

Rubbish to runway

Trashique puts local artists to the ultimate test: create runway-caliber fashion purely from trash while emulating the style of world-renowned artists.

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Where can you combine fashion, art and trash and get away with it? And actually call it entertainment?

Nowhere but Trashique, where a small army of artists produce runway ensembles that rival Paris or Milan — all handcrafted from recycled trash.

The event on April 20, a fundraiser for the Fresno Art Museum, draws its trash theme from Earth Day's recognition of our natural environment. Local artists are tasked with creating with fashions made completely out of recycled items. The fashions must be inspired by a famous artist's paintings. This is no easy assignment.

Professional choreography, hair and makeup, also by local specialists, puts the icing on the cake. When models take to the runway, guests will have a hard time believing the fashions are constructed of trash. The artists' conceptualizations of the show's theme are wild, crazy and outlandish, yet absolutely amazing in their use of material rubbish.

Participating artists fiercely labor over creations that take many hours to fabricate.

Veteran Trashique artist Cala Carter draws her inspiration for her three pieces from Caravaggio's painting "La Medusa," Roy Lichtenstein's "Oh Alright," and Nam Jun Paik's "Electronic Devices," all

connected with wires.

Her creative process starts as a blank canvas. Through the trash and recycled materials she finds, she experiments with how the rubbish responds to her artistic direction.

The trash and rubbish can come from anywhere. For example, a friend provided Carter with mylar because years ago a local company, Fresno Decorating, gave her huge rolls of slightly damaged

material. iLoveToCreate (Duncan Ceramics) also provided art materials and trash from their facility.

Carter and a fellow artist rented a storage unit so they could accumulate found materials and not overwhelm their homes with trash.

Many types of glues and duct tape hold Carter's trash creations together. In building a Medusa headpiece, Carter uses teal, green, blue and silver mylar strips over pipe cleaner bases to form the snakes on Medusa's head. "As an artist, you can experiment if your materials are not so costly to begin with," says Carter. "The artist's process is continual, and that's what makes it fun." With four to six months lead time, the artists have time to search for new materials, discuss pieces with fellow Trashique artists, and make alterations up to the last minute.

"My husband is very understanding about my trash container on the patio...he's always glad when I'm done!" says Carter.

Third-year participants Leonard and Susan Filgate have selected Gustav Klimt for their artist inspiration. Klimt is known for his gold pieces and Susan was lucky to have plenty of gold and red "trash" left over from the Super Bowl. Expect to see recycled Super Bowl decorations, vegetable bags, cardboard and other surprises.

"Trashique is an amazing, spectacular and surreal experience," says Filgate.

Leslie Batty, a Trashique neophyte, is inspired by one of art history's greatest and has chosen Salvador Dali as her inspiration. Her trash haul comes from years of saving bread ties, which will definitely make it into her design.

She's experimenting with mesh vegetable bags that might be used as knitting over a hat. Being one to love scale and grandeur, Batty is planning on making two pieces for the runway show, and possibly a third.

Batty is one of six young contemporary, up-and-



△ **Top:** Trashique artist Cala Carter.

Above: Trashique artist Leslie Batty.

Both are busy preparing for this year's runway show.

▷ **Rhomie Thompson** made this dress out of lottery scratchers.



coming artists selected to showcase their work in the current “Breakthrough” exhibition at the Fresno Art Museum. Her paintings depict her deep understanding and love of fashion and will be on display during Trashique.

A total of 55 artists are participating in April’s show. Expect to see a total of 75 creations as some artists will create multiple fashions. This year, look forward to seeing inspirations from such great artists as Erté, Judy Chicago, Roy Lichtenstein, Salvador Dali, Gustav Klimt, and more.

“I look forward to the reaction from the crowd. You will not believe you are in Fresno. Fresno is a huge art city and there are lots of talented artists that call Fresno home. We’re a mecca for art. So much is happening in the Valley, and Trashique is an amazing event to showcase these powerful artists,” says Linda Cano, executive director of FAM.

This is the Fresno Art Museum’s signature fundraising event, designed to create local awareness not only of the museum, but also to celebrate exciting and innovative art forms with its long-time supporters and new audiences. The entire evening takes place in a transformed museum starting in the sculpture garden, continuing into the art galleries where lively music, entertainment, food and drink await until the fashion show begins.

Tickets cost \$100 a person and the event is expected to sell out. To find out more about Trashique, visit The Fresno Art Museum’s Facebook page or its website at www.fresnoartmuseum.org.^{CV}