Fashion Design Portfolio Frequently Asked Questions | 2018

We hope the following FAQs will help you consider the most effective ways to highlight your creativity, design sense, and perception of fashion.

Q: I have not yet experimented with fashion sketching and sewing projects. Will this hurt my chances of getting accepted to the Fashion Design & Management program?
A: No. Fashion graphics and garment construction are taught during the first two semesters at Cornell and are required of all Fashion Design students. We understand that not all students have opportunities to participate in fashion experiences/coursework.

Q: How do I meet with a faculty member to review my portfolio and to discuss my interests in the program?
A: All faculty appointments are scheduled through Timothy Snyder (tps78@cornell.edu /607-255-3196). We recommend that you visit the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design's website and review the faculty pages to identify the faculty member whose interests are closest to yours. An appointment can be scheduled with that faculty member if they are available.

Q: Should my portfolio sketches be colored to indicate fabrics used or can they be shown in black and white?
A: Black and white sketches work well for fashion illustrations. You might, however, want to include fabric swatches with some of your sketch work to give reviewers an idea of how you envision the finished garment(s). Design faculty are interested in applicants' thoughts about the design process, fabric selections, and color choices.

Q: What is the best way to present projects I have sewn from printed commercial patterns?
A: Photograph front and back views of the design on a model or mannequin. Show any close-up shots of the detail work you wish to highlight. You may include fabric swatches of the designs with your photos. Make note of the source of the commercial pattern.

Q: I have a strong point of view in fashion and am asked by others to consult on their fashion choices, purchases, and decisions. How can I reflect that effort in my portfolio?
A: Create and include storyboards or collages around fashion themes and colors to demonstrate how you coordinate apparel and accessories. You can also include photos of your friends in the outfits you have coordinated for them and briefly explain your selection decisions.

Q: May I submit a letter of recommendation from a professional designer in place of one of my high school teachers in my formal application to Cornell?
A: No. A recommendation letter from a designer with whom you have worked can be included in your portfolio, but it cannot replace a teacher letter of recommendation.

Q: May I send new visuals to add to my portfolio if I was deferred to regular decision as an Early Decision candidate to the Fashion Design option?
A: Contact the College of Human Ecology Admissions Office (607-255-5471) to learn more about your candidacy. Submitting additional visuals to your portfolio, as well as updates regarding design-related activities and awards, might be helpful to your candidacy. You can also send a statement of continued interest to the College of Human Ecology Admissions Committee via email (humec_admissions@cornell.edu). Additional letters of recommendation are not helpful.

Q: I have not had an opportunity to make clothing. Should I enroll in a sewing course in a local fabric store, or ask a family member or friend to work with me on some basic sewing projects before I begin my college courses, if I am accepted to the Fashion Design program?
A: The summer before you matriculate at Cornell is an excellent time to establish a basic understanding of fabric and machine handling. Fashion design is a design field where it is possible to make what you design using your own hands. Background work will enhance the quality of projects in your fashion design studios. Fashion design work in the major includes original sketch ideas, textile color and surface design, apparel pattern development, and construction of garments by the student.