

March 7, 2011

# Subversive Artists Host a Party at the Woolly

By CATHAY CHE

The Woolly, the semi-secret lounge in the basement of Woolworth Building, has hosted a smattering of private parties since opening in 2009. Fashion designers have presented after-parties there. Socialites-in-training have celebrated their birthdays (one Sweet 16 was even serenaded by Nicki Minaj). And various artists have left their mark on its faux-decaying walls and cluttered five-and-dime nooks.

That tradition continued Thursday night when Amy Smith-Stewart and Invisible-Exports, a tiny subversive gallery on the Lower East Side, unveiled two new works. Fay Ray, an artist, created a cancerous-looking collage behind the D.J. booth from hundreds of magazines clippings. And Alexander May photocopied black leaflets with one-liners — all funny, some dark — taped haphazardly on the odd-angled walls.

The party, which coincided with the start of [the Armory Show](#), also honored Eric Shiner, the new acting director of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, who wore a navy blazer and Pee-wee Herman-esque red bow tie for the occasion. Flashbulbs flickered off his shiny bald head.

"I was 16 years old when Andy Warhol died, living an hour outside of Pittsburgh, watching MTV and wishing I was here," Mr. Shiner said, waving at people across the room, clearly enjoying his moment.

The event drew a fashionably disheveled crowd of artists and art-world insiders including Genesis P-Orridge, Lisa Kirk and Deborah Kass. Penn Badgley, the young heartthrob from "[Gossip Girl](#)," also showed up, but a long list of V.I.P.s. distributed beforehand, which had included Alan Cummings and members of the Scissor Sisters, were no-shows.

Others arrived fashionably late. "We couldn't get here until '[American Idol](#)' finished," said Christopher Makos, who was Andy Warhol's portrait photographer and now half of the art duo The Hilton Brothers. He and his partner, Paul Solberg, wore identical gray metallic suit jackets and skinny half-ties they designed themselves and had made in Beijing.

"If you want to be an artist now, go to the 798," he said, referring to the Chinese capital's art

district. "It's incredible, like New York City in the 70s."

The Wooly was elbow-to-elbow until the open bar, courtesy of Tanteo tequila, ended around 11 p.m. Among those who stuck around was Jun Nakayama, a club kid dressed like a baby doll in platinum wig and pinafore. She had just returned from Japan, where she took care of her sick mother for six months. "Tokyo is so boring," she said. "Everyone smokes and I hate it."