

Australian Fashion Education: Getting the Right Fit



Tina Marino

2009 Higher Education and Skills Group (formerly Skills Victoria)
Overseas Fellowship



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Specialised
Skills
Institute**

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i. Executive Summary

The environment in which the Australian Fashion Industry exists has changed considerably over the past ten years. It is important to stop lamenting the change, embrace it and use it to the industry's advantage. There are opportunities to keep the unique Australian signature and make a mark on both a local and global scale.

The fashion industry's traditional skill set maybe diminishing but what needs to be remembered is the artisan skills and apply them in a modern way. By travelling to Italy and Europe where artisans are revered and respected, the Fellow saw how to apply these attributes to a modern fashion industry. She visited a very unique university in the Veneto region where the lecturers were also practitioners and artisans in various fashion specialties.

There were similarities found through the Fellowship experience to our TAFE system where project based learning that integrates technique with complex processes go from conception to the realisation of a work. Students were taught to produce patterns through the draping method. They design creatively but the final product must be wearable, functional and saleable. Tina Marino, the Fellow, witnessed the strong support for the university by the Veneto Fashion industry, with major fashion houses and companies providing support of sponsorships and awards for the graduates.

One of the businesses visited during the Fellowship was Atelier Stilamiglio, an artisan family business established in 1979 in the Veneto region. They have been part of the Italian manufacturing industry for 30 years, initially established as an outwork management company. When Stefano Stenta entered his family business in 1992, he wanted to take the business in a stronger product development direction. He has transformed his company to be part of the initial creative development of prototype garments for high fashion couture clients. He uses his network of the various artisans in his region to create the final product. He states that there are no large manufacturers, each company has expertise and they work as a series of organised collaborative companies. Gone are the days of the enormous manufacturers in that region.

The main problem for Atelier Stilamiglio today is that of human resources. Much of the youth in the area are not willing to come and work in manufacturing. The problem is they are not interested in manual work and therefore heritage skills are disappearing. Stefano Stenta is encouraged to see that the IUAV University Fashion Design Degree is focussed on the manual aspects of fashion along with the design. He explained that although he is an artisan, he has a strong business approach through his organisation to fashion development.

During her travels the Fellow found many artisan based businesses successfully surviving in a financially unstable environment. These successful businesses were driven by passionate owners/directors who have their roots firmly developed from traditional bases. They may have changed how they do business, but they never forget where they have been.

The Fellow met with people from Maglificio Miles, a company that had its origins in the production of silk for over 20 years. With silk products becoming less viable, they changed business direction into growing a world standard knitwear business, proudly producing only in Italy and employing one hundred in-house and also over three hundred workers in various companies across the region. By having a strong connection with outside workers makes for a very strong network, which provides Miles' company with the ability to support the development of very individual and unique collections. This collaboration is premised by the ideal that each company is not a single organisation working alone, but is part of a working network, ensuring each continues to develop its own unique style.

The Fellow was introduced to a very colourful artisan, Annalisa Guerra, who creates high-end hand embellished beaded garments. During the initial discussion, Guerra questioned how Australian fashion is developed or created, asking questions such as:

i. Executive Summary

- How do Australians choose their fashion?
- Do they like to look good or are they looking at the labels?
- Is label the determinant factor in their fashion purchase?

After talking to Guerra, the Fellow was forced to consider that maybe the Australian industry should also be questioned in this way.

About her own business, Guerra explained that the industry must keep abreast of two competing demands:

1. The ability to retain the artisan ideals and professionalism
2. The necessity to keep up with industrialisation at the same time.

Guerra has tried to keep her company as 50 per cent artisan as possible, teaching the technician the trade and 50 per cent to keeping the day-to-day business financially competitive. Guerra believes that new designers are too young, even if talented, and are so much in a hurry that they don't have time to look back to search the origins and see where fashion has been. She offered her advice to the Fellow as a teacher to ensure students understand that although the world of fashion is enchanting, they must realise that they all can't be designers. The fashion industry is a life of sacrifice and hard work, with humility and patience being the main the qualities required.

To visit these companies and schools and witness the respect for the artisan was encouraging to the Fellow, reaffirming her belief that there is a place for traditional skills in quality fashion products. The Fellow's visits to world famous museums that consider fashion items with the same value as great historical artefacts demonstrated the importance of fashion as a representation of history. The British Government through the Victoria and Albert museum (V&A) in the United Kingdom encourages the restoration of garments because they consider fashion as art and as an important factor in understanding their cultural history.

The Fellow was impressed to observe that they also considered graduate work is important enough to exhibit in a highly renowned and respected museum.

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ii. Abbreviations/Acronyms

CV	Curriculum Vitae
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CMT	Cut, make and trim
DIIRS	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, TCF Division
GIDC	Garment Industry Development Corporation
HESG	Higher Education And Skills Group (formerly Skills Victoria)
IFC	International Fibre Centre Limited
IFFTI	International Foundation of Fashion Institute
ISS Institute	International Specialised Skills Institute
PAA	Paris American Academy
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
RTO	Registered training organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCF	Textiles Clothing and Footwear Industry
TFIA	Council of Textile and Fashion Industries Australia
IUAV	Instituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (University Institute of Architecture in Venice)

iii. Definitions

Collezione

Collection (as in a specific collection of designer works)

Direttore

Head of School of an Italian University

Draping

A process whereby fabric is manipulated on a three dimensional form, to enable balance between design and fabric

Maglificio Veneziasrl

An Italian company specialising in producing medium-fine level knitwear. It is a classic example of the management style that has enabled the North-East of Italy to remain an internationally renowned economical and cultural fashion phenomenon

Sposa

An Italian bride

1. Acknowledgements

Tina Marino would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who gave generously of their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide her throughout the Fellowship program.

