Towards a Future Pedagogy: The Evolution of Fashion Design Education

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Abstract

This study examines the future of fashion design education through current practices and speculations into professional practice and design pedagogy. Through research in current art and design academic practices, design in society, fashion design education, developmental attributes of young adults, mentorship, and undergraduates' preparation for the professional world, the necessary evolution for fashion design education is examined. Research will show the need for existing academic practices to be rethought due to significant shifts in the professional practice and society's relationship with design. The majority of national and international academic institutions are questioning their long-standing philosophies in art and design education. The study concludes by stating fashion design education must evolve in order to innovate product and strengthen failing systems. This future pedagogy will succeed through pedagogy that emphasizes design theory, faculty and student mentorship, and an increased awareness of innovations occurring in the professional practice.

Key words: Design, Education, Fashion, Student, Learning

1. Introduction

Today's fashion design schools are facing a rapidly evolving and highly volatile academic landscape. The number of schools that are rethinking their long-standing philosophies of design education, the fashion design industry's uncertain future, and the heightened demands placed on designers are affecting the modes in which design education is delivered. In what ways is design education and the professional practice evolving? In what ways is the industry's uncertain landscape reshaping pedagogy? How can design schools prepare graduates for their new roles as young professionals? What forms of faculty development and student mentorship are needed for this emerging pedagogy? This paper explores the future of design education and the evolving professional practice.

The majority of American fashion design education programs are reexamining their current philosophies and practices in order to respond to several circumstances. These include an industry that is changing at an unprecedented rate, an evolving student generation, and a new set of skills and abilities demanded by the profession. Fashion design education is attempting to address these challenges by placing greater emphasis on "design thinking" and conceptual processes in order to produce designers who can understand broader contexts, create innovative new products, and rethink business systems.

2. Design and Society

In the words of Virginia Postrel (2003), "we are increasingly engaged in making our world special through design" (p.7). Fashion design has achieved such attention that it has entered the museum environment with one notable example being the retrospective of Giorgio Armani's work shown at The Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Around the world, increasing numbers of urban centers are hosting their own fashion weeks that are state sponsored "and therefore represent the commercial and cultural interests of the respective country" (Loschek, 2008). The prevalence of design is underscored by such mainstream retailers as Kohl's, H&M, and Target hosting top designers such as Karl Largerfeld, Vera Wang, Comme des Garcons, and Isaac Mizrahi who offer "guest star" collections (Pink, 2005). Due to an ever-increasing demand for "designed" objects, rates of production and consumption are reaching unimagined heights.

The Spanish retailer Zara has approximately two hundred designers who develop forty thousand styles each year, of which twelve thousand are produced (Seigel, 2011). The production cycle for the Swedish retailer H&M, design-to-retail, is just three weeks and involves a highly choreographed network of chain management around the world (Seigel, 2011). This surge in garment-making has direct relation to consumption; consumers now demand roughly four times the number of garments that we did in 1980, and the same quantity that we buy will be discarded each year (Siegel, 2011).

These high levels of production, consumption, and disposal have shaped consumers' psychology and the relation to design. Due to abundance, design is no longer driven by need (Van der Velden, 2006). As Daniel Pink (2005) describes in his book *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*:

> Abundance has satisfied, and even over-satisfied, the material needs of millions—boosting the significance of beauty and emotion and accelerating individuals' search for meaning. As more of our basic needs are met, we increasingly expect sophisticated experiences that are emotionally satisfying and meaningful. (p. 46)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs elaborates on this idea by stating one's nonmaterial yearnings increase when one's material needs are met. The designer's role is evolving due to the new demands consumers will place on products that have greater aesthetic value. Material abundance has made designers realize that the only way to differentiate their products in today's overstocked marketplace is to make their offerings aesthetically appealing and emotionally compelling (Pink, 2005). In order to create products that resonate emotionally with their targeted audience, designers must become empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning-makers (Pink, 2005).

To support this new approach to design, many believe the design industries are evolving from a "product-centered practice" to a "knowledge-based economy." The future of our design practices is to "produce ideas and design solutions that demand a high level of education, skills, and creativity" (Skjold, 2008). Yet this future has migrated manufacturing from domestic centers, such as New York's Garment Center, to overseas locations. When manufacturing is no longer part of the Garment Center and just design remains, the designer's role evolves in a larger global context. When evolving into this role, fashion designers emphasize the critical need for creativity and innovation in order to inspire consumers who are inundated with commercial offerings and desire emotionally satisfying and meaningful products.

