

hue

The Magazine of the Fashion Institute of Technology



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hue

The Magazine of the Fashion Institute of Technology

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On the Cover

Creating FIT's 75th anniversary logo

To create FIT's 75th anniversary logo, on the cover of this commemorative issue of *Hue*, Communication Design Pathways faculty members C.J. Yeh and Christie Shin employed an educational framework they call Guided Experiential Learning. They selected two students from more than 30 applicants to form a mini design agency. The students, Hira Ali and Tyisha Kellman, both Advertising and Digital Design '20, got real-world experience under close faculty supervision.

The team started by researching existing anniversary identity systems, in higher education and the corporate



Tyisha Kellman, Hira Ali, C.J. Yeh, and Christie Shin.

sector. They came up with a range of concepts, hammering out more than 100 sketches, and winnowed them to a final three. The team presented the three contenders to Communications and External Relations. The choice was "Timeless FIT," which focuses

on design fundamentals like balance, rhythm, and simplicity.

The identity system consists of eight parallel lines, one for each FIT decade. The lines curve and fold, creating basic shapes that echo the fundamentals of design. They integrate the FIT button into the 75th anniversary logo. The result is simple, elegant, and truly timeless.

The students learned a lot about brand identity. Kellman says the biggest challenge was "sticking to the brief—focusing our ideas on what the school needs and wants."

"We weren't working on it as students and professors," Ali says. "It was mentorship."

An iconic façade

The cover photo is a close-up of the façade of the Marvin Feldman Center, FIT's first building, completed in 1959. The aluminum, provided by Alcoa, was said to have been mined for WWII fighter planes. Architects De Young, Moscovitz & Rosenberg specified a new color, Architectural Brown, "to capture the feeling of forward



The façade of the Marvyn Feldman Center.

thinking," according to an Alcoa press release, and the textured diamond pattern was meant to resemble fabric. We chose it for the cover of this anniversary issue to highlight the rich history of FIT, which has embraced innovation from the start. Cover photograph by Smiljana Peros.

FIT Logos, Then and Now

"A great logo draws attention. It informs, inspires, and wants to be remembered," says Rocco Piscatello, adjunct assistant professor of Communication Design and noted brand identity and signage designer. By those measures, the FIT "button" logo is a feat of brilliance: simple, bold, and instantly recognizable. Developed by renowned graphic designer Michael Bierut of Pentagram in 1999, the logo is a contemporary classic, an iconic circle around clean, sans serif Bureau Grotesque type. When FIT's new Unconventional Minds brand rolled out in 2018, two additional color choices—pink and green—were added to the original blue, which was adjusted too. The form, typeface, and proportions remain the same.

The logo's timeless quality makes it easy to forget that there were other logos before it. First there was just a seal rather than a logo. Later marks were more "designed," changing with design trends. Number 2 was perhaps a too-faithful homage to MIT's logo, a literal reflection of founder Mortimer Ritter's wish that FIT should be an "MIT for the fashion industries." Piscatello says Number 3, designed in the '90s and used only briefly, was "quirky and attempted to communicate creativity. However, it lacked clarity."

In contrast, the current logo is distinctive and unfussy, and easy to incorporate into a range of materials, from publications to digital applications to signage. A successful logo lasts, becoming associated over time with the organization it represents, and the FIT button is doing just that.



1. 1940s



2. 1960s-'70s



3. 1990s



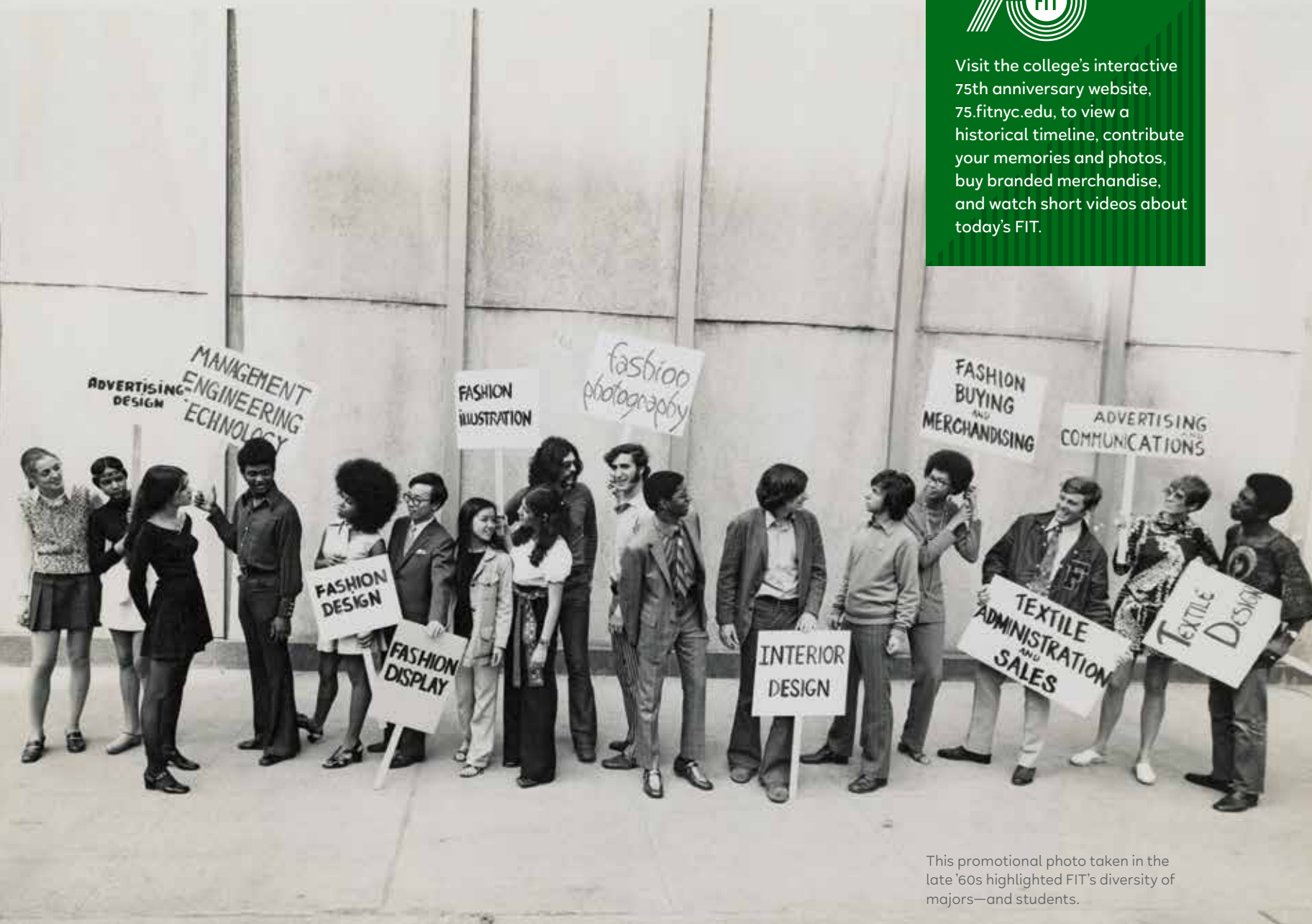
4. 1999



5. 2016-present



Visit the college's interactive 75th anniversary website, 75.fitnyc.edu, to view a historical timeline, contribute your memories and photos, buy branded merchandise, and watch short videos about today's FIT.



This promotional photo taken in the late '60s highlighted FIT's diversity of majors—and students.

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Mario Valeriano/courtesy of Pyer Moss

The Pyer Moss fall 2018 collection referenced 19th-century black cowboys to highlight the whitewashing of American culture.

DECONSTRUCTING POWER

Power dressing, power heels, the power suit ... what do these terms actually mean? *Power Mode: The Force of Fashion* at The Museum at FIT explores the multiple roles clothing plays in establishing, reinforcing, and challenging power dynamics in society. The show presents 50 objects from the museum's permanent collection—military uniforms, “it” bags, sharply tailored suits, fetish gear, and pussyhats—many of which have never before been on public view. *Power Mode*, organized by Emma McClendon, associate curator of costume, runs in the Fashion and Textile History Gallery through May 9.



Austin Jensen '18

Art Draws From Architecture in Interdisciplinary Exhibition

Architecture was the muse for the artists in the exhibition *Picturing Space: Artists Imagine Architecture*, which ended its run in the Art and Design Gallery on Jan. 5. Curator Anne Finkelstein, adjunct associate professor of Communication Design Pathways, brought together the work of 25 fine artists, exhibition designers, and interior designers—faculty, alumni, students, and invited artists—who responded to the urban built environment in their work. The pieces ranged from large three-dimensional installations to small sculptures and models, and included photography, paintings, drawings, and video.

In the catalog, David Ebony, contributing editor to *Art in America*, wrote, “The creative forces of *Picturing Space*—artists, professional designers, and the FIT students whose works are featured here—visualize a future marked by benevolent, sustainable architecture, renewable energy, and sensitivity to the environment amidst the challenges brought about by climate change.”



Rolf Treutten

The Writers Bar at the Raffles Singapore hotel, designed by Champalimaud, is a new cosmopolitan hotspot.

ALEXANDRA CHAMPALIMAUD WINS ISRAEL PRIZE

The Interior Design Department awarded Alexandra Champalimaud, designer of sumptuous hotels and residences, the 2019 Lawrence J. Israel Prize on Nov. 21. The prize has been given annually since 1998 to an individual or firm whose ideas and work enrich students' education. Champalimaud has designed the Raffles Hotel Singapore, the Four Seasons Jakarta, and Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles. “You are all enormously talented, and are having an incredible education, but just remember: It never gets easier,” she said in her address to students. “You have to have a lot of grit, a lot of respect, a lot of intellect, a huge heart, a big personality.”

QUICK READ

Advertising and Marketing Communications faculty members Renee Azoulay and Jean Marc Rejaud will train Association of National Advertisers member companies in **shopper marketing**, a strategy for lasting sales effectiveness and better alignment with brand objectives and positioning.

Michael Trapani, director of marketing at Acoustic—formerly IBM's Watson Marketing—spoke Oct. 30 about **artificial intelligence for marketers**. He said that AI won't endanger jobs: “Human plus machine always beats the machine itself.”

Footwear icon **Stuart Weitzman** discussed his career and offered advice in the form of “Stu-isms” to students on Oct. 16. One Stu-ism: “Risk is not a four letter word.”

FIT PARTNERS WITH JEWELRY WEEK

FIT was the official education partner of the second annual New York City Jewelry Week, a citywide promotion and celebration of the jewelry industry, Nov. 18–24. FIT hosted many of the week's 130 events—panels, interviews, lectures, workshops, and receptions—including sessions about ethical and sustainable jewelry and the effect of e-commerce on the industry, as well as a conversation between Fern Mallis and jewelry legends David and Sybil Yurman. A resource room featured producers of sustainable jewelry.



Student Magazine Honored

In its first year of eligibility, *Blush*, FIT's student-produced fashion and beauty magazine, won the Associated Collegiate Press's 2019 Pacemaker Award, often called the "Pulitzer Prize of college journalism." Magazines were judged on coverage and content, quality of writing and reporting, leadership, design, photography, and graphics.



Experimenting With Technology and Craft in FIT's Maker Space

A few times a semester, students and faculty flock to the sixth floor of the Gladys Marcus Library to experiment and play with intriguing creative practices. Some are high-tech, like LilyPad microcontrollers that can make lights dance to music, software that programs augmented reality experiences, or a hologram projector. Other times, the educational offerings are more low-tech, like calligraphy, Korean fabric wrapping, and an extremely popular Halloween photo booth.

These events take place in the MakerMinds Space, founded in 2017 by Jana Duda, technology resources manager, Innovative Technology and Digital Production, and Helen Lane, instructional design librarian.

Lane points out that more and more libraries are hosting maker spaces. "Libraries are places of research but also places of getting work done," she says. "We wanted to embrace the fact that we're a nonstandard library—it's an extension of the role of libraries to support the curriculum and student projects."



Some technologies in the MakerMinds Space are presented elsewhere in the college. In the Faculty Research Space, a laboratory in the Pomerantz Center, faculty can learn how to use cutting-edge equipment. Duda also organizes an Innovation Playground, held each fall for students to try out 3D printing, laser cutting, 3D scanning, and more.

"It's really important to engage with students outside of a classroom, to let them experience these technologies," Duda says. "It's a way of broadening their knowledge base."

At one MakerMinds event, students built and played a floor piano.



RECENT GRAD WINS DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP AT GUCCI

Melanie Wong, Fashion Design '19, is one of 11 recipients of Gucci's first-ever yearlong Multicultural Design Fellowship, beginning in April 2020. The program is part of a company effort to be less Euro-centric and more inclusive, following a recent controversy about a culturally insensitive product. Half of every week, students intern with the brand; the rest of the week is devoted to courses in Italian at a school in Rome that Gucci created expressly for fellowship recipients.

The Italian luxury house sought concepts from people of color who were recent graduates of design programs. Wong adapted her knitwear thesis collection, called ABC, American Born Chinese. The looks blend Chinese and American dress, embodying the tensions second- and third-generation immigrants feel about their heritage. To select the fellows, Gucci flew 50 students representing 10 global fashion schools to Rome to present their ideas at the storied Palazzo Taverna. The fact that Wong specializes in knitwear helped her stand out, she says.

Global Fashion Management hosted Linda Greer, senior global fellow with Beijing's Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, presenting her Clean by Design methodology for **reducing factories' carbon footprint**—a system Stella McCartney called "simple yet highly effective."

The National Science Foundation awarded FIT a \$186,635 grant to purchase a **tabletop analytical scanning electron microscope** for on-campus research and undergraduate STEAM education.

Alan Romo, Technical Design '19, won an international contest sponsored by the software company Gerber, for a coat incorporating **a biodegradable material made from pineapple leaves**. Four of the five finalists out of 120 entrants studied at FIT.



Slow Factory

Students were amazed by the sheer size of the Fairless Landfill.

FINDING INSPIRATION IN A LANDFILL

To help students grapple with the future consequences of their design decisions, Theanne Schiros, assistant professor of Science and Math, co-organized the Landfills as Museums program, a trip to the country's largest landfill. Students from FIT and Parsons visited the Fairless Landfill in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, which processes 20,000 tons of waste daily—and converts landfill gas to electricity that powers 8,000 nearby homes. They learned about the complex efforts to prevent leakage of toxic chemicals and gas into the environment. Afterward, students took part in a workshop that showed how to design in a way that minimizes the waste resulting from the product's eventual disposal. Landfills as Museums was created by Slow Factory, a design lab working toward solutions for sustainability problems, in partnership with Adidas and Waste Management, a garbage disposal and recycling company.



