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Justin Alexander has not only graced the fashion world with stunning and elegant designs, but the company has also graced Albright’s very own fashion department with generous donations. This high-end bridal gown and accessories company has inspired women everywhere with contemporary designs and clear ideas of how fashion should express femininity, confidence and beauty. Justin Alexander also endlessly inspires and encourages the students of Albright with wedding fashion collections, but above all with generosity.

In the summer of 2017 and 2018, Albright’s fashion department received two different donations of silk fabric from Justin Alexander. Professor Doreen Burdalski, chair of the Fashion Department shares, “Justin Alexander’s donations have enabled students to create wonderful collections out of luxury silk fabrics. The beautiful colors and prints provide inspiration to our young designers.” Because of these incredibly kind-hearted donations, Albright students were able to take their ideas and designs to the next level. Support such as this from the community and the industries they study, allow Albright students new opportunities to flourish and learn. Justin Alexander is also incredibly talented and successful. In 1946, the brand entered into the bridal world as T&G Bridal in Brooklyn, N.Y. At the time, women were revolutionizing the fashion industry by embracing clothing as a statement and form of expression, instead of just an everyday necessity. The company is rooted in the idealism and fantasy that fashion can and should express. Justin Alexander prides itself in creating pieces that can be recognized by “vintage inspiration paired with progressive details.” The bride is the most important consideration when it comes to Justin Alexander designs, so it is no surprise that the company’s designs are every bit as full of life and detail as the women wearing them.

Since its debut into the bridal industry, the brand has expanded to include its marquee collection Justin Alexander, along with designs of Justin Alexander Signature, Lillian West, Sincerity Bridal and Sweetheart Gowns. All of the company’s brands aim to create the perfect look for any bride with beautiful silhouettes and high attention to detail, while keeping in mind the needs of brides and the trends they want to wear. It’s no surprise that Justin Alexander has become one of America’s and Europe’s most recognized and celebrated wedding fashion producers.
William Exaros ’91 continues to achieve great success since his graduation from Albright. With his hard-working, cheerful personality, he landed a dream job with the highly acclaimed fashion brand, Chanel. Originally from New Jersey and now a Bucks County, Pa., native, William travels to New York City everyday to do what he loves.

What is your current career title?
Group Director of Visual Merchandising for Chanel.

What did it take for you to earn that position?
It took me 12 years to get to Chanel. I started at Banana Republic and other retail stores, then worked my way up to Tiffany & Co. After about a year there, I realized that I prefer to work for European brands because of their attention to image, creativity as well as ingenuity and understanding that Chanel excites me because they truly believe in creativity and visual merchandising.

Who influences you in the fashion industry?
I am really focused on the brand I work for at the time. My job is really about being the steward of the brand. When you work for a company, it’s not about you as a creative person, it’s about the brand. You can influence the brand with your creativity, but it all comes from the place of the brand’s heritage and legacy. When it comes to who influences me, I believe it is important to know what’s going on in the fashion world outside of Chanel, but I tend to become very immersed in the brand I work for, and I become a super fan of that specific brand. Chanel is such a powerhouse that we do not need to look to other brands to compare what we’re doing, but it is important to see what’s relevant in new designers’ work so that we also stay relevant.

What is your greatest accomplishment so far?
Besides creating wonderful windows and experiences for the different houses that I have worked for, primarily it is watching people that work with me advance and grow in their careers. Women who have worked for me have moved on to work in visual merchandising for brands such as Versace, Marc Jacobs and Vince Camuto.

What is the most exciting moment you have had in your career?
I was at Louis Vuitton for almost 10 years and while I was there, I was part of the first team to cover the Louis Vuitton building 11 stories high for a winter installation. We installed the first motorized window for the company in NYC.

Why did you choose Albright College?
I was following in my uncle’s footsteps who was an alum. I wanted to be a lawyer. I also visited the campus, and it felt like home.

What did you study at Albright?
I started as a pre-law major, then moved to art and art history. I decided midway through college that I no longer wanted to be a lawyer. I got involved with the theatre and arts programs, and I helped out a lot in the Freedman Gallery. I never actually took classes in fashion merchandising, but the art classes I took taught me everything I needed to know.

What did you originally plan to do after college?
I wanted to hang and light galleries or museums. I also wanted to teach art history. At Albright, I fell in love with teaching, but I do not regret not becoming a teacher because I am able to teach everyday as a director, and Albright gave me a sense of the importance of teaching and how to do it.

How did Albright prepare you for your career?
I think mostly it was working in the theatre department that opened my eyes to new possibilities and what it is that I could do. The Freedman Gallery was a huge part of me wanting to get into a creative career. I was one of the first students to be in the art building, and I got to watch the process of it being built. Being that closely connected to it was an awesome experience. I also thought of Albright as a school where it is possible to make your mark and a difference. Because of the small class sizes I knew everyone, and because of the one-on-one attention, I always felt important in my opinion matter, which has allowed me in these big companies to feel the same way and helps me to make others feel that way.