As the leader for producing fashion design, New York City has more fashion establishments than anywhere else in America (The Municipal Art Society of New York [MASNY], 2011). Through the stylish and "off the rack" creations of Claire McCardell, Norman Norell and Bill Blass, among many others, the city became an international leader. The industry's abundance of fashion design houses is evident by the 270 fashion presentations held during Fashion Week in February of 2012 attended by over 100,000 industry professionals (Berry, 2012). Despite such quantities, the city's Garment Center has been radically reduced from its former status as the single biggest employer in the city (Pinkerson & Levin, 2009). Traditional fashion production centers, such as those in New York and Milan, are being vacated due to the availability of less expensive production facilities overseas (Gill, 2008). The percentage of American clothing made in the USA has declined from 95% in 1965 to 5% in 2009 (Pinkerson & Levin, 2009).

3. *The Current Academic Landscape*

The German state school The Bauhaus (1919-1933) strongly influenced the primary structure for American art and design higher education (Marshall, 2009). The Bauhaus's mission was to promote "the integration of artistic and practical pedagogy, aesthetics and applied skills to produce artists and designers who can participate as creative individuals in the professional working world, becoming part of society and contributing as a group to the greater good of Germany" (Wax, 2010, p. 23). As duplicated by many of America's leading fashion design programs, Bauhaus students were encouraged to learn design principles "by doing and making," and studied various art and design fundamentals before progressing to a chosen design specialization (Marshall, 2009). In order to provide this education, faculty were active, practicing artists and designers who imparted their expertise by placing emphasis on how things were made in the contemporary practice (Wax, 2010). For many American design schools, such as Parsons The New School for Design, the academic mission was originally aligned with

The Bauhaus and based on a vocational, trade-oriented activity driven by industry (Wolff & Rhee, 2009) and taught by active professionals. Other leading institutions, such as The Fashion Institute of Technology, were launched with government support to supply the growing post-war American apparel industry's need for highly qualified labor (MASNY, 2011). Contemporary fashion design education is centered on building practical skills and creativity that prepare students for entry into the practice.

Program structures vary across American design schools; students either enter a four year fashion design program directly or are required first to complete a "Foundation Year," where they learn the fundamental skills and principles of general art and design before entering three years of dedicated fashion design studies. Upon entering the major, emphasis is placed on building the skills associated with the practice, such as pattern making, garment construction, designing fashion "collections," and understanding the various markets. The advanced semesters challenge students to refine their design processes and aesthetics through theory- and skill-based design assignments. To augment the academic experience, some programs engage professional brands or visiting designer critics to work with the students on designated projects; while these experiences complement the contextual learning outcomes, they also offer important insights into the professional experience.

Fashion design curriculum is typically framed by the core studio courses of fashion design and garment construction that are taught throughout the undergraduate levels; these are supported by required liberal studies and discipline-related subjects such as digital design, textiles, drawing, business, knitwear, and other courses that support students' individual goals. Semester-abroad programs allow students to engage in other forms of design pedagogy and foreign fashion industries. The capstone experience of the undergraduate education is the development of a graduate portfolio and fashion collection that showcases the student's abilities and launches them into the industry. Most graduates enter the industry immediately following graduation and secure positions as Assistant Designers. For some of these professionals, graduate studies in such areas as business, fashion history, and fashion design are undertaken in order to advance professionally or to enter a related area of greater interest.

4. An Evolving Education

As the world demands better solutions for concerns such as environmental sustainability, educators are providing opportunities for students to become future "agents of change" by creating curricula and design projects that interface with social and civic organizations. For example, fashion design students at Pratt Institute created hospice uniforms for Visiting Nurse Service's Haven Hospice Specialty Care Unit (Dennis, 2011), and students at California College of the Arts (CCA) visited Guatemala to design within cultural contexts and learn issues of sustainability, market conditions, and fair trade principles. As some have asserted, the design school's mission is "...to foster a new generation of designer-citizens: productive, engaged, inventive businesspeople, policy makers, and community activists, many of whom also make beautiful and useful things" (Wolff & Rhee, 2011, p. 12). The field of art and design education is preparing for this new landscape by rethinking the role future designers will play (Wax, 2010).   Academia has begun to question how it can prepare students. What new skill sets will be needed for the shifting professional landscape? How can our programs and graduates prepare for a future that is so highly unpredictable?

