

TALKING ABOUT

HELLO, SUNSHINE
THE L.A. SINGER-
SONGWRITER
PHOTOGRAPHED
IN A TOMMY
HILFINGER COAT.



MUSIC

PERFECT PITCH

Joining the swelling ranks of solo artists with elaborate stage names—Bat for Lashes, St. Vincent—is Alison Sudol, a 24-year-old who records under the moniker **A Fine Frenzy** (it refers to the madness of the poet in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*): "It's subtle," she admits, "but I feel like A Fine Frenzy is an entity that others can possess that's not me." That pretense of distance must have been comforting to Sudol, "a quiet girl who played the piano in her parents' garage," when her 2007 album, *One Cell in the Sea*, won her international acclaim. Suddenly, she was touring with the likes of Rufus Wainwright. By the time she started this month's *Bomb in a Birdcage*, she was considering quitting the business altogether. "Touring is hard, and it's lonely," she says. "There's a lot of pressure. I started writing these new songs to rediscover why I love music." Sunny without being saccharine, "Blow Away," the first single, is irresistible. As for Sudol, she found the process "magical and rejuvenating. It made me realize that this is what I want more than anything in the world." —LAUREN WATERMAN

OBJECT

high culture/low budget

*de you for hostess
lovely gatherings*

NOTE WORTHY

For a generation mindful of the environment, bespoke stationer Nancy Sharon Collins's **Petite Suite** (50 custom notes and envelopes for \$222) comes with a choice of ink color on recycled stock. Says Collins, "It's an homage to a centuries-old way of engraving—for the digital age." —STEPHANIE LACAVA

LIVES

rare specimen

A new exhibition captures the artful life of Mary Delany.

Cross Martha Stewart with Erasmus Darwin and you get Mary Delany. A sharp-eyed observer of eighteenth-century English court society, this "woman of fashion for all ages" (as Edmund Burke described her) enchanted royalty with her embroideries and inspired poets with her gardens. But she achieved still greater renown late in life, preserving the fleeting beauty of flowers in nearly 1,000 marvelously delicate (and for the most part botanically accurate) cutout paper collages. "**Mrs. Delany and Her Circle**," an exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art, includes a court dress stitched with cascading flowers on black satin, drawings, manuscripts, and 30 of her "paper mosaicks"—an eternal springtime that blossomed in her drawing room.

Born Mary Granville in 1700 into an aristocratic family's junior branch, she was married off at seventeen to a Cornish member of Parliament 40 years her senior. Liberated from this unhappy union by his death eight years later, she spent her widowhood attending court and concerts, decorating garments and grottoes, and savoring the society of learned feminine companions. In 1743, against her family's wishes,

Mary married Dr. Patrick Delany, an Anglican cleric. They settled at Delville, his small estate north of Dublin, where guests such as Jonathan Swift admired her picturesque gardens, "embroidered" with flowers and sown with seeds sent by far-off friends.

Following Patrick's death in 1768, Mary returned to England and nourished her nascent interest in Linnæan botany while spending time at Bulstrode, the estate of the duchess of Portland, whose vast collections were



LATE BLOOMER
DELANY BEGAN MAKING FLORAL COLLAGES (LIKE THIS CACTUS GRANDIFLORA) IN HER 70s.

legendary. (London-based artist Jane Wildgoose's installation, created for the show, explores their fertile friendship.) There, one day, Mary noticed the similarity in hue between a geranium and a piece of bright scarlet paper; she took out her scissors, and from her endless industry, a new art form was born. —LESLIE CAMHI *pata* >448