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ANNOUNCING

An Interview with Denise Green

by Beth Davis

Fresh from a doctoral degree in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia, and with an earlier master's degree in Textiles from the University of California, Davis, Denise Green, Cornell '07, returned to her alma mater to become the newest faculty member in the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design.



From her earliest days as a FSAD Cornell undergraduate, Dr. Denise Green has studied human relationships with textiles and clothing. Her studies have included diverse cultural groups: the study of pre-teen girls in a 4-H urban outreach, the examination of the masculine self as expressed in Burning Man fashions, and the investigation of the historical and contemporary relationships of textiles with their Native American cultures in the Northwest Coast of Canada.

In addition to her duties as assistant professor in the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design, Dr. Green is the Director of the Cornell Costume and Textile Collection as well as a faculty member of the graduate fields of Anthropology and American Indian Studies. She also serves on the Faculty Advisory Committee for Cornell's H.F. Johnson Museum of Art. Enriched by her travels and experiences, Dr. Green brings a youthful enthusiasm to her Cornell activities.

Questions:

1. What (and who!) inspired you to pursue knowledge in the areas of design, textile and dress?

Denise was born in Auburn, New York. Her mother, a quilter, provided Denise's earliest inspiration into the world of textiles. At the age of eight, Denise was taught to sew by her mother and the two of them worked together on quilting projects. Her first project was challenging – a pinwheel baby quilt for a young cousin – and her mother ripped out any seams which did not meet perfectly in the center of the pinwheels! Her mother's own sewing experiences grew out of involvement with 4-H Cayuga County, and she won blue ribbons at the New York State Fair in the Fashion Show. Denise has some of her mother's garments ('the plaids are perfectly matched!') and continues to wear them. Today, Denise is drawn to textiles as a voice for expression, for both the human body as seen in fashion, and our living environments as found in decorative textiles. This articulation of creativity through textiles has been a compelling force since her youth.

2. Has there been a favorite or exceptionally fulfilling activity/project?

Two projects stand out as significant. For her Cornell senior project, she created a mixed-media installation entitled 'Commodified Identity.' This presentation was composed of sculptural forms with textural surface embellishments that expressed theories of fashion and design applications. During her later doctoral field work in the Northwest coastal region of Canada, she found personal rewards in participating in local ceremonial customs. Here she utilized her garment-construction skills as well as her ability to stay up through long nights (talents honed while a FSAD undergraduate student at Cornell) to help with the construction of ceremonial dance shawls and speaker vests. Not only was she realizing the ideal anthropologist's role of participant/observer, but this event made clear the value of being able to give back to a community which had given so much to her personal growth as well as to her research.

3. What areas of research are you currently pursuing?

Dr. Green is continuing her work in the Northwest Coast, by way of a Franklin Fund Research grant from the American Philosophical Society. With this grant, she is investigating the relationships between human activity and ceremonial artifacts found in various collections. Denise is also studying current Hatha Yoga practices, exploring perceptions of body image as understood through the lens of this particular system of yoga exercise. Her continued involvement with Style Engineers includes the creation of videos presenting role models which encourage STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) curricula as pathways for careers in fashion. The use of science in teaching, particularly in the areas of sustainability, design, and natural dyeing of textiles, are an ongoing pursuit.

4. What advice might you offer to someone interested in pursuing a career in design, textiles and dress?

"Jump in!" Pursue your passion, but don't be afraid to ask people for help in areas where you lack experience. You never know where diverse skills may help you in the future.

