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Hip Huggers in Jerusalem

June 12, 2006 09:45 AM - [Karin Kloosterman, Israel](#)



Late Saturday night, when I do my best work, I was working on a story for the National English daily, The Jerusalem Post. The story started cooking a few weeks ago via [TreeHuggerTV](#), when I saw a program about [Swap-O-Rama-Rama](#) in the US. Fresh piles of swappable clothing? Designers and sewing machines on-hand to fit recycled clothes to my bod? Iron-ons, knitting, crochet lessons? The adrenaline started pumping into my stomach- the same way it did when I used to live on Walmer Road in Toronto and would catch a fresh pile of "stuff" on the curb, so generously left out for the taking (the story about the mythological red recycled shirt will come later).

I proceeded to contact Swap-O-Rama-Rama organizer [Wendy Tremayne](#) who advertised the willingness to help people wherever they were to set up a swap. I thought about Tel Aviv or nearby Jaffa.

"Someone's already started one in Israel," Wendy replied by email. "Be in contact with Hagit," she said giving me her email. A few emails were made, editor DBT agreed and a short feature about Swap-O-Rama-Rama was in the works. Seconds after I get off the phone interviewing Hagit from Arts collective [Sala-Manca](#) about this Friday's [Swap-O-Rama-Rama](#) happening in Jerusalem, it rings. "Hey. You're writing for TreeHugger in Israel?," asks the unfamiliar voice with a Hebrew accent. "Yes." I replied, "Just started. I'm new."

"I guess that's why I haven't seen your posts," said the voice introducing herself as [Talya](#) - a huge TreeHugger fan. Talya explained that she was inspired to start up a Swap-O-Rama-Rama in Israel after watching an episode about it on TreeHuggerTV. She was one of the four organizers and Hagit, her friend, made the contact.

For those in the hood- don't be fooled by the name-change to [Re-Kolektzia](#) - Israelis have a hard time saying "R". This Friday morning, expect all the same hipness of the US-based Swap-O-Rama-Rama. [See some pics.](#)

The Re-Kolektzia website says: We are not required to wear the CastroFoxCalvinkleinGapZaraMangoBananarepublic uniform! In Re-Kolektzia we transform old clothes into inspired new raiment. That old dress, married thoughtfully to a piece of curtain, becomes a deep front shirt, a pleated skirt or a stylish apron. Instead of paying through the nose at boring and commercialized shirt shops, come meet us in an enchanting 19th Century courtyard near the Russian Compound. Bring a pile of cloths that are just taking up space in your closet (yes, yes, we mean that blue shirt with yellow stripes and those jeans you can no longer stuff yourself into). At Re-Kolektzia you'll find tailors, designers, printers, people who know how to charm clothing into being. All you have to do is choose something(s) from the piles, think of what you'd like done, and bring them to the experts. Sometimes scissors do the job, a print can turn a dress around, and sometimes serious tailoring may be in order. No matter what's done, you'll leave with a unique new item for your wardrobe. One-off designer duds for free!

Here's a few words Wendy wrote, which I didn't put in the newspaper story: "Swap-O-Rama-Rama is a metaphor. It could be applied to any number of things in commodified culture. It just so happens it's being applied to clothing and this is simply because we are hemorrhaging textile waste, and women are targets for spearheading consumerism. Magazines pitch women reasons to consume. So putting this metaphor in the world in the context of clothing was a logical step. The event demonstrates the various ways in which consumerism robs humanity of important parts of the human experience."

Our hero. [::Contact Re-Kolektzia](#) [::Here for Hebrew](#) Re-Kolektzia will be in Jerusalem June 16, 10 am till 5 pm. NIS 10 entry plus bag of clothes.

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3

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