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ARTS

Emerging designers to hit the runway at MIAD's first fashion show



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Fashion and apparel students at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design are bringing their budding collections to the runway May 7 for the institute's first-ever fashion show.

The fashion and apparel major, which MIAD launched in 2023, will send its first batch of graduating seniors into the professional world this spring.

Nine students will be featured in the show: the program's five graduating seniors, who are required to participate as part of a school-wide effort to better prepare graduates to enter the workforce; and four sophomores and juniors, who submitted proposals to present their work alongside the graduates.

Before the fashion and apparel major was developed, students were flooding the school's textile lab in increasing number. Product design majors were already creating soft goods and accessories for major brands like Harley-Davidson and Milwaukee Tool, so the framework and resources required for a fashion major were mostly in place.

When Sarah Eichhorn, associate professor of fashion and apparel design and chair of the 3D design department, came to MIAD in 2023, she led the curriculum design for the program, drawing on her years of experience teaching and chairing the fashion department at Milwaukee's Mount Mary University.

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Students joined the fashion program with an array of goals. Some want to design costumes for films and plays, others dream of opening their own label, and some hope to design for the biggest names in fashion.

The curriculum, built to serve all those interests, has yielded a diverse class of future designers. To reflect that diversity, the fashion show promises personal narratives as well as technical expertise. In addition to the models walking the runway, the show will include brief interviews with each of the designers talking about their collection. Most juniors and seniors will present work from their collections courses, which task students with designing apparel around a theme.

Senior Bailey Staerkel is bringing a modern twist to Victorian-gothic apparel with her "Stitched Together" collection. Senior Joe Kline was inspired by trends in contemporary streetwear when he developed his collection, "Jackpot." Others designed apparel around cosplay and florals.

If the senior exhibition show – which is teeming with explosive talent across disciplines – is any indication of the work set to hit the runway, the night is sure to be a show of young, creative force.

Anya Sesay covers arts and culture for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Send her story ideas, things to see and people to meet at asesay@usatodayco.com. Follow her on Instagram [@anyanicolette](https://www.instagram.com/anyanicolette).

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