Barbara L. Kuhlman Scholars' Fiber Arts & Wearable Art Exhibition

by Beth Davis

Each year, the Barbara L. Kuhlman Foundation awards grants to talented apparel design students from different colleges throughout the United States. With these funds, students plan, design, execute and exhibit highly personal works of fiber arts and wearable art. This year marks the 10th year of acceptance of a group of Cornell University apparel design students as Kuhlman scholars. The 2015 exhibition will display their creations from September 15 to November 12, 2015 in the Jill Stuart Gallery in the Human Ecology Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Becoming a Kuhlman Scholar

Robin Reynolds '16 is an apparel design major in the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design (FSAD) at Cornell University. She is one of seven students participating in the fall 2015 Kuhlman exhibition. For Robin and her fellow students, the process for becoming a Kuhlman scholar began more than a year earlier. Co-advisors for Cornell's Kuhlman scholars and FSAD faculty Van Dyk Lewis and Anita Racine met with a small group of prospective students in May, 2014 to discuss a selected theme for the following year's exhibit. That fall, faculty and students brainstormed ideas in order to further develop individual exhibition proposals. This process helped each student prepare an artist's statement, a description of their proposed piece, a resume, and a portfolio. These were submitted along with faculty recommendations to the Barbara L. Kuhlman Foundation. If a student's proposal was accepted by the foundation, the student received a scholarship in December 2014, to be applied to the creation of an original piece. The works of the current seven 2015 Kuhlman scholars are now on display.

"I try to communicate"



This year's exhibition theme is "ART." To inspire new ideas and motivate creativity, students were asked the question "What is art?" When I asked Robin how this question directed her work, she spoke candidly about her ideas and her design process. "Art is about communication, a dialogue between the viewer and the creator of a piece. That connection is important: without that connection, art does not exist." Robin further elaborated, "It's rooted in our DNA to create art and communicate through visual images when there is an absence of language." Applying these concepts to her work, Robin created a piece that cannot fail to delight. The full-length gown is constructed of woven polyester, polyester lace, and nylon tulle. Complex piecing throughout the garment creates shape, as is evident in the photographs. Swarovski crystals strung onto wires and manipulated into the shape of DNA double helixes serve as shoulder straps as well as line the bodice. Within the garment, Robin assembled a web of conductive threads, whose surface patterning echoes the double helix shape of the crystal helixes. Sensors located at the hemline connect to a logic circuit that regulates both voltage and current within the garment. Aptly titled, "Synapse," Robin has created a piece that simulates the synapse's behavior of transmitting electric signals between two nerve cells. As the viewer approaches the piece, the sensors activate the logic circuit, which then sends electricity up through the conductive threads to the wired crystal





helixes, causing the crystals to light up. However, the viewer must be in close range, that is, within the personal orbit of the piece, in order to affect this reaction. Like the synapse, only close contact between the two bodies activates the transfer of information. With Robin's piece, this process rewards the viewer with a brief twinkling of the Swarovski crystals, a visual acknowledgement of the vital communication between creator and viewer.

Past and Future

Robin is a native of Atlanta, Georgia. Her interest in sewing began at an early age when she experienced difficulty finding clothes that fit her tall, thin frame. "I began to make them for myself, so they would fit," she admitted. Later, during her high school years, she was encouraged by a ballet teacher to become involved with costuming. Both experiences led to an interest in fit, which extended to her studies at Cornell where she worked on half-scale models with FSAD professor Susan Ashdown. Her interest in apparel design is matched by an interest in the sciences, and both inspired the formulation of this exhibition piece. An internship in custom bridal wear offered training in decorative beading, which she utilized so effectively in her design. Robin is a senior and hopes to one day own her own company. At this moment, she is particularly keen on the needs of women for higher quality lingerie - especially articles "which fit, are durable, are created from healthy fabric choices, and are fashionable."

CCE/CHE 2015 Summer Intern Report

by Chloe Collins*

This summer I worked as a Cornell Cooperative Extension/College of Human Ecology intern with the aim of engaging girls, aged 10 to 15, in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) by piggybacking off their existing interest in fashion design. I was integrated into Professor Susan Ashdown's Style Engineering team in early June. By the end of the summer I felt as though I had been part of the program for much longer and am grateful to have worked with such an incredible team. Much of the summer was spent in Cornell's Human Ecology Building preparing for two 4-H Camps, Camp Bristol Hills and Camp Wyomoco, and for a Girls, Inc. camp that took place at the Everson Museum in Syracuse. The prep work, although tedious at times like threading needles and cutting fabric was the kind of behind-the-scenes work that proved to be very rewarding and necessary for a pretty seamless three weeks of camps with the girls.



