

## SPONSORED VISIT BY ANNI JURACICH TO F.I.T. NOVEMBER 2016

I am fortunate to have been granted the opportunity to visit F.I.T. NYC by IFFTI and RMIT University.

### Parameters of Visit

The scope of my visit was to explore how the learning environment at F.I.T. is used to encourage and facilitate positive engagement for their Fashion Styling students.



### F.I.T Key Details

F.I.T. was established 1944 to provide skilled workers for the Fashion Industry through structured courses – moving away from on the job training. The institute is located in the heart of the New York Garment District. Their Fashion Styling program was established over 14 years ago.



FIT (no date) Available at: <http://sites.fitnyc.edu/depts/security/MissionStat.htm> (Accessed: 20 November 2016).



New York city in 60 seconds (2010) Available at: <https://nycin60.wordpress.com/category/fashion-2/> (Accessed: 20 November 2016).

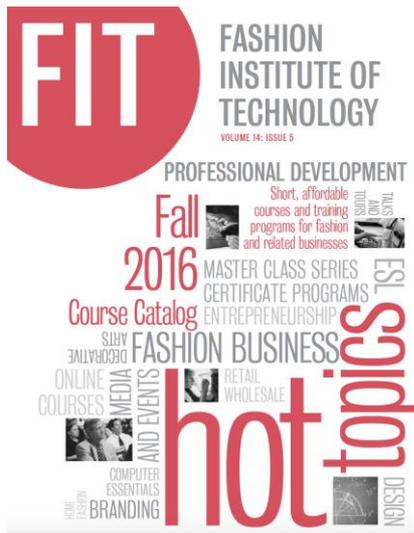
### Fashion Styling Program Details

Fashion Styling is part of the Continuing and Professional Studies area. This area focuses on catering to learners that are looking for a change of career direction or up-skilling. The courses within this area are available for learners to study on a part time basis.

Students applying for the Fashion Styling program have usually done prior study or have worked in the fashion industry for several years. Flexibility is key for this type of learner - all courses are offered at night and on the weekend, courses can be completed individually or as part

of a Certificate with the option of taking 2 years to complete a 1 year program.

I met with Joan Volpe for several hours to discuss the program. Joan is the Managing Coordinator for the Professional Studies/Company Training Center for Continuing and Professional Studies.



This is a copy of their Course Catalogue for Fall 2016 - All of the courses are further supported by a program of "Talks and Tours" which are mini tasters or additional information for learners or as a top up for industry professionals.

### **Key Findings from these discussions**

- We briefly discussed the history of the program and how it aligns with the history of the Fashion styling industry – the program was developed because of an industry need.
- Length of the program - 12 months - although students can be complete the program over 24 months. RMIT's Diploma of Fashion Styling is also a 12month program.
- We discussed the structure of learning within the program –
  - How courses are structured to scaffold learning, with some independent units not reliant on prior knowledge
  - Areas of Styling are separated/quite distinct – Image Consulting, Fashion Styling, Fashion Event Planning, Media Events and Photography (Image consulting focuses on helping individuals present themselves through their clothes, while Fashion Styling focuses on styling for magazines, catalogues, events, publicity, and social

media). This division of styling disciplines is a reflection of the industry – although some professionals do cross over disciplines.

In USA accredited Image Consultants complete client's colour analysis – in Australia personal stylist usually do not offer this service.

F.I.T.'s Styling cohort is specializing after either undergraduate study or several years experience in the fashion industry. This experience is usually in a creative field ie fashion design or production or could be photography

### **How the program reflects the industry**

The program maintains its strong connection to industry by;

- Employing teachers who are professional stylists (usually with many years' experience).
- Offering ongoing training to industry. This training is tailored to specific needs of the company – one example of this was the training of staff in an e-commerce company to style garments for flat lays)

### **Classes I observed were across 3 separate Styling Discipline Areas**

#### **1. Media Events and Photography**

Class name – “*Styling – Fit Fundamentals*” - Sadia Seymour

Class name – “*Hand Sewing, Mending, and Alteration Essentials*” – Patti Bambosa

#### **2. Fashion Styling**

Class name – “*Fashion Styling for Media*” – Nancy Alusick

Class name – “*Social Media and Digital Best Practices for Stylists*” - Lars Niki

