

Museum of Arts and Design Hosts ‘Garden of Earthly Delights’ Gala

By Leigh Nordstrom | May 20, 2016



Ghada Amer

Photo by Benjamin Lozovsky/BFA.com

Any excuse to don a flower crown, and the fashion crowd is in. Thursday night was no exception, as the Museum of Arts and Design threw its annual gala, this year sponsored by Roger Vivier and themed “The Garden of Earthly Delights.” Guests including Sofia Sanchez de Betak, Lily Kwong, Tali Lennox, Martha Hunt, Britt Maren, Kate Foley, Harley Viera-Newton, Cleo Wade, Indre Rockefeller, Arden Wohl and Leandra Medine gathered inside the Americas Society Upper East Side town house, done up by floral boutique group Putnam & Putnam with a tree constructed of laurel branches as well as tables ripe with cherries, mushrooms and poppies.

“I lost my boyfriend,” said a flower-free Wohl, wiggling out of a photo op. Past her, a group of gentlemen in tuxedos, freshly descended by the downtown banks, discussed their television habits (unsurprisingly, the bros like “Game of Thrones”).

Harlem-based, Egyptian-born artist Ghada Amer was the honoree for the evening. “I think I understand why they like my work,” she said of MAD, “because I always work with crafts and low art, high art, all of those issues. Why should there be a design museum and an art museum, what’s the difference? What’s art and what’s design? How do you separate this?”

Amer is known, and self-identifies, as a feminist artist. “I deal with a lot of women’s issues — for me it’s very important to empower women,” she said. “I mainly deal with issues of desire and love. I always have focused on women’s issues. It was always acceptable for myself.” And feminism’s recent revival into pop culture’s conscience has had little sway on Amer. “It’s not about what’s in or what’s out; for me, it’s more about survival,” she added. “It’s not about fashion. Actually, I’m not even dealing with it – they are dealing with me.”



L to R: Kate Foley and Harley Viera-Newton; Sofia Sanchez de Betak; Martha Hunt; Cleo Wade; Lily Kwong; Leandra Medine