Awarding Body – International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

The International Specialised Skills Institute Inc is an independent, national organisation that for over two decades has worked with Australian governments, industry and education institutions to enable individuals to gain enhanced skills and experience in traditional trades, professions and leading-edge technologies.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our Fellows. Under the **Overseas Applied Research Fellowship Program** the Fellows travel overseas. Upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

1. Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions.
2. Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses.
3. Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

Over 200 Australians have received Fellowships, across many industry sectors. In addition, recognised experts from overseas conduct training activities and events. To date, 22 leaders in their field have shared their expertise in Australia.

According to Skills Australia's 'Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy 2010':

Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change.

International and Australian research indicates we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. Future environmental challenges will also create demand for more sustainability related skills across a range of industries and occupations.

In this context, the ISS Institute works with Fellows, industry and government to identify specific skills in Australia that require enhancing, where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions or other Registered Training Organisations. The Fellows' overseas experience sees them broadening and deepening their own professional practice, which they then share with their peers, industry and government upon their return. This is the focus of the ISS Institute's work.

For further information on our Fellows and our work see <http://www.issinstitute.org.au>.

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1. Acknowledgements

Fellowship Sponsor

The Victorian Government, Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) formerly Skills Victoria, is responsible for the administration and the coordination of programs for the provision of training and further education, adult community education and employment services in Victoria, and is a valued sponsor of the ISS Institute. The Fellow would like to thank them for providing funding support for this Fellowship.

Individuals/organisations involved in the Fellowship submission

- Joseph Merola, Chief Executive Officer, International Fibre Centre, Geelong, Victoria, Australia
- Jo Kellock, Former Executive Director, Council of Textile & Fashion Industries of Australia Limited, Melbourne, Australia
- Angelina Baccini, Head Designer, Baccini and Hill, Armadale, Victoria, Australia
- Robert Stewart OAM, Promotions Manager, Hamilton Sheepvention and Young Designers Wool Awards, Hamilton, Victoria, Australia
- Heather Marcus, Director, Fashion Awards Australia, Mayor, City of Wyndham
- Mark Reid, Reid Enterprises, Melbourne

Australian organisations impacted by the Australian Fashion Industry

Government

Senator Kim Carr, Senator for Victoria

Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

Canberra, Australia

Senator, Fierravanti-Wells

Senator for New South Wales

Canberra, Australia

Industry

Angelina Baccini, Head Designer,

Baccini and Hill,

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World Council of Sheep Breeders

Orange, NSW, Australia

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Melbourne,Australia

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Kent Williamson, Director, Business Development

School of Fashion and Textiles RMIT University

Other

Robert Stewart OAM, Promotions Manager

Hamilton Sheepvention and Young Designers Wool Awards

Heather Marcus, Director,

Fashion Awards Australia

Mayor, City of Wyndham

2. About the Fellow

Tina Marino-Grahame

TAFE Teacher, School of Fashion and Textiles, RMIT University

Qualifications

- Advanced Certificate: Clothing Manufacture, Box Hill College of TAFE, Victoria, 1990
- Certificate IV: Assessment and Workplace Training, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Victoria, 2002
- Diploma: Vocational Education and Training, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Victoria, 2003- 2004
- Certificate IV: TAE Training and Assessment, RMIT University, Victoria, 2012

Apart from Marino's lifelong passion to study fashion in Italy, this ISS Institute Fellowship has been an awakening journey for her. Marino has worked and studied fashion since her early twenties. In the early 1980s, her first fashion position in Haute Couture business was designing and fitting wedding gowns with Adele Chapeaux on the prestigious Toorak Road, South Yarra. She was then inspired to work with the then emerging Bridal Designer, Marianna Hardwick, managing her first retail outlet in the quaint shopping district of Mailing Road, Canterbury in Victoria. This gave her an in-depth experience in the niche Melbourne fashion industry. While working in this area of the industry, Marino studied part-time for her Advanced Certificate in Clothing Manufacture over six years. She then ran her own private Special Occasion/Bridal made-to-measure business from her home.

When Marino started teaching in 1997 she realised the elation and value of sharing her passion with like-minded people. With an excellent relationship with the fashion industry and the community, TAFE institutions not only consider the theoretical aspects of learning, but also encourage practise. Marino firmly believes that as trainers they not only have the honour to impart their skills to enrolled students, but also to be used in the up-skilling of the industry.

Marino has always encouraged her students to enter the Student Fashion Competitions, generally with superb results. She has had the joy of mentoring student winners of the prestigious Gown of the Year. She has also mentored the major prize winners of the Young Australian Wool Awards over the past three years. These students were the recipients of Scholarships to study fashion in Milan. Due to her student successes she has been invited to judge the work of Secondary Students in the Fashion Awards Australia competition; more recently having the honour of judging the professional Designers in the same competition.

Marino makes it a priority to attend professional workshops, especially international ones, as she feels it is like taking a trip overseas without leaving home. She believes all Australian Designers need to take this initiative and embrace diversity, using these opportunities to enrich the trade, and enable the Australian industry to demonstrate to the world how wonderful and creative it is.

Delivering the basics of draping over the past year has encouraged her further to continue to work in this industry. Witnessing how quickly students have grasped these basic skills and the enjoyment with the freedom of working directly on the stand with fabric has been a driving force. The Fellow feels so passionate about these skills and the value of acquiring this knowledge she will introduce these skills for consideration when the current National Training Package for Fashion Design comes up for review.

The recent introduction of training packages have emphasised the importance of consultation with the industry. As result of the Fellow's links with the industry she has been able to listen and to improve what is delivered to her trainees, or in workshops that are conducted.

2. About the Fellow

Going to Italy and working with fellow professionals, plus liaising with Italian Fashion Designers and Manufacturers validated what she has worked toward for many years. Experiencing firsthand how Italian Fashion operates was inspirational and invaluable.

