



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 03:39:50

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WEARABLE ART

[[image - B&W photograph of Julie Schafler modeling the crocheted "Samurai Top" by Sharron Hedges]]
 [[photo credit]] LINDA KOLINSKY [[/photo credit]]

Julie Schafler, who will soon be married to Jim Dale, Tony Award winning star of Barnum, has her own claim to fame. Eight years ago she founded and opened Julie Artisans' Gallery at 687 Madison Avenue and started a trend that is now being copied by other galleries and shops.

Ms. Schafler's achievement has been to seek out artists who design pieces to be worn. These works have a dual purpose: they can be worn and they can be displayed on a wall like a tapestry. The craftsmanship of these pieces - sweaters, capes, vests, scarves, etc., is so exquisite that the items become works of art. (Prices range from \$40 to \$4,000. Some have been acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art for display.)

Among the dazzling pieces at the Gallery you'll find a multi-colored, crocheted "Samurai Top," by Sharron Hedges, inspired by Japanese samurai armor (shown on Miss Schafler in the photograph above); striking kimonos by Linda Mendelson with poetry knitted on the back; a cape by Susanna Lewis with repeated images of the Chrysler Building on it; hand-painted silk pieces by Julia Hill; and an extraordinary series of vests by Joan Steiner adorned with appliqué that recreates four rooms in the house where the artist grew up.

The Gallery, which is open Monday through Saturday from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM, also served to bring Ms. Schafler and Mr. Dale together. "He was attracted by our window display," says his fiancée, "and he walked in. That was two years ago." They are to be married on March 23.
 - LOUIS BOTTO

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