Smiljana Peres

COMMUNICATING WITH RESPECT

During FIT's Civility Week, Oct. 21–25, students learned from faculty and outside experts about navigating hot-button issues with respect. Keynote speakers were Alexander Heffner, host of *The Open Mind* on PBS, and Roz Chast, acclaimed *New Yorker* cartoonist. Chast (left) addressed students at the concluding event, Diversity Comic Con, a celebration of multiculturalism in the comics and graphic novel arts featuring nearly 100 creators.

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR FIT AND THE FIT FOUNDATION

Two new members were appointed to FIT's Board of Trustees, to replace Jay H. Baker, who stepped down in 2019, and Amsale Aberra '82, who died in 2018. Gabrielle Fialkoff is the founder of GKF Group, an advisory firm on social impact, partnerships, and public affairs. She has more than 13 years of political experience, previously serving as director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships for the Mayor's Office. Mona Aboelnaga Kanaan is founder and managing partner of K6 Investments LLC, a private investment firm in industries including financial services, technology, consumer products, and entertainment. Their terms will end June 30, 2023, and June 30, 2024, respectively.

Additionally, the FIT Foundation, the primary fundraising arm for the college, elected Gary Sheinbaum, chief executive officer of Tommy Hilfiger Americas, as chair, and Ivan Bart, Eric Fisch, and Carmen Nestares as directors. Each will serve a three-year term. Bart is president of IMG Models and IMG Fashion Properties, Fisch is senior vice president and head of Retail and Apparel, Corporate Banking, for HSBC Bank USA, N.A., and Nestares is CMO of Amazon Fashion.



Smiljana Peres

Michael Caralis, director of public sector sales and operations at Verizon, Farmer, Richards, Schachter, and moderator Jacqueline Jenkins, acting executive director of strategic planning and innovation.

THE FAST COMPANY INNOVATION FESTIVAL

On Nov. 5, FIT hosted a session of the fifth annual *Fast Company* Innovation Festival, a five-day event that brought together thousands of makers and innovators from around the world. "Transforming Industry: Creative Collaboration in a 5G World," was a panel discussion introduced by President Joyce F. Brown and featuring Jonathan Kyle Farmer, chair of the Fashion Design MFA program; Troy Richards, dean of the School of Art and Design; and Ted Schachter, professor of Advertising and Marketing Communications. They shared insights on how technologies such as 5G wireless systems are transforming the creative industries in the art world, fashion design, retail, and more.

QUICK READ

The Loop for Good: Sustainable Fashion Pop-Up Shop, a **clothing swap and immersive technology showcase** in the Art and Design Gallery Nov. 20 and 21, was organized by Fashion Business Management faculty and students from many majors to promote circularity in fashion.

During the sixth annual **Sustainability Awareness Week**, Oct. 14–18, students heard from alumni designers using recycled product and zero-waste pattern-making, and from earth-friendly companies investing in sustainable innovation.

Derek Anthony, Advertising and Marketing Communications '20, also known as poet and rapper D.A. the Future, was one of 42 SUNY students to receive the inaugural Norman R. McConney, Jr. Award for Student Excellence, recognizing standout **SUNY Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)** students.

Innovation Incubation Iteration

Inside the FIT/Infor DTech Lab, an engine of FIT's future

BY ALEXANDRA MANN

Innovation is the lifeblood of FIT, and the FIT/Infor DTech Lab is one of the biggest drivers of that innovation. This public-private partnership with Infor, a global leader in business software, was established in June 2017 with a mission to engage faculty and students in solving industry problems using design, science, business, and technology. With Executive Director Michael Ferraro at the helm, DTech has undertaken nearly 30 projects with 35 faculty members and 115 paid student researchers from a range of majors. Industry partners include Tommy Hilfiger, IBM, Adidas, and the Girl Scouts.

DTech operates as a design studio and think tank to innovate for industry, drawing from the college's creative and intellectual capital and developing solutions in an educational context. This groundbreaking partnership has forged a talent pipeline through which students contribute to new products and services in numerous industries, work that often gets them hired at firms like PVH, IBM, and Lafayette 148 before they graduate.

Here are five notable DTech projects.

Reimagining the Girl Scouts

uniform: Throughout the Girl Scouts' 107-year history, its uniforms have been based on two symbols of affiliation: the traditional sash and vest. In an effort to retain and boost membership, especially for older girls, a team of three FIT students developed a new uniform system comprising three collections (Everyday, Events, and Function) with jackets, tops, dresses, skirts, convertible pants, and even leggings, all designed to work together. The looks are fresh, modern, wearable, and, dare we say, cool. The uniforms will be unveiled in 2020.

Helping people with hereditary

neuropathy: Affecting approximately 2.8 million people worldwide, Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease causes weakness of the foot and lower leg muscles, which may result in frequent tripping or falls. As part of their work for the Hereditary Neuropathy Foundation, students designed accessories that are easier to put on, more comfortable, and more functional. They transformed leg braces into a fashionable accessory by designing stylish adaptive covers. The students considered easy closures, adjustable fit, breathable and sustainable materials, a range of styles for casual to formal wear, and the potential for brand licensing.



This zippered dress with a pop of color was developed for FIT's branded line of apparel.

Developing a cutting-edge

apparel brand: The college is partnering with OnPoint Manufacturing to launch FIT-branded lines of apparel and accessories. The brand will be designed, marketed, and merchandised by students and manufactured using OnPoint's innovative fit personalization technologies and supply chain strategies. This avant-garde FIT label includes two collections of women's wear—luxury and mid-market. Students are exploring sustainable on-demand manufacturing that can reduce waste and costly overruns. The first products may come as early as September.

Predicting the future of Tommy

Hilfiger: Fifteen students from three majors teamed with IBM and Tommy Hilfiger in 2018 to explore how artificial intelligence can enhance design inspiration and improve manufacturing and marketing. The students were given access to IBM Research's AI capabilities, including computer vision, natural language understanding, and deep learning techniques. Those tools were "trained" by feeding them 15,000 of Tommy Hilfiger's product images, 600,000 publicly available runway images, and nearly 100,000 patterns from fabric sites. IBM researchers helped translate the data into information about silhouettes, colors, and novel prints that inspired student fashions that marry the Tommy Hilfiger brand with forward-looking design and retail concepts.



A high-tech jacket inspired by the Tommy Hilfiger brand.



Fashion Design MFA students designed adaptable accessories for people with Cerebral Palsy.

Simplifying tasks for those with

Cerebral Palsy: The basic act of opening and closing a bag or wallet can be a challenge for someone with Cerebral Palsy, a group of disorders hindering movement, balance, and posture. Students in the School of Graduate Studies' Fashion Design MFA program developed ingenious adaptable accessories—a messenger/tote bag, wallet, chest pack, and umbrella—for the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, using feedback from focus groups to guide the creative process. A product launch is tentatively planned for New York Fashion Week in September 2020.



From FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
225 West 14th Street
New York City
No. 2-7926

For release: June 8th

First prize winner at the fashion show sponsored by the FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY and held last night, June 4th, as part of the first commencement exercises was this greige fitted suit with pepin, designed by Marie Cropper, one of the teen-age students. The grand prize, a \$100.00 savings bond, was donated by Ben Chalk of Young Originals.



Celebrating FIT at 75



Welcome to this special issue commemorating FIT's 75th anniversary! These pages are a nostalgic journey through the college's rich and colorful history. The *Hue* team canvassed alumni to share their cherished memories, scoured the Department of Special Collections and College Archives to unearth remarkable historical photographs, and flipped through every yearbook back to the '40s to cherry-pick the most charming, funny, and sometimes puzzling moments in the history of FIT student life. FIT is known for unparalleled faculty mentorship, so we devoted a feature to that powerful and lasting bond. In one piece, couples who fell in love on campus tell their happily-ever-after stories; in another, we sing the praises of our best-known alumni musicians.

A special insert celebrates the 50th anniversary of The Museum at FIT with some of the museum's iconic garments. And President Joyce F. Brown recalls her proudest moments as the college's longest-serving president and shares her vision for FIT's future.

In an era that prizes hot takes and disposable media, this issue is not that. We hope it will be a keepsake that rewards a second look, and a third.

Send your FIT memories to hue@fitnyc.edu. They may be included in a future issue.



New York's first AFT college contract signed with FIT

NEW YORK, N.Y. — The first collective bargaining contract for college teachers in New York state was signed here last month between the United Federation of College Teachers, AFT Local 1460, and the Fashion Institute of Technology.

FIT teachers, who belong to a chapter of Local 1460, won benefits which included:

- A grievance procedure ending in binding outside arbitration;
- Reduction in workload and class size to increase individualization of instruction;
- A salary schedule "which represents not only substantial increases, but makes a professional career at the college economically feasible."

The Fashion Institute is a public community college with terminal technical programs which include general education in the humanities and social sciences. Locally sponsored by the board of education, its trustees include labor leaders Louis Stalberg, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and Morris Iushewitz, secretary of the New York City Central Labor Council. The college presently enrolls 5,000 students, and is planning an expansion.

THEN  NOW

Top row: FIT under construction in 1958; community leaders lay the cornerstone for FIT's first building; the David Dubinsky Student Center was built in the early '70s.

Middle row: Groundbreaking for four new buildings in 1969; the northwest corner of West 27th Street and Seventh Avenue in the '60s.

Bottom row: Signing of FIT's first union contract in 1967; the new Art and Design Gallery in the Pomerantz Center today.





In the Beginning

A history of the college's early years—
and a glimpse into its future

BY JENNIFER LOCONTE AND JONATHAN VATNER



Seventy-five years after FIT's founding, as fashion degree programs have become commonplace worldwide, it's hard to grasp just how radical an experiment it was to create the first college devoted to the apparel industry. But in the early 1940s, when the New York State Board of Regents established educational programs and colleges to educate World War II veterans and retrain war workers for private industry, apparel—the state's largest industry—was ignored. Max Meyer and Dr. Mortimer C. Ritter advocated for this essential education. After unsuccessfully pitching fashion programs to several existing colleges, they decided to start their own.

With financial pledges from industry leaders, they formed the Educational Foundation of the Apparel Industry to establish and fund the college. (It later became the Educational Foundation for the Fashion Industries and is now the FIT Foundation.) The foundation was granted a charter from the New York Board of Regents in 1944 to establish the Fashion Institute of Technology and Design. ("Design" was cut early on.) The New York City Board of Education provided 10 teachers, machinery, and space on the top two floors of the Central High School of Needle Trades (now the High School of Fashion Industries). The foundation provided scholarships, additional teachers, and experts from the fashion industry to participate.

In September 1944, FIT opened its doors to 100 students. Two majors were offered: Apparel, Millinery, and Textile Design prepared students for positions as workroom executives and designers, and Scientific Management students would become foremen, management engineer's assistants, and assistant plant managers. Courses included Tailoring Techniques, Costume Design, Business Law, Marketing, Labor Relations, History, Sociology, Speech, and Painting. Tuition was free for New York City residents, and expenses for books and supplies totaled around \$75 per year.

In 1948, the New York State Legislature established the State University of New York (SUNY) system, which included a program for two-year community colleges. In 1951, FIT became the second community college in the state and the first in New York City.

From the beginning, spots were in high demand, and the college outgrew its shared space almost as soon as it opened. In 1959, it moved three blocks north to its own building on West 27th Street, where it remained. The \$15 million aluminum and glass structure—named the Marvin Feldman Center in 1992—accommodated 1,200 students and became the cornerstone of FIT's current campus, which encompasses the entire block and serves nearly 9,000 students, in both full-time and continuing education programs.

The United College Employees of FIT/American Federation of Teachers Local 3457, the first public higher education union in the state, was founded in 1967, representing full-time faculty; by 1970, staff and part-time employees were included, too. FIT is still the only New York college with such an inclusive union contract, and it became the model for unions at colleges across the country.

In 1969, the Brooklyn Museum loaned its costume and textile collections to the college to launch the Design Laboratory, which in 1993 became The Museum at FIT, a world-class resource for students and designers, with its holdings of 50,000 garments and accessories dating from the 18th century to the present. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, it is one of a few museums in the world devoted to the art of fashion.

As the creative industries have evolved, so too has FIT. Even Meyer and Ritter, visionaries of their time, would surely be amazed to see the college on its 75th anniversary. Physically, it has expanded to nine buildings in New York City and has campuses in Italy and South Korea. Educational offerings, still an unparalleled blend of hands-on practical skills and conceptual thinking, have vastly increased to 48 undergraduate and master's programs in diverse design and business fields.

An educational authority in the new creative economy, the college is committed to research and innovation, drawing on the insight and influence of faculty, students, alumni, and industry partners to solve global challenges. An inspiring new academic building on West 28th Street, soon to break ground, will provide flexible classroom and lab space to further this goal. And the college's new brand, Nurturing Unconventional Minds, draws independent thinkers eager to help transform the creative industries. FIT, a pioneering institution from the beginning, is strengthened by its rich history but continues to stride boldly toward a brighter future.

A President's Perspective

Dr. Joyce F. Brown shares insights from her two-decade tenure



On the occasion of FIT's 75th anniversary, *Hue* sat down with Dr. Joyce F. Brown, the college's longest-serving president, for a look back at her remarkable 20-year tenure at the college. The conversation is excerpted here. Read the full interview at hue.fitnyc.edu.

What was your vision for the college when you first arrived in 1998, and how much has it been fulfilled?

I am first and foremost a cheerleader for the future. When I arrived, I found a college rich in historical traditions and values, rich in student and faculty talent, and creativity. We were on the cusp of the new century; all kinds of changes were happening in the world. Student demographics were changing—the technological revolution was in full swing. It was clear to me that if we could harness all of our talent to embrace the changes, we had great potential for growth. But as a community, we really had

to examine all we had—our strengths and weaknesses—in order for FIT to become a beacon of the future for the industries it serves. Some of that vision has been realized through a collegewide strategic planning process. But visions evolve; they are always a work in progress. You always want to achieve more.

What have been your most stirring or moving or proudest moments?

Where we started: transforming a place by building on its natural resources. All of the following give my heart an extra beat when I think of them, and in effect are an outgrowth of that vision.

- Developing partnerships with MIT, Stony Brook, Brown
- Opening the FIT/Infor DTech Lab and breaking new ground in the reputation and accomplishments for FIT
- Opening our Innovation Center
- Hiring accomplished scholars, designers, and artisans to join our faculty
- Awakening the intellectual curiosity of our students to reach beyond their comfort zone to explore science and technology and marry that newfound knowledge to art and design
- Commencements!
- Meeting successful alums around the world
- Working within a community to invigorate experimentation, exploration of new ideas and partnerships, collaboration, and movement to new horizons
- In another vein altogether, shepherding our community after the 9/11 strikes to provide comfort and, as much as possible, a sense of safety to all, including their families

As you reflect on FIT and its history, what do you think its most important contribution has been to the industry and to the life and culture of the city?

FIT has been a safe haven for young creatives to learn about their place in the world. They arrive with a jumble of ideas and creative capabilities and they leave us destined to be the next generation of leaders of the creative industries that define New York City.