This wasn't my first experience with summer camp. I had attended a horse-riding day camp and several years of overnight gymnas-tics training camp, as well as a few day-long retreats with my high school swim team; however, the week before the trip to Camp Wyomoco I panicked and bought everything I could find in insect repellent garb, including an insect repellent sleeping bag and bracelet. Luckily most of our work was inside and I generally avoided the bugs. At camp I was responsible for handing out and collecting evaluations. The evaluations were intended to show how effective the Style Engineers program is at involving the girls, sparking their interest in STEM, and teaching them to use the engineering design process. The girls somewhat dreaded the first handouts because they appeared a little like a test. I also was responsible for leading several hands-on activities. One of my favorites was an activity called Joint Jive, in which the girls created their own dance routines to demonstrate how clothing has to accommodate body movement. I enjoyed seeing the girls' perplexed faces when they were first introduced to an activity such as Space Dough, a delve into parallel and series circuits, but then seeing how enthusiastic and at times incredulous they became when their experimentation provided new unexpected results and patterns.

The few weeks after the camps were spent working with two interns who participated in the NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates, Ainslie Cullen and Frenda Yip. Together, we recorded evaluation data, sorted the reusable materials, sifted through the hundreds of camp photos, prepared materials and posters for upcoming presentations and exhibits, and revised content for the exciting launch of the new website, <<http://www.styleengineers.org/>>. This internship was a phenomenal opportunity to branch outside of my discipline and work with girls who are at a point in their lives where they are open not only to fashion but to the important STEM that supports it.

*Chloe is the 2015 Cornell Cooperative Extension/College of Human Ecology summer intern located in the Department of Fiber Science & Apparel Design. She is a rising sophomore majoring in Design and Environmental Analysis. You can read more about her experiences on her blog at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/ccesummerinterns2015/category/engaging/>

ENGAGING YOUTH

Style Engineers Website Goes Live!

by Charlotte Coffman

If you have followed this newsletter the last four years, you already know about the Smart Clothing, Smart Girls — Engineering via Apparel Design project. You may even know that the 2015 summer camps and recently launched website have been retitled Style Engineers. The website is our way of sharing the program with a larger audience. If you or the young people with whom you work are interested in the topic of Fashion through Science, check out the Style Engineers website, <<http://www.styleengineers.org/>>.



The Style Engineers website has two sections: Young Designers and Leaders. At this time, the majority of the material is located in the Leaders section because our priority is to provide leaders with the instructions and guidance they need to immediately engage their students. This section contains activity instructions, videos, suggested program schedules, lists of other resources and some FAQ. The Young Designer section contains videos, puzzles and a sketchbook. With time, additional activities and videos will be added to both sections.

The website revolves around five modules:

- *Patternmaking, Tools & Tech* introduces spatial perception, garment shapes and clothing construction
- *Smart Clothing* focuses on the use of electronics in clothing as one example of wearable technology
- *Marvelous Materials* explores the physical properties of materials used in protective garments and everyday apparel
- *Movement Improvement* emphasizes how the fiber content, fabric structure and garment design determine the ease of movement for the wearer
- *We Are Engineers* is a primer on the engineering design process from brainstorm to prototype to final project

Each module is introduced by a *Design Pro* video, a real designer explains her real job that produces a real product in the real world. A variety of activities that support that module are included with instructions and in some cases how-to videos. Student handouts and design challenges can also be downloaded.

To learn more about the project, view these videos:

Style Engineers and CLO Virtual Fashion Partnership

<<http://styleengineers.org/style-engineers-clo-virtual-fashion-partnership/>>

Introduction to Style Engineers

<<http://styleengineers.org/introduction-to-style-engineers/>>

To read more about the project, see these articles.

