

IFFTI Faculty Exchange 2016 – Final Report



Mandy Penton
School of Fashion & Textiles
RMIT University
Building 513.03.01
25 Dawson Street
Brunswick Vic 3056 Australia
mandy.penton@rmit.edu.au
PH: +61 39925 9202

I was fortunate to receive an IFFTI Faculty exchange for 2016. With the support from IFFTI and RMIT University I was able to participate in a faculty exchange with Ecole Supérieure Arts Appliqués Duperré Located at 11 rue Dupetit-Thouars 75003 Paris France in September this year.



The aim of my faculty exchange with Duperré was to work collaboratively with their staff and students, to explore the approaches to learning and teaching pedagogy they use and look at comparisons to the approaches undertaken in the Associate Degree in Fashion Design & Technology we offer at RMIT.

I found the exchange experience both valuable and informative for me and hopefully this will provide an ongoing opportunity to share ideas and best practices between the two institutes. This would be an advantage for both the staff and of students', from the two institutes, who do not necessarily share a common native language, to develop stronger communication skills as a way of achieving common goals.

I was welcomed to Duperré by the Director, Annie Toulzat and Natacha Lallemand, International Relationships Manager along with other staff members, who provided me with the opportunity to discuss the structure of their fashion and textile design programs in comparison with the programs I manage at RMIT. I was interested to hear how Duperré use cross-curricula courses, as a way for students to broaden their skills and knowledge rather than maintaining program specific learning objectives.

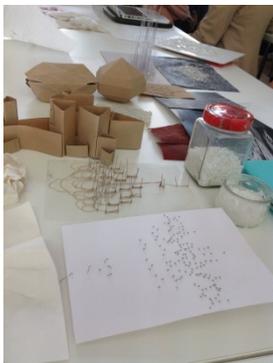
We discussed different ways the students at Duperré engage with the French fashion industry and the public. They spoke of the project students had been involved in recently where the students participated in a design project with Paris City Hall. Students were invited to view old heritage curtains and using the curtains as their inspiration students created their own creative and contemporary interpretations.

During my visit to Duperré I had the pleasure of attending a range of classes and this provided me with the opportunity to spend time with the individual staff and talk at length with the teacher and students on the courses they were studying, what and how they were learning and their experiences through their studies. Both the students and staff were generous with the information they shared and were very helpful, giving me permission to take photos of them and their work as well as taking notes on what they were doing, for inclusion in this report.

Here is a snap shot of my experiences during my time the classes:-

First year students in their creative laboratory class with teacher Sandra Chaumié

In the first few weeks of classes students undertake a creative project called “Back to Paper” where they must choose something that inspires their design creativity and then recreate their inspirational idea using paper. There is no limitation on the type of paper. The day I visited the first year class they were presenting their initial design ideas and concepts to their teacher for feedback so the work was still in the planning stages but the ideas were already coming together. I was impressed by the students’ ideas and what they had achieved in such a short time. Some students had really pushed the boundaries of using paper with students explaining very different concepts based on their different inspirations. One student had chosen, as his inspiration “Chandeliers”, and used a range of papers including sandpaper to provide the feel of crystals. A second student’s inspiration was “swans” and had meticulously cut and shaped from very fine paper to create feathers. Another student, who had just returned from a trip to Tahiti, was using her airline ticket and the colours of the island as a starting point, while another was working with playing cards as her inspiration.

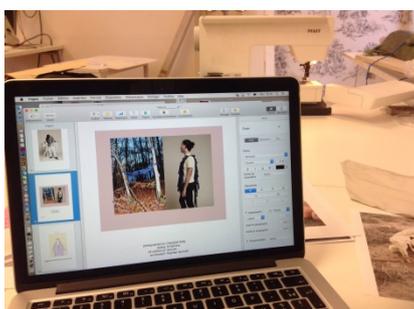


Second year Creative Laboratory with teacher Amme-Cicile Sonntag

This class focuses on a project that spans nine months which culminates in the development and presentation of a final collection of work consisting of approximately five to eight pieces. The students research and explore their creative ideas and inspiration, often built on what they commenced as part of their first year studies and is supported by other classes they are also undertaking in the second year, including garment prototyping, graphic design and visual design communication courses. Skills and knowledge students engage in include development of technical drawing, fine art and creative technology; with students discovering different possibilities when using different materials and machines.