This unpredictable future is largely due to how globalized the fashion industry has become; the world is becoming smaller, as Tom Friedman's book *The World is Flat* (2005) describes. In today's design room, a designer might hail from Belgium, design for a German brand, present work bi-annually in Milan, and sell to stores in Asia, as was the case of Raf Simmons who designed for the label Jil Sander. Therefore, it is necessary for fashion designers to become increasingly educated in the nuances of the expanding global markets, sub-cultures, available resources, and technologies. As a result, higher education curricula are becoming increasingly influenced by ethical issues, philosophy, innovative technology, and an increasing sensitivity to environmental issues and different cultures (Marshall, 2009). By infusing curricula with relevant information in these areas, programs aim to prepare design graduates so they can succeed in the evolving global industry while having an ability to synthesize their fashion practice with other disciplines in order to innovate products. Examples of successful interdisciplinary design include the collaborations between Marc Jacobs and the artists Richard Prince and Takashi Murakami at Louis Vuitton, and Nike's LZR Racer bodysuit that was created through advanced computer software. The practice of fashion design is no longer the siloed vocation it once was, but is now understood to be a link that greatly impacts local and global economies, and the environment.

Many American design schools are offering or considering multi- and inter-disciplinary studies where the process of research and development engages analytical thinking as the primary learning objective (Palomo-Lovinski & Faerm, 2009). Parsons The New School for Design recently created the graduate program Transdisiplinary Design in which students of diverse backgrounds work as design teams in specialized areas of Urban, Sustainability, The Social, and Systems. Other schools are adopting interdisciplinary models in hopes that they may become the defining logic for the whole institution (Marshall, 2009). In the 21st century, emphasis on design process is being increasingly utilized across disciplines as a thinking tool that can be applied to sustainable design, business systems, and a host of other fields (Marshall, 2009). According to Laetitia Wolff and Jen Rhee (2009) at Parsons the New School for Design:

> Design is no longer just a vocational, trade-oriented activity driven by industry, as described in Parsons' founding mission, but rather a methodology with potential application to almost any kind of problem—the focus has shifted from object to process or system. (p.10)

Tim Marshall, Provost of The New School and former Dean of Parsons, encourages a shift from building students' rudimentary skills in a *specific* design area towards a design pedagogy that values the core qualities inherent in the design process: the ability to collaborate and communicate, a capacity for empathy, an ability to articulate design insights to those in other fields, and the capability to act strategically (Wolff & Rhee, 2009). As Joel Towers, Executive Dean of Parsons, states that "there are moments when this narrowness [of academic study] makes sense, when the specificity of expertise is necessary. But we're at a moment where the issues we're trying to address—their complexity—require a breadth of knowledge" (Agid, 2008, p. 12-13).

In order to nurture this type of creative development in students, educational institutions must enable design's cross-fertilization with areas such as science, education, or business, in order to innovate products for our society that are shaped by media, technology, the economy, and environmental awareness (Palomo-Lovinski & Faerm, 2009). This approach to design education was raised at The Fashion Institute of Technology's conference Moving Forward: Fashion Design Today held in November of 2011. At this event, participants at a round-table discussion expressed the idea that a broader approach will provide greater flexibility and value to graduates in today's hyper-competitive job market. Flexibility will be an asset since, as the designer Clement Mok asserts, future designers will be expected to cross boundaries into unfamiliar practices while being able to "identify [new] opportunities and make connections between them" (Pink, 2005, p. 135). To provide graduates with these abilities, we must give priority to academic research (Van Zandt, 2011). This will require a reexamination of current fashion education practices in America.