The acquiring of this knowledge at an international level will develop her technical and specialised skills thus enriching her professional and personal reputation.

3. Aims of the Fellowship Program

- Become skilled in traditional art of draping and to apply these skills for current fashion design and patternmaking.
- Understand how draping applications can be used to enhance the evaluation of prototype garments in the modern product development workrooms.
- Use draping techniques and knowledge to support the correct fit of fashion garments.
- Develop skills and processes to enable designers to pass on alterations simply and efficiently to the patternmaker or outworker.
- Access Italian fashion manufacturers and educational institutions and view what traditional tailoring and couture finishes are being used in high end and niche markets.

4. The Australian Context

A brief description of the industry

Throughout the history of Australia, clothing industries have made a fundamental contribution to our economic and social development. They also have an important and continuing role to play in Australia's economic and social future.

The Australian Fashion Industry has experienced radical change in the past twenty years. Relaxation of trade tariffs has resulted in production moving overseas, assisted by technology such as computer-aided design (CAD), production and ordering. However, the associated skill base has diminished concurrent with a growing proportion of Australia's production in the fashion industry moving offshore.

The Fellow's discussions with various industry representatives have identified shortages in the textile and fashion industries in Australia. There is difficulty in Australia in finding people with skills in areas such as, but not limited to, specialised sewing and machine operations, garment construction, pattern making, product development and fit analysis.

Australia did have skilled artisans in its workforce; these people had been trained in Europe before immigrating into Australia. Unfortunately such people are disappearing thus making it hard to incorporate them or their knowledge and experience into training. It is necessary to reintroduce and relearn these skills so they can return the artisan techniques to our trade. By doing so, the industry has the potential to develop its fashion businesses to design garments that are unique and individual. These skills can give the industry in Australia the edge it is always striving for in the competitive global market.

The benefits of bringing back such traditional skills to Australia are obvious. Returning these skills to our industry will arm us with the knowledge to oversee the correct production of quality garments thus empowering our Australian Fashion Industry with the processes to be competitive in the market globally. The reintroduction of the foundations of our trade will enable us to build on our passion and professionalism in the Australian Fashion Industry and encourage the correct use of quality materials and fabrics, which can easily be applied with the correct training.

SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	
Niche business continuing within Australia	Small businesses are still manufacturing in Australia. Many high end labels prefer to produce their ranges here. This showcases the unique Australian design. An example of this would be Driza Bone. This company went off shore and because of the poor quality manufacturing, returned back to Australia.
Fashion design training packages align with Australian industry	Textile, clothing and fashion training packages are being delivered in TAFEs and RTOs. They are in constant consultation with the Australian Fashion Industry. It is reviewed on a regular basis through curriculum maintenance and community of practice meetings.
Discerning Australian consumers	The Australian consumer has become more aware of quality and is looking for apparel design that has that fashion edge. Another point shows that Australians are becoming more aware of fair trade and sustainable fashion.

4. The Australian Context

WEAKNESSES	
Dwindling trained workforce in traditional skills	Unfortunately the artisans that immigrated last century are being lost to retirement and a lot of their skills haven't been passed on. Australia is in great peril of losing these treasures and skills forever.
Using overseas factories to save money	Since early 1994 when the major clothing manufacturers went offshore through failed Government initiatives, the traditional skill based was lost within Australia as the cost of labour and training was cheaper overseas. Quality of the garments being produced as a consequence suffered.

OPPORTUNITIES	
Fluctuating Australian dollar can be attractive initiatives and tariffs	With the Australian dollar always changing the industry should be looking at manufacturing in Australia again. Australia's export price can be more stable allowing the industry to be more attractive to overseas markets. With innovative training, the quality of Australian made garments will always be of a higher standard.

THREATS	
Asian market taking intellectual property	'Australian' manufacturers are sending our innovative product design overseas to be developed and then manufactured cheaply in Asia. There is therefore an increasing risk that our designs and/or inferior copies will be diverted through other markets into Australia and around the world. A prime example of this is the Billabong T-shirt in the street markets of Asia.
Aggressive competitors?	Australia's most aggressive competitor is China, and India is not far behind. They are very good at copying and they have a very cheap and plentiful workforce.
Successful competitors?	An example would be the Cambridge label of men's apparel. This company manufactures men's suits in New Zealand and exports to the Australian market. The main reason quoted by this company for its success is that its goods are made in New Zealand with New Zealand wool (and not in Australia).
Complacency at some businesses	Australian companies are sending their product lines overseas to be manufactured cheaply in Asia. As with threat number one above, there is an increasing risk that without careful management of this process inferior copies will find their way through to other markets.
General willingness for large companies to sell out/close down	Large companies are actively closing up shop in Australia to send manufacturing overseas in the search for the larger profit margins.

5. Identifying the Skills Deficiencies

There are examples of areas in Australian Industry where there is a weakness in the innovative skills, knowledge, experience, policies, and/or formal organisational structures to support the ongoing successful development and recognition of individuals and the particular sector.

The focus of all ISS Institute Fellowships is on applied research and investigation overseas, by Australians. The objectives will be to enable the required enhancement and improvement in the innovative skills not currently available in Australia, and the subsequent dissemination and sharing of those skills throughout the relevant Australian Industry, Education, Government bodies, and/or the Community.

There is no training provided in Australia in the use of draping as a tool to increase the understanding of correct fit. Training is required in the analysis of the body to understand characteristics that need to be considered when fitting a garment correctly.

Training is also required for pattern technicians in the understanding of how to use draping techniques to assist in the alteration of prototype garments and improved fit. Training is also important for technicians to enable their ability to take this information and transfer alterations to patterns, then relay the information concisely to machinists or outworkers.

