Girls Just Want to Have Fund

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THE ANNUAL NEW YORK MARATHON runs in November. In the nonprofit New York art world, it arrives in April—only instead of nylon shorts, runners wear designer frocks and patterned ties, while it’s the events themselves compete for the title of most imaginative fundraiser. During the week of April 11, the race was fierce, with galas on six consecutive nights.

On Monday, Art Production Fund cofounders Yvonne Force Villareal and Doreen Remen decked themselves out in Dolce & Gabbana gowns for their “Good and Plenty Benefit” at the palatial Park Avenue Armory. Just inside the door, APF director Casey Fremont (also in D&G) directed guests past performer Eloise Fonnieles, who stood atop a ladder clad only in makeup and antlers. Upstairs, Dana Schulz was sketching faces and Nate Lowman applying temporary tattoos, while Jeff Koons unveiled a plate he had designed for the APF and his Koons Family Institute for missing and exploited children.

The fabulosity meter only climbed from there, with nearly five hundred guests on their best behavior. Chief among the attractions was Clarissa Dalrymple, the perpetually underground, headpating curator who supports many a young art career a significant early boost. “She is a radiant beauty individual with the best eye in the city,” Whitney Museum curator Chrisiele Illes said in her toast. “If you want a lot of people to come to your benefit,” whispered an observer, “just make Clarissa the guest of honor.” (And put 150 giao artists and collectors on your benefit committee.)

Dalrymple was actually one of two honorees. The other was philanthropist John Dempsey, group president of the Estée Lauder Companies. Their pairing made two camps of the assembled, one corporate-casual, the other privileged-bohemian. The divide materialized in the seating arrangements for dinner. On one side of the soaring, ground-floor hallway were businessmen-collectors like Phil Aarons, lawyers (Michael Ward Stout), and art consultants (Mark Fletcher, Eileen Guggenheim). On the other sat artists, dealers, and more collectors, but mostly artists, so Rob Pruitt and Jonathan Horowitz, for example, could buddy up with Jane Holzer, or Elizabeth Peyton, Kiara Lidén, and Nate Lowman could do the same with Adam McEwen, Hanna Lidén, and Dalrymple. Tables had caviar-Pop centerpieces and lipstick-smear napkins by Dan Colen—the APF’s latest addition to its Works on Whatever Inventory. Everyone carefully folded and pocketed their napkins after dinner (though a fresh one was waiting in their pink goody bags, along with a letter of solidarity from Senator Kirsten Gillibrand).