What advice do you have for current college students interested in pursuing a career in fashion?
You can adapt, but being true to yourself and who you are is my best advice. I believe that knowing who you are gives you a power in business and any field. Don’t be someone you’re not or change who you are. Being honest to who I am gets me everywhere I need to go. I never changed who I innately am. I may be too honest, too scattered, too nontraditional, but for someone who’s almost 50, I will feel like a kid everyday going to work. I also want to advise that you should experience all parts of the fashion industry to decide what you are most interested in.

by Brittany Cianela ’21

FASHION LION • THE ALBRIGHT COLLEGE FASHION DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER
Throughout history, humans have used fashion as a form of protest, arguably helping to emphasize the importance of their movements. During the French Revolution, previously popular French styles featuring brightly colored silk, contradicted the movement. Revolutionaries took style cues from the lower classes. Sans-culottes, or non-breeches, as well as a jacket named carmagnole, a Phrygian cap, tricolor cockade and clogs represented the identifiable wear of the revolutionaries and their sympathizers. This form of dressing set the nobles at odds, with their over-the-top way of fashion.

Revolutionary France was not the only period of history to see fashion as a form of protest. Notable styles emerged during 20th century America in opposition of society norms. The 1920s featured flappers: women with short hair and short dresses, leaning away from the previous conservative decade. Hippie fashion of the 1960s reflected the ideas of peace and happiness. Punk of the 70s and 80s expressed the ideas of those against the establishment and pro-individualized freedom.

Fashion as a form of protest continues in the 21st century through social media and pop culture. Simple “The Future is Female” statement shirts and women dressing as handmaidens from a popular Margaret Atwood book and Hulu series “The Handmaid’s Tale” are contrasted by shirts protesting anti-abortion legislation and Hollywood stars wearing black at the Academy Awards in solidarity of the #MeToo movement.

Fashion as a form of protest lives on.
What do you enjoy about the arts?
I like the creativity that goes into art. The second thing that I like is when a piece makes me think about something in a different way. A different idea, a different way of looking at things, a different way of imagining the world, even just a different way of being. I think the creativity, though, is a big piece for me. Seeing creativity that goes into it; things that I could never do. One of the University of Richmond’s semester performances was a piece called “Dances with Drones,” where the performers were dancing with the drones on stage. It was so fun to watch!

How do you participate in the arts?
I’m mostly an observer of arts. I enjoy theater performances and art museums.

What do you enjoy about fashion?
I enjoy seeing the things that students create here at Albright, because it’s so creative! At last year’s annual fashion department showcase, a young woman made a tutu as part of a research project, and I found it so interesting!

How do you participate in fashion?
I don’t just wear a suit everyday, I wear things that are different. Actually, I used to sew a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away! I made my own bathing suits, and they fit me really, really well. The first thing I sewed was an apron, and my grandmother taught me how to crochet and do embroidery.

Would you consider taking up sewing again?
If I had the time, I would. I’ve always enjoyed it. I even have a really nice sewing machine, but I just don’t have the time.

If you could take any art or fashion class (visual, theater, music, history or digital) here at Albright, what class would you take?
I would love to take a digital art class. I would love to know and understand some of the digital tools and how you would use them in new ways. Also I would love to take a photography class; not just how to do physical prints, but how you compose photos. I knew a fabulous photographer named Ken Bennett, and he could take pictures that would make you say, “Oh my word, that’s a work of art.”

Do you think that a liberal arts education is complete without a fine arts course or a course relating to the arts?
Absolutely not.

In your fall 2017 inauguration speech, you mentioned that before attending Albright College, you did not have an appreciation for the arts. How has your view on the arts changed since graduating from Albright College?
At Albright I attended the Domino Players’ shows, I took an art class, and an interdisciplinary course on Film and Art: Rebels of the 60s and 70s. That really opened up my appreciation for art.

Just out of curiosity, what was your opinion of the arts before your college career at Albright College?
I never really experienced the arts. My family was not very artsy. It was not a thing.

And finally, just for fun, if you could wear anything you wanted for a day, what would you wear?
When I saw this question, I had no idea how to answer it! But, my favorite thing to wear are jeans and boots. Give me jeans, some boots and a pullover sweater — and I’m good!!

“I used to sew a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away!”

A scientist, educator and now 15th president of Albright College, Jacquelyn S. Fetrow, Ph.D., ’82, continues to demonstrate how a liberal arts education makes a difference. Following graduation, Fetrow pursued a career in biochemistry and technology after obtaining a doctorate from Pennsylvania State University. Her path in education included a professorship at Wake Forest University and a position as provost at the University of Richmond. And most recently, Albright welcomed her back as the college’s first alums president. Thankful for a well-rounded education, Fetrow also praises her liberal arts education for pushing her to learn and appreciate the arts.
The Albright Fashion community is a diverse group of young talented students. In fact, many are entrepreneurs with their own clothing companies. Fashion Lion asked two Albrightians about what inspires them and what it takes to juggle school work and entrepreneurship.

