

THE STYLE ADDICT

THOUGHTS AND DISCOVERIES ON FASHION AND DESIGN.

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Prêt-A-Porter: Brent Ray Fraser's exhibit

I do not subscribe to the notion that fashion designers are merely artisans, or that fashion is just an expression of a designer's idea. Fashion, like art, is a creative force that both defines and represents a segment in time. An exquisitely designed and made bag is an artwork and should be treated as such.

My belief was further confirmed at Brent Ray Fraser's Prêt-A-Porter exhibit that opened on Friday at Eastwood Onley Gallery. The method he used for most of his work involved dipping designer suits and bags (not just any designers - Armani, Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, Hugo Boss, Prada, and Yves Saint Laurent) in paint and imprinting them on canvases, giving each piece a different "look". His exhibit, in essence, is a runway show. When I talked to Brent about his work, he described how he came to develop an obsession toward with the suits and bags he worked with, much like those devotees you see on Fashion File.

Okay, so his angle isn't a blatant exultation of fashion as a higher art form, but rather, focuses more on the blurring of the line between fashion and art. The way his work is displayed, for instance, has the unstretched canvases hanging on rolling racks, just like the way clothes are hung in retail stores.

Is fashion an art? My own answer is a resounding yes. Whatever your belief is, Brent's fashion house is worth a visit. Prêt-A-Porter runs until Oct 2 - 2075 Alberta St., Vancouver.