For decades we have been turning out industry leaders and middle managers. Each generation carries a vision or philosophy of life that I hope was influenced—for the good—by their years at FIT. Today's students have a different prism, a different set of concerns, than our alumni from 2000 or 1975 or 1950. Today's students are passionate about the environment, they are concerned with diversity and inclusion, and I think that is true of all of our students, whether they are destined for the C-suite or the big stage or middle management.

The creative industries at the heart of the dynamic culture and commerce of New York City will continue to evolve in response to the beliefs, commitment, and leadership of our graduates—particularly in regard to sustainability, diversity, iconoclastic breakthroughs in production, design, marketing, and best business practices.

From top: President Brown with Nina Garcia '92 in 2010, with alumnus Michael Kors in 2012, with Brooke Astor, with Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2010, with Christian Louboutin in 2019, with Calvin Klein '63 in 2010.



A GRANDMOTHER'S GIFT

My grandmother was an amazing seamstress and she made this evening coat. My earliest memories are shopping for fabrics and selecting coordinating material for lining. Choosing trim or other embellishments and gorgeous buttons were a must. I loved *Vogue* patterns and sometimes my grandmother could alter the pattern to include a special design feature I might want. She could make and fit everything perfectly. Fast forward: This coat was part of an ensemble for my college graduation senior prom. I saved it because the fabric and workmanship are so beautiful—not to mention those buttons! And I thought I might just get to wear it again someday. It is probably one of the last outfits that she made for me, so it has a special place in my memories and reflections of life.

As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, the college salutes its founders who dared to dream

Mortimer Ritter, educator and former tailor, founder of the Central High School of Needle Trades (1935) (now High School of Fashion Industries), director of FIT from 1944 to 1951 and its first president, 1951–52

Max Meyer, industry leader, founder of the Educational Foundation for the Apparel Industries, first chairman of the college's Board of Trustees (1952–53), acting president of FIT from October 1952 to February 1953, and former vice president of Sterling National Bank

Samuel Deitch, leading manufacturer of coats and suits, member of the Central High School's needle craft commission, and acting president of FIT from February 1953 to September 1953 and from March 1965 to December 1965

Betty Hawley Donnelly, executive secretary of the vocational advisory board of the Board of Education and head of the education committee for the State American Federation of Labor

Morris Haft, cofounder of the coat and suit company Morris W. Haft and Brothers, noted philanthropist and art collector, and chair of FIT's Board of Trustees from 1953 to 1968. More on page 14.

Theodore Fred Kuper, attorney who helped organize the Educational Foundation and obtain its charter, and drafted legislation making it possible for FIT to become a community college under the program of the State University of New York

Virginia Pope, fashion editor of *The New York Times*

Who Were They?

Shirley Goodman? David Dubinsky? Some of FIT's buildings and facilities were named for people important in the college's history. Have you ever wondered, as you walk around FIT's campus, who were the people the buildings and facilities are named for? Here's a selected list, with brief biographies. Where possible, we included quotes (below), drawn from oral histories in the Gladys Marcus Library's Special Collections and College Archives.

Marvin Feldman (1984): [When I arrived,] the self-esteem of the institution wasn't anywhere near what it should have been. They did not understand that they were better than Harvard; it had such forward-looking criteria. This was an institution created by people who were denied their own opportunity for schooling; they were graduates of the coat and suit business on Seventh Avenue. They had a burning zeal and an appreciation of what education should be. ... As you read [FIT's] incorporation papers, the early people who developed this institution were right on target [with] the mix of general and vocational, education of the working people—things that today we take for granted.

Fred P. Pomerantz (1981), *answering questions for FIT's oral history project:*

Q: What did you learn about sizing by working with the government?

A: Well, I'm the first company in America that made petite dresses. We made petite dresses only.

Q: Starting in what year?

A: Right after the war. Because we did some work for the Army and over 65 percent of our orders were women 5-foot-5 and under. So they gave us the measurements and we had to make the dresses for the measurements. ... We were the first one in business that ever made a petite.

Q: Did you call them petite?

A: Yeah. We used to advertise Leslie Fay Petite.

Shirley Goodman (1984): I felt very strongly, as did the founders, about establishing FIT as a community college. It was extremely important to keep ... the support of the industry as a partner. It was quite unusual, but [the legislation] was written so that when FIT became a community college under the State University of New York, it would be supported in part by the Educational Foundation for the Fashion Industries. ... [W]hen we broadened the programs of the college, we tried many times to change [its] name ... but it had become so well known as FIT—employers were advertising for “so many years of experience or an FIT graduate”—that no other name suggested ever took its place.

—LINDA ANGRILLI AND ALEX JOSEPH

Shirley Goodman Resource Center: Goodman (d. 1991) came to the college in 1949 to help draft the legislation making FIT part of the SUNY system. She served for many years as executive director of FIT's Educational Foundation for the Fashion Industries (now the FIT Foundation), a position she held until her death in 1991. For a time, she was acting president. “If there is a single person whose vision and guidance have been most influential in shaping FIT, that person is Shirley Goodman,” Marvin Feldman said.



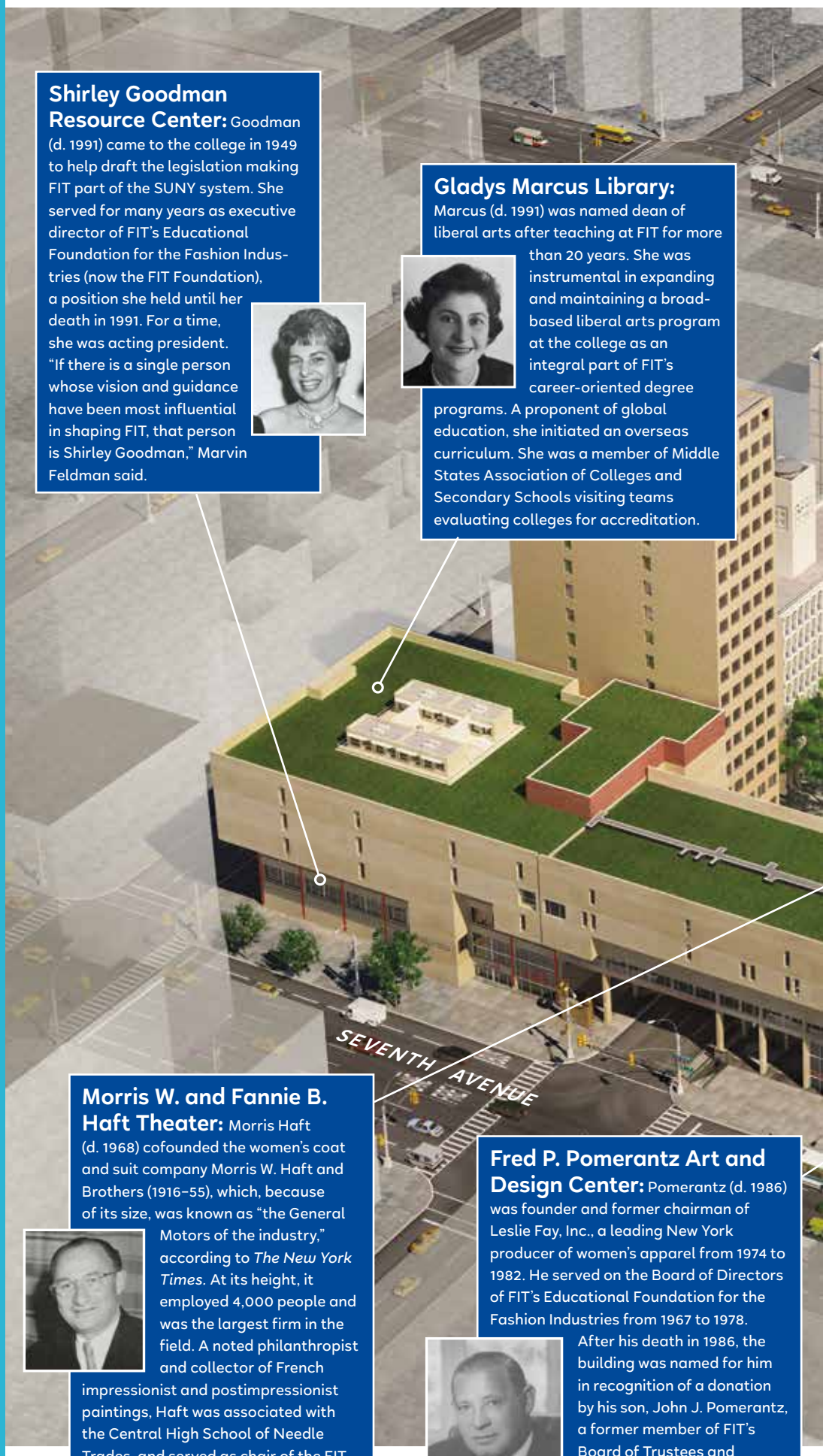
Gladys Marcus Library: Marcus (d. 1991) was named dean of liberal arts after teaching at FIT for more than 20 years. She was instrumental in expanding and maintaining a broad-based liberal arts program at the college as an integral part of FIT's career-oriented degree programs. A proponent of global education, she initiated an overseas curriculum. She was a member of Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools visiting teams evaluating colleges for accreditation.



Morris W. and Fannie B. Haft Theater: Morris Haft (d. 1968) cofounded the women's coat and suit company Morris W. Haft and Brothers (1916–55), which, because of its size, was known as “the General Motors of the industry,” according to *The New York Times*. At its height, it employed 4,000 people and was the largest firm in the field. A noted philanthropist and collector of French impressionist and postimpressionist paintings, Haft was associated with the Central High School of Needle Trades, and served as chair of the FIT Board of Trustees from 1953 to 1968.



Fred P. Pomerantz Art and Design Center: Pomerantz (d. 1986) was founder and former chairman of Leslie Fay, Inc., a leading New York producer of women's apparel from 1974 to 1982. He served on the Board of Directors of FIT's Educational Foundation for the Fashion Industries from 1967 to 1978. After his death in 1986, the building was named for him in recognition of a donation by his son, John J. Pomerantz, a former member of FIT's Board of Trustees and foundation.



Nagler Hall: Isidore Nagler (d. 1959), an Austrian-born labor leader, held many positions in organizations that supported workers' rights, serving as vice president of the ILGWU, general



manager of the joint board of the Cloakmakers Union, secretary of the Jewish Labor Committee, chairman of the Federation for Labor Israel, and vice president of the New York AFL-CIO. With David Dubinsky, he was a founder of the American Labor Party and the Liberal Party of New York. "He led the cloak makers through the hard days of the Depression," helping them win a 35-hour work week, according to his obituary in the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

David Dubinsky Student Center:

Dubinsky (d. 1982) was a noted labor leader who was president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) for more than 30 years. He helped create the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), a federation of unions that organized workers in industrial unions, and was a founder of the American Labor Party and the Liberal Party of New York in the 1930s and 1940s.



George S. and Mariana Kaufman Residence Hall:

(Located off campus, on 31st Street) George S. Kaufman (d. 2018) was an FIT trustee (1982–2018) and chairman of the Kaufman Organization and Kaufman Astoria Studios. The Kaufman Organization has owned, managed, and developed commercial and residential properties for more than a century, and Kaufman Astoria Studios, which he founded, is a thriving entertainment and telecommunications center that played a pivotal role in bringing film and TV production to New York. A \$4 million gift from the Kaufmans helped purchase and



renovate the building on West 31st Street that would become Kaufman Hall in 2007. Kaufman was also a member of the Real Estate Board of New York, chairman emeritus of the board of the Fashion Center Business Improvement District, and a board member of numerous philanthropic and civic organizations.

Marvin Feldman Center: Feldman (d. 1993)

was FIT's president from 1971 to 1992. During his tenure, the college began offering bachelor's and master's degrees—extraordinary for a community college; enrollment grew to 12,000 from 5,000; and six new campus buildings were constructed, bringing the total to eight. FIT's original building was named for him in 1992.



John E. Reeves Great Hall: Reeves (d. 1990)

was chairman of Reeves Brothers, Inc., a Manhattan textile manufacturer, from 1965 to 1975. He was president of the American Textile Manufacturers Institute from 1973 to 1974. The Reeves Foundation, led by his son J.E. Reeves, Jr. (shown with President Brown), made a generous challenge grant to FIT's first capital campaign, enabling the construction of the Conference Center and Great Hall. At the dedication, Reeves, Jr., said of his father, "He did not believe [education] was something that began formally or ended with college. For him, it was a lifelong achievement, never concluded, that was very broad and yet a proper balance and expansion of mind, body, and soul."



Katie Murphy Amphitheatre: Murphy

(d. 1975) was a vice president and influential fashion director of Bloomingdale's. She contributed to the success of many designers, including Sonia Rykiel, Calvin Klein, and Issey Miyake, and helped Ralph Lauren make the transition from designing men's clothes to women's wear. Lauren said Murphy's guidance "was like having a coach who watches over you when you are a kid. You remember everything he said. She always made me feel special."



Teachable Moments

The unique bond between a professor and a student can last a lifetime. Here, alumni reminisce about faculty members whose lessons still resonate

Catherine Sisto Fagbeyiro
Interior Design '03, Visual
Presentation and Exhibition
Design '96

“In his later years, **Martin Pegler** dragged us around the Met, and in our early 20s we could hardly keep up!”

Mitchell Au
Fashion Design '02

“**Steven Stipelman** told me that I needed to trust myself and not constantly seek approval when it came to my fashion illustration. It’s funny how those same words apply to everything, especially in a world of social media.”

Denise Healey Marchand
Interior Design '71

“My favorite professors were **Irene Gregg** (Art History), **Stanley Barrows**, **Martin Zelnik**, and **Julius Panero** (all Interior Design). They prepared me for an illustrious career in interior design as I didn’t even know what a scale ruler or a T-square was when I walked in the door. It was all quick wit in the business of design!”

Helene Schoenfeld Arancon
Packaging Design '84

“**Laszlo Roth**, the founder of the Packaging Design Department, was an amazing professor and mentor. I have thought of him often throughout my career, especially my years as vice president of creative services for toy companies. The great Laszlo Roth and George Wybenga were the authors of the packaging design books that my team used as a bible when researching unique packaging dielines.”



2016

Lisa Engel Lowell
Patternmaking '92

“**Harry Greenberg**, my grading professor, really cared about us. If you missed a class, he would call you to make sure you were OK.”

Jacqueline Kline
International Trade and
Marketing '17

*Summer photography class
in Florence with Professor
Ron Amato.*

Mary Badenhop
Fashion Illustration '75

“**Alvin Pimsler** helped me grow as an artist and as a person. I really looked up to him. I was only 20 years old and I was frightened that I wouldn’t be a great artist. Mr. Pimsler was always so encouraging and taught me to have confidence in whatever I’m creating.