#### **3. Image Consulting**

Class name – “*Introduction to Image Consulting*” - Carol Davidson

### **Styling – Fit Fundamentals (Teacher Sadia Seymour)**

Learning is structured for professional fit techniques for stylists working in media

Duration 3 hours X 3 sessions

Scenario – practical workshop

The class I visited focused on styling on the stand for catalogue shoots  
Class began with a “round table discussion” - these discussions included;

- teacher's experience – for learner's to see how their career may evolve
- stylist's toolkit – important tools to build a kit and their purpose
- mannequins and models would be used to fit clothes each week
- importance of a professional fit (ie clean image that entices consumer)

One of the teaching and learning activities the students participated in was fitting garments on stand in pairs (Sadia first demonstrated the activity and then the students repeated process with her guidance when needed). Students were enthusiastic and quickly engaged in the learning activity.

Learners are encouraged to act independently – bring resources to class – ie garments to fit, correct size pins and various other items.



(No Date) Available at: <http://blog.btryc.edu/precollgeprograms/files/2012/10/2012-09-29-13.22.23.jpg> (Accessed: 22 November 2016).

## Hand Sewing, Mending and Alteration Essentials – Patti Bambosa



(No Date) Available at: [http://1.bp.blogspot.com/\\_aknd\\_8OmGDuVW3l8jgI/AAAAAAAAAGQw/KOIPgQmWfQs1600/Dress-forms-photographed-by-LM\\_Flickr.png](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_aknd_8OmGDuVW3l8jgI/AAAAAAAAAGQw/KOIPgQmWfQs1600/Dress-forms-photographed-by-LM_Flickr.png) (Accessed: 22 November 2016).

Learning is structured for students to gain skills in professional hand-sewing techniques that are used to save professionals both time and money – skills are used across styling, image consulting, events and wardrobing.

Duration 4 hours X 4 sessions

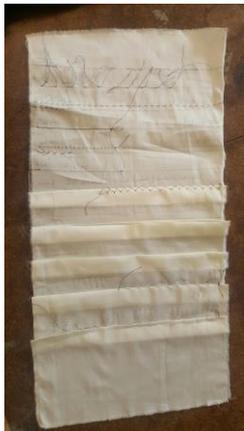
Scenario – practical workshop

The class I attended the first in this series. It was aimed at on the spot alterations/adjustments – geared toward times when access to machines is not possible or not warranted.

Discussions included

- teacher's experience – for learner's to gain an understanding how to work within the industry
- stylist's toolkit – this was a more extensive kit than the needed for the previous class; each tool was shown, described and it's use was explained

The Teaching and Learning Activity aimed to give the students basic hand sewing skills that are essential for on location shoots - Patti explained each stitch type, it's use and then the students practiced sewing the stitch type. Patti also had a finished stitch type sampler for students to refer to if they were unsure or wanted to work ahead. The student's engaged in the immediacy of the activity and enjoyed seeing their skill level progress.



### **Fashion Styling for Media – Nancy Alusick**

This course covers the basics of styling for media – advertising, television commercials, print layouts and video. Learners explore sourcing and working with a collaborative team (photographers, costume designers, models and actors)

Duration 3 hours X 6 sessions

Scenario – practical workshop

I sat in on the fourth class of a series of six. Students were working on a photo shoot project – this was a team project – each team had 4-5 members. Student's enjoyed the ownership of this project - they had created a concept/moodboards and were sourcing clothing and props for a photoshoot in class 6. Most groups had approached a small design house for clothing. Week 5 was the "model call"- class discussions were focused on project planning – what model would best suit their concept/clothes? What sourcing still needed to be completed? How would they communicate with the photographer?

### **Social Media and Digital Best Practices for Stylists (Lars Niki)**

Course focuses on marketing campaign to self promote freelance professional using latest social media platforms and strategies to attract clients. Learners will explore the best ways to capture and showcase their images.