Identifying and defining the deficiencies

1. Draping for fitting:

- How traditional draping techniques can be applied into the current fashion industry
- Use of draping understanding to analyse correct fit.

Draping uses the body contours to create a shape; understanding shape creates better fit.

2. Draping to alter prototype garments and patterns:

- How to use knowledge of draping to improve the alterations of prototype garments
- Differentiating standard pattern making practices to forming patterns by draping
- Application of this knowledge to extend existing patternmaking processes.

With this knowledge pattern technicians will be empowered with the knowledge to apply 3D techniques to alter 2D patterns.

3. Draping to enhance fashion design:

- The use of this application to extend the options available for producing garments for the Australian Fashion Industry. Fashion design process will be approached in a unique and innovative way.

Drape can allow creative designs to become a reality without hours of patternmaking.

4. How to prototype draped garments.

Use knowledge of patternmaking techniques to take draped designs on the stand onto paper then to production.

5. Tailoring and couture finishing techniques:

- Finishing garments with the use of traditional methods to enhance the final product

5. Identifying the Skills Deficiencies

- Hand finishing skills to produce quality garments
- Techniques that isn't traditional to be used in production of niche market garments.

Higher quality garments that have that point of difference, accommodating the needs of the discerning fashion customer.

Why draping needs to be addressed

Draping is a traditional form of patternmaking used to create designs on the dress stand or human model. It is manipulating and using the characteristics of quality fabrics to create unique garments and analyse fit.

Draping is an efficient and creative way to design and allow the designer to relay their ideas visually and in 3D to the product development team. Draping goes hand in hand with couture and tailoring; they are artisan trades that are missing in current Australian training models. The finest international fashion houses in history have and still use these methods to create their unique gowns.

6. The International Experience

The emphasis of this overseas study tour was to create an ongoing connection between Australia and the various educational institutions, museums and industry specialists that the Fellow visited. This was done with the aim of developing the Fellow's skills and knowledge to help fill the skill deficiencies and training weaknesses highlighted that exist in Australia. Marino hopes to encourage others to share her enthusiasm for the future of the Australian Fashion Industry.

Veneto Region

Organisation: Faculty of Art & Design, Università IUAV di Venezia

Location: Treviso, Italy

Contact: Maria Luisa Frisa, Direttore

The Fellow had the honour of visiting and spending time in this prestigious University, set among the tranquil canals of the medieval city Treviso. This University boasts the only State run Degree in Fashion Design.

Objectives

The Fellow's objective was to be introduced to the Italian delivery of training and use of draping in teaching; connection with a major centre of fashion training; and gaining introductions to the unique manufacturing conducted in this region.

Outcomes

The Fellow found that for a course that was only established four years ago the feeling was of incredible intelligence and practicality. It is three year undergraduate Degree program that provides fundamental preparation in the various areas of the clothing and fashion design industry.

The Director, Maria Luisa Frisa, is an amazing and intelligent woman. Her curriculum vita (CV) includes a prestigious range of expertise in the Italian high fashion industry. She is an accomplished writer along with her connection with Armani and also her strong connection with the famous Palazzo Pitti Parades. She has gathered together truly professional teaching staff, who are all incredibly talented and motivated. They are also practitioners in their various specialities and come from all over the world. This is very similar to our TAFE system. The teachers encourage their students to challenge and extended themselves to achieve amazing results.

The students come from various backgrounds because the program is accessible to all. All students do a foundation year. That gives the staff an opportunity to identify the individual strengths of each and every student. In the subsequent years they then specialise in clothing, accessories, footwear and product design. In the second year they are required to produce a range of six articles. The presentation of the work is paramount. They need to consider every aspect from the design concept to the final product. Patterns are produced through the draping method. They are required to photograph their garments in the style or theme of the collection. Visual representation is required of the theme from various sources, from audio visual presentation on computer to story boards.

In discussions with staff they expressed their view that students should extend their imagination, stepping out of their safety zone. The resultant design must be really creative but wearable, functional and saleable. They are required to cost each garment in detail and be able to produce it again.

The Fellow was honoured to attend the 2009 graduate parade and exhibition. Final year students presented collections of garments and accessories in a spectacular show to rival any international

6. The International Experience

fashion week. It was staged in a delightful baroque theatre to an enormous crowd of fashion identities, journalists, local industrialists along with family and friends. This is where Marino witnessed the strong support for the University by the Veneto Fashion Industry, with major fashion houses and companies providing support of sponsorships and awards for the graduates.



Exhibition



Maria Luisa Frisa and staff



Amanda and student



Students working



Student paper drape

6. The International Experience



Student exhibition drape details

6. The International Experience

Organisation: Godi Fiorenza

Location: San Marco, Venezia

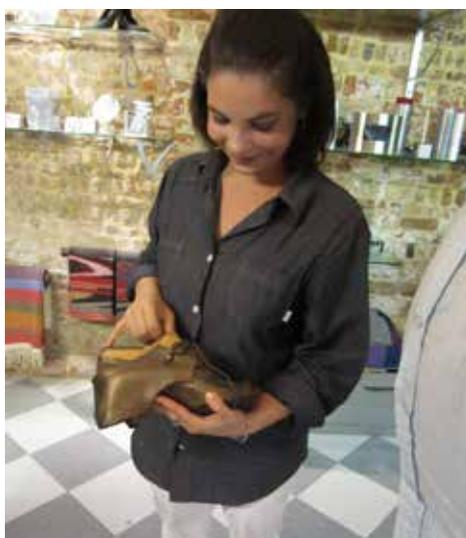
Contacts: Patrizia & Samanta Fiorenza, Lecturers

Patrizia and Samanta are lecturers at IUAV. Here the Fellow witnessed why these ladies are such fabulous and motivating teachers. They have a charming retail outlet and workroom tucked away in the winding streets of San Marco, Venice. This is where they practice their true artisan skills of delicate hand beaded detail on individually draped pure Italian silk garments. They have stocked items along with commissioned garments they create for their exclusive clientele. The sisters also create exquisite handmade jewellery and individually hand fashioned shoes.

