



ORGANISING A FASHION SHOW: some hints & tips.



Fashion shows are fun and creative way of highlighting some of the ethical issues surrounding the fashion industry. There is a lot to be considered so it is well worth planning ahead.

Organising a fashion show can be very time consuming and there is a great deal of hard work involved. However, on the day, when the buzz and excitement of the show take over, it is all worthwhile. Highlighting some of the problems within the industry is also an extremely valuable thing to do. Whether you want to concentrate on child labour, environmental damage, workers rights or recycling there are a lot of issues to address. It is not a task for one person alone, but for a team. Work together to get the best possible results.

In the fashion industry shows tend not to last more than half an hour. Your show can be as long or as short as you feel is appropriate. Take into consideration the amount



of models you have, the number of outfits you are showing, other entertainment you are having and the number of people you expect to be in the audience. If you want dance routines, live music or an art exhibition to be part of your event - feel free. Be as creative as you like with the format of a catwalk show.

This pack will provide you with a rough checklist of things to consider as well as creative ideas about the content and some tips to get you started. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at: anna.fitzpatrick@ejfoundation.org

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Date and Venue:

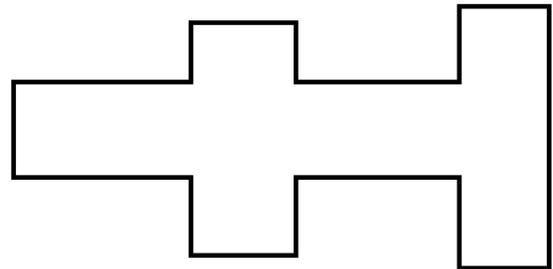
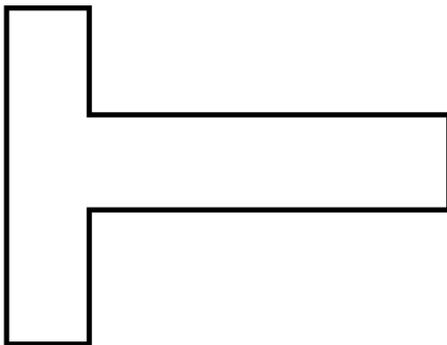
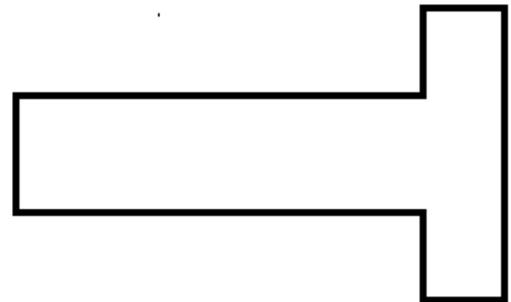
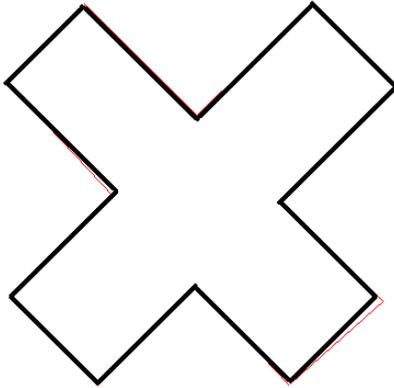
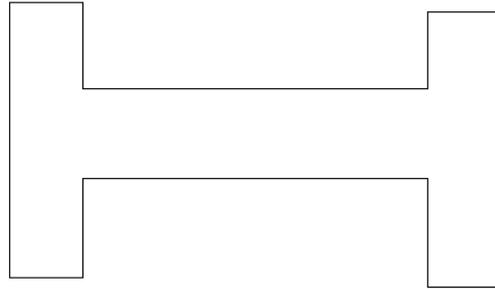
When is the show going to be? Is it going to be a daytime affair or an evening one? Bear in mind that if you opt for an evening time show, ideally you should be able to provide entertainment for a couple of hours (including an interval). Alternatively, it could be a shorter show staged during lunchtime and maybe repeated a couple of times throughout the day to ensure maximum exposure - i.e. everyone who wants to see it can. This sort of show will take less organising and works well if the audience is just going to be fellow pupils at school.

The venue of the show might dictate the date and the length of the show. If it is going to be at school, book the hall as far in advance as possible. Consider whether it will be possible to hold rehearsals there in the run up to the show. If you are planning the venue to be outside school you will need to check with a teacher that the venue has the appropriate insurance for the show. You will also need somewhere to practice. You should also bear in mind that there will need to be some sort of space to keep the outfits in and a place for the models to get changed. A separate area for boys and girls will be needed. If possible this area will be private and warm.

The catwalk:

The key feature of the show is of course the catwalk and there is the length and layout to consider. Stage blocks are ideal as there are about the right height.

