



Perspectives

The Newsletter of the Association of Sewing and Design Professionals

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THE GLAMOUR OF BELLEVILLE SASSOON

I arrived in London to visit my 95 year old Mother and work for an English client one day before the exhibit 'The Glamour of Belleville Sassoon' was scheduled to close at the Fashion & Textile Museum (a small museum south of the Thames river -nearest tube stop: London Bridge). What a delight to discover that indeed David Sassoon was in the gallery that afternoon.

My sister and I began in the first small room which had a collection of 5 garments worn by Royals. (No photos allowed!) Belleville Sassoon has dressed all the female members of the royal family apart from Her Majesty the Queen. On display was the going away outfit created for Princess Diana for her wedding to Prince Charles and during the small tour that David

Sassoon gave us he told us he had been very fortunate to find the glorious coral two-piece outfit and have it on display. It was thought to be lost. He had made two jackets for the dress: a short sleeve version for warmer weather and a long sleeve one if it was cold.



Helen Haughey
by Chuck Islander



David Sassoon and Helen Haughey

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How I Wish I Had the University of Fashion When I Went to Fashion College!

My name is Francesca Sterlacci. Many moons ago I applied to fashion college. Although my high school offered art classes, none of our art teachers knew the first thing about how to prepare a fashion college admissions portfolio or what it took to be a fashion designer for that matter. My high school sewing teacher, Mrs. Tieri, who was a 1940s Pratt graduate, offered technical sewing advice but to be honest, she really wasn't a fan of my design sense. She was in love with 1940s style, you know, Mainbocher, Dior, and Balenciaga (I would later appreciate the work of these talented designers). In contrast, the designers that were inspiring me at the time were 1960s designers like, Gernreich, Courreges and Rabanne. Not only did Mrs. Tieri not "get" my design sense, she questioned my hubris in reworking commercial patterns to fit my designs, a big no-no in her class! Despite our differences I successfully compiled an art portfolio and clothing samples, then applied and got accepted to the Fashion Institute of Technology. Years later, I became a Seventh Avenue designer under the label "Francesca Sterlacci Ltd" and manufactured 100% of my collection in New York City. My collection sold at Saks, Barneys, Nordstroms and other fine stores around the country. It was 8 years later when Mrs. Tieri and I reconnected. Just like a proud parent, she had saved all of my press clippings over the years (so sweet). She even volunteered to work for me that summer! Why I am telling you this?

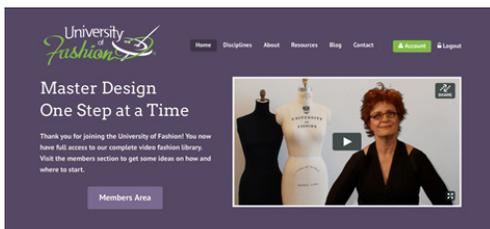
Fast forward to 1990 when I closed my company after 10 years. It seemed like more of my time was spent running the business and less time designing the collection. So, I started a freelance design company called Design Instinct and began teaching part-time at FIT. It was there at FIT that I met designer Geoffrey Beene who inspired me to think of ways to keep the art of fashion design alive in the U.S., particularly

the hands-on skills of pattern making, sewing and draping, at a time when this knowledge was increasingly being exported off-shore. Having always been a "hands-on" designer, one who needs to touch fabric and drape it on a dress form for inspiration, I wanted to share my hands-on skills with my students. I found that books, although I had written several, just weren't the right medium to teach my hands-on sensibility to today's generation of aspiring fashion designers. Today's students, as I learned while teaching graduate level design online for six years at the Academy of Art University San Francisco, want to learn from a more visual approach to teaching.

I am not sure whether living for 9 years in Silicon Valley, the home of Facebook, Google and Apple, wasn't the inspiration or because I am passionate about things Made in USA, but suddenly it hit me: Create a fashion design video library! A video library that tapped into all my fashion contacts over the years and brought in the best fashion college professors and fashion industry pros to share their knowledge and skills through professionally produced videos with the hope of jumpstarting a Made in USA manufacturing movement. I began by filming basic lessons, just the way you would learn if you were sitting in the classroom at any of the best fashion colleges. I then expanded on the concept to offer more advanced lessons. I wanted the website to inspire and empower people to become designers.