The Fellow was very encouraged to see the art of draping practised in such a pure form. She found Patrizia and Samanta very enthusiastic about their work and the future of this form of design being sort after now and in the future.



Patrizia and Samanta



Samanta and shoe



Godi fiorenza entrance

6. The International Experience

Organisation: Maglificio Miles s.r.l.

Location: Vicenza, Veneto Region

Contact: Michele Bocchese, State Manager

The Fellow met with Michele Bocchese, the State Manager of this high fashion knitwear production company. Bocchese is well educated and has an excellent international network. He explained that this is a family business that was started by his mother Sylvia in 1962. The last three generations of his family had been involved in silk production. As it became more difficult to produce silk in Italy, the business had slowed down over the last 20 years. They have been working at growing the knitwear business, still under the watchful eye of his mother.

He explained that their business is unique in the sense that they only work with high level designers. Maglificio Miles works supporting several lines for these high-end fashion houses working on about ten projects at the same time. Bocchese liaises with the head designers from the product development, on to the first samples then on to managing the production of the garments. For 12 years they also managed the selling of ranges directly to the stores for Giorgio Armani Black Label. He has however, now handed back that responsibility to the fashion houses because he found the retail outlets were not reliable in paying their bills.

From their current projects they are producing approximately 180,000 to 200,000 pieces, with over 2,000 samples in a year. Maglificio Miles is probably the largest high level fashion knitwear manufacturers in Italy, proudly producing only in Italy and employing 100 in-house and also over 300 workers in various companies within the region. By having a strong connection with outside workers makes for a very strong network, which provides his company the ability to support the development of very individual and unique collections.

A key activity for Mr Bocchese is that he holds the position of the President of the Industrial Association of Fashion in Vicenza. He explained that this makes for a very special fashion district in the north east of Veneto. This district is rich with thousands of companies that work in vastly different areas of fashion; from formal to shirting or jersey products, even all aspects of textile production from the initial raw material to washing and dying.

He believes the key to the success for their region's 'Made in Italy' product is that there is not only creativity but the strength of collaboration between these many companies. This collaboration is premised along the ideal that each company is not a single organisation working alone, but is part of a working network, ensuring each continues to develop its own unique style.

Asked about the threat from Asian markets, he stated that in his opinion Italy has faced that problem well. With the 2006 invasion of low cost products, thousands of products flooded the European market. Some companies reorganised and improved their technology. He explained that only the low cost production has been exported from Italy, not just to China but also to Romania. There are many flights from Verona or Treviso daily sending out production every day. A balance was created last year with hundreds of Italian companies starting businesses in both China and Eastern Europe. Globalisation has driven this new reality.

In his view the current crisis, he said is not a production crisis, it is a consumption crisis. There has been a strong reduction in consumption causing problems for manufacturers. He thinks that will be an improvement in the next 12 months because they still have the factories to start the new production.

The Fellow was delighted to see that his company proudly has an archive of 34,000 samples; the largest collection of high-end knitwear in the world. They use the archive as a resource for future collections. Every three months they treat the area for bacteria to ensure quality of each garment is maintained. Every item is micro chipped, so that the stitch and fibre content is recorded. Marino was

6. The International Experience

thrilled to see how the Italians are so proud of their history and values the retention of traditional skills.

Bocchese also explained that they have a stitches catalogue, compiling details of thousands of designs. These are very important for initial product development; they are used as inspiration at the beginning of season when the designers come to view and to gain ideas. All the stitches have computer files with all details for ease into production.

The Fellow found this visit enlightening and a true insight into a successful Italian fashion company.

Location: Vicenza, Veneto Region

Contact: Annalisa Guerra, Fashion Business Owner and Director

Annalisa Guerra is a fascinating woman who trained with and for 19 years has worked beside Miuccia Prada, the main creator and business owner of the Prada group. Guerra feels she has 'become' like Miuccia, and is proud to continue in her traditional style.

Guerra was initially very interested about why the Fellow was there. She sees Australia as a new horizon and a place where so many cultures combine. She questioned how Australian fashion is developed or created and how Australians choose their fashion, especially querying whether they just like to look good, or do they look at the labels and is a label the determinant factor in their fashion purchase?

During the discussion she recommended to the Fellow that students must learn a second language in order to allow them to get into European the fashion industry, "If fashion students want to extend their fashion knowledge they need to get out of their safety zone". They have internal production in Vuitton in Paris and all quality staff must learn Italian. She said that all the understanding is in Italian, the technicians and designers are in Italy and because the majority of Italian is so parochial, Italian is their chosen language. She lamented though that Italy is slowly losing its own culture because of globalisation. She explained that industry and designers must keep abreast of two competing demands: first the ability to retain the artisan ideals and professionalism; and second to keep up with industrialism at the same time. She has tried to keep her own company activities as 50 per cent artisan teaching to the technician and the trade, and 50 per cent to keeping the day-to-day business financially competitive. But it is a big sacrifice. It is too expensive to operate exclusively the artisan space. Unfortunately the people who have the money don't appreciate such sacrifice. The new designers are too young, even if talented, and are so much in a hurry that they don't have time to look back to search the origins of their trade and see where fashion had been developed.

