

INTERNATIONAL EMERGING FASHION: A PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT BY COMMUNICATION DESIGN STUDENTS

Angela Lyon



Figure 1. students photographing model wearing Rebecca Carrington at Glenfalloch.
Designer: Rebecca Carrington, Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.
Photographer: Christopher Hansen.

On 13th March 2019, Otago Polytechnic Communication Design students collaborated on a range of fashion photoshoots, capturing the designs of visiting international fashion design students in a range of iconic Dunedin locations. These visiting fashion designers were in the city competing in the prestigious International Emerging Designer award as part of the annual iD Fashion Week, coming from institutions in the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Australia, Japan, Argentina, China, the United States of America, Singapore and New Zealand.

The project was initiated by Professor Margo Barton, (Academic Leader of Fashion at the School of Design, Otago Polytechnic and iD Fashion Week Co-chair), who wanted to give the visiting emerging designers an opportunity to better experience Dunedin and the chance to have their garments photographed on models on location. The day was organized by iD team members Ella Barton-Buchanan and Gauthier Dejece, who arranged models, (both international and local), hair and makeup from iD sponsor L'Oréal, buses and provided the travel itinerary as well



Figure 2. Laura showing Vivi her photographs of Vivi wearing Minori Yanagese.
Designer: Minori Yanagese, Institution: Ozaka Bunka Institute of Fashion, Japan.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.

as additional planning details to the students. Ella and Gauthier continued to act as the project clients and liaised with students as the project developed. Each visiting fashion designer selected one outfit from their collection to be photographed on location.

At this time Communication Design students were undertaking a course in advanced techniques of Photography. Ordinarily I would assist students in generating their own brief and they would use advanced photography techniques to generate a photographic solution. However; the synchronized timing of iD Fashion Week provided a real-life brief and the opportunity for richer and unexpected experience in fashion photography and the opportunity for project-based teamwork and learning.

Many of the students had limited camera skills and experience but showed themselves capable of working well in a team with a high level of problem-solving skills in the context of digital media design, as well as with a high level of self-management relating to the design process. Using these skills students developed a brief that would provide industry-ready images, suitable also for the designer's requirements, while at the same time creating outcomes required for assessment of their Advanced Design Techniques course.

With 27 garments to photograph in six locations, planning and preparation was key to ensuring the brief was fulfilled. As a group of competent researchers, students explored the conventions of fashion photography, identifying methods and techniques they could adopt to create images that were individual, contemporary and most importantly, presenting the international designs against the Dunedin backdrop. Class workshops saw us undertaking experiments in figure and viewfinder composition where we used each other as models, 'cutting shapes' and striking poses in a series of variable lighting situations anticipating the uncontrollable nature of the light and environments on the day.

Students planned and explored an individual area of expertise and presented these ideas to each other; together building a collective resource of skills and knowledge to pull from as required. Areas included portraiture, dynamic camera angles, figure poses, silhouettes and compositional shapes. This ensured the team would have a range of vibrant images to present. Students consulted with Ella and Gauthier who were very encouraging about the direction their planning had taken and confident in the skills, techniques and creative ideas students they saw presented, both collectively and individually.

THE FASHION SHOOT DAY

By the day of the shoot students were excited, with perhaps, over-planned anticipation. The day began with the emerging designers arriving by bus with garments in hand at the Dunedin Central Railway Station. By the time the models arrived from hair and makeup, a cruise ship had arrived and the station was abuzz with tourists. It was a beautiful crisp Dunedin morning with bright light and sharp dark shadows. Once dressed, the models moved to different areas of the railway station, with two or three photographers at a time, generally choosing to avoid the contrasting morning light conditions and opting for either bright or dark situations in order to get good exposure of the individual garment details, their models and the location. Unexpectedly a mass of tourist spectators, designers, train riders and photographers milling around the station made it difficult to get a background without people in it. We photographed a total of five different outfits at this location on five different models; Clementine, Charlotte and Cameron from Dunedin, and Emma and Vivi from Shanghai.

Everyone then boarded the bus to the next location, Glenfalloch, for photographs in the private, historic, harbor side gardens. After a generous lunch, we explored the gardens seeking suitable settings for the next set of outfits. The sun directly above brought challenges as the light reflected off the water and into the models eyes. Old and enormous macrocarpa provided an atmospheric and windswept backdrop which contrasted with the lush surrounds of native ferns, exotic flowers and other New Zealand trees that read of otherworldly garden parties and timeless picnics, all bathed in dappled light.



Figure 3. Students photographing Vivi wearing designer Amy Louise Redford's garment in front of Larnach's Castle.
 Designer: Amy Louise Redford, Institution: Manchester Fashion Institute, UK.
 Photographer: Christopher Hansen.

The next location was Larnach's Castle and the bus climbed the winding road from the harbour's edge to the top of the hill. The castle provided a truly magical setting sitting atop the Otago Peninsula with its panoramic views from Taiaoro Heads to the city to Hooper's Inlet. In typical Dunedin style, we ran into many of the same tourists we saw visiting the Dunedin Railway Station that morning and they were eager to witness the next part of our day. It was amazing how the garments transformed, shape shifting into the Victorian / Edwardian environment as if stuck in a time sandwich.

A small team broke away from the group and took model Charlotte to the top of the castle. It seemed as soon as we hit the stone steps, the garments entered a portal, shifting instantly into golden medieval "castle-wear." We crept to up the turret, careful not to scratch the garment's satin fabric, arriving at the top with a backdrop that looked out over the craggy landscape of the peninsula past Hereweka - the Harbour Cone. A storm was brewing. The light below the greying cloud was an electric golden colour, as if bouncing off the golden satin of the garment. We quickly took photos of Charlotte overlooking the edge, lordng over the castle and Dunedin from a far.