**Dell Foreman ’20: Samurai Sky**

**Why did you decide to pursue fashion design at Albright?**

When I first got here I was a business major but I didn’t like it at all, so I decided on fashion because I love clothes.

**How did you come up with the Samurai Sky brand?**

I wasn’t seeing what I wanted to wear in the stores so I thought why not make it myself!

**What does Samurai Sky mean to you?**

It’s become a lifestyle for me. I find myself wearing or seeing someone else wear something of mine almost everyday. All my free time is focused on making sure the business is running smoothly or coming up with new designs and concepts.

**How do you want your brand to be perceived?**

I want people to feel comfortable wearing Samurai Sky however they want. One of our slogans is “Your Fits, Your Style” whether you want to dress it up or wear sweats and a hoodie. As long as people are comfortable!

**What or who are your inspirations when developing a design?**

I do a lot of research on what people are wearing at the moment. It’s not necessarily one person in particular — it’s more of what’s in at the moment and what I think the people would want to wear.

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**Kaniya S. Howard ’19: NiyaCrochet**

**Why did you decide to pursue fashion design at Albright?**

I knew I always wanted to be in fashion since I was a little girl. Coming out of high school where I did not get any education on fashion, I knew I wanted to go to a college with a well-known fashion program that can teach me about the industry and give me hands-on experiences through courses that allow me to both make and design clothes. I knew Albright was the one after meeting with professors when I came to tour the college.

**When did you start crocheting?**

I started crocheting almost three years ago. I learned how to crochet through social media. I took it upon myself to go to Michael’s to purchase my first crochet hook and yarn. I sat in front of my laptop to learn how to make a simple top. I didn’t realize how easy it was to produce something just by using yarn and a hook. From there, I pretty much flourished. I stepped away from YouTube after I learned how to make basic stitches to create my own original styles.

**Where do you want to take your brand?**

I’m starting on social media. I use Instagram to post my new items and for people to see and make orders.

**What are your aspirations for the NiyaCrochet Brand and yourself?**

I wish to take NiyaCrochet to the next level. I would like to see NiyaCrochet no longer as a “side business” for me. I want to have an official website soon and do numerous of pop up shows in different locations to let everyone know what I do. I recently had some thoughts to own my boutique store front years from now. So if I can achieve that, I will see my brand, NiyaCrochet as official.

**What or who are your inspirations when developing a design?**

I want to make sure that all of my design work is original. I get inspired to make new garments when I see different yarns I’ve never seen before, as well as seeing beads and buttons that I can use to make a garment.

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Left photo by Natalie Moscat ’20. Right photo: model is Paulizar Doe ’21, photo © courtesy of John Fantasia.

by Leslie Tolentino ’22
Whether you’re sporting a cheetah print skirt and a red top from this year, or experimenting with different shades of yellow (this season’s new “it” color) you’ll have plenty of trends to pick from in the near future.

Be on the lookout for higher hemlines this spring, because miniskirts are back in style. Dress them up with some cute boots, or dress them down with some comfortable sandals. Could the reason miniskirts are coming back be a response to the midi and maxi length skirts that have been worn for the past few years? Will you be rocking a leather, suede, denim or printed miniskirt this season?

Expect a blast from the past this season, as groovy prints from the 1960s and ’70s make their way into spring 2019. Achieve an effortless cute look with a comfortable caftan paired with some leather sandals, or sport a pretty printed headscarf. Clothes and accessories this season will definitely be incorporating boho-chic vibes.

Animal print is one thing that will never stray from fashion, but its recent revival has everyone adding a leopard blouse, skirt or dress to their wardrobes. Animal print is super stylish and can be worn with almost anything. Instead of the traditional use of black and brown, designers are now experimenting with animal prints in eccentric colors such as neon yellow or sky blue. This spring, anticipate other animal prints including tiger stripes, python and zebra.

Add a touch of sparkle to your wardrobe and makeup! Glitter is becoming increasingly popular this season. Pair a shimmerly blouse with a skirt or a simple pair of jeans. Add glitter in all different kinds of colors to your everyday makeup look for some diversity.

An easy way to transform any hairstyle is to simply throw a bow on it! Hair accessories can tremendously add to a look and the one thing missing from your outfit could just be something in your hair. We are now witnessing the return of headbands being worn across the forehead. Headbands are also now being made out of unique materials such as tinsel and leather.

Embrace the use of colors and prints this upcoming spring. Whether you’re leaning toward casual bohemian vibes or feeling bold in glitter, be confident in what you wear!