Guerra's business is in Vicenza in the Veneto region, where they cover all aspects of the fashion industry, from creating the initial ideas to the developing final prototypes. They follow exclusively high fashion weeks, collections, accessories and all aspects of the luxury brands. She works directly with the head designers for the great fashion houses of Marc Jacobs, Balenciaga, Louis Vuitton, Givenchy, Nina Ricci, and Prada, in all aspects of producing ensembles for haute couture. She has young women working with her who she is training, but finds that the need for time and money for them to become qualified in this mode of work is becoming prohibitive. There is no support from the government to develop this artisan skill. In her attempt to show the Italian Government and fashion industry and what treasures they have at hand in Italy, she has collaborated with a teacher/designer Carlo Contrata from the IUAV University to show his range at the Rome High Fashion Week.

At her own expense she has opened studios in Madagascar where she has trained 60 to 70 people in the production, hand beading and finishing of high fashion garments and accessories. She has gone there to train and employ these people but has received no support, not even the Foundation for the development of Africa from the European Union has helped her. She still believes it economically worth the expense for her to work with these people as it enables her to still create these gowns at a reasonable cost but always under her strict supervision.

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Guerra showed the Fellow many pieces of her hand work, much of it about to appear on the fashion week runways from Balenciaga, Prada and Nina Ricci. An example of her work was a pair of Givenchy shoes, which had required 22 hours of embroidery to finish them to her required standard. She offered her advice to the Fellow as a teacher to ensure her students understand that although the world of fashion is enchanting, they must realise that they all can't be designers. That it is a life of sacrifice and hard work, with humility and patience being the main the qualities required. One person works on each individual gown or product because it is her belief that each person has their own signature and she does not believe that a garment of this quality can be handed around and completed by more than one person.

Guerra also has her main showroom in Rue de Rivoli, Paris, housing over a 1,000 pieces archiving 20 years of her work. She feels that the French appreciate and are willing to purchase her fine work and is in the process of transferring much of her business to Paris.

Organisation: Atelier Stilamiglio

Location: Vicenza, Veneto Region

Contact: Stefano Stenta, Director

Stenta knows Australia for the wool produced there. He feels it is difficult to do business and have a relationship with Australia because of the time difference. He is really interested in biological wool, but found this wool was still not fine enough and that the Australian industry needs to work to refine it. He had found difficulty in identifying the correct partnership in order to create a flow of links in the manufacturing process, from raw material to the final fabric.

Atelier Stilamiglio is an artisan family business established in 1979. They have been part of the Italian manufacturing industry for 30 years, initially as an outwork manufacturing business where they received the fabrics and patterns from the fashion houses and then undertook the production process. When Stefano entered his family business in 1992, he wanted to take the business in a stronger product development direction. He has now transformed his company to be part of the initial creative aspects of developing the prototype garments for their high fashion couture clients. They submit designs to their various clients, having done all the necessary research required, and then work alongside the head designers in development of their ranges. Once agreed, he makes the patterns and a prototype, which could take anywhere from four hours to 40 hours. The work time depends on which company is involved, such as Alexander MacQueen or Prive Armani. He makes a range of garments, from haute couture specifically to go on the fashion runway, to the run off garments that go into stores for sale. He uses his network of the various artisans in his region to create the final product. He states that there are no large manufacturers; each company has expertise and they work as a series organised collaborative companies. The days of the enormous manufacturers have all but disappeared. The Veneto area has 5000 artisan companies, with 1000 in the Vicenza area alone. Stefano further explained that 70 per cent of their work is in collaboration with the large labels.

Not many labels undertake their own manufacturing, generally because of lack of resources; but these collaborations have been very successful. He works and has worked with the most famous labels such as Gucci, MacQueen, Dior, Ferragamo, Pringle, Versace, Bottega Veneta, Prada, Chloe, Armani and Ferre. They will call on him to come to their fashion shows and help them finish their garments for the runways.

Stenta feels there is a strategic element in working for many labels because it enables his company to grow and he is able to experiment. He believes it is a world that you never stop learning every day. When he started in 1992 he only worked for Armani but found after four years of working with minimal

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resources he couldn't do anything else. Realising this limitation, he began to work for other labels and despite the added complication he can grow and expand his lines.

The main problem encountered by their company today is that of human resources. Most of the youth aren't willing to come and work in manufacturing and they are not interested in manual work, with the result that this aspect of the industry is disappearing. Stenta is encouraged to see that the IUAV University course is focussed on the manual aspects of fashion along with the design and that there are also small schools within the regions still teaching the basics of the industry, teaching patternmaking and production. He is concerned that the people who are retiring are leaving with their skills not able to be replaced.

Stenta took the Fellow around his workroom, including showing her his archive. He wishes that it was larger but he does keep the prototype of every style he develops because it is part of his history. He doesn't publicise that he has these samples, but he maintains these items as his own private collection.

Stenta explained that they hand pattern make. When the style is finalised it is transferred onto the computer. They have a simple CAD area with LECTRA patternmaker, grader and plotter. They have Pattern Development Management (PDM) software - a product management system for the specification documents. He explained that although he is an artisan, he has a strong structure and organisation to his fashion development.

Stenta also took the Fellow through an explanation of the various articles of clothing from Gucci, Alexander MacQueen and Sofia Kocasalaki, including a biological garments range that he is currently

working on. He showed the Fellow a specific garment that had been fitted and then altered by his patternmakers. Much to the delight of the Fellow, Stenta explained that they pattern make by draping on the stand for the initial design. They then work through the development to a paper pattern with perhaps three or four fits, always returning to the stand through this whole process.

Event: Fiera Di Milano Trade Fair

Location: Milano, Italy

This is an annual trade fair at the famous Fiera Di Milano run over four days at the end of June. It is an amazing setup with each exhibitor having its own private boutique area. This gives the buyers and the industry a very unique experience. It is also open for the public to attend on the weekend, along with exclusive trade only days.