“After FIT, I spent many years as a fashion illustrator and later went on to start my own business, Pipsqueak Productions. Mr. Pimsler regularly invited me to speak at his classes about how I’ve grown as an artist and a business owner. He passed away in 2015. I’m grateful to FIT for introducing me to this wonderful professor!”

2015



Viviana Barraza
Fashion Design '00

"A standout memory was winning the Critic Award in Tailored Design. The whole semester we worked with mentor **B Michael**. His insight and wisdom is something that still carries me to this day. I ran into him in New York a few years ago and he remembered me."

Alena Caras

Advertising and Marketing
Communications '19

"Professor **Charlie Rutman** was truly an inspiration. He was always mentoring his students, helping them find jobs, and helping them with their resumes. He personally put me forward for roles with executives. Once, he managed to take some of his students along with his clients to a Hulu marketing conference, and it was so inspiring to hear their strategy."

Karen Curley Harran

Textile Design '80

"My favorite teacher was **Isabella Corwin** in Textile Design, although it didn't start out that way. I wasn't sure what I was doing or where I was going with my art. One day in class Professor Corwin 'invited' me into the hallway to chastise me. She told me I talked too much for a talented girl! I was devastated. I asked her, did she think I was in the right place and did I even have any talent at all? Her reply: 'Of course you have talent or I wouldn't spend my time on you!' After that I didn't blabber anymore! When I got my big job in NYC, we still remained close. I would call her for advice and ask her to send me interns—and she did."

Jim Brown

Textile Design '66

"In the mid '60s, **Dean Marion Jones** mentored this raw youth of a boy from the sticks of upstate New York. Always an encouraging word and advice that never seemed to be wrong. She suggested that I broaden my FIT experience by participating in extracurricular activities. As a result, I was the first male to be president of Nagler Hall, was on student government, was a social issues columnist for the school newspaper, received one of 10 gold keys at graduation for service to the school, was president of the Alumni Association, and the list goes on. It was all due to her. I am forever thankful."

Jhane Barnes

Fashion Design '75

Barnes launched her company immediately following the end-of-term fashion show in 1975. Her garment, a futuristic men's matte metallic outerwear jacket, got a standing ovation, and when she met her biology professor, **Malcolm Katt**, outside the auditorium, he offered to bankroll her business. "When I told him I wanted to own my company, he asked what I was going to do for money," she recalls. "I needed \$5,000, and he said he thought he could swing that." A few days later, Katt and Barnes got standardized forms at the post office, signed partnership papers, and another entrepreneurial success story was born.

Eustace Robinson

Accessories Design '97

"**Michelle LaLonde** encouraged me to do the one-year program and attend Arsutoria in Milan, Italy. The best decision I ever made was to take her advice. I have worked for Coach, Danner, and Pensole in Portland, Oregon."

Shelly Howard Lohmann

Fashion Buying and
Merchandising '76

"I was a London Scholar in the fall of 1975 and we had to write air-grams back to Professor **Alfred Sloan** every week!"

1988



Lisa Baum Cantelli

Fashion Business Management '89

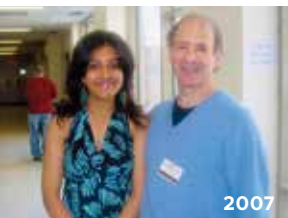
"Professor **Diann Valentini** taught one of my classes and was our club advisor for DECA—she helped us grow professionally and made me a better candidate to handle a career, family, and life. I miss her!"

Above: Lisa Cantelli, Diann Valentini, and Julie Marotta at the DECA Competition.

2006



2007



Deepshikha Purohit
Jewelry Design '07

From top: Purohit with Cara Croninger; with Michael Coan.



2013



2013

Sibylle Pfaffenbichler Young
Product Design: Textiles '78

"I was in **Miriam Russo's** Textile/Surface Design classes. We stayed in touch by here and there visiting an art show in New York. Then we went to lunch somewhere. These photos are from our lunch after a Met visit. We always took each other's picture; too bad we are never in one together. We lost touch for a few years until Professor Russo, in her 90s, popped up on Facebook asking for my friendship!! What spirit! Sadly, Professor Russo passed away last August at 97 years old, a beautiful, elegant lady till the end. I was invited with many of her friends to celebrate her life before her ashes were flown to her home in Italy. I miss her."

Wendy Sirocka Nastasi
Marketing: Fashion and Related Industries '89

"I took three classes from **Jack Barschi**. He was an amazing English teacher and writer. I think I had him for English comp, writing for business, and comedy. He failed any paper that had the word *nice* in it. We thought that was stupid at the time, but he was right."



2016

Ashley Attianese
Fashion Business Management '17

"**Lori Massaro** was more than just a professor to me; she was a huge inspiration and mentor. She was the first person to help me with career advice whenever I needed. She created the best club on campus, called Runway27, which opened up so many doors at FIT and in my career."

Phyllis Fox Schaer
Apparel Design '63
"Professor **Edmund Roberts'** fashion advice on plunging necklines for underendowed: 'The less you have, the more you can get away with.' And encouraging us to purchase cheap clothes in larger sizes and add a belt to cinch it in for more drama! Let the clothes and fabric work for you!"

Louis Marino
Advertising Design '91

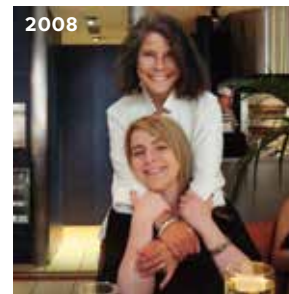
"All of my professors helped me, but a few transformed me. **Judy Ellis** was my foundation teacher and would later found the Toy Design Department. **Frank Csoka** taught me to believe in the power of storytelling. The man was a wellspring of ideas; his critiques of my work would always turn into a workshop of possibilities. He was so generous of his time. **Eli Kince** made me believe in myself, and, as hard as he was on me, did so because he cared intensely for design. **Pat Peduto** was equally hard but approached advertising like a martial art. **Ruby Friedland** was my professor for a few classes and also helped me attain my first internship at my favorite advertising agency. She cared a lot about how you presented yourself as a candidate."

Christina Gandy
Fine Arts '00

"**Robert Schecter** was hilarious. He inspired us to look at art from all different angles. I had never been asked to make an ugly painting before enrolling in his abstract painting class. I remember him saying, 'Trow some kitty litta on there!'"

Kathleen Harvey Murer
Fashion Design '76

"My first semester I was very unsure of myself and unsure why I was there. **Charles Contreri**, my draping teacher, took me under his wing and gave me the confidence to go on. He made me believe I had value!"



2008

Jenna Rosen
Advertising and Marketing Communications '09

"During my last year at FIT, I spent time in London as part of the AMC internship program. We called it 'The Real World: FIT in London,' because 20 or 25 girls living in a flat with two professors definitely could have been a reality show. We also were privileged to get to know these professors on an entirely different level: **Roberta Elins** [above] and **Albert Romano**. Roberta, as she insists I now call her, is still an important part of my life. Her weekly dinners that she hosted at her flat were an amazing bonding opportunity, a really special way to connect with her.

"We were in London in the summer of 2008, before U.S. cellphones were used overseas (unless you wanted to spend a zillion dollars on roaming charges), so we all went together to the Orange store for temporary phones. Topping up our phones was always an experience: It was done via an automated number, and we had to try our best at London accents for the system to recognize us!

"I took a trip with my classmate Claudia Wu to Paris, which was every bit as beautiful and magical as we expected. What we didn't expect was to run into a group of other FIT girls who were window shopping on the Champs-Élysées. We spent the night eating escargots and drinking Champagne under the Eiffel Tower, a memory I will always cherish."



Brogna and Brzozowski at In Home, his Sag Harbor boutique.

A Friendship, Years in the Making At FIT, mentorship doesn't stop at graduation

It's not just the high-level industry experience and connections that make FIT faculty special, it's also their commitment to educating, nurturing, and mentoring students. Often the relationships shaped in the classroom flourish after students become alumni and need help in their careers. Such has been the case with David Brogna, retired assistant professor of Home Products Development, and Leeann Brzozowski, who graduated from the program in 2002.

Brzozowski adores Brogna: "He's one of the most influential people in my life to date." And Brogna feels connected to Brzozowski (and many other former students) in an almost parental way. "It's not so much that I'm always in touch with them, it's that they're always there," he says. "Leeann doesn't know how many times I talk about her and her products."

Brogna taught at FIT for 30 years and wrote the core curriculum for the Home Products Development program. Early in his career, he worked as a merchant for Macy's and A&S; for the past 24 years, he and his partner have owned In Home, a housewares and furniture boutique in the upscale Hamptons village of Sag Harbor. In 2005, he received the Paradigm Award for lifetime achievement from the Home Fashion Products Association. He retired from FIT in 2018 but keeps in touch with most of his former students.

In Brzozowski's second year at FIT, she'd been accepted into the Interior Design bachelor's program when Brogna's introductory class in Home Products Development lured her away. After she graduated, he guided her toward showroom sales, because she enjoyed customer interaction and the "limitless" commission-based income (she is currently a national sales director for the furniture company Chai Ming Studios). She kept up a phone and text-message correspondence with Brogna; every time she needed to make a career decision, including a few risky leaps, she consulted him first. "Our alumni need a sounding board," he says. "They need to know that there's someone covering them. I wouldn't let them make the wrong move."

That correspondence accelerated when Brzozowski launched her own product. Born and raised on the Jersey Shore, she has always loved lying out on the beach but could rarely get comfortable. On her stomach, she resorted to digging holes in the sand to make room for her chest; on her back, she'd roll up another towel to elevate her head. "You're at a place of leisure, where you're supposed to be relaxed," Brzozowski says. "This was crazy."

She decided to do something about it. In 2015, she began developing the Sol Mat, a thick foam mat with two ergonomic advantages: a concealed chest contour that allows for "breathing room" and a built-in pillow. (A men's version includes the pillow but not the contour.) "It's an upgrade to the beach towel," she says. "It's lighter than a yoga mat. And you can remove the cover and throw it in the laundry."



Top: The Sol Mat rolls up for easy transport. Above: Inside In Home.

Brzozowski perfected the design and found a way to manufacture it in the U.S. with marine-grade foam and fade-resistant Sunbrella fabric. But launching a new product is a giant challenge for a solo entrepreneur, and she turned to her mentor for help.

Brogna guided her through the patenting process, helped her identify her target

market, and advised her on creating brand extensions, such as a Sol Mat for kids and one for dogs. His nephew did her graphic design. And Brogna recommended that she host pop-up shops to hear customer feedback firsthand. In 2018, he invited Brzozowski to set up a Memorial Day pop-up inside In Home. "Everyone who walked in was fascinated by the product," he says.

Brzozowski also held an event on Shelter Island and one at the SoHo outpost of The Laundress, an eco-friendly cleaning products company. "These pop-ups have been huge for research. It's fuel—it gets you motivated."

Thanks to a connection from Brogna, Brzozowski is in talks with Wayfair to sell the product through the mass online retailer. First, though, she is exploring options to produce it at a lower price point. The average retail price is currently \$250.

"It's like I'm back at school," Brzozowski says. "It's like I'm doing my senior project on another scale."

"But this time it's not for a grade," Brogna responds, "it's everything." —JONATHAN VATNER

Campus Memories

We asked alumni to share their recollections of their time at FIT. Here are some of our favorites.

See more and send us your own memories on the 75th anniversary website, 75.fitnyc.edu. We will continue to post them throughout 2020.



Ann Marie Sclafani
Restoration '95

“As a Fine Arts major they would encourage students to take survey classes to explore more profitable outlets, as very few students became full-time working painters. This picture was taken by a classmate during our photography survey in the Pomerantz Center in 1992. (Maintaining that hair was a full-time job.) To my knowledge, none of us went on to painting careers so I guess they were right. I’m a jewelry designer today.”



Jacqueline Clay Chester
Apparel Design '60

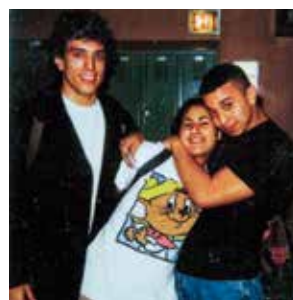
“This was a promotional photograph taken on FIT’s roof in the spring of 1959, a few months before I went to Russia to model in the American National Exhibition in Moscow. Shirley Goodman invited me. The gown was encrusted with pearls and embroidery and all that good stuff. It was to be worn in the ball scene of the fashion show. I was blown away because the gown cost \$500. I thought that was a million dollars—it was the most expensive garment I’d ever worn.”



Joyce H. Cheng
Fashion Design '88

“As a foreign student, those years in FIT brought some of my greatest memories and best experiences. I won the Critic Award and was honored by Betsey Johnson.”

Cheng’s art book will be published in China in 2020.



Johann Soto
Toy Design '00

“Hanging fun with my girls, they were awesome, miss them.”



Chris “Robots Will Kill” Chillemi
Fine Arts '98

“This painting is actually the reason I stayed with painting. I grew up using markers, spray paint, etc., so when I learned about brushes I wasn’t too into it. Mainly because a lot of the teachers I had made me feel like it wasn’t art if it wasn’t made with brushes and on a canvas. So I was feeling negative about a lot of art stuff. Then I had a professor named Jeffrey Russell. He had us do paintings without brushes. This painting was a part of that project. I used water bottles filled with paint, sandpaper, even spitting paint on the canvas (I do not recommend this). That part was actually me being a wise ass and trying to make fun of modern art. Ahhhh, youth. The black markings are actually material sewn to the canvas.”

“This painting made me realize that I did not have to use a brush to make art and I could use spray paint, markers, and whatever. About the canvas, he said, ‘You paid just as much for the corners as you did for the middle. Don’t neglect them.’ Also yes, dyed blond hair, huge shirt and pants, beads, bracelets etc. ... '90s overload.”



Michael Kors at FIT, 1985.

“I remember my first draping class. We had to do a classically tailored suit. But I thought, ‘Who wants shoulder pads? Who wants darts?’ I was a militant modernist. I made a very soft version of the suit. For the final presentation, there were all these suits on dress forms, and mine on a live model. I think the faculty saw it coming from a distance. I was very opinionated.”

Michael Kors
Fashion Design

Amritpal Ahluwalia
Jewelry Design '18

“Beautiful Breezeway sun, random fashion shows in college, 8 am classes in winter, stressful finals, crowded dining hall, long lines at Starbucks, running to the bookstore for books and utilities, fights with friends, making new friends, late-night assignments, free food, stress-releasing gym workouts, and pet therapy ...”

Danielle Stein Gonzalez
Accessories Design '12

“I loved spending time in the handbag rooms! Creating handbags that pushed my limits and helped me grow so much as a designer!”



Bonding with a roll of Pellon interfacing in the handbag room closet.



