Donna R. Danielson, Fashion Illustrator at Iowa State University, 1964-1991

Lan Zhou
Iowa State University

Sara B. Marcketti
Iowa State University, sbb@iastate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/aeshm_conf

Part of the Art Education Commons, Fashion Business Commons, Fashion Design Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the Illustration Commons

Recommended Citation
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/aeshm_conf/13

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Apparel, Events and Hospitality Management at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Apparel, Events and Hospitality Management Conference Proceedings and Presentations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Donna R. Danielson, Fashion Illustrator at Iowa State University, 1964-1991

Abstract
From the years 1964 to 1991, Donna Rae Danielson taught fashion illustration in the Applied Art Department and costume design in the Textiles and Clothing Department, College of Home Economics, Iowa State University. The purpose of this study was to understand her teaching and research methods during her tenure as a faculty member at ISU.

Keywords
fashion, educator, illustrator, teaching

Disciplines
Art Education | Fashion Business | Fashion Design | Higher Education | Illustration

Comments
Donna R. Danielson, Fashion Illustrator at Iowa State University, 1964-1991

Lan Zhou and Sara B. Marckettì, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA

Keywords: fashion, educator, illustrator, teaching

Donna Rae Danielson was a zealous and enthusiastic educator, creative illustrator, and dedicated daughter. From the years 1964 to 1991, she taught fashion illustration in the Applied Art Department and costume design in the Textiles and Clothing Department, College of Home Economics, Iowa State University (ISU). Danielson gained wide academic recognition from the university and students throughout her career. The University Outstanding Teacher Award, which she was awarded, stated that Danielson was “a scholar and teacher who possessed the highest of standards in all aspects of her professional activities” (“Donna Rae Danielson,” 1976). Her students described her as “a person with high ability to stimulate, explore, and clarify creative ideas with high standards to their significance to topics under discussion” (“Donna Rae Danielson,” 1976).

The purpose of this study was to understand Donna Danielson’s teaching and research methods from 1964 to 1991, the period in which Donna Danielson was in service as a faculty member at ISU. Studies are rare concerning someone who is both a fashion educator and illustrator. By studying Danielson’s teaching and research methods, we can gain understanding to the fashion education process. It is important for schools with apparel related majors to understand fashion education history and learn from it. While past researchers have studied the mutual influences between fashion design and the greater social environment, most of the people studied have worked within the apparel industry and not in academia (Crump, 1992; Rainey, 2003). This study highlights fashion education through the case study of Danielson’s career.

Sources used for this study included Danielson’s master’s thesis (Danielson, 1976), two of her published articles (Danielson, 1986; 1989), and Danielson’s archival materials owned by the Textiles and Clothing Museum, ISU. These materials, donated by her cousin Karen Jensen, included newspaper and Iowa State University press clippings documenting Danielson’s life and career achievements, photographs, student work, and over 400 of Danielson’s thumbnail sketches, fashion illustrations, and holiday cards. The history of design education, specifically in the Department of Textiles and Clothing and Applied Art within the College of Home Economics at ISU was also researched to provide contextual information to Danielson’s career. Data analysis of the archival materials and education history provided in-depth information regarding Danielson’s teaching methods and techniques, as well as the influence of the contemporary fashion education environment on Danielson’s career.

In addition to the archival materials, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews [institutional review board approved] who knew Danielson well. These included: Ann Thye, a former student and current academic advisor in the AESHM Department; Jane Farrell-Beck, a former colleague
and University Professor Emeritus in the AESHM Department, and Danielson’s cousin, Karen Jensen. The length of the interviews ranged from 1 to 5 hours. All interviews were transcribed and theme analysis conducted to derive relevant information regarding Danielson’s life and career. The interviews played an imperative role in understanding Danielson’s teaching method, personality characteristics, and family influence.

Key findings from this study include: Danielson’s perseverance in exploring technical skills and inventive means to render different textures and fabrications in illustration; her use of correspondence with fashion designers and illustrators to “enrich classroom teaching” and keep track of the latest-trends and cutting-edge information (Danielson, 1986); and Danielson’s use of individual guidance to teach students proportion and balance.

Although fashion education is often considered separate from the “real” fashion industry, Donna Danielson’s teaching methods demonstrated how education should not deviate from its practical application; rather, it should be abreast with and even surpass the contemporary trends in industry. Danielson’s career and dedication reflected Iowa State University’s land grant culture and values of innovation, continuous improvement, intellectual freedom and excellence. For fashion educators, the success of Danielson’s dedication and meticulousness towards education provides a role model to emulate.

References


*Unpublished manuscript of Donna Danielson’s literary materials.* (1976, February 25). (Box 014). Archives of the Textiles and Clothing Museum, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.