

THE WEARING OF THE GREEN

As Randolph Duke puts it, "Let's face it, a designer can't change the world. What fashion can be, though, is another mode of inspiration that makes people more aware. My fall collection is dedicated to the great outdoors and is meant to inspire people about nature, so that they will think and act in ways to ensure that there will be an outdoors to enjoy. It's that effort to inspire that I think is so important. You know how it goes: if everybody did just one little part . . ."

That notion of "one little part" inspired ELLE to invite Duke and the other designers on these pages—Todd Oldham, Betsey Johnson, Giorgio di Sant'Angelo, John Scher, and Michael Kors—to create one-of-

a-kind numbers and donate the proceeds from their sale to the effort to save the tropical rain forest. Some of the designs draw directly on natural themes, like the leafy motifs in Duke's bolero and in dresses by Oldham, Johnson, and Scher; others offer more metaphorical allusions, such as di Sant'Angelo's windblown ensemble and Kors's essence-of-forest-green ensemble. All have something in common: to make that "one little part" of difference.

Model Elle Macpherson also voices a healthy skepticism about an overly eager embrace of ecological causes. "I don't like to talk too much about the environment—I think it's too easy to talk about it in a pseudo-intellectual way that doesn't mean much. And I think too many people in the public eye use environmental issues as a way to promote their own image. It's more important to just do something." Among Macpherson's credits is a documentary film she recently hosted, *Whales, Dolphins, and Us*. "After having direct contact with whales and dolphins for six months, my respect for them, and my concern for the environment's problems, grew."

Direct contact has also inspired artists to become more active in save-the-planet causes. While facing the same questions of credibility that fashion personalities do, some major artists like Kenny Scharf, whose work has been included in many New York and international museum and gallery shows, have urgent personal reasons for getting involved. "I've been watching the destruction of the tropical rain forest firsthand, from the back door of my home in Brazil," says Scharf. "When

my wife, Tereza, who is from Bahia, and I first moved in five years ago, it was still very beautiful. Now the landscape is almost completely destroyed. It's one thing to read an abstract fact like 40 to 50 million acres of tropical forest disappear around the world every year, but if people saw the total ruin of the natural environment in action like I do in Bahia, they'd really be scared."

Even those who argue that predictions of environmental doom are unduly alarmist have been shaken by a recent report, *World Resources 1990-91*, prepared by the World Resources Institute with the United Nations. In it, the bad news is bad indeed: "very conservative" estimates of the huge loss of tropical forests are much worse than had been estimated, and the results of such deforestation will be "an unparalleled tragedy" for the planet. Among the sad facts: in each of several recent years, an area equal in size to the state of Washington has been totally deforested—40 to 50 million acres.

Why does this matter to us Temperate Zone dwellers? Because forests absorb carbon dioxide. With less forest, more of the gas builds up in the atmosphere, which means a warmer earth, thanks to the greenhouse effect. And an earth that is warmer by only a couple of degrees on the average will mean a planet very different

Left: All-cotton T-shirt. Available exclusively through ELLE and Martha International, NYC. For information on how to order T-shirts, see Retail Guide. Right: Sequin and bugle bead dress, Todd Oldham, one of a kind. Bracelets, Brad Oldham for Todd Oldham, one of a kind. Available through special order exclusively at Martha International, NYC.

T-shirt designed by artist Kenny Scharf. All profits will go to Companions of Arts and Nature, a foundation dedicated to preserving the rain forest.

