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JUST OPENED

Assembly New York

A fresh men's shop with an old-meets-new point of view. *By Jason Wilson*

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As the beast that is the menswear market continues to sprout newer and more lucrative tentacles, shop owners are casting stronger nets with which to tame it. This week, Greg Armas, former master of L.A.'s **Scout**, braves the NYC retail wilderness equipped with an aptly named bridle, Assembly. An avid vintage collector and former gallerist, Armas compiled an attractive collection of classic and contemporary men's clothing, antiques, and vinyl in a bold attempt to disseminate a style rather than singular must-haves. Armas's assemblage focuses on "concepts with a history and reference outside of the contemporary that creates a quality beyond the current trend-driven market." Translation: His vision is readily apparent as soon as you walk in the door.

Ksubi fishnet-knit sweatshirts blend perfectly next to a vintage black-velvet waistcoat hand-painted with a pointillist stagecoach motif. A bright pair of kente cloth sneakers rests above a rack of **Endovanera** jackets. Nearby, in a basket on the black hardwood floor, a pair of cerulean Stacey Adams trainers beg to be tampered with. Culled from shopping trips throughout Europe and Japan mostly, the shop's vintage selections threaten to eclipse the **Corpus** and **Rachel Comey** duds. "With vintage, you have all these amazing fabrics predating synthetics that are impossible to create anymore, unless you're a YSL or Dior." Case in point, a vintage winter-weight cardigan looks as if it could be the grandfather of the Henrik Vibskov aztec-inspired knits.

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Armas plans to elaborate on his particular brand of retail authenticity through a series of collaborations. "I'm excited about working with a lot of the designers on projects exclusive to Assembly that reach beyond clothing into objects, music, and the obscure," he says. A set of Austrian turntables and meticulously selected rare vinyls already compliment the fantastically tattered Led Zeppelin, Stevie Wonder, and Nirvana concert T-shirts. And though the store will also host a rotating exhibition of women's accessories, this gathering is essentially just for the boys. "Men taking an interest in their reception is important," says Armas. "As in nature, it's the male who usually has the responsibility of attracting the mate."

Assembly New York, 174 Ludlow Street (between Houston and Stanton streets); 212-253-5393.

Photos by Piera Gelardi

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