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## Apparel student wins international design award

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BLACKSBURG, VA., December 6, 2007 -- Mariah Clarke of Greenwood, Va., a senior majoring in apparel, housing, and resource management in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech, is the recipient of the International Textile and Apparel Association's (ITAA) Paris American Academy 2007 Scholarship.

Clarke, who is focusing her studies in the apparel design program, received the prestigious award for her gown design, "Victorian Rose."

Clarke's "Victorian Rose" design was inspired by the late Victorian Bustle period. Her goal was to recreate the elegance and essence of this period, but in a modern silhouette.

After the essence of the design was envisioned, the construction process began which included draping construction techniques, extensive hand sewing, and couture tailoring. The finished gown consists of more than fifty yards of material.



*Mariah Clarke models the gown.*

Jihyun Kim, assistant professor of apparel, housing, and resource management and Clarke's advisor said, "Mariah's design is absolutely a one-of-a-kind gown and she did a stunning job obtaining design inspiration from historic costumes of the Victorian Era. Her construction skills and techniques leave no room for error and academic professionals and industry members at the conference highly commended her visual design and the quality of the construction process."

The Paris American Academy Scholarship is a top design award offered by ITAA to an undergraduate student for excellence in design creativity and innovation. The 2007 Design Competition is an important segment of the ITAA Annual Conference, which took place in Los Angeles in November.

Peter Carman, president of the Paris American Academy, was on hand to present the award which included four weeks of study at the Paris American Academy with tuition and housing paid. While in Paris, Clarke will work with professionals from the French haute couture and ready-to-wear industries. She plans to pursue career interests in design and merchandising, working towards a couture business focused on high end formal wear.

"The ITAA juried design exhibit is an international competition which attracts the best in student design submissions from the ITAA membership," said LuAnn Gaskill, professor and head of the [Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management](#). "It's a very competitive design show and we're delighted to see her taking top honors."

ITAA is the primary academic association of the textile and apparel field with membership from over 240 colleges and universities in 12 countries. Clarke's participation at ITAA was funded, in part, by the Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management, and a grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Undergraduate Research Institute.

The Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management, located in the [College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences](#), offers active instruction, research, and outreach/Extension programs in three areas of concentration: apparel, housing, and resource management. Faculty and staff in the internationally recognized and award winning department are committed to diversity and a student-centered approach to the educational process as well as high quality academic and career advising.

PHOTO CAPTION: Mariah Clarke models her award winning gown, "Victorian Rose"

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