Fashion design in America is significantly under-theorized when compared to other creative disciplines such as architecture and fine-arts (Skjold, 2008). However, outside of American, the research approach to fashion education has been highly developed by such schools as Central Saint Martin's and The London College of Fashion, both in the United Kingdom. These institutions base their design school research traditions on the humanities, cultural awareness, and historical contexts "where fashion is considered a cultural phenomenon in a social and historical context" (Skjold, 2008). The advanced level of European fashion education is illustrated by the sixteen graduate-degree programs offered by The London College of Fashion and the quantities of doctoral programs offered throughout Western Europe. For example, at the state-funded Kolding Design School in Denmark, the contract between the school and the Ministry of Culture states that one-third of the teaching is to be research-based (Skjold, 2008) in order to enrich the fashion industry.

Determining the ideal balance of conceptual learning with practical application seems to be a prioritized discussion in fashion education. Some educators think that the "intellectual, analytical, and conceptual considerations through research and experimentation must be foremost within a college design curriculum, yet should be grounded in ideas of practical application" (Palomo-Lovinski & Faerm, 2009). As fashion design education evolves and students' attempts at originality are nurtured, curricula must effectively balance artistry (vision, research and design), craft (technical skills), with business acumen (professional practice and placement) (Palomo-Lovinski & Faerm, 2009). Cameron Tonkinwise, Chair of Design Thinking at Parsons stated:

> We are educating designers who can actually begin to be social entrepreneurs and not just the providers of a product for somebody else to commercialize. With business acumen and design thinking skills, they are strategic in that they don't just come up with the theme; they come up with the system that is going to sustain and proliferate the theme and actually have an impact on the world. (Wolff & Rhee, 2009, p. 13)

At the Fashion Education Summit hosted by The Council of Fashion Designers of America in January of 2012, there was general consensus amongst the attending educators and professional designers that a craft-based education should not be lost or neglected, nor should it be replaced by academic traditions that do not provide the specific needs of fashion design education. The de-emphasis of such knowledge as garment construction and materiality and overemphasis on humanities and social sciences could have the potential to create a "fragmented education in which students would neither learn to work as designers nor do research, and in which the different requirements of the curriculum would appear meaningless" (Skjold, 2008, p. 11). However, attendees at the Summit agreed the key challenge for students lies in being able to acquire essential skills, interdisciplinary experiences, and conceptual development successfully within the relatively short time period during which a design degree is obtained. Students must acquire the skills they need to succeed in the current marketplace while simultaneously collecting knowledge that will allow them to remake and improve the future marketplace (Towers, 2005). Many American fashion design schools are responding to the need for designers to have advanced knowledge by offering (or currently developing) Master's degree programs in fashion design and design theory; other institutions are contemplating the development of doctorate degree programs.

If design schools *do* transition from an exclusively skill-centered curriculum to a theory-centered course of study that is supported by skill development, design education will increasingly emphasize the iterative stages of design and the students' ability to contextualize their creative process. The resulting paradigm shift therefore prioritizes "thinking" over "making" in design education. To promote this focus in design theory, some design schools offer first year students coursework that teaches design process through immaterial areas such as business systems analysis and service design. Service design "addresses the functionality and form of services from the perspective of the clients" and contextualizes the design processes by requiring students to empathize with users and to "develop a holistic understanding of the ways in which our relationships to services govern everyday life" (Forlano, 2010). By engaging with these broader types of design thinking, students gain a more sophisticated thought process for design application that may permeate and inform subsequent practical work (Bailey, 2007) and thus innovate the design industry. This will also encourage broader collaborations across disciplines. These new academic and professional partnerships will challenge outdated modes of fashion design and production (Palomo-Lovinski & Faerm, 2009). The importance of evolving design education into a field in which designers are allowed and encouraged to cross traditional barriers was underscored to students and educators by The New School's President David Van Zandt during his inaugural address in 2011. He stated:

> Future designers will acquire success not by simply how smart they are by studying traditional subjects or to those who have master technical skills. It will go to those who are able to comprehend both the problem and the context of the problem and how to design or create solutions that are efficiently and aesthetically desirable for the community. (Van Zandt, 2011)

As academia speculates on which attributes the future designer must possess, and how students can be provided opportunities to develop successfully, a deeper understanding for how industry and academia define "design expertise" must take place; this clarity will allow fashion design education to develop the needed expertise that much further (Dorst & Reymen, 2004). As suggested by Van Zandt, design expertise is no longer relegated to creating a mere item, but relates to larger and more connected conversations that may inform and affect more serious global networks. According to Rhee and Wolff at Parsons (2009), the school's ongoing objective is to "foster a new generation of designer-citizens: productive, engaged, inventive business people, policy makers, and community activists, many of whom also make beautiful and useful things" (p.10). These graduate attributes further support the students' abilities to become leading "design thinkers" who work more laterally across disciplines. Like Towers, Marshall emphasizes that graduates—regardless of their areas of study—must be able to continually learn new skills, be entrepreneurial, understand complex issues, and take leadership roles in implementing change.

