

## Time Out New York, July 7-13, 2005

### "Fear Gear"

Roebling Hall/Chelsea, through Jul 30 (see Chelsea).

**F**ear Gear" poses the question: What would happen if paranoia overtook personal style? The show could easily have deteriorated into a superficial fashion statement, but curators Euridice Arratia and Elizabeth Beer don't skirt the most obvious threat of the moment—the war in Iraq. And with ten of its 14 contributors being women artists, the show also opens the door to a revival of feminist art as a tool of protest, recalling first-wave feminist tactics of the early 1970s.

Combining homeland security with home-improvement tips, the show proposes some interior-decorating alternatives to fallout shelters, ranging from "New World Order" wallpaper by the design firm 2x4 to Lucy Orta's *Refuge Wear—Habitent*, an aluminum-coated hut that can be both worn and lived in. Jean Shin deconstructs military uniforms, cover-

ing a wall with sleeves and pant legs and hanging the remnants of the suits like an alien predator from the ceiling, while Libby McInnis creates necklaces from glass vials. Filled with pharmaceuticals and makeup, they are meant to be broken open in case of emergency.

The best works here are two viciously funny videos, Patty Chang's *Fan Dance* and Maria Marshall's *The Emperor and His Clothes*. As an industrial fan blasts her with paint, Chang dances, violently splattered but undaunted. Meanwhile, in Marshall's piece, a young boy stands in a desert landscape, putting on and taking off an absurd amount of clothing, while Bush's infamous "weapons of mass destruction" speech provides the soundtrack. Both works capture the futility of seeking refuge in clothing—or in art—at a time when

the real dangers we face may be bigger than any we could imagine. —Barbara Pollack



Patty Chang, still from *Fan Dance*, 2005.

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