

Boyle, Meka. "Fringe Fashion," *Family Style*, 17 February 2024.

FAMILY STYLE

Fashion

Fringe Fashion

"The New Village: Ten Years of New York Fashion" at Pratt Manhattan Gallery makes the case that the city's D.I.Y. sensibilities still pack a punch in a sartorial group show that fuses art and design.

Words by Meka Boyle

February 17, 2024

With New York Fashion week in full swing, models strut down runways in the latest designs, pausing for a moment for guests to scan their looks. The whole ordeal costs upwards of hundreds of thousands and lasts a matter of minutes, and then, poof, they are gone—accumulating a second, albeit one-dimensional, life online in recaps, moodboards, highlight reels, and of course, e-commerce sites.

At Pratt Manhattan Gallery, "The New Village: Ten Years of New York Fashion" presents a more meditative, less commercial look at a wave of designers and artists pushing the boundary of what fashion can be (a chair, a wall piece, a performance). Curated by Jennifer Minniti, chair of Pratt Institute's fashion department, and fashion curator Matthew Linde, the group show offers a window into New York's D.I.Y. sensibility that pulses through the ethos of some of the city's most exciting—and, in some cases, fringe—names in fashion and art. The exhibition references the Fashion Institute of Technology's influential 1986 fashion exhibition, "The East Village," spotlighting a new era of emerging designers, boutique fashion brands, and boundary-pushing visual artists.

This week in Pratt's gallery space, the line between art and design is blurred. Sculptures appear clothed and clothing is sculptural. Artist Jessi Reaves' light-up, wire wall piece, *Set to Self Destruct*, 2021, reworks fabric into sculptural forms that are caught in a spider-web-like metal fixture that also includes paint, glass, sawdust, wood glue, and, of course, lamp wiring. For her sculpture *99c Bowery Gang Gang*, 2021, Martine Syms Frankensteined what appears to have once been a cotton T-shirt. The deconstructed fabric adorns a folding chair: A hat and shoe hang from its sides. Elsewhere a black, resin dog sits atop a pool of baby pink organza that cascades down from Beverly Semmes' crushed velvet purple robe—a commission originally for Alexander McQueen in 2022. A dress from Vaquera's Spring/Summer 2023 collection an American flag is seductively draped into a high-low dress in the label's signature voluminous silhouette.



Beverly Semmes, *Marigold*, 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Susan Inglett Gallery.

Women's History Museum's 2022 design features a cape with a sartorial Google search history emblazoned down the back; while Elena Velez's Fall/Winter 2023 corset and maxi skirt are literally painted white. There is footage of interdisciplinary artist Camilla Carper's closet-sculpture-performance, *Inside Out Closet 3*, 2024, as well as fashion designer and artist Susan Cianciolo's 2016-17 *Prayer Circle* features an array of everyday objects: cloth tapestry, tape, mobiles, tables and chairs, drawings, magazine pages, bundles of wood, and plastic.

Other featured designers include Gauntlett Cheng, Lou Dallas, Luar, and Telfar. Many of these are even among the university's faculty, former educators, and alumni, including Mike Eckhaus of Eckhaus Latta, who served as a visiting associate professor of fashion; Cianciolo, a current tenured professor of fashion; and alumni Claire McKinney (also an adjunct assistant professor) and Sophie Andes-Gascon, the designers behind fashion brand Sc103.

"The exhibition provides a framework for understanding how innovative fashion systems born outside of industry conventions can shape and shift the culture of American fashion," says Minniti, who has been chairperson of the fashion department since 2011. She adds that "it also explores... the intersection of fashion and contemporary art as catalysts for creative change, challenging industry conventions, and imagining new creative communities."

"The New Village: Ten Years of New York Fashion" is on view through March 16th, 2024 at Pratt Manhattan Gallery at 144 West 14th St, New York, NY 10011.