Some of the students I spent time with explained their work to me and provided me with the following explanations on their very different individual concepts and plans for their final collections.

1. Exploring how product can be of a multi-purpose design - from wearable piece of clothing that also becomes a bag or a jacket that can become a hammock or bed.

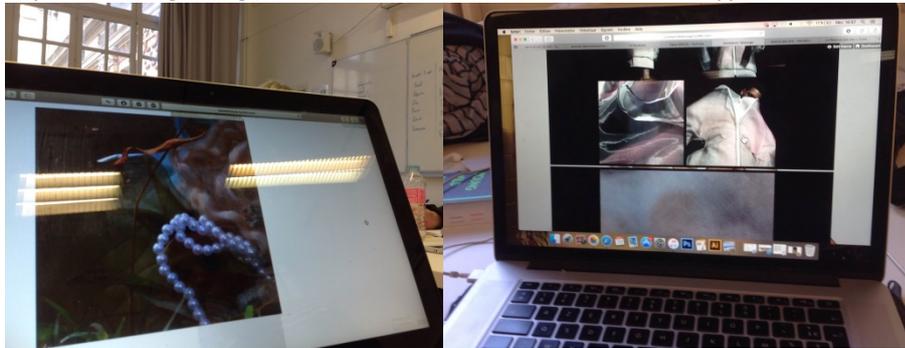


2. Inspired by Haiti researching options for creating design ideas from discarded materials to create a fashion identity. A great conversation and a student and I spoke at length and I was able to forward her a link on fashion based on second hand and recycled materials in Sierra Leon as a comparison.

Fashpack: Freetown Episode 1 Welcome To The Junks in iview

<http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/fashpack-freetown/AC1420H001S00>

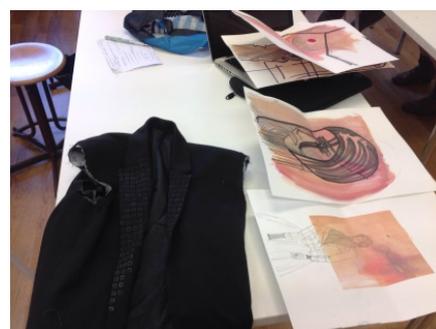
3. Experimentation with fabric to create an ethereal impact of garment/ fashion design and experimenting using latex in a laser cutter to create a lace type textile.



A students' final collection of work is presented to a panel of assessors and includes both written and oral justification of their design process and final outcomes as well as the set-up of an exhibition of their work.

Second year "prototype" class with teacher Christian Tournaful.

This class has a focus on patternmaking and garment construction and supports the learning of the students in developing their final collection. It was great to spend time with the students and see what work they were doing and what they were trying to achieve. I enjoyed the chance of sharing design ideas and options for pattern development with a student who was working on a deconstructed jacket as he was trying to design a sleeve coming from the front panel rather than the traditional armhole position. I discussed the work of Shingo Sato and suggested he research his patternmaking methods as a way of resolving his problem.



It was great to receive such detailed information and feedback from students and I appreciated their candor when answering my questions on their studies. Hearing firsthand what they found most valuable about their studies and what they believed would be most useful to them in their future studies and/or career helped me to gain a better understanding of Duperré teaching focus. The majority of second year students found the skills and knowledge they had acquired to assist them in participating in open research and pursuing techniques that allowed them to develop a concept by

first freeing the closed minded. They achieved this by first learning and experimenting with design and fine art and then after applying the learnt technical skills so the design concept can be created and from this they could then create their final collection.

The other area that was of the utmost importance to the students was their electronic portfolio. All students begin to create an electronic portfolio in their first year. Students showed me how they create an electronic catalogue starting with their first year work; many bring forward design ideas and continue to build on them throughout their second year research and development. Students said this was a great practice and would be a valuable source for demonstrating their ideas and capabilities when applying for further study or employment opportunities in the future. This is one area that I know our students need to develop skills and knowledge in and it should be compulsory for all students, at the moment they have the choice if the format is electronic.

One of my primary focuses for the exchange fellowship was to learn what the learning and teaching pedagogy was for the two year Diploma of Fashion Design with a major in Fashion & Environment program. The program curriculum has an emphasis on learning that relates to fine arts but it still includes a considerable amount of technical skills including pattern-making and development of technical data. What I found most interesting was how the program merged the design and technical aspects together to provide students with the skills and knowledge required to create a unique experimental product with all the supporting research and technical information required as part of their final assessment at the end of second year. They achieved this by including cross-curricular courses from their other program disciplines, including graphic design, textile printing and knitting.

