It Feels Good To Be A Gangster at the Art Production Fund Annual Gala

by Cait Munro | Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Art Production Fund events are not known for their understatedness. And why should they be? Headed by three of New York’s most fabulous art patrons, Yvonne Force Villareal, Doreen Remen, and Casey Fremont Crowe, APF has helped produce some of the splashiest public art projects of the past decade, most notably Prada Marfa (see FriendsWithYou Builds a Psychedelic Cave in the Meatpacking District).

So when heavyweights in the arts, fashion, and cultural spheres turned out last night expecting a lavish soiree, they were not disappointed. The theme was “Gangs of New York,” inspired in part by the gala’s location, the very swank Downtown Association. The men-only social club (which is decorated perfectly for the consumption of a fine glass of scotch and an ultra high-end cigar, in true old school gangster fashion) was founded during the neighborhood’s Five Points era, around the same time in which the Leonardo DiCaprio film Gangs of New York takes place.
“When we visited the location, we started thinking about gangsters, and how this is kind of a gang—the gangs that really support art and culture. And just all the great groups of people that make up New York and make up the art world,” said Villareal, who wore a plunging green and black dress, headband, and fringe sandals by honorees Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez of Proenza Schouler.

“The design of the gala paid homage to Proenza Schouler’s spring/summer 2015 collection,” revealed Kara Mann, an interior designer and the evening’s creative director. “Their fringe, use of crochet, and metallics were all a launching off point for the design of the party which was meant to highlight the romanesque revival design of the venue.”

If the art world is, in fact, a gang, many of the kingpins were present: Hanna Liden (who created bagel centerpieces for the event—we’re seeing a trend here: Artist Chloe Wise Remakes Chanel Bags Out of Bagels and Pancakes), Will Cotton, Gavin Brown, Maria Baibakova, Lisa Yuskavage, Marilyn Minter, Cindy Sherman, Andrea Rosen, Dan Colen, Richard Phillips, Jane Holzer, Wangechi Mutu, Haim Steinbach, KAWS, Zoe Buckman, Leo Villareal, Juliana Huxtable, Rachel Feinstein, Barbara Gladstone, David Maupin, Todd Eberle, Karen Wong, Lisa Phillips, and Vincent and Shelly Fremont.

The party also teemed with fashionistas and socialites—ostensibly members of a different, and perhaps rival gang. But luckily, no violence broke out in what quickly became a packed and almost rowdy pre-dinner cocktail party.

Shortly before dinner, actress Liv Tyler also casually showed up, causing a swarm of photographers to careen across the room in order to snap a photo.

Over a meal prepared by the hip SoHo eatery Charlie Bird, founders Villareal and Remen toasted to 15 years before announcing an upcoming project with Liden called “Everything,” which is funded by Kiehl’s—a fact that gives us a strange sense of appreciation for the convergence of the art and fashion gangs.
Lucy Chadwick

Wangechi Mutu, Mario Lazzaroni, Nana Meriwether

Jonah Freeman, Arden Wohl

Erin Fetherston

Liv Tyler

Valerie Boster, David Hallberg, Maria Baibakova

Athena Calderone

Genevieve Jones

Lisa Phillips, Cindy Sherman, JK Brown

Temporary tattoos by Sean Landers