Marshall states designers "….need to abandon positioning design as a secretive and privileged process in favor of a fluid and porous approach that situates design as a shared practice of societies and cultures with the designer enabling general participation through professional facilitation" (Marshall, 2009).

5. *The Emerging Student Generation*

When considering how fashion design education must evolve, an examination into the general characteristics of young adulthood must occur. Understanding the common attributes of college students, along with those unique to fashion design students, will ensure the future pedagogy and methods of its delivery are successfully developed for students. What challenges, hopes, beliefs, and needs do young adults have? How can understanding the personal and professional development of students inform and develop student mentorship? How can design education respond? Research into this specific population will provide a deeper context for developing future fashion design pedagogy.

5.1 Attributes of the College Student

Despite the fact that a transitional period experienced by recent college graduates has become normative in today's American culture, there has been little research performed on the development of the 19-29 year old when the transition into adulthood is commonly marked (Arnett, 2003); the first scholarly conference discussing this age demographic was held at Harvard University in 2003 (Arnett, 2004). In lieu of such scholarly attention, media has focused on this age group through the works of fiction and journalistic accounts; these have often portrayed the subject in a negative and pessimistic light (Arnett, 2000a). Researchers raise the issue that such portrayals can be damaging when viewed by young adults since, when young adults begin to form part of their self-identities, they may initially base these identities on stereotypes (Erikson, 1968). This age group may also seek a niche in some section of society through free role-playing experimentation. Marcia (1980) describes this by stating:

> …identity is a self-structure—an internal self-constructed collection of drives, beliefs and individual history. The better developed the identity is, the more aware one is of their own uniqueness and similarity to others, along with their own strengths and weaknesses. If one's identity is weak or underdeveloped, the more confused the individual is and likely to rely on external sources for self-evaluation. (p. 159)

While stereotypes may be initially adopted for self-identity, one of the primary focuses for young adults is to gain an understanding of how they fit within the larger community (Yates & Youniss, 1996). This is a salient point given the *increasing* diversity of cultures, religions, and ethnicities young adults experience in their local communities and academic environments. Individuals must learn to navigate such integrated environments themselves if their parents did not experience such diversity when growing up and are unable to impart such preparation to their children (Karcher, Brown, & Elliot, 2011).

Given the evolutionary nature of identity formation, it does not happen neatly. In the earlier stages, the individual seeks release from the parents, shifts from being a "taker" to being self-reliant, and sets aside childhood fantasies by adopting a lifestyle (and perhaps a career choice) that is more realistic (Marcia, 1980). This can be especially challenging for those entering such highly competitive professions as fashion design where, due to competition from increasingly large graduate population and limited job vacancies, entry into the field may be closed or available to only a very few who are at the top of their class (Arnett, 2004). The young graduate may be forced to settle for an alternate, less desirable career path.

In order to form an identity, an engagement in various life offerings takes place so that the young adult may make more enduring decisions. Author J.J. Arnett (2000) claims this process begins in adolescence but takes place mainly in young adulthood. He states:

> Emerging adulthood is a time of life when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain, when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course. (p. 469)

For many young adults, a plan or route has been created for travelling from adolescence to adulthood. However, the plan is almost always subject to change through changes in academic pathways, situations that may affect their studies, the realization that they may need additional coursework or degrees, and additional personal circumstances (Arnett, 2004). This evolving pathway grants most young adults a wider scope of possibilities than in other age ranges because they are exploring options. As Arnett (2004) states "To be a young American today is to experience both excitement and uncertainty, wide-open possibility and confusion, new freedoms, and new fears" (p. 3).

