



devon meyers photo

Eve Lubin, left, and Cami Thompson model outfits from the Artware line.

Artware fashions opening eyes

by Duane Noriyuki

A carpet of green pasture is dotted by smooth, lean-bodied horses, and chickens peck at a farmyard tucked neatly in the peaceful Emma valley.

It's a gentle blend of rural and metropolitan, as Cami Thompson and Eve Lubin live the country life but set their sites on the yellow brick road to the city, to the Oz of the fashion industry.

For its credibility in fashion centers like New York and London that could launch their Artware Ltd partnership into the thick of the fast-paced and competitive fashion industry.

Designers of hand-crafted, hand-painted women's attire, Thompson and Lubin are marketing a unique line of elegant clothing that they hope will open eyes as well as pocketbooks.

Formerly a Boulder wildlife artist, Thompson has taken her brush to fabrics, designing elegant women's attire carrying the sometimes bold Artwear motif.

A wild-eyed snow leopard drapes its body over the silk shoulder of a blouse. Painted feather designs hang from a detachable collar of another.

And, like their working place, their work itself is a blend of rural

and city. The clothes season the valley and fit comfortably into the rustic setting.

But the Artware line is designed for formal settings. It is available only through finer boutiques and is priced accordingly.

Since January, Thompson said, about 300 orders have been shipped to select shops throughout the nation.

"There are so many ways to go," said Thompson. "But it takes a while to become recognized, to gain credibility."

And that's the stage Artwear currently is in, attempting to draw the attention, respect and demand of the industry.

Thompson's original textile works can be seen roaming about in the form of hand-painted T-shirts, enough in demand to warrant the \$150 price tags.

And the future includes visions of linens, furniture, perhaps even entire home interiors carrying Artware themes.

"The art is really secondary to the line," Thompson said. "But the art also is what makes the line unique. I want the line to be accepted, not just the art."

While hand-painted clothing is nothing new, Artware's use of tex-

tiles and adornments creates a new perspective on evening wear.

The detachable collars draped by hand-painted feather designs are attention-grabbers, but they prompt more of a "pretty" reaction than a "wow" reaction, according to Lubin.

"That seems to be people's initial statement," Lubin said of the Artwear line. "They'll say, 'Oh, how pretty,' which is nice, because a person doesn't want to be overshadowed by the clothes."

Lubin's roots in the fashion industry are in modeling. While Thompson was working for some four years in developing the painting and sealing techniques being used, Lubin was modeling in high-fashion circles. Their meeting five years ago set up the eventual partnership.

And, while two women working in a barn outside of Aspen seems like a long way from the fashion centers that determine what's hot and what's not, the prime market area for the Artware line is not so distant. Both Lubin and Thompson feel the South is where most of their buyers will be found.

But who knows what lies at the other end of those yellow bricks and what adventures there will be along the way.