

Ballroom Marfa and Max Mara Host a Riotous Spaghetti Western Gala

By Lilah Ramzi | November 7, 2018



Sofia Coppola and Rainer Judd; courtesy of BFA

There's really only one way an Italian fashion brand and a Texan art center can come together to celebrate an iconic filmmaker: a spaghetti Western-theme gala. Good thing that's precisely how Max Mara and Ballroom Marfa (for the unfamiliar: the gallery and arts organization is housed in a converted dancehall and is responsible for the iconic Prada Marfa) honored Sofia Coppola last night. Entering the event, guests were at once transported from West 50th Street to the Wild Wild West of Hollywood's yore.

Beyond the swinging saloon-style doors, were desertlike backdrops, bales of hay, vintage cameras, a smoking campfire, cacti, and tumbleweeds galore.

So who was the mastermind behind the soiree? Artist Matt Jackson, as Max Mara's Maria Giulia Maramotti tells me: "We wanted to give the event an Italian twist!" As for the dress code, the invitation read: *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* after Clint Eastwood and Sergio Leone's famous cowboy flick. Maramotti interpreted the wardrobe requirements wonderfully, mish-mashing Max Mara's famous camel with an embroidered Mexican top. (Others were slightly more inventive; one festive guest sported a suit of faux spaghetti.) "I'm proud that we're honoring a woman artist and a director," Maramotti continued, identifying her favorite Coppola film as *Lost in Translation*.

During cocktails (an apropos mix of Casa Dragones tequila and limoncello drinks), guests perused the art to be auctioned off later in the night. Eventually, the crowd wandered to the dining room to a twangy, harmonica-heavy soundtrack. Southwestern vibes abounded in the space (dazzler rugs carpeted the stage) and every once and a while, an Italianate element would appear (Chianti-bottle candleholders). It's worth noting that the whole event was whipped together by the mastermind behind Prentice Art, Bettina Prentice, who, after a decade of producing the art world's most alluring events, hosted her final event last night. And what a swan song it was!

Attendees included Lauren and Andres Santo Domingo (the former, chic in Marni), Allison Sarofim, Lazaro Hernandez, Nicholas Kirkwood, Laure Hériard Dubreuil, Eugenie Niarchos, Casey Fremont, Kate Young, Brett Heyman, Ballroom Marfa cofounder Virginia Lebermann, and Jesse Lazowski. First up on stage was other Ballroom Marfa cofounder Fairfax Dorn, who began with a joke: "I would much rather be here in this room with all of you than watching CNN." (She was, of course, referring to the outcome of the midterm elections.) Next on the stage was Ballroom Marfa's executive director Laura Copelin. "It feels really wonderful to be around everyone who understands the transformative power of art, we are all here because we believe in the power of creation."

Copelin then brought up Rainer Judd (daughter of artist Donald Judd, who was a mayor of sorts to the town of Marfa) to introduce the woman of the night, Sofia Coppola. Judd and Coppola are longtime friends, and Judd admitted herself that "I'm biased, so there's nothing I am going to say that's not biased because I love her so much." Coppola graciously accepted the honor and award (a miniature golden carrot) and treated the audience to a little film, "an old home movie from my first trip to Marfa in 1991 in our early 20s when I was a CalArts Fine Arts student trying to become a painter." Lucky for us, Coppola also tried her hand at filmmaking.



From left to right: Maria Giulia Maramotti and Laura Copelin; Fairfax Dorn and Sofia Coppola; Virginia Lebermann and Sean Daly; courtesy of BFA



From left to right: Allisson Sarofim; Bettina Prentice, Valerie Boster and Christine Heller; Alessandra Neidich; courtesy of BFA



From left to right: Kate Young; Rashid Johnson, Claire Olshan and Bettina Prentice; atmosphere of the event; courtesy of BFA



From left to right: Cactus Blossoms; Maria Giulia Maramotti and Lauren Santo Domingo; courtesy of BFA