Duration 3 hours X 4 sessions  
Scenario – practical workshop

This course had three ongoing projects that were aimed at getting the students to research social media platforms, creating images and trialing and discussing different methods/approaches to attract followers. Students were able to choose from 4 projects – this allowed them to structure their learning according to their goals/needs.

Lars began class discussions by asking questions about the progress of their social media project. At first the learners appeared to be a little hesitant to discuss their success on social media, which was determined by their growth in followers. Lars then directed his questions to specific learners, who opened up about their progress. Lars continued to ask directed questions – this approach encouraged all learners to participate, and engage in general discussion.

In Australian social media is imperative – practicing stylists use this tool to extend their reach, they are regularly contacted by fellow creatives (photographers etc..), who have viewed their work on social media.

### **Introduction to Image Consulting (Teacher – Carol Davidson)**

Basics of Image Consulting – learners explore colour, line and visual principles. Figure and face types, hair and make up are keys areas of learning.

Duration 3 hours X 6 sessions  
Scenario – practical workshop

I attended the first class in this series where the learning centred on an introduction to this career role and course, then narrowed to colour theory and why/how this is used to choose the most appropriate colour for your client – Carol's mantra is "clothes shouldn't enter the room before your client and your client shouldn't enter before their clothes. They should enter together."

Carol used a combination of visual presentations, class discussions, real life examples and activities to encourage the learners to engage in this course. One example where she demonstrated this combination in a teaching and learning activity was showing two images of different people, then placed squares of colours that suit their colouring under the images. She encouraged the students to discuss what changes they noticed in the person's appearance (ie what does it highlight? Is this good or enhancing? Next Carol swapped the square of colours with unsuitable colours and discussed the changes with the students. Carol used her skills and the learning tools to empower the students to develop their knowledge through their exploration and judgment.



(No Date) Available at: <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/pLdqZwCC1b0U/Lze5PpVCIwAAAAAAAAAY1Xwebr0216gsl600/Rebecca+Ramney.jpg> (Accessed: 1 December 2016)



### Learning from classroom reflected in Industry



(No Date) Available at: [http://s1.ticketm.net/tn/en-us/dam/a/56a/b7219222-78fa-4551-87c5-7687d77796a\\_28411\\_CUSTOM.jpg](http://s1.ticketm.net/tn/en-us/dam/a/56a/b7219222-78fa-4551-87c5-7687d77796a_28411_CUSTOM.jpg) (Accessed: 30 November 2016).

I was fortunate to observe learning from F.I.T.'s Event Styling put into practise by volunteering for a benefit event where Barbara Berman (a

F.I.T. teacher) was event manager - responsible for the volunteers. This annual event is “*Stand up for Heroes*” at Madison Square Gardens. I observed “on the night” planning and scheduling discussions, participated as a volunteer, which included attending briefings, run through and event execution. Being involved in this event also allowed me to observe the event hierarchy – especially the interaction between venue staff and event staff. The processes for organizing event volunteers is similar in Australia.

## Summary

Both RMIT's and F.I.T.'s programs are very practical – with strong similarities in classroom methodology i.e. delivery of a small chunk of theory, then the students put this theory into practise with teachers guiding their skill/knowledge development. Both programs focus on maintaining links with industry to enrich the student experience through relevant activities and creating connections.

Both programs use the classroom and learning activities to encourage discussion and collaboration, as these techniques mirror the industry.

The key difference between the Fashion Styling discipline in New York and Australia is that New York stylists focus more on one area and don't cross over as much as we do in Australia. ie you maybe a Catalogue Stylists therefore don't work in Editorial. Australia's Styling industry is not as established as New York and our stylists need to be multiskilled.

## Extracurricula Activities

ART

Fashion in Art Tour – The Met

This tour discussed how fashion is used across different art movements to facilitate the communication of the art story through non-verbal means. Messages can be communicated in conceptual format or a more literal format.

