

Front Row | Ruth La Ferla

■ Bypassing Fashion Week tents, mavericks find other ways.

During New York Fashion Week, which ended on Friday, Miguel Adrover was conspicuously missing from the fray. A telephone call to his office in Manhattan did little to clear up the mystery of his whereabouts. When he was eventually contacted, he volunteered slyly, "If you see me now, I'm in the middle of nowhere."

He was, it turned out, in Palma de Majorca, working on the concept for his next collection, a transseasonal line he is to unveil in the fall. "Right now, we are working on some patterns but don't have actual pieces yet," he said breezily. "There is still plenty of time."

Mr. Adrover, who has fallen into a comfortable pattern of showing only one collection a year, was putting into production the elongated blazers, basket-weave cardigans and shirtwaist dresses he showed in New York in September, some of which will be sold at Jeffrey and at Henri Bendel in New York and at Colette in Paris. He has also created a jewelry line, his first, highlighted by a necklace of swallows handmade in gold.

That Mr. Adrover cannot, or simply will not, play by fashion's customary rules — abiding by neither conventional retail delivery schedules nor by a consistent design signature — will surprise no one who has followed the jagged trajectory of his career. This season, he was joined in spirit by a handful of fellow mavericks who, like him, chose to bypass the frenzy of the tents.

Charles Chang-Lima, a New Yorker by way of Caracas, where he was born, and Taiwan, where he grew up, receives clients at his white-washed showroom on West 40th Street. Mr. Chang-Lima, 44, has been turning out meticulously tailored collections for eight years, skipping the tents for six of them. "I did stage shows in the past," he confided, "but it was only to get the stores to notice me. Now that they have, there is no longer a need for a fashion show."

His confidence is based on his ability to attract retail executives from stores like Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom and Barneys New York. At



Diane Bondareff for The New York Times

Soledad Twombly fills the closets of her apartment with her one-of-a-kind designs.

Barneys, his collection, priced from \$900 to \$3,000 for cocktail and evening dresses, and \$1,200 to \$1,400 for suits, appears alongside fashions from the likes of Marc Jacobs. Last week, it was business as usual as clients filed into his studio to place orders for pieces like a cardigan of a knitted black lace that resembles Mongolian lamb. It can be worn with a matching knitted lace dress or, alternately, over a frothy skirt of white pleated tulle, its exposed seams its single concession to the avant-garde.

Mr. Chang-Lima, whose somewhat formal creations were inspired by "Vertigo" and other Hitchcock thrillers, has injected a few novelties