros S. Ramirez, director of El Mundo, Spain's second largest newspaper — not only designs clothing, but also jewelry, lamps, bedding and stationery, all of which incorporate every Crayola shade ever invented.

At her new shop downtown, which mirrors her boutique in Madrid's ritzy Salamanca shopping district, shoppers will find everything from neon apricot sweaters to mauve duvet covers and sheets to baby corduroys in bright purple and splashes of turquoise.

Some of the kids' clothes — which make color-coded Garanimals look tame — will soon come in corresponding sizes for mom and dad.

A chance meeting in 1983 helped Ruiz de la Prada hone her aesthetic. At the ripe old age of twenty-two, she met Andy Warhol at a

straight. She subsequently visited the Big Apple with the aim of taking over the style world.

Now, it seems she's well on her way.

"When I began to work in the '80s, everyone was obsessed with New York, not Paris," she recalls. "I've had an apartment in Paris for seven years. It is the most important city in fashion. But New York is becoming the center of the universe again."

Ruiz de la Prada already owns shops in Madrid, Barcelona, Mallorca, Portugal, Paris, Milan and Puerto Rico.

"New York, it's easier," she says. "Here they say, 'How can I help you?' In Paris, they don't even look at you."

When it's suggested that Manhattan women might not be ready for her neon frocks, Ruiz de la Prada shakes her head vehemently.

"No, they are ready," she whispers like a prophecy.

But how can she be so sure?

"Lots of Latinas," she says. "A long time ago they were a minority in America. Now, they are powerful, so the time is right."

Ruiz de la Prada has fond memories of one of her first visits to Gotham during the Studio 54 years, when she



Agatha Ruiz de la Prada is clearly not afraid to inject color into her funky designs, available at her new downtown boutique.

## HOTPICKS

By MERCEDES SANCHEZ

### ✓ TITO PARTY

(Tonight)

Salsa legend Tito Nieves celebrates his 30th anniversary in music and the release of his new album "Hoy, Mañana y Siempre" with other salsa stars, like Gilberto Santa Rosa, La India, Ismael Miranda, Tony Vega and Sergio George, at Carnegie Hall. 57th St. at Seventh Avenue. (212) 957-7788. 8 p.m. \$50-125.



### ✓ KILLER BILL

(Thursday)

The reggaeton concert of the year comes to the world's most famous arena. Big timers scheduled to perform at **Megatron** include Daddy Yankee, Tego Calderón, Don Omar (pictured), Hector "El Father," Wisin y Yandel, Zion y Lennox and more! After you get your Turkey Day grub on, work it off