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# STYLE

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## Lacroix fashions brighten benefit for S.F. Ballet on Friday

By Sylvia Rubin  
CHRONICLE FASHION EDITOR

**I**n the minimalist early 1990s, fashion hit rock bottom for extravagant designer Christian Lacroix. Where were the colors? The prints? The joie de vivre?

This sober era of no-frills fashion, complete with models who looked strung out, was dubbed heroin chic. It was the antithesis of Lacroix's bouncy, colorful, folkloric vision. The ladies who lunch, who had once worn his embroidered jackets and abstract-print dresses, had taken to black and gray suits with white shirts and little or no jewelry. But the designer, who started his label in 1987, prevailed, and this year marks his 20th in the business.

On Friday, Lacroix's colorful spring 2008 collection — as well as six extravagant looks from the haute couture fall 2007 collection — come to San Francisco for the annual San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary benefit fashion show and luncheon at the Westin St. Francis, sponsored by Saks Fifth Avenue.

This show is one of the more elaborate runway events to hit San Francisco in a long time.

There will be huge hats, towering tresses, big baubles and startling eye makeup.

# En pointe

Lacroix is flying in his top hairstylist from Tokyo, who will require 11 assistants. Head makeup artist Robert Williams, of Chanel at Saks, is also bringing extra help. The show is being styled by Macha Eliez at Lacroix, who is coming from Paris.

For the spring 2008 ready-to-wear collection, the models will be outfitted in bold, graphic West African-style head wraps to go along with the swirly, abstract print dresses, including ones with jeweled bodices thick with colorful chunky charms. Yellow, fuchsia and purples dominate the color palette. Lacroix was inspired by photographs from the 1940s, and there is a '40s feel in the wide trousers and strong shoulders of a printed chiffon-belted dress. There are some tailored coats and suits mixed in with loose, flowing caftans.

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Center stage: San Francisco Ballet's Yuan Tan wears Christian Lacroix's hand-painted gazar gown with jeweled bodice, one of the looks in the Ballet's benefit show.

MARK CONSTANTINI / The Chronicle



Kendra Stanley repurposes rain jackets to make eco-friendly shopping bags.

**PAPER OR NYLON?**

## A cleaner environment is in the bag

By Sarah Adler  
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Whether it's repurposed rice sacks, recycled juice boxes, surplus military tents, unused car upholstery or ripped sail cloth, bagmakers are experimenting with all sorts of materials to create alternatives to plastic bags. In San Francisco, the phenomenon is being fueled by a city ordinance and eco-designers such as Kendra Stanley, who seek to change consumer behavior — one bag at a time.

As the Nov. 20 deadline looms for San Francisco's grocery stores to transition from plastic bags made from polyethylene to biodegradable ones that do less harm to the environment, Stanley is sewing up a storm in her Bernal Heights home.

Stanley used to taper jeans for friends

**"We have triggered a mini cultural revolution with a growing interest in using reusable alternates that are not your common bag."**

Supervisor ROSS MIRKARIMI

in high school. "Friends, their friends and even passers-by would line up after school with their jeans because they heard about my creative stitching," recalls the 38-year-old transplant from Colorado. Last year, Stanley finished a degree in nonprofit business administration at University of San Francisco, gaining skills she says that

are now helping her respond to the plastic-bag initiative.

"If you're not trying to make the community around you better, then what are you doing? I want to use my hands, but also have a political impact."

Her line of grocery bags, City Bag Trade ([www.citybagtrade.com](http://www.citybagtrade.com)), is made from repurposed rain jackets. Stanley says she felt the canvas totes on the market were unstylish and unwieldy, with their thin straps and extra bulk, so she set out to build a better bag that was both practical and fashionable. The bags, featuring Stanley's intricately designed threadwork, recycle as much of the jacket as possible, including zippers and pockets. And the bags are waterproof.

