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One blue jay hosts GenArt's night of fine plumage

By Susanna Homan

"I just burped," giggles fashion designer Jay McCarroll as he walks over to meet me. "This is the best (expletive) vodka; I've had four sips and I'm trashed!"

McCarroll is the campy victor of Bravo's "Project Runway" reality show and the emcee of GenArt Styles Chicago '05, a showcase of the winners of an annual fashion competition. The event was held Thursday night at Hard Drive, the lobby-nightclub of the Hyatt Hotel at 151 E. Wacker. Featured designers include Ashley Reid, The Avant, Omar Kashoura, Anrealage and one local designer, Maine East High School graduate Karolina Zmarlak.

Twelve local designers had the chance to strut their stuff at Lollapalooza last weekend. The Chicago Fashion Foundation put on a series of fashion shows at the two-day music festival after a personal request from show organizer (and former Jane's Addiction frontman) Perry Farrell.

Resident talent featured in the designer showcase included clothing designers Bynum & Bang, Cyndi Chan, Cynthia Ashby, Double Stitch, Jan Zhou, Lara Miller, Nasaani, Scarlet Designs and Sujata Gazder, and jewelry designers Dede Metal, Francesca Signorino and Paul C. Phillips.