

S/VOLUME



\$16.95

DISPLAY UNTIL FEBRUARY 28TH, 2020



TEDDY QUINLIVAN
by Ellen von Unwerth

CONTEMPORARY SENSATIONS

These ambitious emerging designers have plans to transform Canadian fashion.

BY SUZANNE ROGERS

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MODELS: GIANLUCA, AISSA, AND CEILIDH (WANT MANAGEMENT)



THE SUZANNE ROGERS FASHION INSTITUTE AT TORONTO'S Ryerson University has entered its third year with another crop of talented fellows: Adrian Arnieri, Michal Perelmutter, Julia Payton, and Lynne Hey.

With these welcome additions, the SRFI is supporting nine fellows as they further their academic and professional careers in fashion. These four dynamic individuals will follow in the successful footsteps of Stephanie Moscall-Varey and Olivia Rubens, who are completing their MA Fashion Design Technology Womenswear program at the London College of Fashion; Matin Mithras, recently graduated from Ryerson in Fashion Design and now enrolled in the post-graduate LCF Design Technology Womenswear degrees; Alexandra Armata, soon to finish the MA Fashion Womenswear program at Central Saint Martins; and Jonah Solomon, returning from an internship at The Row in New York for his fourth year in Fashion at Ryerson.

As with their predecessors, I look forward to watching these exceptional emerging designers as they make their mark on the fashion industry in Canada and abroad. I recently sat down with all four, discussing their plans and hopes as they prepare to take the next big step in pursuit of their dreams.

LYNNE HEY

LOOKING FORWARD

"My goal is to work as head designer for a major apparel company that strives to innovate in the luxury market with modern pieces deemed desirable and relevant to its consumers."

DESIGNING IN CANADA

"Beyond the scope of activewear and evening gowns, Canadian fashion is viewed as relatively minor. Hopefully, the progression of my career will serve as an example that Canadian fashion and fashion education is valid."

CREATIVE FUEL

"I get inspiration from re-evaluating my past work in order to experiment with new and creative ways to improve my technical and creative skillset as a designer."

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

"You are fully responsible for ensuring your success within the fellowship."

Self-reliance, perseverance, and resilience will help you immensely. You must be able to compromise while still putting yourself and your goals first and foremost."

IMPACT OF SRFI

"This program creates an opportunity to develop an informed and well-rounded perspective regarding the current state of the industry through its active support of its fellows with industry connections and insight from professionals, both in Canada and abroad."

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

"The formulaic way that social media caters towards our current personal interests has made it an increasingly depersonalized experience in which people are fed homogenized and highly curated content. Additionally, it has only sped up the rate at which fashion consumes and subsequently discards new industry talents."



Photo courtesy of Ted Belton.



ADRIAN ARNIERI

LOOKING FORWARD

“My dream and vision for the future is to continue designing garments that challenge the fashion norm. One day—soon—ARNIERI will be an international luxury brand. I would love to dress pop-culture icons and for ARNIERI garments to walk the red carpet, along with concert and theatre stages. This dream may sound unobtainable to some, but I feel confident that all is possible if you put in the work and remain authentic to yourself.”

CREATIVE FUEL

“A lot of my design inspiration comes from pop culture and music. I can pop in my headphones, listen to a song or album, and envision what wardrobe that musician would be performing in. Building garments around a narrative of lyrics or visuals energizes my mind with creative ideas.”

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

“It has been extremely inspiring to see Ryerson graduates gain success and fulfill their goals within the fashion community through the Suzanne Rogers Fashion Institute. I’m a strong believer that everyone has their own path in life—I can only help others through sharing my experiences; all the highs and lows. As a new member of the SRFI, I would love the opportunity to speak with first-year and fourth-year students. Hearing guest speakers while I was at Ryerson gave me goosebumps. I was in constant awe of how determination landed these former students the job of their dreams.

I hope to inspire current Ryerson students to dream as big as they possibly can, and spread positivity and encouragement to my Ryerson family.”

IMPACT OF SRFI

“Through the exposure of the SRFI Fellowship, I have greater opportunities to refine my brand and build a reputable name for myself to better connect with celebrity wardrobe stylists and VIP clients. It’s my dream to work for and learn from top name designers who share a similar style, vision, and target market, such as Jeremy Scott, The Blonds NY, and my favourite Spice Girl, Victoria Beckham.”

CAREER HIGHLIGHT

“Creating a gown for the 75th Annual Golden Globe Awards has continued to be an extreme highlight. *Entertainment Tonight Canada* host Sangita Patel contacted me after seeing my work through design competitions—I created this stunning floral yellow mesh gown with a bodice covered in Swarovski crystals for her. A week before the scheduled award show, the Time’s Up movement declared all female nominees and guests would be wearing black dresses in protest of the harassment and assault of women in the film industry. I had under a week to create a completely different gown in black. I’ll never forget that proud feeling of being able to stand up for women and for all the women who supported me throughout my life. It was a once-in-a-lifetime moment—no red-carpet show will be as special as that one.”

JULIA PAYTON AND
MICHAL PERELMUTER, AVRGBBS

LOOKING FORWARD

“Having this creative relationship is the best thing that has ever happened to us and we’re so lucky that every day we get to dream up new creations together. As we look to the future, our goal is to keep making things and to grow our brand until it takes over the world.”

DESIGNING IN CANADA

“There are so many wonderful creatives within Canada, but it’s often difficult for them to find international (or even local) success unless they adhere to a very specific vision of what is seen as ‘fashionable’ or practical’. We hope that by using sustainable and inclusive practices to create our playful designs, we can use our privilege to shape solutions to the myriad of problems caused by the fashion industry, especially those that exist here in Canada.”

CREATIVE FUEL

“Our process has always been driven by shared experiences and memories. We’ve always spent hours going through each other’s sketchbooks, collecting screenshots of movies, visiting museums, and trying to learn new techniques whenever we have a chance. Our love of arts and crafts has only gotten stronger (and messier) with age, and we’re always trying to find ways to fuse our childhood passions with our adult sensibilities.”

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

“Collaboration is extremely important to us, and we firmly believe that there is so much to be learned from sharing experiences with others, and discussing their process and worldview. No one can survive in this industry alone—we all have to support each other and work together! Don’t be afraid to reach out to other people for help, and always be receptive to other people’s ideas. But also trust your intuition, as the most interesting ideas often come from discussion or defending something you’re passionate about.”

IMPACT OF SRFI

“Trying to figure out ‘What’s next?’ and navigate the fashion world on your own after graduating a rigorous program is extremely difficult, and it is really wonderful to be a part of a fellowship that is supporting emerging Canadian designers. The world of fashion is both extremely privileged and expensive, therefore it’s necessary to have programs like the SRFI that can support students and equip them with the tools to achieve their dreams.”

DESIGN AESTHETIC

“Our brand ethos uses playful themes, fantasy, and nostalgia as a coping mechanism for our millennial existential crisis. We’ve both always been extremely sensitive creatives but as we started to work together more intimately, shared experiences and storytelling have become more integral to our process. We explore themes that inspire us as individuals but through collaboration, we discover new ways to approach these ideas based on our unique strengths and weaknesses.”

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

“As emerging designers, we are responsible for how our creations impact the state of our current world. Our planet already has an overabundance of new clothes and materials, therefore we have to be extremely mindful of the role that we play when making garments and how our decisions will impact the world for decades to come. What motivates us to keep creating is the desire to use fantasy and imagination in fashion as a means to come up with solutions to the social and environmental crisis that is facing our planet. We are constantly motivated to use fashion as an outlet to unite different nuances of identities, to collaborate, and to better understand our planet and each other.”

