

# CET REPORTER

**FIT** Fashion Institute of Technology  
Center for Excellence in Teaching

The Office of Curriculum and Instruction

Center for Excellence in Teaching and the Teaching Institute

## *Sustainable Fashion By Sandra Markus*

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Editors: Celia Baez and  
Elaine Maldonado

On November 5th, 2010, I traveled to Florence, Alabama to attend a workshop given by Natalie Chanin. Florence, Alabama is located in the northwestern corner of the state. The town was surveyed in 1818 by the Italian surveyor, Ferdinand Sannoner, who named it after Florence, the capital of the Tuscany region of Italy.

For decades, Florence was called the T-Shirt capital of the United States, and the apparel industry flourished there. Thousands of people were employed in the mills. As T-Shirts began flooding the market from China, the domestic industry was decimated.

Florence has experienced a renaissance lately with designers such as Billy Reid returning to his hometown Florence. Known for his *bespoke* (high-end)

tailoring and classic American design aesthetic, he recently won the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund award for new designer.

But the real reason for my weekend excursion to Florence, Alabama was to visit the renowned designer, Alabama Chanin. Behind unassuming doors worked the designer who has become synonymous with slow design and sustainability.

Slow Design was born out of the Slow Food Movement, which originated in Italy almost two decades

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Billy Reid

## Sustainability Mini-Retreats, 2010-2011

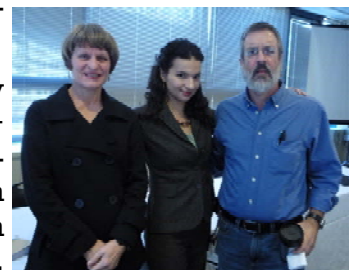
On November 12, 2010, the first 2010-2011 mini-retreat on Sustainability took place with guest speaker, Scott Boylston, Savannah College of Art and Design. Scott is a package designer and a member of the U.S. Green Building Council (Savannah Chapter) and as part of his presentation, he outlined his work at SCAD, infusing the curriculum with the principles of green and sustainable design. FIT faculty joined the panel to share the work they've been doing at FIT and helped guide the Q & A part of the event. Many thanks to Artie Kopelman (Science and Math), Sandra Krasovec (Packaging), Scott Lundberg (Graduate Studies) and Shireen Musa (International Trade). The proceedings of the event can be found on the CET website ([www.fitnyc.edu/cet](http://www.fitnyc.edu/cet)) and on the NSF



Scott Boylston

project website at [www.Tech-fit.net](http://www.Tech-fit.net). This was the first of a two-part mini-retreat.

The second sustainability mini-retreat, Science + Design = Effective Business!, took place on March 4, 2011. Maryann Allacci (Interior Design), Sandra Markus (Fashion Design) and Robert Vasalotti (FMM) made presentations along with guest speaker, Susan Elrod, director of Project Kaleidoscope, a national science education center located in Washington D.C. Conversation and activities focused on the role of science in preparing students for the green and sustainable marketplace. Proceedings of this event can also be found on the CET and NSF websites.



Sandra Markus, Shireen Musa  
and Artie Kopelman

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ago. As a reaction to the frenetic pace of 21st century life, slow design celebrates the beauty of craftsmanship, artisans, and a deep respect for the environment. It revels in the belief that products made with love, care and time will not be discarded so quickly.

In November, I had the privilege to attend a workshop at Natalie Chanin's studio. With 12 other women, I spent the weekend sewing, learning and listening to the story of Natalie's evolution as a designer, her commitment to sustainable design practices, and her love for the rural area she was born and raised in—Florence, Alabama.



Natalie Chanin

After studying environmental design at North Carolina State, Natalie worked as a Costume Designer and lived in Vienna. She returned to Florence, located at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and picked up a needle. She currently employs local women—former factory workers, retired teachers, and stay-at-home moms to help sew her one-of-a-kind, handmade garments for her line, Alabama Chanin. Her work intertwines old



world techniques with new age design aesthetics.