The following seven (7) contacts were made at this annual fashion industry trade fair. All were extremely forthcoming and offered



Sposa italia

6. *The International Experience*

relevant ideas and information.

Objective

The Fellow's aim was to obtain contacts with as many Italian enthusiastic and proud manufacturers of Italian bridal and special occasion wear as possible in order to evaluate and select the most appropriate contacts to research further.

The following are snap-shots of the range of contacts the Fellow spoke to at the trade fair.

1. GUISARI Collezione

Contact: Guiseppe Sarubo, Director

With obvious considerable pride, Sarubo showed Marino a unique corset design that he has patented. He delighted in showing her how to fold this individually designed corset so it bounces back into shape perfectly.

6. The International Experience



Giuseppe



Guisari girls



Giusari

6. The International Experience

Contacts: Tina Frangelli & Nicola Gallone, Designers

The Fellow spoke with the head designer of this Italian bridal fashion house. She explained how all the garments are made in-house in their workroom in the Italian city of Bari. She invited the Fellow to come and design and make a dress together.



Azzuro collezione

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3. LUCIA GIAPPINO Haute Couture

Contact: Lucia Giappino, Couturier, Head Designer

Lucia designs exquisite gowns created with traditional hand finishing, hand sewn bound edges and her own lace patterns especially made for her in France. She proudly said that silks all come from Como. Giappino shared the Fellow's fear that specialist finishes are being lost. Her market is not only in Italy but they also sell to Turkey, Osaka, Soul and Atlanta. Lucia invited the Fellow to come and spend some time in her workroom. Lucia is so full of information it would be very exciting to inspect her work place and meet the amazing masters she has on her team.



Lucia and husband



Lucias work

6. The International Experience

4. PENROSE

Contact: Susanna Vecchi, Head Designer

The Fellow explored unique and specialised underwear for special occasions with dressing that hides all body imperfections. Vecchi explained that they create unique lingerie, accessories and shoes that evoke quality, elegance, and fashionable appeal for every bride.

She was happy for the Fellow to visit in September.



Penrose

6. The International Experience

5. AGUSTIN TORRALBO Couture

Contact: Agustin Torralbo, Designer

Torralbo was a Spanish designer of high-end evening wear and was exhibiting his latest works. The Fellow enjoyed a short but valuable conversation with him and his team regarding their business organisation and objectives.



Agustin with dressed model

6. GEMELLE DONATO sposa

Contact: Antonella and Mariella Donato, Designers,

Twin Sisters from Catania who have a passion for elegance and a taste for classic style at the same time. Romantic details are a distinctive description of the stunning Wedding Gowns of these two designers.

The Fellow was thrilled to receive another invitation to visit their Studio in Sicily.

Cannot locate this image: Antonella with Model



Gemelle donato

6. The International Experience

United Kingdom and France

Organisation: Victoria & Albert Museum

Location: London, UK

Contact: Sonnett Stanfill, Curator of 20th Century Contemporary Fashion

Exhibition: Future Fashion Now: New Design from the Royal College of Art

The Fellow met with Sonnette Stanfill, Curator of 20th Century Contemporary Fashion at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Her position was like a dream come true for a fashionist, as it encompasses such a variety of tasks: from the set-up of temporary exhibitions to working in exhibition cabinets for a week designing undergarments to support the fragile garments, explaining how they have to specially make the dummies for the individual garments costing from 400 to 1,000 Pounds Sterling.

Stanfill is a fascinating and intelligent woman who was willing to spend time and answer all questions no matter how insignificant. She took the Fellow through their permanent fashion exhibit that is about to be replaced because the garments on display are starting to deteriorate from just from being on stands. The V&A have over 100,000 fashion articles in archives and can only show a 120 pieces at one time. Also she took the Fellow through the fashion graduate exhibition from the Royal London College of Art. The Fellow was impressed to think that they consider graduate work is important enough to exhibit in a highly renowned and respected museum.

The V&A sees the importance of fashion as a representation of history. The 20th Century fashion archive alone is available to view for free for up to 18 people if you give them three months notice. Stanfill's job is supported by the government and a large part of her activities is to spend time with the public, answering their questions and enabling the viewing garments that are being offered to the Museum for their archives.

The UK Government encourages the restoration of garments because they consider fashion as art and as an important factor in understanding their cultural history. They also recommended visiting some other collections that have good holdings of contemporary fashion: Museum of London, Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection (at Kensington Palace), Fashion Gallery (in the City of Bath) and Brighton City Art Gallery and Museum.



V&A graduate work



V&A graduate work



V&A graduate work

6. The International Experience

Organisation: Les Arts Decoratifs, Musee de la Mode et le Textile

Location: Paris, France

Exhibition: Madeleine Vionnet Purist de la Mode

Contact: Ingrid Held, Curator

This is the first major retrospective highlighting Madeleine Vionnet, who was an innovative couturier who ran a progressive fashion house in Paris from 1912 to 1939. She was the master of the bias cut gown and invented the design on the body without the use of the corset, allowing for the fabric to drape over the natural contours and curves of the women of the early 20th Century. She reshaped the fashion industry with exquisite silhouettes with use of the cowl, halter-tops and handkerchief hemlines. She was the master of experimenting with the arrangement of materials in exciting and extraordinary ways, setting the foundations for fashion today; liberating women, and establishing the true sensuality that is associated with French dressing.

The Fellow found this video provided an insight to the beautiful exhibition she had the pleasure of viewing. www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFTowwh0CZg

Organisation: Musee Jean Moulin

Location: Paris, France

Exhibition: Accessories and Artefacts: Women's Lives in Paris 1940-1944

This was a very important exhibition that consisted of about 300 items from wartime France. It stirred emotion in the Fellow to see the resilience of the French in the occupation of Paris, and how through necessity, the most unconventional materials were used for fashion products. Even in war the Parisian would not compromise looking good while at the same time using it as a tool for propaganda. The Fellow was able to also see how Paris drew strength in fashion rising from the shallows of Nazi occupation and recession.