Linda Rivera

Fashion Business Management '95, executive coordinator for Academic Affairs



Top: Linda with Kelvin, 1995. Above: A recent shot of FIT staffers Kelvin, Linda, and Asante.

“In 1995, I graduated at Radio City Music Hall while pregnant with my youngest child, Asante Rivera. I was so proud that day, we snapped a picture with my son Kelvin Vann Jr. On May 24, 2018, I returned to Radio City Music Hall to see my legacy baby walk across that stage for completing his bachelor’s degree. I’ve worked at FIT for 33 years and I loved it so much that both my kids work here too. Kelvin loves what he does in Media Services and my legacy baby, Asante, is helping the FIT Foundation keep their records straight. WE LOVE FIT!!!!”

Shelyan Madera, Maritza Camareno, and Belicez Cepeda wearing their first-semester final project garments, 1997.



Nagler Hall, October 1997

Maritza Camareno
Fashion Design '99

“My first semester at FIT was very challenging. I moved from a tropical island, Puerto Rico, all by myself to the big New York City. Living on campus made everything easier.”



Kamali's yearbook photo, 1965.

“An illustration class taught by Ana Ishikawa at FIT was the best thing that ever happened to me. She brought in different illustrators to talk to us. One day, she brought Antonio, who was the year ahead of me and already working for *The New York Times*. We became friends. He was super talented, a really good guy, the best.”

Norma Kamali
Fashion Illustration '65



Drawing of Kamali by Antonio.



Norma Kamali, Calvin Klein, and Susanne Bartsch at The Museum at FIT, 2015.

Angela Rizza
Illustration '11

“Every Wednesday we'd all meet at the pizza place that used to be across the street and get chicken bacon ranch pizza.”



2011 Illustration BFA grads Chase Stone, Angela Rizza, Tara Conley Tangen, Jess Kropp, and Mickey Cyphers.



Antonio Lopez



Ana Ishikawa

Tina Leone Lopez
Fashion Design '95

“Always hanging out with the girls on campus in between classes.”



“Modeling in the accessories show.”

Jeannette Dunn Kendall
Patternmaking Technology '79

“Professors clad in suits with ties, rushing into class, always a measuring tape draped around their neck, having just stepped out from their jobs in the Garment District. I was privileged to work with Dr. Harry Besserman, Dr. Brodsky, Professor Scheier, and many more. Sitting across from Andy Warhol at a Halston fashion show, internships at Liz Potter Sweater Design House in Soho and Ceil Ainsworth's high-end children's apparel, ultimately full-time design assistant at (the now-defunct) Russ Togs.”



A page from one of Kendall's textbooks.



Kendall at the 1979 graduation at Madison Square Garden.

“I was not good at patternmaking or sewing. In my first sewing class, the needle went right through my finger and I said, ‘I am not touching those machines again.’ I was always good at sketches, at art. And that was how I expressed myself.”

Calvin Klein

Fashion Design '63



Klein in 1973.

Maria Tappin Date

Jewelry Design '91

“I was a foreign student from Trinidad, who had only vacationed in the U.S. prior to attending FIT. Traveling to school by train from Queens was exciting, but I got lost upon exiting the station every day of my first week. I decided to apply for dorm accommodation. My roommates made me feel right at home. During my first semester, Denise Protomastro, Fashion Design '90, took me under her wing and ensured that I accompanied her to her family home in Connecticut as often as possible so I wouldn't feel lost in the city. It was complete culture shock to see students wearing 4- and 6-inch platform trainers, outlandish hairstyles in assorted colors, and outfits reminiscent of Madonna in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. Pagers were a thing, hall phones were used to communicate with the outside world, and just a handful of students had mobile phones and desktop computers in their dorm rooms. By the time I entered the working world as a production assistant at M&J Savitt, I felt like a New Yorker. FIT was more than a university; to me it was a second family supporting me on my journey to adulthood.”



“One memorable event on campus was the 1990 Spring Fest. It was akin to a street fair/party open to the public. The student band performed and there was even limbo dancing on 27th Street.”



A group of Jewelry Design students outside a classroom with Professor William Manfredi.



Henry Picado

Fashion Design '97

“I came from a very modest family in Costa Rica with big dreams and hopes. My goal was to become the first Costa Rican presenting a collection on all the international runways and to dress all major celebrities. Thanks to all those wonderful teachers like Dolores Lombardi, Professor Kwon, and many more who made a difference in my life. Today I am proud to say that I have my own studio on Seventh Avenue, and I've dressed major celebrities including Keira Knightley and Lady Gaga, created brands for major companies, and have global distribution of my line, Este & Chlo.”

Polly Berne Katz

Illustration '81

“I feel so lucky to have had NYC as my college playground. I remember going on field trips with my classmates to the Flower District, to the zoo, and to various museums as well as climbing up to the roof of the school to draw. I remember seeing Dizzy Gillespie perform on campus, and seeing Diana Ross in all her splendor attending the Coty Awards on campus.”



Faryl Forman Stillman

Fashion Buying and Merchandising '89

FIT fashion show at the Limelight.

“Most of the students had jobs or had some job experience. Being a foreign student, my background was very limited in terms of internships but the school was very helpful. I secured an internship at Perry Ellis, and worked in their fashion closets, helped the public relations department, and greeted the editors' and Marc Jacobs' guests. It was an incredible scene, with Keith Richards, Steven Meisel, Christy Turlington, and Naomi Campbell showing up at the show-room. I was backstage at the controversial show where Marc Jacobs introduced his grunge collection. Unforgettable moments for a student.”

Nina Garcia

Marketing: Fashion and Related Industries '92



Joe Carrotto '17



Stephen Burrows at FIT, earlier in his career.

“On the last day of class I said to my senior teacher [Marie] Edelstein, ‘I’ll see you at the Coty Awards.’ I was just being futuristically optimistic. But then I did.”

Stephen Burrows
Fashion Design '66



Zappulla (foreground) and her roommate, Fran Antonucci, in Coed Hall in 1983.

Laurie Perlongo Zappulla,
Marketing: Fashion and Related Industries '85

“On September 4, 1979, at St. Vincent’s Hospital, a neurosurgeon told me that I would never walk again. I had broken my neck in a diving accident. I was at Rusk Institute rehab for almost one year and outpatient therapy for an additional year. Miraculously, one hundred days post-injury, I walked! Despite the success of walking, though, I remained functionally disabled. At FIT, most kids were a little out there, on the edge in one way or another. Sexually, artistically, these kids were definitely more than just fashion junkies. Punk rock was hot, boys had painted fingernails, hair was high and molded. And then there was me. I guess I may have thought I stuck out because I used a cane. But upon reflection, when I think about it, I fit right in. I was different, but so was everyone. I loved being with them. I felt normal in that crowd.”

Zappulla published a memoir, You’re Going To Walk: Still Pressing On After Spinal Cord Injury, in 2018.

Cindi Hammer Petrillo
Illustration '85

Photo taken in 1983.



Burrows at FIT’s commencement, 2019.

Laura Jackson
Fashion Design '98

“Met my best friend of 30 years at FIT, Ron Patterson. Professors called us “Bonnie and Clyde” because we were always getting into something! FIT was the *Fame* of fashion colleges!”

Jackson shows off her latest design in her Apparel Draping class, 1996.



Angela S. Mazzulli Sapione
Fashion Design '62

Karen Sapione Coppola
Fashion Design '92

“This photo [below] is from the 1961 yearbook. My mother, Angela S. Mazzulli Sapione '62, is on the lower right. They were in class, learning to rip seams. After graduation, she worked for Little Miss Celebrity designing girls dresses (sold at JCPenney), on 34th Street, across from Macy’s. She worked there until she started a family, then worked out of our home as a seamstress, specializing in wedding gowns and flower girl dresses. She passed away two years ago.

“In second grade, I was a fashion designer for career day. I took her portfolio to school with me. I graduated from FIT in '92 and have been in the industry since. Half of my career was as a designer, mostly children’s wear as well, but when I decided to have a family, I transitioned into print/textile design. For the last 14 years I have been at Aéropostale. I am the CAD manager and oversee all print and pattern across all divisions.”



Nicole Greenberg

Advertising and Marketing Communications '94

"For Halloween in 1990, my roommates and I dressed for the biggest indoor Halloween party at the world-renowned Palladium. We still reminisce about that night!"



“It was 1972. I walked in on 27th Street, to that Feldman building, under that arch, and I thought, ‘Wow, this is where I want to be.’ I left behind my khaki pants, my penny loafers, my button-down shirt, and my navy blue blazer, and I was ready for New York style. That summer, I let my hair grow in an afro out to here, I went and bought platform shoes that were this high, and I had a plaid Eisenhower jacket suit with bell-bottoms this wide. I thought I was the end! As I walked in, the first day of school, there was a guy standing there in the very same outfit! [It was Joe Castaldo, Textile and Apparel Marketing '73.] We became instant friends.”

Dennis Basso

Fashion Buying and Merchandising '73



Dennis Basso on Fire Island in the '70s.

Albina Dobruskin

Interior Design '13

"On the days (or should I say the nights) before finals you had to wait in line to get a computer at 2 in the morning at the computer lab."



Basso at FIT's commencement, 2013.



Philip Paritsky

Photography '76

From left: Kurt Franke, Photography '77, Gerri Giovanelli-Bauer, Mike Mollo, Susan Piasta-Stern, Philip Paritsky, all Photography '76. "I'm still friends with them 45 years later," Paritsky says. Photo taken in 1974 by Rick Klein.



Pamela Singleton

Textile Technology '87



In 1996, Lev's mother completed her AAS in Fashion Buying and Merchandising—50 years after receiving her high school diploma.

Lauren Isaacson Lev

Marketing: Fashion and Related Industries '82, adjunct assistant professor of Advertising and Marketing Communications

"I attended FIT's open house in fall 1977 after a family friend said FIT had an advertising major for business students who weren't artists or art directors. I had always loved advertising and wanted to study this discipline but my skills were in writing, not design. While sitting in the Haft Auditorium with my mom, watching the student fashion show move to the disco version of *Native New Yorker*, I recognized that FIT was the place I wanted to be. While at FIT, I worked on three American Advertising Federation student advertising competitions. Our ad teams placed regionally and/or nationally with advertising and marketing plans for products including Nabisco, Coors, and Corning Glass Works."

The Past Recaptured

The good, the bad, and the weird in FIT's yearbooks

A moment of silence, please, for that deceased institution known as Ye Olde College Yearbook. Social media, among other forces, has pretty much ended that once-perennial annual. FIT's yearbook, *Portfolio*, met its end in 2014. Though we occasionally detect a hankering for some unifying record (hence the various FIT alumni Facebook pages, and Instagram accounts like @fashiontech_in_da_90s), no one seems to miss it much.

In every college's history, there's an official narrative, and then there's what *really* went down. The yearbook straddled these categories:

Sanctioned like a formal portrait, it could also be as casual as a snapshot. The *Hue* team scoured the 70-year run of *Portfolio* and assembled a collection of moments that we found ... revealing. We wanted images that marked an instant in time (the Classical Listeners Club, 1966); captured an iconic style (the Soul Club, 1992); or just made us go, "WTF?" (the mysterious *Last Supper* image, which ran without a caption in 1974).

We included what we knew, which was usually not much, and often nothing. Know more? Drop us a line at hue@fitnyc.edu.



Sketching in class, 1947.



In 1951, still in the top two floors of the Central High School of Needle Trades, FIT offered courses in a cutting production laboratory. Here, students learned how garments were made (the men wore ties, of course).



FIT relocated to its first building on 27th Street in 1959. Many yearbook captions alluded to the move.



In 1962, Antonio Lopez, Illustration '62, who went on to become the legendary artist known as Antonio, served as art director on *Portfolio*. His partner Juan Ramos, Interior Design '62, shares a smoke with a pal here, as Antonio looks on.



Bookstore, 1963

Hair Apparent.



1962



1978



1992



2000



CLASSICAL LISTENERS
 Faculty Advisor, Roy Daniels
 President, Merle Pollack
 Vice President, Clara Toro
 Secretary-Treasurer, Avril Behrens

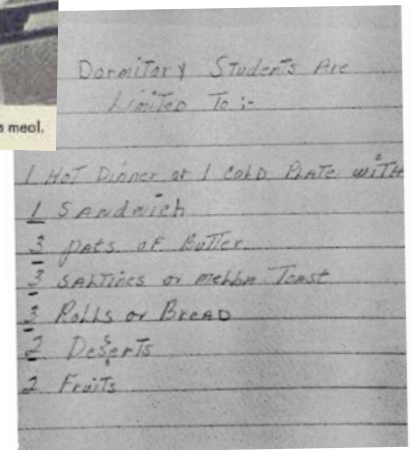
Classical Listeners Club, 1966.



GIRLS BOWLING CLUB
 Mr. Howard Essig instructs his charges in how to improve their bowling scores and encourages them to compete with one another for trophies. Trophies were presented to Gertrude Wong, Pearl Bryde, Gay Ballard, Joyce Ehrick and Rhoda Paul.



"What dormitory students are entitled to" at lunch, 1967.



Registering for classes, analog style, 1968.



"By the way, there's a 10-minute limit on the phone." 1967.