Pictured here is an example of her masterful stitchery, using scraps of t-shirt fabric. All of her garments are 100% organic cotton jersey, grown-to-sewn in the USA.

For the three days I was there, I also sewed and shared stories with my fellow stitchers, reminiscent of the sewing circles of earlier times.



Sandra Markus

Sewing Circle

## Angel @ FIT—Spring 2011

### By Jeffrey Riman

Over 38% of FIT is now using Angel as part of their teaching and learning strategies. New faculty are encouraged to come to the CET for introductory training. If you do not currently use Angel or you are seeking further training, please go to the CET calendar at <http://fitnyc.edu/5964.asp> to sign up for the next available session. Returning faculty who wish to add new tools and techniques are encouraged to continue to explore Angel and add new skills to their toolboxes. Many faculty members are now busy creating gradebooks, rubrics and drop boxes which enhance learning while reducing the use of paper hand-outs in class. There are also many products beside Angel that may enhance your courses and which can be integrated into Angel including Google docs, blogging and tweeting. Use of social media will add relevance and interest to your course, but also require planning and practice. Look at our calendar this spring for upcoming sessions on Social Media, and Sustainable Practices.

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Both mini-retreats were facilitated by Karen Pearson, Science and Math and Elaine Maldonado, CET. Funding was provided by the FIT Sustainability Council, the National Science Foundation and the CET.



Karen Pearson



Elaine Maldonado

See page 3 for more mini-retreat pictures.

## Student/Faculty Roundtables

Last year, the CET facilitated two Student-Faculty Tech Roundtable Lunches, and in July, 2010, outcomes of



the event were presented at the 2010 Campus Technology Conference in Boston. This year two Roundtable Lunches addressed the topics of advisement, homework and grading. The CET is indebted to the Student-Faculty Corporation for funding these special campus-wide conversations that address issues of concern to students, as well as faculty.

In total, 175 participants attended the four events. A full description of the activities, the questions used to generate discussion, and audio files of the findings reported back at the end of the day can be found on the CET's website (<http://www.fitnyc.edu/cet>). You can reach the Roundtables page by clicking on Projects/Grants in the navigation bar. Please note that the Roundtables are posted by year. For more information on Roundtable events, please contact Elaine Maldonado in the CET at X7-4062.

See pictures on Page 4.

## Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire at 100

On March 25, 2011, FIT faculty, staff and students joined US Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, NY Senator Chuck Schumer, former Mayor David Dinkins, organizations and individuals, to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Temperatures hovering in the low 30's did not discourage people from gathering in Greenwich Village to remember the 146, mostly young immigrant girls and women, who died in a fire that was to change labor and fire laws, establishing safer working conditions in New York City.



During February and March, 2011, Daniel Levinson Wilk, American History, organized the *Triangle 100 Talks*, reflecting on the legacy of the Triangle fire while looking forward to resolutions.

The five events, all held at FIT, culminated in an all-day conference and exhibition by FIT students and artists from around the country. All events were open to the public and several were co-sponsored by the Teaching Institute.



**Sustainability Mini-Retreat Pictures—Clockwise: Renee Cooper, Frances Dearing, Andrew Cronan, NSF Advisor Laura Tufariello, Guest Speaker Scott Boylston, Bernard Dillard, Guest Speaker Susan Elrod, and FIT participants**

**FIT students join faculty members, Deborah Beard, Rhonda Burrell-Stubbs, Renee Cooper, Donna David, Bernard Dillard, Susanne Goetz, Naomi Gross, Jean Jacullo, Nancy Kaplan Ostroff, Eileen Karp, Shelley Kohan, Tisa Lerner, William Lynch, Joan Melnick, Madeleine Meyerson, Karen Pearson, Al Romano, Robert Vassalotti, Jane Werner, and Calvin Williamson to discuss “hot topics” such as Advisement, Grading and Homework. Also participating in the March 15, 2011 event were Vice President MaryBeth Murphy and Dean Dympna Bowles. (See article on Page 3.)**

