

The Blogs That Took Over the Tents

By Cate T. Corcoran

NEW YORK — Fashion bloggers have snuck into the tents at Bryant Park this fashion week, and they're not always polite about the shows they see.

The first blogger to comment live from inside the tents was Julie Fredrickson of *Almost Girl* on Friday morning, who called the John Bartlett men's collection "just slightly odd" and said the "combination of lumberjack bearded men with Tobias Wolf Old School was not a look I can really grasp."

Lesley Scott and Rachel Porter of *Fashiontribes* were also planning to blog live from the tents on Friday afternoon.

Bloggers are a small but growing presence at the shows. Most do not post live, but comment on what they see later from home. While the number of bloggers who actually make it to the tents is small, there is an enormous, and growing, number of fashion and shopping-related blogs: about 2 million, according to Technorati Inc., a research firm that tracks blogs online, or slightly less than 10 percent of the 2.7 billion blogs the company tracks. (That number includes blogs in languages that use the Roman alphabet and that contain anything fashion-related, including sites such as *Pink Is the New Blog*, which focuses on celebrities.)



Julie Fredrickson of *Almost Girl*, blogging from Bryant Park after seeing the Red Dress Collection Friday afternoon; Designer Nanette Lepore wrote about makeup artist Polly Osmond of MAC, who is creating a "young glamour" look for Lepore's show Tuesday, in her blog.



"Fashion used to be very dictatorial," said Constance White, style director of eBay and a former fashion journalist, speaking at a panel on fashion blogging hosted by *glam.com* last week. "The impact [blogs are] having is the idea that the whole population is taking control and ownership of fashion. As we used to say at *The New York Times*, 'Our jobs are in jeopardy.' Everybody's a fashion critic. Everyone can comment on whether Reese Witherspoon should have worn the same dress that Kirsten Dunst wore before." Perhaps in

five or 10 years, blogs will have the power to make unknown fashion designers into stars, she said.

Fredrickson, who is 22 and graduated from college in December, started *Almost Girl* about a year ago. She plans to work full time for *Fashiontribes* as soon as the shows are over.

"It's my first time at fashion week," she said Friday. "It's very exciting. We put up five or six posts from the morning shows already."

She plans to attend about four shows a day; the one she is most looking forward to is *Doo.Ri*.

Fredrickson gained admis-

est, and everybody else is talking about how fabulous she looks."

Scott Schuman of *The Sartorialist* posts photos of street fashion and writes about his visits to showrooms of unusual men's wear brands, two topics not much covered in the mainstream fashion press, he pointed out. Like many of the fashion bloggers, he has experience in the industry and inside connections. A former showroom owner and retail salesperson for such stores as Valentino, he is a full-time dad of two little girls and goes out hunting for pictures on the weekend

that hip on the Internet, but blogs are fun and we talk about blogs all the time. There are different blogs here the girls always follow. Mostly, it's for the humor."

So far, Lepore has written on *glam.com* about the grueling hours during fashion week and revealed that her staff eats bagels rather than seaweed.

The stereotype of a blogger is a lonely soul sitting in her bedroom, sending her innermost thoughts to anyone who will read them in cyberspace, but blogs are increasingly taken up by the mainstream. In June, Finney

“The impact [blogs are] having is the idea that the whole population is taking control and ownership of fashion.”

— Constance White, eBay

Actually,
there is one substitute
for experience.

School of Continuing & Professional Studies

FIT is for creative thinkers seeking professional development in art and design, business and technology, or the liberal arts.

Advance your career with:

- Evening and weekend courses and degree programs
- Hot Topics certificates for career enhancement
- Customized courses for corporate training
- Entrepreneurship and small business development

It's not too late to register.

FOR A CATALOG:
www.fitnyc.edu/wwd
1 888 FIT-IS-NYC ext. 39



Where creativity gets down to business.

Fashion Institute of Technology
Seventh Ave. at 27 St. State University of New York

sion to the shows through *Fashiontribes*, whose editor and publisher, Lesley Scott, has been attending fashion week for about four years as a freelance stylist. Scott started *Fashiontribes* last May.

Bloggers see themselves as truth tellers in a world where the truth is hard to come by.

"What we offer is a personal point of view," said Scott. "I love magazines, but they can come across as corporate. Also, you get the speed [with blogs]. People like the snarky elements."

"If you're a junior writer at *Vogue*, you can't write a scathing review of *Oscar de la Renta*," said Kathryn Finney of *The Budget Fashionista*. "Whereas, as a blogger, I have a lot more flexibility because my boss is me. Last year, I was really mean to Nicole Richie, but she did look like an anorexic spoon. I'm being hon-

when his wife, a design director at the Limited, can watch their daughters.

"It's like a reality show," he said.

Getting access to the tents can be difficult for bloggers. Finney's first time was in September 2003. "I think they thought I was a print publication," she said. "It's really hard unless you have a connection. I think they're afraid bloggers will expose how ridiculous they are. I love fashion, but sometimes it gets pretty ridiculous." Her first time in the tents, she shadowed Robert Verdi of *Fashion Police* and picked up the goodie bags he didn't take.

Imaginary Socialite is popular with the fashion assistants at Nanette Lepore, who is doing her own blog from her studio this week and posting on *glam.com*.

"It's really fun," Lepore said in a telephone interview. "I'm not

has a book coming out about how to be glamorous on a budget called "How to Be a Budget Fashionista" from Ballantine Books.

About 11 percent of Internet users read blogs regularly, according to a study by the Tides Center called the Pew Internet & American Life Project. About 70,000 new blogs are created daily, according to Technorati.

"Obviously, she [Finney] had a huge fan base following her postings and an audience already in place," said Duffy. "It's a new vehicle to drive book sales."

Fredrickson also has a book she hopes to publish, a chic-lit novel based on the idea of Prada and Plato meeting. Her agent recently dropped her, saying the book was too intellectual. "I'm sure someone will be interested," said Fredrickson. "Smart comedy is always popular."

Hilfiger Discloses Management Changes

NEW YORK — Tommy Hilfiger Corp. has disclosed some management changes, including the departure of its group president for U.S. wholesale and domestic licensing.

Lynn Shanahan, the group president, has left after 15 years with the firm. Her last day was Friday. Shanahan's wholesale responsibilities will be assumed by Allan Zwerner, president of men's wholesale. Zwerner previously was president of licensing at Perry Ellis Inc. and was head of men's wear for catalogue and stores at J. Crew Inc. He also held a variety of positions at Federated Department Stores during his 25-year tenure there.

"We have taken important steps in the U.S. wholesale business, while our licensing part-

nerships remain best in class," Shanahan said in a statement.

David Dyer, chief executive officer, said in a statement, "Lynn's leadership has been instrumental in building the Tommy Hilfiger brand on a global basis. She has built our domestic and international licensing programs, which today represent about \$1 billion in wholesale equivalent sales, and has established some of our most important vendor relationships. We thank her for her contributions and wish her well in her future endeavors."

Sharon Waldron, executive vice president of domestic licensing, who reported to Shanahan, now reports to Bob Rosenblatt, chief operating officer and group president.