Meanwhile other emerging designers and photographers explored and photographed in the nooks and crannies within the castle, as well as around the incredible ornamental gardens of the castle grounds. Castle hosts and tourists alike were enthusiastic to join in and support the spectacle. Time flew by very quickly and before we knew it everyone below was rushing onto the bus destined for the last two group sites, First Church and Emerson's Brewery. As we ran out of the castle, the moody sky burst and it began to pour: another Dunedin classic- the fourth season of the day!

George, an emerging designer from London, together with his garment and model, Gauthier; Chris Hansen from the photography team and myself, were escorted to the airport for our last shoot of the day on the Dunedin Airport runway. Our new London friend could not believe that the airport would allow us access to do that. "Only in Dunedin" we laughed. We passed by the Maungatua ranges, all grey and blue, and even from the car the designer's garment popped all orange and reflector. It felt very 'international' passing through Customs to get our temporary passes. The stewards and security officers repeating proudly, "this would only ever happen in Dunedin", as they enjoyed the spectacle. Our shoot closed the runway for a full half an hour, as airport visitors watched on from the gallery's window. We raced to the 'piano keys' at the end of the runway escorted by Jim the fireman in a fire utility vehicle, offering his services as a model and joking all the way. The wet atmosphere and gustiness led to drops on the camera. Blur on the lens and longer exposures than we preferred were unavoidable. However the back drop was perfect for this garment in comparison to the earlier locations. I marvelled at the foresight and prior planning by the iD Fashion production team in anticipation of the final fashion shoot images!

The images produced at First Church and Emerson's too had their individual feeling of urban and industrial environment; stone, wood work and the greyness of the afternoon weather also popping out the colour of the garments and situation.

The students had a thoroughly enriching and invaluable experience and agreeing that they gained a lot by being thrown into the various situations and problem solving the issues that came with the day. One of the photographers, Laura Wellman, stated it was "quite nerve racking but good experience" while another, Chris Hansen said, "The experience gained from working alongside emerging and established professional artists with an international scope was priceless...and a lot of fun."

As everyone went their separate ways, the team of photographers were elated with the production of photoshoot. For us, Dunedin had turned up in style, providing a unique set of quintessential moments to record with our cameras. From the tour of young and old Dunedin, our four seasons in one day, the convenience of the localities and the familiarity and enthusiasm of the people involved; models, designers and spectators alike, the day provided a true Dunedin experience for all of us to take back to our respective worlds. On top of this was the experience of real-life project-based learning from which the students took away many new skills and knowledge beyond what could be delivered in a classroom-based environment.

A huge thank you to Ella Barton-Buchanan, Gauthier Dejace, Margo Barton and the iD Fashion Committee for organising the day. Also for models: Aart Model Management, Dunedin and Shanghai University of Engineering Science (SUES), Shanghai; Hair: Klone Dunedin; Makeup: Lisa Matson.

Photographed during the iD International Emerging Designer Awards, Dunedin, New Zealand, March 2019.

Angela Lyon is an artist and photographer based in Dunedin. She graduated with a Masters of Fine Art from Otago Polytechnic's School of Art in 2007. She currently is a lecturer of design and photography in Communication Design at Otago Polytechnic's College of Art, Design and Architecture.



Figure 4. Designer: Minori Yanagese.
Institution: Ozaka Bunka Institute of Fashion, Japan.



Figure 5. Designer: Xiuliam 'Lian' Zheng, Institution: IFA-SUES, China.
Photographer: Jacob Koopman.



Figure 6. Designer: Cassandra Casas. Institution: Kent State University, USA.
Photographer: Laura Wellman.



Figure 7. Designer: Olivia Goonatillake. Institution: RMIT, Australia.
Photographer: Sam Doorey.



Figure 8. Designer: Anna Petry. Institution: RMIT, Australia.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.



Figure 9. Designer: Lavinia Ilolahia. Institution: Auckland University of Technology, NZ.
Photographer: Christopher Hansen.



Figure 10. Designer: Rebecca Carrington. Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.
Photographer: Madison Dollman-Low.



Figure 11. Designer: Rebecca Carrington. Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.
Photographer Angela Lyon.



Figure 12. Designer: Betty Liu. Institution: RMIT, Australia.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.



Figure 13. Designer: Kimberley Franklin. Institution: Massey University, New Zealand.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.



Figure 14. Designer: Eily Shaddock. Institution: QUT, Australia.
Photographer: Laura Wellman.



Figure 15. Designer: Amy Lousie Redford. Institution: Manchester Fashion Institute, UK.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.



Figure 16. Designer: Erika Ryuu. Institution: Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore.
Photographer: Riley Coughlin.



Figure 17. Designer: Tsega Gebremedihm. Institution: Massey University, New Zealand.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.



Figure 18. Designer: George Clarke. Institution: Bath Spa University, UK.
Photographer: Angela Lyon.



Figure 19. Designer: Ryoyu "Yumi" Wang. Institution: RMIT, Australia.



Figure 20. Designer: Xiaoping 'Fiona' Huang, Institution: University of Central Lancashire, UK.
Photographer: Sam Doorey.



Figure 21. Designer: Bethany Cordwell. Institution: Queensland University of Technology, Australia.
Photographer: Sam Doorey.