

**PULSE**

Christine Muhlke

# Sewing Circles



Frances Roberts for The New York Times

**Tailored to a generation** that can barely open a hotel emergency sewing kit, Sew Fast Sew Easy at 147 West 57th Street is a school for needle dummies.

"I wanted to give back the techniques I learned from experts in the fashion industry to these creative women who are rent-broke with Prada taste," said Elissa Meyrich, a former sportswear designer who opened the school in 1992.

Dancers, artists, lawyers — mostly women, ranging in age from 14 to 35 — enroll to learn about making clothes to custom-fit their style, budgets and bodies. A single three-hour class teaches how to stitch up a chic nylon tote or crochet an evening bag (three nights for a bikini). After four classes, even beginners can make a simple skirt.

Alison Raffaele, a makeup artist, has graduated to the second of the school's four levels and is hooked. "I watch stylists fit clothes all day with pins and clips, so I see that when clothes really fit, they look a thousand times better," she said. "The skirt I made fits like a glove and looks expensive. I feel like a Holly Hobby for the 90's."