Despite these commonly experienced challenges, most young adults view the exploration exhilarating rather than onerous (Arnett, 2010). Studies have shown that well-being, self-esteem, and life satisfaction all rise steadily during young adulthood for most people (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006). Those in their early 20s are often depicted as feeling daunted by low economic prospects, student loans, and by the soaring national debt. However, at the same time, they feel ambitious and eager to pursue their financial, occupational, and personal goals (Hornblower, 1997).

5.2 Mentorship

The period between the ages of 19 and 29 can be one of great instability (Arnett, 2004). To support their developmental process, young adults learn to rely on peers, parents, and other adults for emotional support, advice, community, and mentorship (Karcher, et al., 2011). Mentorship is valuable in the transition process because it develops competence and character through teaching, advising, and the demonstration of model behavior (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Optimal development during young adulthood leads to a healthy and productive life; the adult is able to earn a living, engage in civic activities, and participate in social relations and cultural activities (Hamilton, et al., 2004). To achieve maximum benefits during the transition into adulthood, young adults must have active engagement in diverse activities and develop supportive relationships that provide mentorship. Mentorship is what is most beneficial to their development and often results in their success in academic programs and the professional world (Hamilton, et al., 2004). Mentorship may prove to be particularly needed as one survey found that the average youth under eighteen spends five to six hours a day with some form of media (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004), often alone, without parental supervision (Brown, Schaffer, Vargas, & Romocki, 2004).

5.3 The College Experience

Due to today's youth struggling to discover their personal and professional pathways and thus taking longer periods of time to explore and experiment, the college student demographic has altered. At the beginning of the 21st century, nearly *half* of all undergraduate students were more than twenty five years old, and for most young adults today it takes at least five to six years to obtain a four year degree; just 56% of college students complete their four-year degree within six years (Van Zandt, 2011; Briody, 2012).

There are several reasons why students prolong their college years, and while these include wishing to improve one's income, the need to obtain degrees that carry a higher status, and the simple joy of learning (Arnett, 2004), college in the United States is commonly seen as the time when one finds out what one wants to do (Arnett, 2004). This importance of college allowing for exploration and discovery was supported by many college students; one subject felt her college experience was "full of revelations and growth" and that "Because of college, I am closer to possessing the knowledge I need to be who and what I want to be" (Arnett, 2004, p. 138). A prolonged college experience that involves broader and deeper professional exploration may prove highly beneficial since it is during this time that many young people acquire the education and training that will provide them with the foundation for their personal and professional achievements in the decades ahead. This wider scope and deeper investigation ultimately allows young adults to make more thoughtful decisions (Arnett, 2000b).

Some scholars express concerns that the American higher education system does not provide graduates with a fluid transition from the classroom to workplace because there is a lack of proper guidance systems for secondary level and college students. Young adults face an overwhelming amount of choice, yet are not sufficiently mentored. Similarly, many educators assert that today's entering college freshmen are underprepared for college, thus prompting high dropout rates. To increase retention, some institutions, such as Virginia Commonwealth University, have created programs to help students transition from high school into college; from 2004 to 2012 the University experienced an 80% increase in freshmen retention.

5.4 Preparation for the Professional World

According to Barling and Kelloway, the majority of American high school students are employed part-time (Arnett, 2000b). Most are engaged in service jobs such as restaurants, retail, and similar avenues where challenges are low and the skills learned are few. Adolescents view these jobs not as direct preparation for career goals, but rather as a means to make income for their active leisure life (Arnett, 2000b). Despite viewing these jobs as casual activities, adolescents can gain significant long-term benefits through these jobs which will impact their adult development. By working, the adolescent acquires independence, gains confidence in handling responsibilities, increases various skills, develops a team playing attitude, and develops awareness for how the world operates. These, in turn, help shape their values, goals, and identities (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Unlike in adolescence, emerging adults use work experiences to gain focus on their professional goals. The individual begins to consider how employment opportunities will lay the groundwork for the jobs they may have through adulthood (Arnett, 2000b). For fashion design undergraduates who intern, the workplace is commonly used to learn what they are most skilled at, for which area of the practice they are best suited, and what type of work they will find satisfying in the long term. They learn what they are good at in addition to what they are weak in, a realization that frequently leads to failure or disappointment (Arnett, 2004).

