



FASHION MUSIC ART CULTURE Interview FILM NIGHTLIFE GALLERIES VIDEO

NEWSLETTER RECAPS SHOWS

FASHION

AT HERMÈS, IT'S A MAD, MANS WORLD

by ZACK ETHEART

LIKE FOLLOWS! COMMENT

FOLLOW US!



LAUNCH GALLERY

← IMAGE + ADD TO MY LIBRARY # PHOTO

Sitting down with Veronique Nicholson and Leandro Erlich on Friday night in the Moore Building of Miami's Design District, it was hard to believe the two had only met three months prior, in February of this year—first, because they joined and joined with each other like old friends. (Nicholson, the artistic director of Hermès menswear, and Erlich, an art market-minded Argentinean installation artist, had it down to such necessary details as finishing each other's sentences and laughing at what we could only assume were inside jokes.) Second, because the product of their collaboration—11 installations that filled the cavernous five-story building around them—were so impressively massive and thoughtfully detailed that they looked at least like a year's worth of work.



Maybe it was the delight of having pulled off this slight of hand that had Nicholson and Erlich giggling to each other in the hours leading up to their exhibition's debut. "It's not every day that two geniuses get to work together," Erlich laughed. "John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Veronique and Leandro..."



Nicholson concurred: "A sparkling day."

The occasion for the exhibition was Hermès's third annual A Man's World event on Friday evening, this year in Miami, previously in Paris and Beijing. The inspiration: taken from this year's official theme at the house of Hermès, "oh, le sport," and more specifically, from Nicholson's athletic Spring 2013 collection. It was a challenging subject for an art exhibition, if sport is concerned with function and art with form. "The idea was to find a meeting point," Erlich explained. Fashion, with its focus on both, proved a perfect intersection. Hermès in particular, with its taste for clean silhouettes cut in new and unexpected materials, seemed a natural fit for the playful nature of Erlich's work.

CURRENT ISSUE
OCTOBER 2013
SUBSCRIBE NOW

LIKE INTERVIEW FOLLOW INTERVIEW

"I knew the work of Leandro from a long time ago," Nicholson remembered. "I saw the pincone, which I fell in love with, and even though I didn't know the man, I felt like he completely fit the sensibility that I have and try to express for the men's clothes. I love his sense of humor, his sensuality, his idea of *décoration*."

As the doors opened at eight o'clock for invitees (clients, buyers, and the generally fashionable of Miami), the Moore Building became something between a high-fashion fashionhouse and a living museum. A group of aesthetes acted as male models for the night. In Spring 2013 Hermès, walking on the previously high beams that crowned the building's atrium while mirrors that covered the floor made their bright all the more dizzying.

Over the next few hours, guests made their way, drinks in hand, through the rest of the space. A claustrophobic maze of interconnected dressing rooms was popular, as was a big green boxing ring the floor above it, cut in half and perfectly reflected against a mirror to allow the more adventurous in the crowd to step in and face their own worst enemy. Across the hall, a set of twin models mimicked each other's movements through a window between their two drastically furnished bedrooms. Mirrors, real or imagined, were everywhere—a luxury retail megastore with a *troupe* Foué! twist.

The other installations—trippy video projections inspired by waltz patterns, flight elevators that acted as vanishing boxes, a rack of suits that extended infinitely in either direction—all made for entertaining variations on the theme. The whole experience was laced with a virtual reality, as electronic trackers allowed a triptych of foggy mirrors to greet guests by name in a handwritten script as they stepped into Erlich's custom-built locker room—possibly the best party trick of the night, after a model who walked in and around the crowd, like a hallucination, casually donning a scuba mask.

After everyone had explored enough (and had enough Champagne to start questioning their own reality, the night finished off with loud music, low lighting, and dancing by a thoroughly entertained crowd. "It's just about meeting somebody who fits in your universe and doing something fun with them," Nicholson offered in summary. "I thought, Leandro, he's a good one, we have fun together."

"We're very excited to share it," Erlich added.

First thing Monday morning, guests received links to personalized microsites full of data from those aforementioned electronic trackers. Merry mirror messages, photo collages and scribbled drawings made for a souvenir from one of the best Miami art parties in recent memory—and that's counting Art Basel.

MoreFASHION