This was of particular interest to me as our two year program, the Associate Degree in Fashion Design & Technology, at RMIT focuses on commercial creativity. We have the exact opposite balance of learning to Duperré. To meet the needs of the Australian fashion market, we have an emphasis in our program for students specialising in fashion technology that students have the technical capabilities to work in a manufacturing environment with advanced skills in patternmaking, technical information including specifications, CAD/CAM, requirements of garment construction, quality assurance and production process, and our training has a strong alignment with these areas. It is essential that the design process is embedded in all of these processes otherwise without good design, commercial creativity will be compromised. I found this comparison an excellent way to benchmark our program against another two year program. It also provided me with the opportunity to observe different ways of engaging students in opening their minds to research and the process of design.

I believe the exchange has allowed me to broaden both my design and creative responses by drawing on a different cultural perspective. I will now be able to share my findings with staff and in turn with students.

My time at Duperré coincided with Graduate students' exhibitions which was a great opportunity to see completed work and how students present their design concepts and finished product following on from my discussions with the second year students who are just commencing their projects. Many of the graduates were on hand to discuss their collections and I was very impressed with completed collections, their presentations and the clear and professional ways they articulated their design process.



At the same time there was also the exhibition of the graduates' Master's degree in Design & Innovation. In collaboration with a project partner from an external organisation, the graduates had taken part in an intensive program, including an internship, workshops and seminars. The work on display really demonstrated the innovative research undertaken by the students, with a wide range of experimentation using many different techniques from a range of disciplines, including digital, print, weave, tapestry and even footwear/accessories design. The materials chosen also pushed the boundaries of design and included using more traditional methods of wool for tapestry combined with latex to and create an interpretation of a faux animal skin.



During my time in Paris I also took the opportunity to visit a range of museums, including a visit to Palais Galliera's to view the current exhibition *Anatomy of a Collection* which included a diverse collection of fashion and clothing from court wear to work overalls and from celebrities to unknowns, the exhibition was a collection of approximately one hundred garments and accessories illustrating fashion from the 18th century to the present day.

While in France I also organised meetings with other organisations affiliated with IFFTI.

IFM (FRENCH INSTITUTE OF FASHION) 36 quai d'Austerlitz 75013 Paris, France



I met with Brad Fujimoto - Head of MSc Luxury program and Hans de Foer - Director of Postgraduate Program Creation and discussed how they manage their work integrated learning (WIL) at their institute. On display were the finished designs of IFM's most recent WIL project that students had designed and produced, working in collaboration with French fashion companies; we discussed the importance of these projects. Not only do students work with industry specific design criteria, they also follow through with the manufacturing process. To support this process they must also develop a design rationale and communicate their design ideas to different sectors of the French fashion industry. This project also provides the students' with the opportunity to build a wider network of contacts. It requires the students to design for a company's market rather than a focus on their individual preferences.

LECTRA

A visit to the LECTRA office, 23, zone de Marticot, 33611 Cestas, France was organised by Anne-Laure Frizon, who also took time out on the day for an on-line conversation, organised for me to be welcomed by Cathie Calas, Event Marketing & International Advanced Technology and Conference Center and Amanda Pruhon, the Manager International Advanced Technology Center. Lectra software and technologies is already a part of the curriculum offered by the Associate Degree in Fashion Design & Technology at RMIT but it was very beneficial to see a 3D prototype demonstration and tour of all the areas during my visit to Lectra including the manufacturing plant and Cutting machine operations area. I now plan to explore how the 3d software is currently being or planned to be used in Australia and what the possibilities are for our program/s incorporating it into our curriculum. Similar to other institutes who are also members of IFFTI have already done.

In conclusion I would like to thank IFFTI and RMIT with the valuable opportunity. I do believe my experiences and knowledge I have gained from participating in the faculty exchange with Duperré will assist me in my future planning and the importance of including in our learning practices the value of experimentation and freeing the mind of pre-conceived ideas as a way of enhancing the design process. With the opportunity to meet in person and have meaningful discussions with the staff at Duperré, I hope to be able to continue to build a stronger professional relationship with them and we can continue to learn from each other's fashion and educational experiences and practices. Ultimately, I hope, this will lead to stronger educational links between the institutes for the benefit of staff and students.