



NAME:
E.V. Day
OCCUPATION: Artist
IN HER CLOSET: "It looks better than what's in my fridge," she says. The highlight: A red vinyl micro-mini dress, circa 1972.
PERSONAL STYLE: "Russ Meyer meets 2001 meets Pokémon."
NEXT PROJECT: "I plan to explode this silver Stephen Sprouse dress into a futuristic dissolving of sequins that will be very Star Trek."

Artist E.V. Day may blow up fashion, but she's no pyromaniac. In her "Exploding Couture" series, she has shattered formal party dresses into hundreds of little pieces that appear to hang perpetually in midblast. On view this month at the occasionally brilliant, often surprising Whitney Biennial, Day's "Bombshell" was created—or destroyed—from a copy of the Marilyn Monroe classic in *The Seven Year Itch*. ("Black Bombshell," one of three detonated dresses, is pictured behind Day.) "I systematically shred and suspend as I go," says Day of the demolition process, which involves scissors, fishing wire, and a vivid sense of deconstruction-chic.

Part cultural critique and part commentary on fashion's rigid codes, "Exploding Couture" points out, according to Day, "how absurd conventional images of women can be." Although she has always had an interest in clothes ("I like analyzing them—seeing how

fashion reflects what's going on in a larger picture"), pop symbols are at the root of all her work. "I start with an icon, and then I transform it. The process of the transformation is the statement," says Day, who has also done a series of mummified Barbies and a set of biomorphic blueprints inspired by Hugh Hefner's private jet.

Like many New York artists, Day lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in a huge converted warehouse loft—with high ceilings and highly volatile plumbing and electricity—because it's one of the last neighborhoods where she can afford the space to make her work. Also like many artists, she has another job to make ends meet: Freelancing as a prop stylist and set designer for low-budget commercials provides fodder for her ideas. "I get to see how consumer images are produced—and then get paid by the same machine that fuels my work," she says.

Shattering convention may be a cornerstone of Day's artistic ideology, but an extremist she is not. "I'm not making a bra-burning statement," she says. "My work is about sexuality, and all creatures and species have it." —ALANNA FINCKE

MODEL: DEBRA HAYES; MAKEUP: JERRY LEE; STYLING: LIZ BRYAN; HAIR: CHRIS WINTER