

# Scene

life, arts and the pursuit of happiness

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# Knit wit

## Tulsa designer reigns with ponchos on the fringe of fashion

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World Scene Writer

**T**erasa Fadem lives life on the fringe — or for the fringe, to be more specific. Fadem is a multi-faceted artist whose latest creative outlet taps into one of her childhood dreams: fashion design.

"I've always loved it," Fadem said. "Since I was a little girl, I always wanted to be a fashion designer."

Thanks to a little knit wit, Fadem is realizing that dream. Her name appears on the label sewn into each knitted, fabulously fringed poncho she makes.

"She has a beautiful eye for color," said Mona Green of Boulevard's, 3749 S. Peoria Ave., which carries several of Fadem's creations.

Ponchos were a popular accessory this spring and will continue to be this fall. But Fadem "sees them in a more elegant manner," Green said, working mostly with unusual, luxury materials, including hard-to-find yarns from Italian mills.

Fadem's bent toward fashion was evident in grade school, having mixed what her mother taught her with what she learned alone about sewing. By high school, she sewed much of what she wore, with the exception of her Levi's jeans. She even made both her junior and senior prom dresses.

Art, which she expressed in various media, was her passion, if not her full-time profession. "I definitely had plenty of art work to show for my time," she said, from painting porcelain to designing jewelry.

Some of that jewelry can be found at the M.A. Doran Gallery, 3509 S. Peoria Ave., which has carried Terasa Fadem Designs for about three years, said gallery director Emily Morrison.

The pendants, rings and earrings she designs feature large semi-precious and precious gems, Morrison said, such as bi-color tourmaline set in 14-karat gold, and a ring made to look like the Greek god Atlas holding the world — or, on this particular piece, holding a pearl.

"It's very unusual," Morrison said. "The scale is fun and different for people who like to make a statement." Her jewelry also can be found at Zark's in Eureka Springs, Ark., as well as a couple of boutiques in Santa Fe, N.M.

Until a year ago, knitting was a medium that Fadem had not yet dabbled in. After a trip to Naturally Needlepoint at 5800 S. Lewis Ave., she wanted to learn.

"The light bulb just came on," she said. With some help from the store, she was soon making a couple of purses before venturing into ponchos.

Fadem doesn't follow a certain pattern when making her ponchos, she said. Her emphasis is on color and texture, and she sometimes makes changes in a poncho midway through making it.

Her favorite materials to use include mohair, merino wool, alpaca, silk, cashmere and hand-dyed cottons, she said. Many of these she finds in local stores, during trips or online. She'll also use ribbons and eyelash yarn.

Colors she uses range from wardrobe-staple black to a kaleidoscopic range of oranges, pinks, purples and greens.

The ponchos, from cropped to



Photos by JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

Fashion designer Terasa Fadem shows off some of the handmade ponchos she designs, on display at Boulevard's in Tulsa. Most of her designs are known for their colorful fringe made from unusual fabrics and yarns.



mid-length or a bit longer, are one-size-fits-all — "figure-flattering for every body type," Fadem said.

A customer can walk into Boule-

vard's — or Stanley Korshak in Dal-

las, by the way — and either buy a poncho there or have one custom made. That usually takes two to

three weeks.

What sets her ponchos apart, Fadem said, is the fringe. Not only does she use the yarns found in the body of the poncho, but she'll add different yarns to the fringe, too, making it more colorful, sometimes even sparkly depending on the materials she chooses.

Ponchos will always be in her "bag of tricks," she said, referring to them as "springboards for all the other things I could possibly do," such as shrugs, jackets and ruanas, which are like shawls or capes.

She wouldn't be where she is, Fadem said, without the support of her husband, Lloyd, as well as her friends. Artists have to have their support groups to keep them going.

"I'm constantly creating," she said. "And I intend on being around a long time doing this."

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## Notes on how to be a divine diva

A geisha shirt and Chinese take-out handbag do not a diva make.

I learned this hands-on Friday night as emcee for "Divas 2004, One Night Only" at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center.

 jason  
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WRIGHT


in the wright light

In case you missed it, "Divas 2004" was a fund-raiser for Health Outreach Prevention Education — H.O.P.E., for short — and featured the musical talents of several fabulous local sirens.

I am not, despite what a few friends might maintain, a diva. But I recognize what it takes — and what it does not — to be diva-like, particularly in front of a crowd.

### Divia directions

I've condensed what I learned into the following points:

#### No. 1: Exude/feign self-confidence.

This may take a mood-stabilizer of some form, perhaps a simple depressant (a glass of merlot works for me). Blues goddess and personal friend Rebecca Ungerman, who produced the event and asked me to emcee, helped me where I was lacking in this department.

#### No. 2: Plan your wardrobe wisely.

For the first act, I wore a dressy denim pant with a black, dragon-embroidered shirt, which matched my prop — a plastic handbag that looked like a Chinese takeout box. This is what I used to store factoid cards about H.O.P.E., which I'd whip out and share with the audience throughout the evening. Nothing went awry.

For the second act, however, I switched into boot-cut jeans, a '70s Nik Nik shirt with a geisha on the front (you know, sticking with the Asian theme) and vintage boots. Not being used to heels, I tripped over the mike cord and toppled the stand right when Mary Cogan came out. Just call me Grace. Note: Flats are big for fall — boots just make you fall.

#### No. 3: Avoid shiny skin.

Some days, especially when I'm hot, my face looks like I just mugged on a can of Crisco. Realizing that, divas Cindy Cain and John Sawyer came to my rescue with some red-reducing foundation and bronzer. They attacked me, really, like raptors trained by Lancome — but the effect was extraordinary. Divas do not, it seems, go without makeup.

#### No. 4: Do not carry wine onstage.

I was already loaded down with Chinese takeout and a clipboard, but I wanted to promote the concession area outside the theater by bringing out my glass of wine. The only thing this accomplished was making people think I'm a lush. A themed lush, but unflattering nonetheless.

#### No. 5: Do not ramble.

When something inappropriate slips out of your mouth, pretend you didn't notice, blink one eye hard several times like you're crazy, then go on. And smile — always smile, even if the mike cord is wrapping itself around your leg like an anaconda.

#### No. 6: Do not snatch things from other divas.

To raise more money for H.O.P.E., the divas and I took platform boots around the theater, begging for bucks for an encore — think firefighters at Labor Day minus the honking. I was following one boot-wielding diva around — like a geisha, if you appreciate the irony — and decided to take the boot from her. I still don't know why I did this, I just hope she forgives me. She and the man whose foot I stood on for a couple of seconds in order to reach a lady waving an Abe Lincoln at me.

#### No. 7: Finally, thank the audience.

If you have to, apologize to them. It depends on how many feet you stepped on and how much wine you spilled.

FYI: H.O.P.E. has programs including prevention education about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections; a statewide 24-hour HIV/AIDS hot line; and the only free, anonymous testing and counseling facility in northeastern Oklahoma.

For more information about H.O.P.E., call 749-8378.

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