

Designer brings Warhol's 'Factory' fashions to big screen

WHEN I FIRST heard the name Edie Sedgwick, I had no idea who she was.

Then, a couple of months back, I heard of this movie being made by George Hickenlooper called "Factory Girl" (currently in limited release). At first, I thought it was about bra-burning Norma Rae-like women trying desperately to rid the world of sexism — but then I realized I was totally wrong. It was a film about Andy Warhol and his muse with a blonde pixie cut, Edie.

Any film about Warhol always intrigues me, but the fact that Edie Sedgwick was a style icon mesmerized me even more.

The story of Sedgwick (played by Sienna Miller) fits the mold of any mid-60's iconic martyr. The film shows her humble beginnings as a well-appointed Cambridge student in a plaid skirt, followed by her evolution into the world's "it" girl in her favorite pair of black tights and then her tragic downfall. She did it all: artist, dancer, socialite, party girl, actress and, of course, model. Think Paris Hilton, but with 10 times as much soul.

John Dunn, the film's costume designer, had the difficult (and fun) task of trans-



Dino-Ray Ramos
DRESSED

dramoed@sangnewspapers.com

porting the cast to the modish '60s where multi-color shades invaded streets. "Laugh-In" was the show of choice and exaggerated black eye makeup was the norm.

"I was really not interested in doing a wax museum reproduction of Edie," says Dunn, a product of theater and psychology higher education. "It was important for Sienna to breathe life into the role."

Without a doubt, the former Miss Jude Law embodied the physical appearance of the pop icon sprite. If you did a side-by-side comparison of the two, the resemblance is uncanny, but Miller still added her own spin to Sedgwick without compromising the icon's personality.

Because he wanted to reproduce certain scenes, Dunn says that 90 percent of the wardrobe was vintage pieces from vendors



STRAIGHT FROM THE FACTORY: Actress Sienna Miller portrays Edie Sedgwick, style icon and "it" girl of the mid-1960s, in "Factory Girl."

in Los Angeles and New York — but he subtly blended sack and shift dresses with contemporary pieces.

"(Sienna) wears two to three pieces from Dior from when they did an Edie homage," says Dunn. "J. Mendel also made a copy of a fox fur coat Edie once wore."

Dior did an Edie homage? I

must have been busy obsessing over skinny models.

Throughout the film, Miller dances in Jimmy Choos, dons a captivating pair of dramatic Erikson Beamon shoulder dusting earrings and Dunn's favorite — a Rudi Gernreich dress matched with a silver fox fur coat, motorcycle hat and bug-eyed glasses. All the while,

there is an air of "boho-chic" charm that Sedgwick was known for.

"Edie was first to use the idea of vintage clothing," Dunn says. "She was the kind of girl who raided her grandmother's closet."

As the wardrobe mastermind of "The Notorious Bettie Page," "Basquiat" and Martin Scorsese's "Casino," Dunn is no stranger to stylish period movies. Still, he doesn't want to be pigeonholed.

"I absolutely adore the '60s and '70s — the whole country was caught up in self-expression," says Dunn, currently working on a "stoner" movie. "Even so, I try not to be rigid. I try to be in an interesting place where the work will come to me."

As for dressing Guy Pearce as Campbell's Soup can connoisseur Andy Warhol, he didn't just slap a white wig on him and drench him in ghostly powder. Dunn's costuming for Warhol was executed well, but Pearce also put his chameleon acting skills to work.

"Guy is obviously in better shape than Andy, but for the role he emaciated himself," praises Dunn. "We kept him very lean and slim."

The challenge in dressing a film like this is to be careful not

to take away from the performance. We see many of Warhol's stylized minions in his loft called "The Factory" (hence the name of the movie). With such an eccentric Warhol-ian tone, Dunn makes sure the visual doesn't outweigh the visceral.

"I tend to do quiet clothing," says Dunn, as someone or something screams in the background. "I always think of the actor with a dial on them and then I adjust the dial and bring it up as best we can. It's very satisfying to do pieces where the people are interesting individuals."

You would think that since Dunn has worked with peers such as Betsy Johnson and Rita Ryack, the thought of his own runway collection would loom in his head. Think again.

"Fashion doesn't interest me," quips Dunn. "People interest me."

Even though he laughs in fear of blasphemy, there is a serious tone in his voice that makes a good point. People, much like actors in costume, give fashion the emotion that it needs to be stylish. Otherwise, it's just a bunch of cloth hanging on a mannequin.

"Factory Girl" is playing at Century 9 in the San Francisco Centre, 865 Market St.