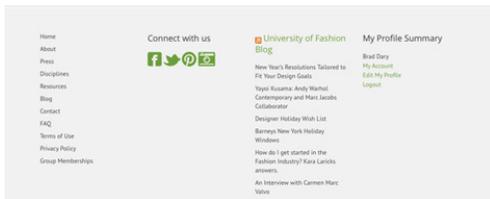


The University of Fashion launched on July 4, 2013 with a large library of videos spanning the 5 fashion design disciplines of draping, pattern making, sewing, fashion drawing and product development. I wanted to make my video library affordable to the many home sewers and aspiring designers in the world today. I wanted to create a place where students could go who needed help with their college admissions portfolio, for those who didn't get into a prestigious fashion college or those who simply couldn't afford to go. I wanted ev-



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everyone to get the same access. In addition, I wanted to offer my video library to fashion companies, to train their designer employees and, to high schools and colleges as a supplement to their “live” teaching programs. Mrs. Tieri, I think, you’d be proud!

At the University of Fashion, we continually add new video content to the website. In fact, we are now offering fashion lectures on subjects like costume history, fashion licensing, and fashion marketing, all taught by college Profs and industry pros. Next month we will launch lectures on fashion branding, color theory and a 3-part series on how to start a fashion brand taught by a successful New York fashion designer. In addition to our “how-to” and lecture videos, we have interviews with famous fashion designers and tours of fashion museums and other key fashion industry resources. Our goal is to be the one-stop fashion hub for fashion professionals, aspiring fashion designers, teachers of fashion, home sewers, and the fashion curious.

Now that you know the history and mission of the University of Fashion, let me tell you a bit about how we produce our videos. After making 2 pilot videos in 2008, we conducted market research at high schools and fashion colleges to learn the best way to deliver our video content. We made substantial changes and came up with what we believe is our “secret sauce”, adding motion graphics, music and well-edited content designed to keep the viewer engaged. We recruit the best teachers at fashion colleges known for their expertise in a particular discipline. Each fashion college instructor has excellent teaching credentials with stellar peer and student evaluations at their institution. Our fashion industry instructors are considered leaders in their field and all of our instructors have spent a minimum of 6 years in the industry, most having more than 20 years. These folks know their stuff!

We tested our videos in classrooms to insure positive student learning outcomes. Faculty at fashion schools have also tested and endorsed our videos. Our subscribers continually send us pictures of their work

and some have even written testimonials. In addition to our video library, we offer a blog that keeps up with fashion industry news. Our Pinterest boards are designed as inspirational resources with links back to our lessons to show how it’s done.

Women’s Wear Daily, Fashion Group International, Seventeen magazine and fashion websites like Fashionista and Refinery29 have also endorsed the U of F. Beginning in January 2014 we are offering the U of F library to schools and organizations. The first fashion college to acquire the library will be FIT, followed by Parsons. Schools that are interested should contact us through our website. Our goal is to not only offer the library to high schools and colleges but also to organizations, which is why we have made a generous discounted offer to ASDP members that we hope to launch in the near future.

Based on ASDP’s recent Online Education Survey Results, it looks like the U of F will be a big hit! Six years ago when I started the U of F, I realized that online learning is the future of education, even for fashion design. To make U of F videos more effective, I leveraged my career as a New York fashion designer, tapped my many industry connections, and, after 20 years in academia (both onsite and online), have been able to recruit the best faculty at the best fashion colleges in the world. At the U of F, we are dedicated to fashion. We don’t offer cooking lessons or crafts projects. We concentrate only on fashion: in-depth and professional. The University of Fashion website is created by a designer for designers. Check out our free lessons and soon you’ll be hooked. The U of F is affordable, convenient, effective, and a great place to “Master Design One Step at a Time.” Try us on for size! www.universityoffashion.com