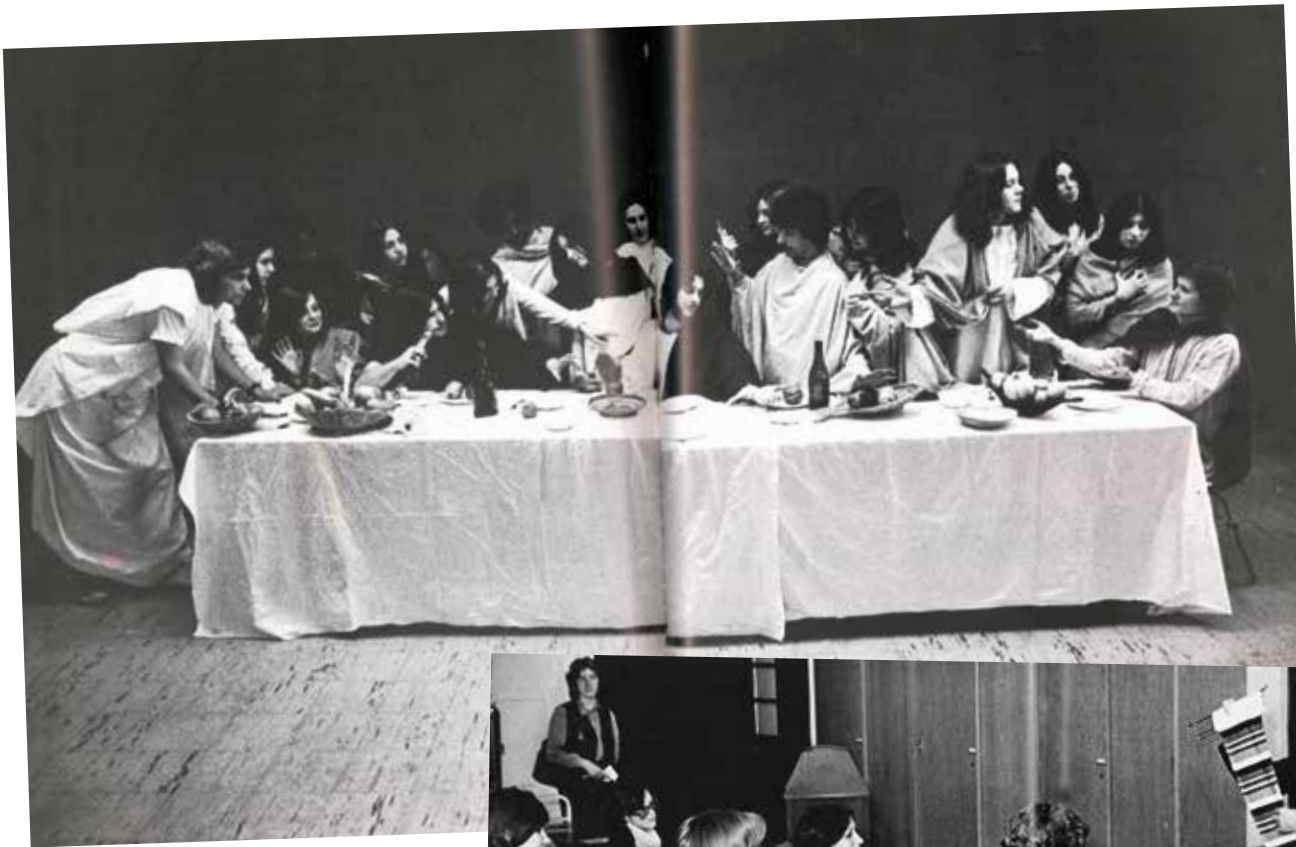




In 1972, this photo appeared in a section titled, "Puttin' on the Ritz." Perhaps it was a costume party, held in the student lounge, Binsky's.



All hail Display Department students, 1975!



The 1974 yearbook was particularly inscrutable. There were no captions for most of the photos, including this re-creation of *The Last Supper*.

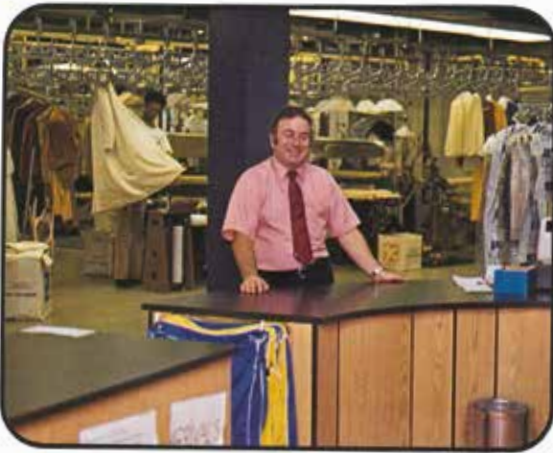


The 1980 yearbook referred to Textile Technology (now Textile Development and Marketing) as "a growing department" that had existed since the founding of the college. The feature celebrated the then seven-year-old knitting lab. (The lab, updated, is still in use.) The photo shows a Textile Science class taught by Allen Cohen.

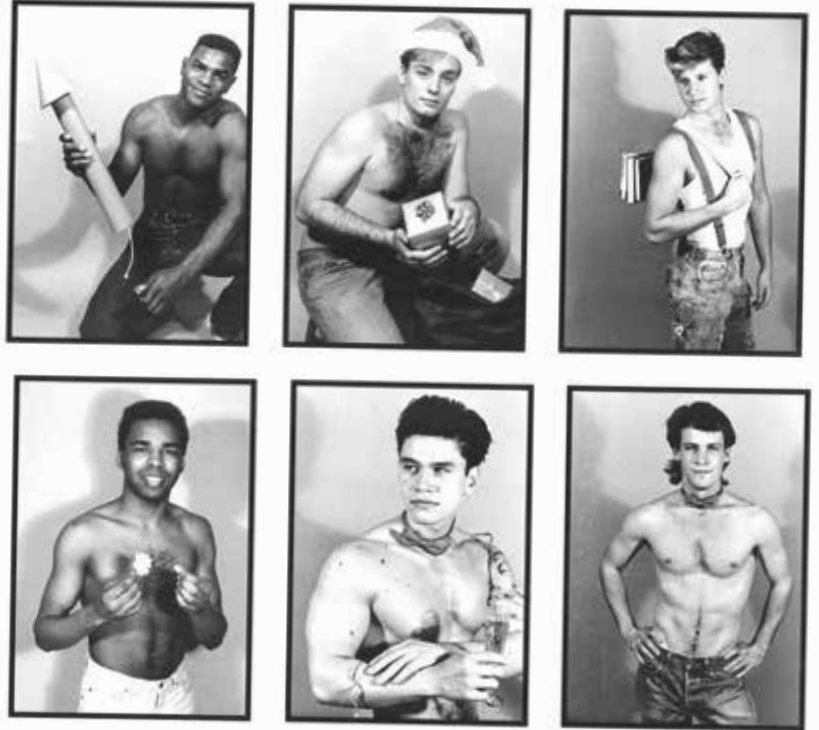


A Cut With Miss Olive

Miss Olive, "FIT's exclusive hairdresser and her inexpensive Hairdressing Lab," was on the ninth floor of the Business and Liberal Arts Center, 1980.



FIT's dry cleaning lab(!), 1981.



In 1989, a jaw-dropping feature, "Bodily Treasures," showed the shirtless male undergrads who appeared in a calendar, *FIT Guys '89-'90*, which sold as a fundraiser for students in the American Advertising Federation. The editors wrote, "Who ever said that women are the only ones exploited!" File under: That Wouldn't Happen Now.



The Soul Club spread in the 1992 book epitomizes early-'90s African American style.

Happily Ever After

A few of the many couples who met at FIT



1984

Stephanie Blanks Stevenson, Cosmetics, Fragrances, and Toiletries '83, and **Brian Stevenson**, Advertising and Communications

Stephanie: "It was 1981. I was standing in line for registration for three hours talking to the guy in front of me, Brian Stevenson. We learned everything about each other, including the fact that I was engaged. When it was his turn, he stepped out of line and said he already had his registration. Stunned, I learned that he had gotten in line just to meet me."



2018

"This October will be our 34th wedding anniversary. We have two children, and a beautiful granddaughter, and we owe it all to meeting at FIT! I'm a human resources professional, and Brian works in publicity for Sony Music, for Fathead sports marketing, and now as a part of the Motown Museum expansion."



1970

Camille Agnese Block, Fashion Design '68, and **Marc Block**, Photography '68

They met on the steps of the Feldman Center in 1967 and were in a *Life* Magazine article on knickers in 1970, just after they married. They celebrated 50 years in January.



1970



2018

Lucy Fierro, Marketing: Fashion and Related Industries '92, and **John Rivoli**, Illustration '91

They met outside the cafeteria on Rivoli's first day at FIT—August 28, 1989. "She was wearing polka-dot pants," he recalls. In 2019, they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

They also work together. Rivoli Design Group Inc. is a New York design agency specializing in art for film and TV studios and their licensees. When computers were still new, Rivoli developed a way to create digital art that looks hand-drawn and that can be reproduced at any size, even for billboards and theme parks. They won over numerous studios: Warner Bros., Dreamworks, Universal, Sony, MGM, and Nickelodeon.

Fierro writes the copy, markets the company, and pitches new business. Rivoli creates the art. He also did a Scooby Doo stamp for the U.S. Postal Service, and he collaborates with Sylvester Stallone on *Rocky*- and *Creed*-themed fine art prints.



1989



2019



2010

Jared Long, Illustration '09, Communication Design '07, and **Angela Finocchio**, Accessories Design '09

Angela: "We met in 2004 at a house party on Long Island. My best friend and her brother threw the party and Jared was friends with her brother. We met outside on their front stoop and instantly bonded over our love of art and music. I was already a freshman at FIT and Jared was applying for 2005, and was taking a Precollege class. We discovered we lived near each other, and he offered me a ride home. We remained close for several years until we started to date in 2007. We've been married for seven years, with a 2-year-old daughter and a freelance design business, War of the Masses."



2007

Lexi Townsend Parisse, Fashion Design '09, and **Nick Parisse**, Photography '09

Nick: "We had a class together, Stress Management, but we never spoke to each other. A few weeks into our freshman year, we found ourselves at a mutual friend's dorm room one evening and we've been together every day since."

In addition to shooting for *Hue*, Nick is director of photography at Dawning, a photojournalism company that creates multimedia stories about humanitarian issues. Lexi teaches fashion design at the High School of Fashion Industries. In January, they welcomed their first child, Marius Gray Parisse.

An FIT Playlist

Over the years, members of the FIT community have made a surprisingly significant contribution to American pop music. We put together a playlist of the best jams we know of. Know more? Email us at hue@fitnyc.edu.



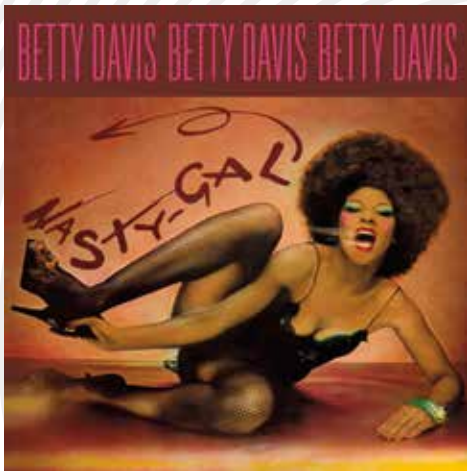
Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

“BE MY BABY,” THE RONETTES (1963)

In 2017, *Billboard* magazine named this No. 1 on its list of the Greatest Girl Group Songs of All Time. The three Ronettes included lead singer Veronica, or Ronnie, Bennett Spector and her sister Estelle (1940–2009), who attended FIT. Estelle Bennett, who is credited with developing the Ronettes’ signature look—mile-high hair and matching, fashion-forward frocks—later dated Mick Jagger and George Harrison, and recorded music under her own name after the group disbanded.

“ANTI-LOVE SONG,” BETTY DAVIS (1973)

Did Betty Davis, born Mabry, attend FIT? We can’t prove it, but the rumors persist. The onetime wife of legendary trumpeter Miles Davis, she recorded a collection of hugely influential funk records featuring salacious lyrics. Illustrator (and FIT alum) Antonio ‘63 styled Betty’s signature edgy look—skintight outfits, natural hairdo—for the cover of her album *Nasty Gal*. Hmmm ...



Light in the Attic



“PULL UP TO THE BUMPER,” WRITTEN BY DANA MANNO FOR GRACE JONES (1981)

Among the greatest double entendres in pop history, this song was inspired by a parking lot sign. Manno, who teaches Afro-Caribbean dance and aerobics at FIT, saw the “Pull Up to Bumper” sign in her garage, and improvised the basics of the naughty ditty on her tape recorder in 30 minutes in the front seat of her car. Soon after, she found herself in Jamaica, babysitting Grace Jones’s son; when the two women happened to be in the sauna together, Manno sang the tune and Jones liked it. The song spent seven weeks at No. 2 on *Billboard*’s dance music chart.

“YOUR LOVE,” FRANKIE KNUCKLES, FEATURING JAMIE PRINCIPLE (1987)

Knuckles (1955–2014), who studied Textile Design at FIT, is known as “the Godfather of House Music,” and this song is considered a classic of the stripped-down style. A member of the Dance Music Hall of Fame, Knuckles cut his teeth in Chicago, and later had a successful stint at Manhattan’s Sound Factory, where he became known for his remixes of Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston. He won a Grammy for remixing in 1997.



Evernight Images / Alamy Stock Photo

“GROOVE IS IN THE HEART,” DEEE-LITE (1990)

If you didn’t hear this insanely danceable retro-funk track in the early ‘90s, you were probably in a coma. Cited as one of the all-time great dance tunes by *Pitchfork*, *Buzzfeed*, VH1, etc., etc.—the song was crafted in part by Deee-Lite frontwoman Lady Miss Kier (née Kierin Kirby), who studied Textile Design at FIT. Her distinctive eyeliner, Pucci-inspired cat suits, and Fluevogs launched her into the pop style pantheon. Dig it!



Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo



EyeBrowz / Alamy Stock Photo

“LOUNGIN’,” GURU (1993)

Gifted Unlimited Rhymes Universal, né Keith Edward Elam (1961–2010), left graduate school at FIT to start a recording career, and became a major figure in hip-hop, recording both as Guru and, partnered with DJ Premier, Gang Starr. He’s heard on the soundtrack of Spike Lee’s *Mo’ Better Blues* (1990) and Neneh Cherry’s album *Homebrew* (1992). His critically lauded recording *Jazzmatazz* (1993) featured rhymes layered over live jazz accompaniment by legends Branford Marsalis, Lonnie Liston Smith, and on this track, trumpet and piano by Donald Byrd.



WENN Rights Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo

“ELEGANCE,” KILO KISH (2018)

A rising star, Lakisha Kimberly Robinson, aka rapper and singer Kilo Kish, Textile/Surface Design ‘12, has collaborated with Childish Gambino and Vince Staples, and *Pitchfork* singled out “Elegance” as a “Best New Track.” Her 2016 tune “Taking Responsibility” appeared on HBO’s teen drama *Euphoria*.



Zoamar Gmbh / Alamy Stock Photo

“SPIDERS,” JUNGLEPUSSY (2019)

Shayna McHayle, Fashion Merchandising Management, who records under the provocative name Junglepussy, has been praised by Lil’ Kim and Erykah Badu. Her song “Bling Bling” appeared on HBO’s *Insecure*. Last year, she received critical praise for her first acting role in the film *Support the Girls*, starring Regina Hall.

Listen

to a Spotify playlist of these songs at bit.ly/fitcelebrates75

Still Singing After All These Years

Renée Minus White, Fashion Buying and Merchandising, is one of the original Chantels

When Renée Minus White began taking classes at FIT in the early 1960s, she had already performed with the likes of James Brown and Chuck Berry as part of the legendary girl group The Chantels. “I never really publicized that,” she says, when asked whether her fellow students ever recognized her. Now the real estate broker and fashion columnist for the Amsterdam News opens up about her singing life. Her story is further recounted in her book, *Maybe: My Memoir*.

I was 11 years old when I started singing with The Chantels. The five of us—Jacquelyn Landry, Millicent Sonia Goring, Lois Harris, Arlene Smith, and myself—met singing in the choir at St. Anthony of Padua [Church], in the Bronx. The rock ‘n’ roll era was just starting, and we were like groupies. We sang rock ‘n’ roll in the schoolyard and went to all the musical shows and waited at the backstage door to get autographs, all dressed alike. We had just seen a show at Radio City Music Hall when Richard Barrett, the lead singer of

the Valentines, saw us. He offered to make us stars.

