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Juergen Teller and a Naked Vivienne Westwood at the Lehmann Maupin Gallery

By Jenni Avins

Last night, at the opening reception of Juergen Teller's new exhibition at Lehmann Maupin on Chrystie Street, the artist stepped outside the gallery for a cigarette, a black overcoat with leopard lining draped over his shoulders.

"Oh God," he said. "I'll be happy when it's over."

Model Hannelore Knuts arrived, kissed Teller hello, and ventured inside where a crowd including Lily Cole, Cecilia Dean, Lorenzo Martone, Tim Blanks, and Stefano Tonchi (whose partner, David Maupin, is one of the gallery's owners) were admiring photographs ranging from a nude blue-ish haired Kristen McMenemy, bony hips aloft, to blissful images of Sussex country life. But the most striking photographs were of Vivienne Westwood, reclining on a floral settee wearing nothing but a little necklace and a slick of lipstick to complement her creamy skin and copper-colored mane. She looks beautiful, calm, and confident, which made us wonder what the sitting was like.

"It was lovely," said Teller, "in her house, on a Sunday evening. I've worked with her a long time, and I'm always amazed at how wonderful her skin is. She looks amazing and she's, like, 70 now. She was 68 when I did the pictures a year and a half ago, and I was just curious about how she would look naked. If you think of naked pictures of old people, they're all wrinkled – and they are not! So I like it a lot. And then when she said, 'Okay, let's do it,' and she was sitting there I was thinking, 'Oh my fucking hell, man!' I didn't quite expect it. So that was great!"