As Stanley puts it, "The style factor resonates with people, and there's an urban

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# City's retailers gearing up for Nov. 20 ordinance deadline

► BAG

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practicality to it." To maximize sustainability, any leftover scraps are used to make compact pouches. Known to friends as the bag lady, Stanley scours Bay Area thrift shops weeknights after working as an e-biz health care analyst. On weekends, she's busy cutting patterns and piecing together her bags, often with advice from friends about thread color, design and handle size.

She has handed out her City Bags free to friends, family and even random shoppers at trunk shows to encourage environmentally friendly habits. This kind of "guerrilla bagging," as she calls it, is a way to encourage people to think about the overuse of plastic bags and their damage to the environment.

Since starting City Bag Trade this summer, she estimates she's given away about 50 bags and has about 50 orders. Stanley doesn't charge a set price. Instead she asks customers either to send in a used rain jacket from which to make a bag or to negotiate a fee. She also offers instructions and patterns on her Web site. She hopes to partner with local businesses, offering customized City Bags with store logos.

But making a profit is not Stanley's goal. She says she wants to increase environmental awareness and change public behavior. She also believes companies such as hers are part of the city's culture.

"There's a level of openness to creativity and flexibility around artistic expression that exists in San Francisco," says Stanley, "and my bags fit into that vibe. Our community is both eclectic and caring."

Meanwhile, the rest of the city is gearing up to comply with the ban on nonbiodegradable bags. Local food retailers, such as Trader Joe's, Whole Foods and Rainbow Grocery, are already selling reusable plastic and canvas bags. Falletti Foods, a family-owned grocery store that reopened a year ago after losing its lease in 2000, is running through the last of its plastic bags and will offer a synthetic bag for 99 cents and a canvas bag for \$5, as well as paper



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RICK KARP, president of Cole Hardware

bags and new corn-based bags to replace plastic.

The owner's six-year absence from the grocery scene has provided him with anecdotal evidence about bag behavior. "When we (restarted) the business, we definitely saw a change in bag behavior," says James "Tick" Falletti. "People's attitudes have changed over the years. We don't say 'Paper

or plastic?' anymore. We now say, 'Is paper OK?'"

San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who sponsored the plastic-bag ordinance, says he is not surprised by the local response. "We have triggered a mini cultural revolution with a growing interest in using reusable alternatives that are not in your common bag," says Mirkarimi. "There is something about San Franciscans, our spirit – when people hear about the initiative, they take action."

Entrepreneurs and artisans have approached Mirkarimi with requests to create a San Francisco

bag, and he's encouraging the San Francisco Arts Commission and other local art-advocacy organizations to explore the possibility of grants to local artists who want to respond to the bag initiative.

"This isn't really fringe and not just wedded to S.F.," says Mirkarimi. Many municipalities, from London to the supervisor's hometown of Jamestown, R.I., are moving in this direction.

Cole Hardware, although not required to comply with the ordinance, is giving customers a reusable bag with every purchase of \$20 or more. The bag is made from woven polypropylene – du-

urable and wide enough to hold at least three or four plastic bags worth of groceries.

"If we can educate people and get them to change behavior 25 percent of the time – and remember to bring a reusable bag – then it's worth it. We are seeing this happen," says Rick Karp, president of Cole Hardware.

Cole, which was the first Bay Area hardware store to receive a green certificate from the city's Department of the Environment earlier this year, has given away about 30,000 bags in the past six months.

Mirkarimi believes there will

be strong compliance and participation from most of the city's grocers come Nov. 20.

This is "the epitome of a good corporate partnership versus other corporations that don't want to take the personal or social responsibility for the impacts they create on our environment or on a taxpayer's purse," says Mirkarimi. "This is what the law is aimed at."

Stanley sees the bag initiative, and her part in it, as a form of citizen power. People are "going to feel empowered each day they use (an alternative bag), and in turn feel motivated to do good and spread the word."



**Eco-chic:** Kendra Stanley recycles as much of the rain jacket as possible in her work, left, making reusable shopping bags, above.

Photo by DEANNE FITZMAURICE / The Chronicle