Apparel design senior wins prize at association meeting

By Sheri Hall

It was imagery of the Garden of Eden that inspired apparel design student Jessie Fair '09 to create a flowing, asymmetrical gown of silk dupioni and organza that evokes a lush garden.

The piece was awarded the top design prize at the annual meeting of the International Textile and Apparel Association Nov. 5-8 in Schaumburg, Ill. The award for Fair will be a two-week internship in London with renowned British designer Zandra Rhodes.

"Jessie is an extremely talented designer who has produced outstanding work," said Ann Lemley, chair of the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design. "She is a great example of the synergy that occurs when someone with such talent joins our program and has the opportunity to work with our extraordinary faculty."

Fair's garment was selected from 138 entries submitted by colleges around the world. Her prize-winning design, "Eden," features a dark teal silk dupioni under-layer with an over-layer of a light green silk and shimmering metallic organza. The final outer layer is a slab-textured silk in a subtle shade of green.

"I was inspired by the biblical Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis," Fair explained. "I looked at several paintings that referenced Eden, but the main inspiration was the written literature. I wanted to capture a lush, green landscape."

She used a variety of intricate construction techniques to create the gown, including free-motion machine embroidery, thread collage and beading. The motifs of vines and leaves were made with silk and wool and hand-sewn to the dress. The top layer uses fused Angelina fibers to create a shimmering grass effect.

Fair used scholarship money from the Barbara L. Kuhlman Foundation to develop the dress.