

# The New York Times

## Arts

THE WEEK AHEAD

May 5 — 11  
Published: May 3, 2013

### **Couture as Armor, Id and Manifesto**

It's been good to see the fashion-as-art thing, so clunky a decade or so ago (Armani at the Guggenheim, etc.), grow messy and confusing. The 2011 Alexander McQueen retrospective at the Met got the ball rolling with its wearable sculptures and its mood of satire and menace. And it paved the way for out-there items like "White Petals Surround Your Yellow Heart," a show that remains at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia through July 28.

"White Petals," organized by Anthony Elms, is based on the proposition that one way or another, you wear what you are. The hip-hop and graffiti artist Rammellzee (1960-2010), spiritual heir of Sun Ra, was a self-stylized cadet in the army of Afrofuturism and armored himself accordingly. Such existential mashups define a show that also includes Hilton Als, Lynda Benglis, Leif Elggren, Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, and Amy Yao among its conceptual couturists. At last, fashion-as-art-as-life. (215-898-7108; icaphila.org)

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