Since 1995 the Mémorial-Musée, with the assistance of its advisory committee historians, has been presenting exhibitions on the Resistance movement, deportation, the Liberation of Paris and German opposition to Nazism.

The Fellow was introduced to and found that the following websites provided some thought-provoking editorials and images relating to the exhibition.

www.nytimes.com/2009/05/26/fashion/26iht-fforties.html

www.dazeddigital.com/.../1/When_Resistance_turned_into_Fashion

www.ml-leclerc-moulin.paris.fr

6. The International Experience

Organisation: PARIS AMERICAN ACADEMY, Paris

Contact: Peter Carmen, President

The Fellow visited a delightful private fashion school located in the Latin Quarter of Paris. The director Peter Carmen is an expatriate and a wonderfully connected gentleman who knows how to make his students' experiences truly unforgettable. Peter showed the Fellow around the 17th Century historically classified building, Pavillon du Val de Grace. The Fellow was enchanted by the intimacy of the school and how Peter tailors his courses to suit individual needs, which a small institute can provide in such a fashionable city. He has a collective of specialist artisans to provide a variety of couture workshops. The Fellow promised she would return with a study tour to participate, especially in the drape workshop that is run by ladies who worked under the famous Madame Gres. Peter kindly gave the Fellow some tickets to see a menswear fashion show at Le Bourse (stock exchange) and she was delighted of course at the opportunity to rub shoulders with the Paris fashion set.



Peter Carmen at the PAA



Mens wear show at Le Bourse



Menswear show exhibition at the stock exchange



The show at La borse

7. Knowledge Transfer: Applying the Outcomes

The personal and professional development gained by Marino during her Fellowship has inspired her to go further into her fashion research of the delivery of traditional manufacturing techniques. She believes there is a place in the fast paced fashion industry for the application of these techniques to enhance the opportunities for Australia to make a mark on an international scale. Sharing the knowledge gained is important for the Fellow. With her position as a teacher she has implemented her findings into her teaching practice. Being in TAFE allows for creative delivery and there is always a place for innovative ideas.

The Fellow would like to conduct workshops in the use of draping techniques to enhance pattern making and improve the analysis of fit; from introductory basic drape to advanced pattern using drape and figure analysis. The Fellow would like to also conduct tailored workshops directed at industry to up-skill the current workforce in application of these traditional techniques.

8. Recommendations

Government - Federal, State and local as appropriate:

- TCF Community of practice funding
- Funding for TAFE to provide training to Industry
- Support for the Australian Fashion Industry
- Encourage 'Made in Australia'.

Industry:

- Collaborative projects with educational institutions (Fellow currently involved in student projects with Cotton On Body, Jeans West and Alfa 60)
- Internships for graduates (RMIT currently working with Myer, Jeans West, Nobody Jeans and Cotton On Group)
- Investing in TAFE and University.

Professional Associations:

- Setting up business Incubatorsie; Brunswick business incubator
- Supporting industry collaborations or co operatives.

Education and Training - university, TAFE, schools:

- Continued support in teaching practices that allows for Drape and Fitting to be included in Fashion education.
- Student and staff exchanges
- Study tours (the Fellow is about to direct a study tour in late 2013, taking approximately 25 fashion design students to London and Paris).

Community:

- Exhibition of graduate students' work in prominent public galleries and museums (E.g. Victoria & Albert Museum).

ISS Institute Inc.:

During her Fellowship visit to the Veneto region the Fellow found the two lecturers at the IUAV University truly inspiring practitioners and amazing artisans. Patricia and Samanta Fiorenza are skilled in couture techniques and hand shoe making. The Fellow believes that they would be able to present innovative and inspiring workshops. The Fellow would be delighted to conduct workshops in draping technique applications for industry and educators. The Fellow, being in TAFE education, helps her understand and see the value of further Fellowships in foundation and traditional fashion and textile skills. Italy is full of amazing artisans and she met many at the Sposa Italia exhibition in Milan who were willing for visits to their studios. These should be investigated further.

9. References

Sposa Italia exhibitor's Websites:

Gemelle Donato Sposa www.gemelledonato.it

Azzurra Collezione www.azzurraCollezione.it

Guisari Collezione www.giusari.com

Augustin Torralbo www.agustintorrabo.es

Penrose www.penrose.it

Lucia Giappino www.luciagiappino.it

VENETO REGION

Design della Moda, Università Iuav di Venezia (Fashion Design at the University of Iuav Venice)
www.iuav.it/fda

Godi Fiorenza Lecturers at Iuav studio and boutique in Venice www.godifiorenza.com

Maglificio Miles High Fashion Knitting Mills in Vicenza www.miles.it/

Annie- Manufacture de Broderie (manufacturer of embroidery) Annalisa Guerra www.annie.it

Stefano Stenta www.atelierstilamiglio.it

Victoria and Albert Museum, London www.vam.ac.uk

Museum of the Decorative Arts, Paris www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr

Paris American Academy www.parisamericanacademy.fr/

10. Attachments

London College of Fashion: Research Publication, Diversifying Fashion

The Hub, Focus on Research Newsletter

Working Papers:

- Custom Fit: Is it fit for the customer? Penelope A Watkins
- Measuring and Shaping a Nation: SizeUK. Jennifer Bougourd
- The Cat Walk Spectacle: HussienChalayan a Magician of Technology. Cerilsacc
- Proposing an interdisciplinary, movement-based approach to teaching and learning as applied to design for performance related areas. Donatella Barbieri

Papers and other material - available form the Fellow on request