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Friday, April 8, 2005 12:11 PM CDT

UNI students prepare for runway fashion show

By **STACEY PALEVSKY**, *Courier Staff Writer*

CEDAR FALLS --- Art will come off the walls and onto bodies at a fashion show Saturday.

"Cosmic Revolution," a fashion show organized by textile and design students at the University of Northern Iowa, will feature ball gowns made of Whoopie cushions and skirts made of shotgun shell casings in the category of "wearable art." Other features include conventional designs ranging from casual to evening wear.

The 13th annual design show is an opportunity for students to peer into the runway world. During the early years, students featured their designs on still models displayed in the art gallery at the university. For the last 10 years, though, design students have coordinated runway shows, of which they have complete creative control. More than 100 student designs were submitted for this year's show, and 70 were accepted. Submissions were juried and judged by alumni Amy Morrison, now a designer for May and Co. in St. Louis. Judging is based on creativity and construction (loose threads are a no-no).

The show is organized by three student



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directors and a group of students enrolled in the Fashion Promotion class. The fashion show is their term paper equivalent.

"It really teaches you personal skills and how to be a leader," said Natalie Wendt, a director. "It's the highlight of my whole college career."

"For a year you live and breath the show," added junior Brianna Smith, another director.

Earlier this year, Smith made evening wear from Spam labels. Her assignment was to make clothing from a nontraditional material. Smith contacted Hormel for permission to use their logo, and they donated a roll of labels for her project. The two-piece outfit --- a tube top and long skirt --- will stroll down the runway Saturday.

Wendt's wearable art took her to the junkyard. She wanted to make a dress out of seatbelts, and so she and her boyfriend spent an afternoon searching through old cars for material.

The audience can also expect to see dresses made of pipe cleaners, video tape and curlers.

"My favorite piece is made out of old army stuff, like duffel bags and uniforms," Smith said.

Erin Hamburg, a junior, designed a dress using the fabric from umbrellas. While some designs in the fashion show started as class assignments, others were created in students' free time.

Hamburg estimates she purchases a minimum of 30 yards of fabric a month. She started sewing as a project for Girl Scouts. Her troop made dresses for dolls to send to developing countries.

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"I thought it was amazing to create a costume from flat fabric," Hamburg said. Eventually, Hamburg wants to get into costume design for theater and film. She hopes to spend her summer working at the community theater in her home town of Bettendorf. She remembers sitting in the fashion show's audience as a freshman, and thinking that someday, she'd watch her designs walk across the stage.

Three of her designs will be displayed this year --- art strutting its stuff on the catwalk.

The show begins at 8 p.m. Saturday in Lang Hall at UNI. It is free and open to the public.

Contact Stacey Palevsky at (319) 291-1580 or stacey.palevsky@wfcourier.com.

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