

Seating and Strutting: Form + Fashion Meets Function: Event and Runway Show

By Jennifer Dumke · Photos by Hauschildt's Photography

Ever think about the clothes you wear as being part of your interior décor? Think of a favorite blouse used as flowing draperies, or a woolly coat as an upholstered armchair. Even as what you wear on your body may be very different than what you curl up on, the concept of working with fashion and décor is thought to be quite similar.

For aspiring designers enrolled in the Institute of Design and Technology – SD, an eye for fashion and flair for interior décor are taught to go hand-in-hand. Creative director, Anita Kealey, has turned this hybrid of form and fashion into an eye-catching challenge that's attracting local design buffs looking for a spectacle. It's called the Form + Fashion Meets Function: Event and Runway Show, and it's a way to showcase local talent.

Like a glamorous reality show, this spring event features the collaborative skills of tomorrow's trendsetters aspiring to cap off their portfolios, while at the same time going head-to-head with their counterparts. Kealey takes us backstage for an inside spin on the spectacle. "We give each student a choice to create a garment or a functional seating piece," she says. To demonstrate the true relationship of interior design and fashion, students pick their fabric of choice from over fifty options, which ultimately must be adapted for both purposes.

With a concentration level that rivals threading a needle, the students from both programs are paired up and challenged to create companion pieces. Kealey says that the event acts not only as a showcase for design and fashion, but also a learning exercise that gives future designers the opportunity to work with a style or color from someone else's viewpoint.





“Let’s face it, in the real world of design, we don’t always have the choice to work with what we find appealing when it comes to design style, trend or colors,” Kealey says. “All future designers, both fashion and interior, must learn to adapt to the desire of their client. It’s what we call the ‘*make it work*’ moment!”

Designers, like artists, are often influenced by their surroundings. It’s quite common to think about interior decor and fashion as forms of art, often drawn from inspirations and trends. Through techniques that encourage the interaction between the two, the students gain valuable knowledge of adaptability and functionality through working with a variety of textiles and fabrics.

“The outcome is quite exciting to see,” Kealey says in describing the challenges each student faces when being prompted to create fashion-forward pieces from fabrics not necessarily intended for their purpose. “That’s why we call this project ‘Form + Fashion Meets Function,’ she says, “The bottom line is to be functional and adaptable.”



Challenging, exciting and ultimately a learning experience that offers local students an opportunity to grow, Kealey says their event has a unique outcome because they create a runway show that features fashion and an accompanying interior design piece. “It not only pushes the boundaries for our students, but it’s an amazing showcase of local talent.”