Choosing one's particular career path has deeper meaning for today's student and young graduates. They have "grown up in an era of great affluence and abundance, and this has made them pursue careers that are more than just paychecks, but something enjoyable and personally gratifying" (Arnett, 2010). Today's young generation perceives work as something that allows for self-development and self-expression (Arnett, 2004). Unlike their parents' generation, wherein many considered simply having a job to be enough, the young adult today has been exposed to a hyper-globalized professional landscape loaded with career possibilities. As J.J. Arnett states, they all want to find the job that's not just "work," but a form of self-fulfillment (Warner, 2010). As a result of this ongoing search for the career that best suits their evolving identities (Arnett, 2004), many young adults experience a "quarter-life crisis" as they leap from job to job without a clear plan. This is partly an identity crisis because one cannot accurately choose a career path unless one knows oneself well enough to choose a career that one may enter more deeply (Arnett, 2004). This assertion is underscored by research showing that the average American holds seven to eight different jobs between the ages of eighteen and thirty, and one in four young adults has more than ten different jobs during this twelve year period (Arnett, 2004).

While such statistics speak broadly to young Americans across all professional practices, the young adult who enters the specific area of fashion design often has a different experience. Fashion design students often state they knew from an early age what type of career they intended to pursue. As a result, they explored the discipline through pre-college coursework and on their own time (Appendix A) and entered undergraduate study somewhat established on their career path. For these students, the period of post-college career exploration is narrower; the goal during college for these students "is to obtain skills and the credentials that will enable them to do the work they know they are cut out to do" (Arnett, 2004, p.130).

Although fashion design students differ from other young adults in that their career paths are self-selected early on, these young adults exhibit the common characteristics of exploration in other developmental areas. It is common for most fashion design students, when engaging in various internship opportunities, to explore diverse types of professional environments; these may range from larger global enterprises to brands that are maintained by minimal staffing and sold in the designer's local boutique. These explorations are in part explorations for their own sake because they allow the young adult to obtain a broader overview of life experiences before committing to "longer, more enduring, and limited adult responsibilities" (Arnett, 2000b, p. 474). Despite this challenging road to adulthood, the majority of American college graduates transition into a career with the belief that "life will be kind to them and that all will go well in their lives. Most believe they will find a satisfying job that fits with their identity, pays well, while managing to find a 'soul mate'" (Arnett, 2010).

6. Summary
Fashion Design Education

Due to the rapid and volatile changes occurring in the industry, the future role of fashion designers will require the ability to perform deeper levels of research in order to support design proposals.

Fashion designers will be expected to engage with previously unrelated practices to create innovative fashion design, contextualize the work, and improve industry systems. Academia is considering how to prepare graduates for this accelerated and highly unpredictable professional landscape by reimagining the future of fashion design education. Educators will increasingly focus on developing students' conceptual skills and design processes within curricula that provide greater interdisciplinary opportunities. While this approach is being lauded by many, others—particularly those in the fashion design industry—stress the need for a balanced education that incorporates the development of conceptual thinking and practical "hands on" skills.

Emerging Adulthood

The developmental attributes of young adults have a tremendous effect on how the graduates enter the industry. The period immediately following graduation is typically marked by great uncertainty, exploration, identity formation, and preparation for adulthood. These factors contribute to young adults undertaking internships and working across several companies in a relatively short time frame so they can discover which professional area(s) they wish to dedicate themselves. The high quantity of change and uncertainty occurring in academia and industry will create an increasing need for student and graduate mentorship. Mentorship may take many forms that include formalized services (such as Career Services Offices located within academic institutions) and less structured opportunities (such as mentorship from internship supervisors).

The Transitional Experience

With such significant forms of professional, academic, and personal change, research into the transitional experience *itself* must be considered. This research will allow fashion design programs to produce successful professionals who will enable the fashion industry to flourish. By understanding the common themes that emerge from these three areas of change, educators will gain a better sense for what kind of undergraduate experience might best prepare students.

Towards a Future Pedagogy

The future of fashion design education will required evolution in areas of pedagogy, mentorship, and student development. As shown, the philosophies for how design programs deliver academic content will change. This will require institutions to provide faculty development so they may learn new teaching methodologies, to engage with professional practice to ensure graduates are prepared successfully, and to increase mentorship opportunities to support students who will enter the increasingly volatile and uncertain professional landscape. If institutions fail to address these areas with rigor and persistence, design education and the global fashion industry will fail.

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