

The Bohemian Society

Designers and business partners Victor Wilde and Heather Scott set out to create a one-of-a-kind collection that would appeal to fashion iconoclasts.

"The Bohemian Society is our own society of people who don't go by the rules of regular society," explained Wilde, who used to earn a living in New York's subways as "Mercury Man," a living statue.

Wilde relocated to the West Coast after completing a documentary about performance art. Then he and Scott, his fiancée and a former fashion model, decided to create an apparel line as an homage to secret societies.



Heather Scott and Victor Wilde

"The line is reflective of who we are," Wilde said. "Both of us have lived unconventional lives and traveled around and met different people—culminate that all together, and out comes The Bohemian Society."

The company bowed just three months ago with a line of T-shirts decorated with military patches and rare screen prints that represent secret societies such as the Freemasons. For example, one shirt features a sword with a crescent and a sphinx head. Another features a griffin, a winged monster with an eagle-like head and the body of a lion.

The designers are eager to infiltrate Los Angeles' fashion scene with their unique



clothing. Last month, buyers and stylists got an early preview of the line at Smashbox

Studios in Culver City, Calif., during Los Angeles Fashion Week. The twosome produced 100 pieces for Spring 2004 in 10 days, Wilde said.

"We met with Smashbox, and they asked us if we could have a line ready for fashion week," Wilde explained. "We weren't sure about it ourselves, but we had to be confident. From then until the show we worked nonstop. And we've spent the past few weeks recovering."

On the runway, The Bohemian Society showed women's ensembles that were both flirtatious and militaristic. A black-and-white asymmetrical off-the-shoulder convertible mini-dress came in cotton jersey knit. A peach silk camisole, accessorized by a cameo pin with lace, featured the word "Seduce" in graffiti print. The top was paired with green twill army pants with quilted patches and red-and-black striped ties at the knees.

For the men's collection, the designers showed a wool gabardine sports coat—with contrast stitching, a hand-sewn skull-and-bones wool patch and a handgun silkscreen on the sleeves—over a cotton T-shirt with a lightning-bolt print and distressed vintage Levi's jeans.

Wilde's interest in recycled military attire began when he was a teenager.

"I used to wear cowboy boots and army pants all the time," he said. "But I don't think I would ever be in the army because I'm against violence. I just like the way it looks—military clothes are designed to have a commanding presence."

The line uses vintage apparel as well as customized screen prints created by local contractors, Wilde said.

Currently, the line is only available at the Lisa Kline boutique in Los Angeles, where retail prices range from \$25 for a basic screen-printed cotton T-shirt to \$200 for a wool gabardine sports coat. Another novel item in the collection is a necktie that comes in a plethora of screen prints—including scorpions, AK47s and skulls—for \$18.

The duo said they want to keep the collection small and only sell the line to specialty boutiques and stylists. Keeping the line's production limited puts it in the category of "secret fashion," which is part of The Bohemian Society's ethos. "When you wear The Bohemian Society, you're wearing a secret society of fashion," Wilde said.

For more information, call (323) 420-3944, or visit www.thebohemiansociety.com.

— Claudia Figueroa

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