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Swap-O-Rama-Rama BY AUTUMN HOWELL AND LIZ GOOD

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED to get rid of your old clothing but felt like giving it away was such a waste? With Swap-O-Rama-Rama, you can bring in your old duds and take home new ones. The best part is that once you have chosen your new duds, you can take them to one of the creative tables and add a new screen print or embroidery, or take them apart and create something new. “Out with the old, and in with the new” is what this event is all about.

Swap-O-Rama-Rama was created by artist Wendy Tremayne in response to consumerism and waste in American culture. The swap is an effort to turn consumers into creators by teaching simple techniques to modify clothing. Each attendee is asked to bring a bag of clothing and a \$10 donation. At the first swap, held October 9, 2005, in New York City, 4,000 pounds of clothing were recycled. A seasonal event in New York and now being launched in other cities, each swap features workshops by local artists and recycled-fashion shows.

A February NYC event drew between 500 and 600 swappers. The tables—labeled with categories such as pants, tops, and accessories—were constantly being refreshed with new items as other donors arrived, and people would flock to the tables as if they held a pile of brand-new Prada bags. Some shoppers were looking for that vintage pair of floral bell-bottoms, others merely a garment without stains or holes.

The creative areas included a Macintosh computer station to create prefab screen-print designs; this area was crowded by those seeking to update an old T-shirt or jacket. Others looking for a more personal creative touch were occupying a table with sewing machines for alterations and an embellishment table.

Tremayne encourages others to host Swap-O-Rama-Ramas in their hometowns and offers support by exchanging information and resources online (a Swap-O-Rama-Rama DIY manual is currently under production). The next fair will be held in Durham, North Carolina, June 25. www.swaporamarama.org.

TOP RIGHT: Photo: Kelly McKay. BOTTOM RIGHT: Photo: Elisabeth Miller.