Style Engineers Teach Science of Fashion to NY Girls <<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2015/08/style-engineers-teach-science-fashion-ny-girls>>

Program Stitches Together STEM, Fashion Design

<<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2014/07/program-stitches-together-stem-fashion-design>>

Program Teaches Girls Engineering via Apparel Design

<<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2013/08/program-teaches-girls-engineering-apparel-design>>

Note: This project is funded by the National Science Foundation.



2015 New York State Fair

by Charlotte Coffman

As always, the Youth Building at the NYS Fair was hopping and some of that activity had its roots in the FSAD. 4-H members and adult educators shared experiential activities with fairgoers throughout the fair. A huge thanks to all who participated.



FSAD Program	County	Contact
Fabric/Flight Connection	Columbia and Greene	Anthony Vicente
Fabric/Flight Connection	Washington	Chrys Nestle
Films	Washington	Chrys Nestle
In-Touch Science	Chemung	Bernadette Raupers
In-Touch Science	Otsego	Patti Zellmer
In-Touch Science	Washington	Chrys Nestle
Simple Gifts	Erie	Tessa Buratto
Simple Gifts	Seneca	Rachel Williams
Style Engineers	Fashion Review	Roxanne Dueppengiesser
Style Engineers	Wyoming	Roxanne Dueppengiesser



Dispersion, In-Touch Science, NYS Fair 2015.



Teen Team, Otsego County, NYS Fair 2015

EXPLORING FABRICS/FIBERS

Faux but Fun Leathers and Suedes

by Beth Davis

On a recent trip to Joann Fabrics, I chanced upon a group of colorful fabrics that challenged some of my previously-held notions of dry, brittle imitation leather. The fabrics were identified as pleather, faux leather or suede and all of them were composed of 100% polyester. They came in a variety of textures, including smooth, quilted, stamped, embroidered, embossed and printed. Some were

hefty enough for furnishings, such as cushions or chair coverings, while others were lighter and more suitable for apparel, including jackets, vests, dresses, skirts, purses, and belts. What inspired manufacturers to create these lines of functional imitation leathers?

An increase in awareness of animal cruelty may be one answer. Recent reports have circulated the internet exposing horrifying practices by some animal raisers. Many celebrities have been asked to boycott products made from alligator skin, for example, a particularly inhumane retrieval process. Another concern is environmental, with chemicals used in leather tanning released into waterways posing significant health hazards. According to an article published online by AATCC News (Association of Textile, Apparel and Materials Professionals a.k.a. American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorist) the new imitation leather fabrics are appealing to consumers as they avoid these issues of animal cruelty and environmental contamination. An attempt to rebrand these products as “

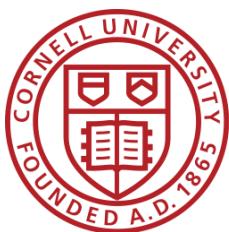


Vegan Leather” also seems to have encouraged interest in a product that in the past has been associated with cheapness and poor quality.

Numerous retailers now offer products made of faux leather. Search the Amazon website for “faux leather handbags” and over 17,000 purses and wallets appear, including designer brands such as Kate Spade, Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger. It is obvious from the interest among manufacturers and retailers that these new materials can offer alternative products which are adaptable to a variety of functions. For consumers, they are easier to clean and less costly than animal products. Some manufacturers are even encouraging sustainability by recycling post-consumer plastics into faux leather materials. Fashion has the final say on whether these fabrics will be successful, but so far, they are finding fans from the posh to parsimonious.

Extension Faculty and Staff

Charlotte Coffman, Youth Programs and Safety Issues	607-255-2009	cwc4@cornell.edu
Fran Kozen, Department Extension Leader , Assistant Director of Cornell Institute of Fashion and Fiber Innovation (CIFFI)	607-255-6204	fhk2@cornell.edu
Karen Steffy, Topstitch Production and Website Development	607-255-8605	ks247@cornell.edu



Cornell University