My dad was a jazz pianist and my mom was a jazz singer, but they got other jobs [as a post office worker and a nurse] after getting married and having children. None of my seven siblings did music: They never thought we would become famous.

Our first real gig was at the Apollo Theater. The gowns we had were strapless, but our parents made little straps for us for coverage. We were young girls. No one was allowed in our dressing room. But we would watch the other performers in the wings: Chuck Berry, LaVern Baker.

In 1959, Arlene Smith, our lead singer, decided that she wanted to go on her own and be a solo artist. Plus, we learned that the guy who was handling us was a gambler, and all the money that we made was gambled away. We were always in flux after that. At 18 or 19, I started working at a department store and taking night classes at FIT. Eventually I started working as a comparison shopper at A&S [Abraham & Straus] in Brooklyn, and then a copywriter.

We never [disbanded] The Chantels. The public wouldn’t let us do that. I’m 75 years old and they’re still calling for us. We have a new member, Neomi Ortiz Brink, a young, talented singer, and we are booked way into 2021. —As told to Raquel Laneri



Top: The Chantels in the late '50s. White is in the center. Above: The Chantels today. White is at right.



Indya Moore and Garçon talk behind the scenes while shooting season 2 of Pose.

Strictly Ballroom

Twiggy Pucci Garçon, Fashion Merchandising Management, choreographs the FX hit Pose

In spring 2017, Twiggy Pucci Garçon was both excited and worried to hear that Ryan Murphy, producer of *Glee* and *American Horror Story*, had a new show in the works, about the New York house and ball culture of the late '80s, known for its dazzling LGBTQI dance, drag, and runway competitions. The show would be called *Pose*.

Garçon has been part of the New York house scene since her adolescence in the early 2000s in Portsmouth, Virginia, and is now “overall overseer” for the House of Garçon, coordinating about 250 global members to plan and create balls. For many, ballroom is more than just an emotional and colorful subject for an hourlong TV drama. She aired her concerns on Facebook, requesting that someone from the scene be hired to help create the show. Six degrees of social media separation later, Garçon had a contract as a ball culture consultant.

Pose follows a group of African American and Latinx gay, trans, and gender nonbinary individuals in the late '80s. In the outside world, the characters face prejudice, poverty, and the AIDS crisis. In ball culture, Blanca Evangelista and her chosen family find a safe space to express themselves.

In a typical ballroom scene, Emcee Pray Tell (portrayed by Broadway great Billy Porter) calls each category, and the characters, in suits and gowns, vogue and strut under the spotlights. For the category “Runway Model Effect,” Angel Evangelista (played by Indya Moore) wears a strapless column gown in a Chanel-like metallic tweed, her face obscured by a wide-brimmed black cocktail hat that she lifts dramatically as she begins to walk. For the category “Black Beauties,” Angel again steals the show with a jewel-toned sequin gown and windblown hair, courtesy of electric fans. Vying for trophies and glory in a world that denies them so much, these characters win acceptance and love.

“A large part of my role for the first season was bringing in other folks from the ballroom scene,” says Garçon, who is also senior program director for the True Colors Fund, working to end youth LGBTQI homelessness. She says that her first list of must-haves included model Dominique Jackson, who portrays the regal housemother Elektra Abundance-Wintour, and Jack Mizrahi,

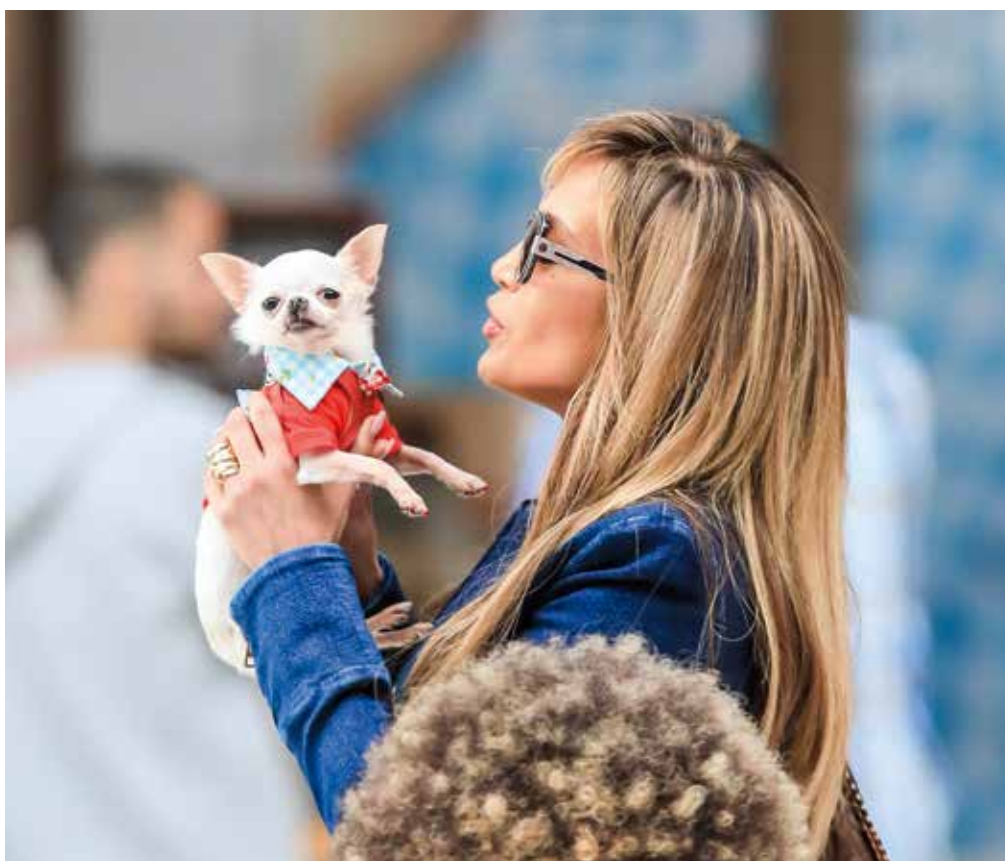
a contemporary ballroom commentator originally brought on to consult but who now portrays a version of himself on the show.

Having now completed the second season, Garçon can be quite sure of Murphy’s intentions. The FX show has won accolades for the inclusion of LGBTQI creatives at every level of production, from background actors (often cast by Garçon) to executive producers.

Garçon is committed to accuracy when choreographing runway sequences for the characters on the show. “*Pose* is a period piece, so I look to stories that have been passed down. Ballroom was significantly more underground, even when I was coming up. I also do a ton of research.”

But getting it right isn’t just about the precision of a runway walk or a pose. It is also about creating a space for people to tell their stories. She knows the life-changing impact of people seeing themselves in media. “A friend who works as a doctor in HIV-positive communities of color let me know that one of his patients was inspired by *Pose* to consistently take their HIV meds,” Garçon says. “Over the season, they saw this person’s numbers increase. I go back to that text conversation and I’m just like, wow. It pushes me to keep doing the things I’m doing.”

—Julianna Rose Dow, Fashion and Textile Studies



J.Lo and Manhattan the Chihuahua on the set of *Hustlers*.

Soy Cheesel/IGC Images/Getty Images

DAPPER DOGGY

Ada Nieves, Pet Product Design and Marketing certificate '08, dressed her pup for *Hustlers* starring J.Lo

One of the most talked-about actors in the recent J.Lo movie *Hustlers* doesn't have any lines. In fact, she's not even human. Manhattan the Chihuahua, who plays Mr. Bruce (in a cross-dressing role), is owned by pet-fashion designer Ada Nieves, whose six Chihuahuas are all in showbiz. Manhattan herself has starred in *The Con Is On* with Uma Thurman, *Someone Great* with Gina Rodriguez, and *All We Had* with Katie Holmes.

"All my dogs have agents," Nieves says.

Once Manhattan won the *Hustlers* gig, Nieves showed producers a few outfits she'd designed for her male dogs—faux fur bags, bedazzled collars, and sunglasses—and they loved them. "It was a big compliment," she says, "but on the other hand I'm thinking, 'Hmm, I guess we really look like hustlers.'"

Nieves is crazy about Chihuahuas, but she also designs glam ensembles for cats, chickens, lizards, rabbits, even rats. (Her 2011 rat fashion show was

featured on the *Late Show with David Letterman*.) Designing for each species requires understanding its unique body mechanics, as well as how the fur, feathers, or scales interact with various fabrics. Coat color matters too, in choosing fabric hues. As does body shape: "You can't put a lot of ruffles on a chubby dog—it's going to look like a seal."

She coordinates an online group of 20,000 Chihuahua lovers worldwide and uses her platform to promote rescue

efforts. Her annual New York Pet Fashion Show, which took place at the Hotel Pennsylvania on Feb. 6, supports the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals each year. She is challenging designers for the show to incorporate technology, such as LEDs and wearable circuits, into the outfits.

"We're going to have dogs, cats, bearded dragons, a guinea pig, a mini pig, a chicken, 80 animals on the runway," she says. "It's four hours of pure pet fashion."

—Jonathan Vatner



Periwinkle models a Nieves creation at the NYC Fancy Rat Convention in 2011.

Martin Row/Barrcroft Media LTD

Plugged In

Sherrell Dorsey, International Trade and Marketing for the Fashion Industries '09, reports on the black innovation economy

As Sherrell Dorsey built a marketing career in the technology world, she paid close attention to industry news. But the more she read, the more she wrestled with one question: Where were people of color in the narrative?

"I'm reading about all these white guy geniuses and I'm wondering, 'How do I identify and tell stories about black geniuses and innovators and inventors and investors?'"

In 2016, Dorsey found her answer. She began waking up at 5 am to search the internet for diverse, under-the-radar stories for a daily newsletter she dubbed ThePLUG. The project was a low-budget labor of love demonstrating that "black innovation is of the norm."

Three years later, thousands of readers start their day with ThePLUG, which has won grants from the Facebook Journalism Project and The Information Accelerator, a technology website whose accelerator program supports efforts to build subscription-based news organizations. Along with the newsletter, there is now an expanded digital platform featuring original reporting from Dorsey and a team of freelance writers, and a data library tracking everything from black-owned



co-working spaces to patents acquired by historically black colleges and universities.

Dorsey, who also received a master's in data journalism from Columbia University in 2018, casts an intentionally wide net, seeking stories that both analyze diversity challenges and spotlight successes across the tech

sector; past subjects include black engineers working to address water safety issues in urban communities and former Tennessee Titan—turned—impact investor Derrick Morgan.

The idea, Dorsey said, is not only to illuminate but to expand the conversation.

"We want to change the way the world—particularly the world of academia, financial markets, and public policy professionals—are all thinking about what's happening across the black innovation economy," she says. "We aspire to be the black *Wall Street Journal*."

—Liz Leyden



ThePLUG can be found at tpinsights.com.



A model backstage at the Savage X Fenty show.

FOR EVERY BODY

Melissa Battifarano, Fashion Design '01, oversees Rihanna's disruptive lingerie brand

In September, Rihanna made history by staging a star-powered, mega-inclusive musical fashion show at Barclays Center in Brooklyn to launch the fall/winter 2019 line of Savage X Fenty, her groundbreaking lingerie brand founded in 2018. Halsey and Big Sean were among the singers, and the models (including two FIT alumni, transgender actor and activist Laverne Cox, and



Battifarano.

RuPaul's Drag Race 2018 winner Aquaria) were of diverse races, sizes, and physical abilities.

It was a stark contrast to most fashion shows—not to mention advertising and entertainment media—which feature thin, cisgender, and mostly white models without disabilities. This radical inclusivity, reflected in the shades, sizing, and support of the pieces, sets the line apart from traditional lingerie brands. Bra sizes range from 32A to 42H, panty sizes from XS to 3X.

"It's for everybody," says Melissa Battifarano, Fashion Design '01, vice president of design for Savage X Fenty. "We really embrace all body shapes and make our customer feel sexy."

Battifarano drives the brand's creative direction and upholds Rihanna's vision. She manages a Los Angeles-based team of about 15 designers, production managers, and quality assurance experts to create the dozens of pieces released each season. Rihanna has final say. "Everything comes from her, down to the hangtags," Battifarano says.

Every product is created especially for the brand. "Merchants want to sell you bestsellers from other lines," she says. "That's not what we're doing. It's not a me-too attitude."

Battifarano, a longtime sportswear designer, met Rihanna in 2014 to work on the Fenty X Puma streetwear collaboration. Battifarano had previously designed for Puma, and her boss there thought she and Rihanna would hit it off. Four seasons later, when that line reached its natural conclusion, Savage X Fenty began.

The fashion show, released on Amazon Prime Video in September as part of a deal to sell the line on Amazon.com, was massively more elaborate than anything Battifarano had worked on before. Past shows have featured about 60 looks; this one featured 147 ensembles for dancers and 44 for models. Midnight 00 created 118 custom pairs of shoes, and Puma pitched in stylish footwear, too.

The show inspired rave reviews from *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Glamour*; even the *Wall Street Journal* took note of the line's ascendancy.

"It's really a cultural moment," Battifarano says. "It's bigger than just fashion. It's a movement."

—Jonathan Vatner



Kinstler Ney flips through some of her paintings.

An Artistic Life

Joselyn Kinstler Ney, Textile Design '56, recalls her early years in textiles

I lived on Union Turnpike in Flushing, across the street from Jamaica Estates, where Donald Trump was brought up. As a woman, what could you be besides a schoolteacher? You didn't have options. My mother insisted I go to FIT. It didn't cost us anything other than the carfare to get there and art supplies. My mother was a widow, and I remember having to scrape to get the carfare.

A really good teacher brings out what you can do—it becomes more about you than her. Helen Klupt was that kind of teacher. And Henriette Reiss was able to see colors and designs when she heard music. When she painted, you knew right away whether she was listening to a Tchaikovsky or a Chopin—you could see it in the art. She was very, very different. But boy, was she good.

After graduation I worked at Wamsutta, making \$60 a week. God, was that a lot of money. We did flower designs for furniture and draperies. The fabric designers in the studio were absolutely phenomenal. When they did a rose, that rose stank—it was that realistic. When I started out, I had to take their designs and paint them in different colorways. Then I started designing on my own. I was being paid to do something I would have done for nothing.

At that time, we put out a line of home textiles by Melanie Kahane, an interior designer who was an icon of culture. Our studio floor was spattered with paint, and she came in dragging a mink coat on the floor. I was so impressed. I couldn't believe someone could drag a thousand dollars of mink on a paint-spilled floor. When I found my ultimate fur coat, a kolinsky, it had a huge opera-type hood, yards and yards of fur. When I dragged that coat on the floor, it was the most marvelous thing I ever did. Melanie Kahane, eat your heart out.