First portrait (on the left) - Artist John Singer Sargent's painting *Madame X* – which is a portrait of Madame Gautreau. When first exhibited 1884 the portrait was considered scandalous because of the interpretation of the messages the dress and stance were communicating — the original image had the right strap falling off the shoulder, was cinched in at the waist, had what was considered a large amount of skin showing - the décolleté was also unadorned with jewels or shawl. The holding of the fabric in her hand was considered “suggestive”.

Second portrait – female figure is considered powerful force – that she is standing over her husband while he is looking up at her, subtle placement of her waist sash, the direction of her arm and her stance over and around her husband.

Third portrait – has 3 women all at same level, which suggests equality they are dressed in solid colours, which suggested power. The women's accessories are also a combination of colours from each others garment which suggests unity.

These messages are consistently used across all visual communication disciplines.



## Whitney Museum



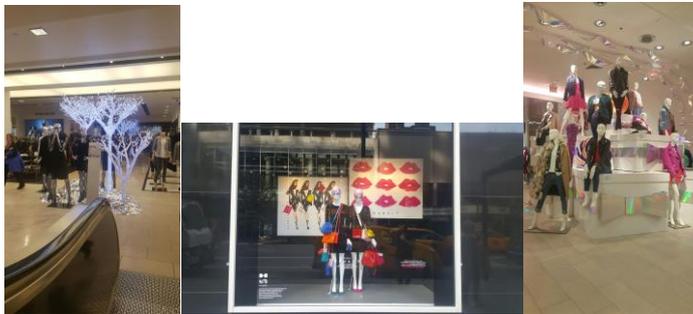
Fashion within Art – the visual imagery within this piece of art challenges the viewer to reflect on how they view the people around them.

When we think of a police line up we imagine a stressful situation – one person is judging another, quite often clothes are used to help identify “the perpetrator” of a crime in a line up – in this piece of art work it is the shoes that define the person – the artist wants us to ponder why the shoes are all the same colour (we are all the same), yet different styles and sizes (we all express ourselves through our unique style) and intensity of the colour (reflective gold offers hope which is in contrast to the usual circumstances surrounding a police line-up).

Fashion styling uses these visual cues in all its communications.

DEPARTMENT STORES

Visits to quintessential New York department stores gave me the opportunity to view how these brands use touch-points within the stores to convey the message of who they are as a brand. I visited Barney's, SAK's Fifth Ave, Macy's and Bloomingdales. Branding is crucial in styling – every garment, belt, earring, ring and nail polish colour chosen needs to reinforce the brand's identity and how their customers' interpret these communications. Imagine a Calvin Klein photoshoot with a hectic and eclectic number of components, models with wild/crazy brunette hair – this would throw their customers who buy into the minimalistic, overtly conservative sexy image that the company portrays.



Most of these stores had personal shopper services that aligned with their branding. In general these services were held in private salons that consisted of a greeting area where consultations were conducted and change rooms. Refreshments were offered during the consultation. Clothes were brought in from the general store area for the client to try on. This service is a value-add for the stores and is consistent with the developing industry in Australia.

Visiting Barney's Chelsea store allowed me to see how Australian fashion presents itself in a different market place – an example of this was Australian menswear tailors P. Johnson Tailors. The brand's styling in NYC is pared back in comparison to their Australian retail outlets and offers a different level of personal assistance. These adjustments appear to align with Barney's branding.



## OUT ON THE STREET

On street I was able to see New Yorkers expressing their personal style – while we live in a global village with images being filtered down immediately there is still a sense that New York is one of the major driving forces behind the fashion industry.



While on the street I passed a TV ad shoot and was able to observe the set up of equipment and crew and quickly took in the space and how it was being used to convey a message.



I would like to thank IFFTI, RMIT and F.I.T. for providing me with this valuable opportunity. I believe the knowledge and experience I

gained through this faculty exchange will assist in further enhancing our learner's experience. It was particularly helpful to be able to have face-to-face discussions with the staff at F.I.T. and to observe how they use their learning spaces and activities to engage their learners. I hope to continue to build on the relationships I formed during this faculty exchange with the aim of benefiting our institutes, staff and students.