Inspired by Kahane, I became an interior designer. You gave me \$500, and I'd completely redecorate your house—and I'd give you back change. In 1976, I incorporated and became Designing Woman. I did the sample houses for new developments—I became rather successful at it. I sold the company in the late '90s. When I first retired, I thought I was going to go bonkers; it was not easy to find my place. But now it's so wonderful. I volunteer as a docent at the Woodmere museum [in Philadelphia], and I paint. I hadn't painted since I was 16. Guess what I paint mostly? Flowers! My gosh, can I paint a flower.

—As told to Jonathan Vatner



AIR PLAY

Allen Ying, Communication Design '04, Photography '03

Squint a little: Yes, come to think of it, Robert Cronbach's 1976 bronze sculpture, *Eye of Fashion*, does resemble a halfpipe. We advise you *not* to use FIT's beloved icon that way, but there was a moment in 2004 when someone did. Allen Ying was there to capture it.

"The story with the photo, just the usual," Ying says. "I met these guys through some other skaters. We were going skating with the goal of getting tricks, footage, and photos, and he saw the sculpture and wanted to try to skate it." There's a delicious tension between the airborne performer's ecstasy and the security guard who's about to end it.

A photographer who specializes in skaters, Ying founded the late, lamented publication *43* (2011-16) "to push the paradigm of what a skateboard magazine is." These days he often shoots music acts, publishing on *Wait Okay*, an ad-free communal blog that he organizes, and *Alt Citizen*, the online magazine for New York's Alt Space gallery. Whether they show skaters, musicians, or people hanging out, Ying's images are transporting. No matter where you see them, when you see them, you're there.

Eye of Fashion is on the corner of West 27th Street and Seventh Avenue.

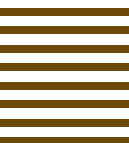


Friends for Life

In 1962, a professor harshly criticized some drawings by student Steven Stipelman '63, an aspiring illustrator. Later, Stipelman was approached in the snack bar by new acquaintance Linda Tain '64, bewildered by criticism from the same teacher. A lifelong friendship began. The following year, as art director for FIT's yearbook, Stipelman included a shot of them in the Fashion Illustration Club, of Tain in the bookstore, and himself, posing on the escalator. Those first critiques seem to have done little harm: Stipelman was staff illustrator for *Women's Wear Daily* from 1964 to 1991, and has taught in the Fashion Design Department since 1993. Tain has taught in the department since 1969; she also held prominent roles in FIT's union. In 2018, she published a book, *Portfolio Presentation for Fashion Designers* (Bloomsbury). Both received SUNY Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Teaching. Some 57 years after meeting, the two remain close. The color photo (lower right) is from a recent trip to Paris.



See a feature about FIT's yearbooks on page 26.





STEPHEN JONES
2003

The acclaimed milliner creates hats for many leading designers. This one was for Dior.



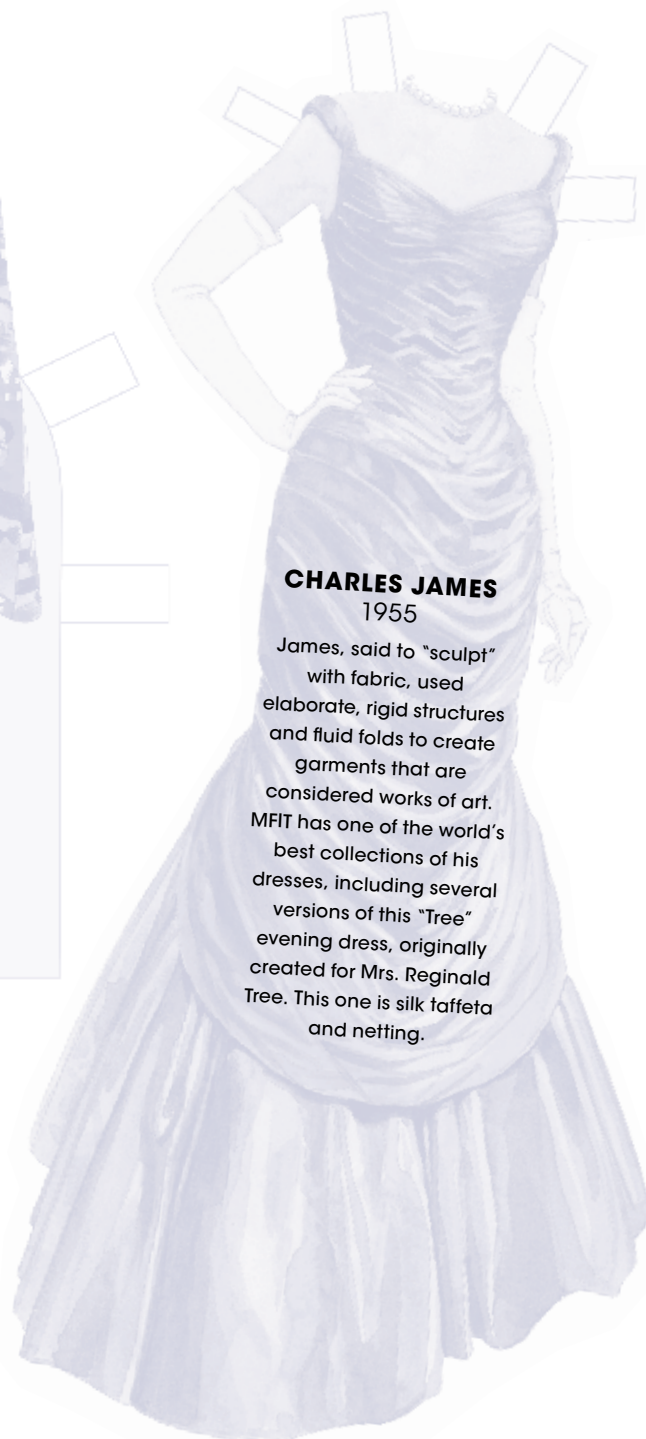
ALEXANDER McQUEEN
2007

Renowned for highly imaginative, sometimes shocking collections and extravagant runway shows—as well as exquisite tailoring—McQueen created this velvet gown embellished with a cascade of gold beads as part of a collection inspired by witches.



VIVIENNE TAM
1995

The Chinese-born, New York-based Tam is noted for designs that fuse East and West. She collaborated with Chinese artist Zhang Hongtu, who created the series of comic images of Mao seen on this multicolor nylon dress—in contrast to the seriousness with which he was traditionally represented.



CHARLES JAMES
1955

James, said to “sculpt” with fabric, used elaborate, rigid structures and fluid folds to create garments that are considered works of art. MFIT has one of the world’s best collections of his dresses, including several versions of this “Tree” evening dress, originally created for Mrs. Reginald Tree. This one is silk taffeta and netting.

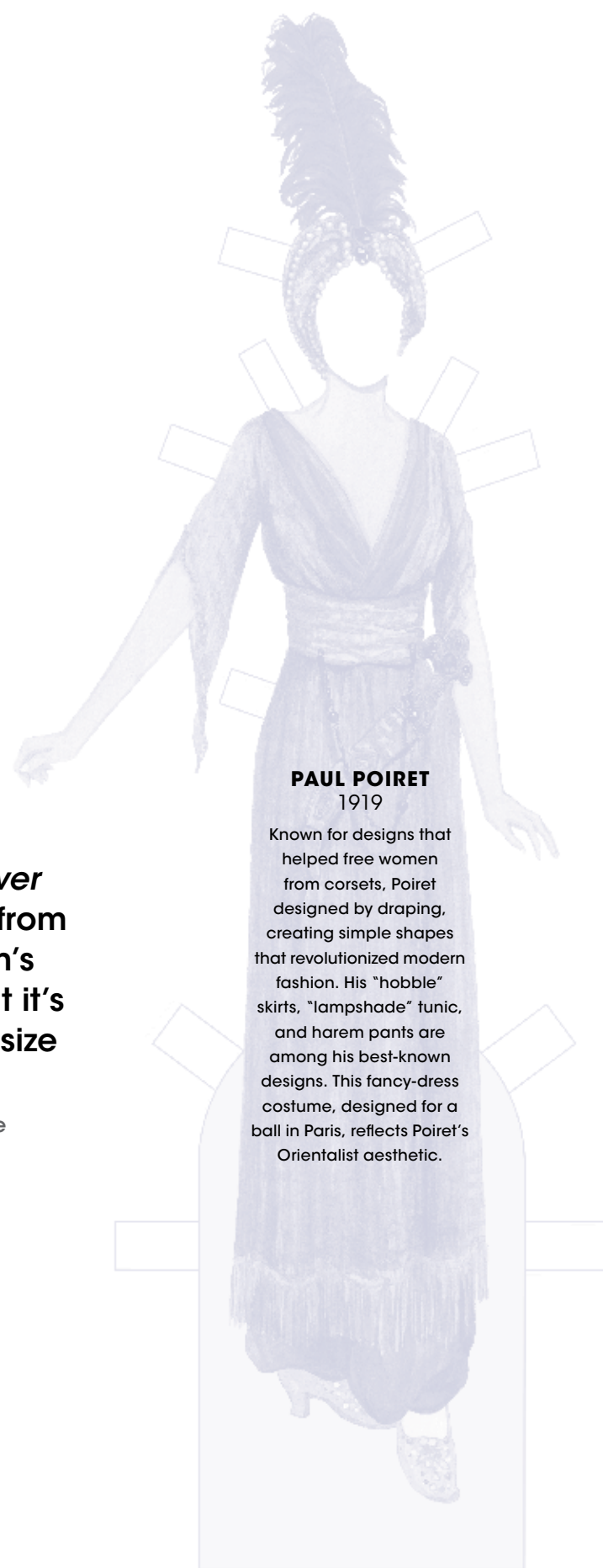
For the fancy hair and the hat:

1. Cut out the hair/hat, leaving the **BLUE** tab attached.
2. Fold the top of the **BLUE** tab back toward the blank side.
3. With the blank side facing you, fold forward on the dotted line.
4. Place the hair/hat on the doll with the fold resting on the head. Fold back the other tabs.



JUNYA WATANABE
2002

Watanabe, of Comme des Garçons, is an innovative conceptual designer who often uses advanced technical materials. He made this dress out of vintage blue jeans.



PAUL POIRET
1919

Known for designs that helped free women from corsets, Poiret designed by draping, creating simple shapes that revolutionized modern fashion. His “hobble” skirts, “lampshade” tunic, and harem pants are among his best-known designs. This fancy-dress costume, designed for a ball in Paris, reflects Poiret’s Orientalist aesthetic.

“I would *never* wear a dress from the museum’s collection! But it’s easy to fantasize about it.”

—Valerie Steele



Produced by
hue The Magazine of the Fashion Institute of Technology
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Steele in Charles James dress and Stephen Jones hat, on paper.

Wearable Art

In honor of The Museum at FIT’s 50th anniversary, and FIT’s 75th, we enable Valerie Steele, the museum’s director and chief curator, to wear clothes from its collection. Sort of.

by Linda Angrilli
Illustrations by Anita Rundles '13



CLOTHES ARE INTIMATE. They’re meant to be on a body, to sheathe that body, to move with that body. And if all goes well, to make that body look fantastic. So it’s a tiny bit sad when a garment is acquired by a museum. Then it becomes a precious object, stripped of its former function. A dress that once walked the runway or sashayed at a downtown club will be kept forever pristine in climate-controlled storage, handled delicately by white-gloved conservators, and exhibited only in dim light that won’t damage fabrics or dyes. It’s there to be admired and studied, but never worn.

What if we could somehow reclaim the original purpose of The Museum at FIT’s garments? What if someone could put them on? We could think of only one way—and one someone. And so we turned Valerie Steele—director and chief curator of MFIT, Yale PhD, iconic historian of fashion, respected scholar, frequent

media commentator, and author of 31 books (some translated into languages including Chinese, French, and Russian)—into a paper doll. Now she can model pieces from the museum’s collection, even if only in two dimensions. “I would *never* wear a dress from the museum’s collection!” Steele said. “But it’s fun to fantasize about it.”

The garments here are all by leading 20th century designers, and were among the pieces featured in the museum’s anniversary show, *Exhibitionism: 50 Years of The Museum at FIT*, held last spring.

To learn about these designs, see the reverse of each outfit.



Tim Gunn, President Joyce F. Brown, and Steele at the opening of *Exhibitionism: 50 Years of The Museum at FIT*.

The Museum at FIT

The Museum at FIT, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is one of a select group of specialized fashion museums around the world, including the Musée de la Mode (Paris), the ModeMuseum (Antwerp), and the Museo de la Moda (Santiago). The museum has a collection of more than 50,000 garments and accessories from the 18th century to the present, including avant-garde fashions by leading designers. Its innovative and award-winning exhibitions are both educational and inspiring, attracting more than 100,000 visitors each year.

MFIT celebrated its half-century mark in 2019, with *Exhibitionism: 50 Years of The Museum at FIT*, a show highlighting more than 30 of its most influential exhibitions dating back to the 1970s. Its groundbreaking shows include *Fashion and Surrealism* (1987), *The Corset* (2000), *A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk* (2013), and *Pink: The History of a Punk, Pretty, Powerful Color* (2018). For more on The Museum at FIT, visit fitnyc.edu/museum.



Exhibitionism (2019) commemorated more than 30 of the most influential MFIT shows, including *Fashion and Surrealism* (1987), a groundbreaking exploration of the relationship between art and fashion.

How a Real Person Became a Paper Doll

When Valerie Steele agreed to be turned into a paper doll, we went straight to Anita Rundles, Illustration BFA '13, an accomplished artist with an uncanny ability to render the drape and texture of fabric. (She created the cover art for our fall 2017 innovation issue, of an 18th century woman in a VR headset, which won a CASE Circle of Excellence Award.) She's also a fan of paper dolls, and was excited to jump in. She went to the museum's 50th anniversary show, *Exhibitionism*, to see the outfits up close, and then worked from photos to create the details. Her images are both gorgeous and accurate, representing each garment with remarkable sensitivity.

Of course, the doll had to be just so, and the signature cat's-eye glasses had to be perfect. We tried several poses, and picked one that showed

the garments well—and would be easy to cut out if readers wanted to. We had fun cutting them out ourselves to make sure everything fit and the tabs worked properly.

Once we decided to include Paul Poiret's harem costume with its feathered headdress, the doll's hair had to lie close against her head. But that hair looked wrong with some of the garments, so Anita created other hairstyles that Valerie has worn, including her simple, sleek everyday style.

Valerie Steele the human was pleased when she saw Valerie Steele the paper doll's fabulous wardrobe. We think you will be too.

Grab your scissors or find an interactive version of this feature online at hue.fitnyc.edu.



Rundles at work on the paper doll in her studio.



Instructions for hat and fancy hair on reverse.

Instructions for hat and fancy hair on reverse.

Do not cut out white area between arm and body.

Do not cut out white area between arm and body.

Valerie Steele