If you would rather not use a raised catwalk (or there are no stage blocks) a floor level stage area can work just as well. You can mark out the shape and length of the catwalk with masking tape or double sided tape, with one side covered in glitter to add a bit of sparkle to the stage. Ideally the stage should be white but black works well too.



These are some possible shapes for the stage. It will largely depend on your back stage area and where the entrance to the catwalk is.

The Team:



A show cannot be organised by one person alone. Dividing the key jobs between a group of you is certainly the most ideal way of doing things and will ensure the smoothest running show. It is also an easy way on making sure everything gets done. Depending on how many people there are organising the show the job titles and descriptions are as follows. Jobs with the same bullet point can be merged should the team be a small one. The rough plan here is for an eight-person strong show committee.

✗ **SHOW PRODUCER:** It is the show producer's job to ensure that everyone else knows what they are doing and is doing it. If they are having difficulties the show producer must help them out. Keeps everyone briefed on changes, times, rehearsals, etc.

✗ **BACKSTAGE MANAGER:** This is an exciting but stressful job and suits someone who works well under pressure. It is a relatively calm job until show day. The backstage manager ensures that everything goes exactly to plan on the day. Needs to know everything about the actual show. Works closely with the Show Producer, the Stylist and needs good relationship with all the models. In the run up to the show can be used as a spare pair of hands helping out in the other departments if and when they need help.

✗ **ENTERTAINMENT MANAGER:** Are you having other forms of entertainment as well as a catwalk show? If so, you will need some one to be in charge of this. The Entertainment Manager will need to inform the other performers about rehearsal times and dates, ensure they all know what they are doing on the night. If you are having a guest speak for instance, it is the Entertainment Manager who must greet them and look after them on the show day.

✗ **SHOW PRODUCER CAN BE BACKSTAGE MANAGER ON THE NIGHT IF THERE IS A LIMITED AMOUNT OF PEOPLE BACKSTAGE MANAGER CAN ALSO DO THE JOB OF THE ENTERTAINMENT MANAGER.**

■ **STYLIST/WARDROBE MANAGER:** This is undoubtedly a role for someone who is very interested in fashion/clothes. Is responsible for the content of the show - finds clothes, fits models, sorts out the running order. A very important part of this job is protecting the clothes. Must ensure they are kept in good condition and are returned in the same condition they were found in.



■ **HAIR AND MAKEUP ARTIST:** Again, a creative role. Works closely with stylist to create fabulous image for the models. REMEMBER TO EXAGGERATE. If it is feasible this person may scout others to work with and lend a hand with the hair and makeup.

■ **CASTING MANAGER:** Who are your models? Friends, parents, teachers? Are you holding auditions? The main duty of the Casting Manager is to make certain that all models know what they are doing, that they feel comfortable, that they attend rehearsals. This is a fun job but also one which relies upon organisational skills.

■ **THE STYLIST CAN ALSO BE IN CHARGE OF HAIR AND MAKEUP AND KEEP AN EYE ON THE MODELS. ALL THREE WILL WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER.** Look in magazines for inspiration, tear out pages and compile a look book for inspiration of some of the looks you might want to go for.

✳ **PRIZES, PROGRAMS AND GUEST LIST MANAGER:** Do you want to have a raffle during the event, if so you will need some prizes? Approach local businesses, either in person or by letter, explaining what the event is for and ask if they would be willing to donate a prize. If you are successful be sure to invite them to the show. If you are having a programme to accompany the event be sure to thank them in print. Design or enlist help to design the program for the event. Work closely with Promoter to compile and manage guest list.

✳ **PROMOTIONAL MANAGER:** Organises selling tickets, advertises the events through posters. It is also worthwhile to contact the local media and explain what you are doing and why.

✳ **THESE ROLES ARE VERY SIMILAR AND THE TWO SHOULD WORK TOGETHER CLOSELY. THE DUTIES CAN BE DONE BY ONE PERSON OR SHARED OUT BETWEEN AS MANY AS YOU LIKE.**

ONCE EVERYONE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A JOB, AS FAIRLY AS POSSIBLE, ORGANISE A WEEKLY MEETING AT LUNCHTIME FOR UPDATES AND IDEAS, SO EVERYONE INVOLVED KNOWS WHAT IS GOING ON.



Models:

Generally speaking it is easy to find willing volunteers to model in the show. A variety of height, shapes and sizes is good. You must have the models measurements as soon as possible to ensure the outfits all fit.

The Show:

Discussing the small details of the show is perhaps the most fun and creative part of organising the event. How are you going to make your show really original, make it really stand out? The team should get together to brainstorm a few ideas. How is the show going to work? Is it going to be one continuous catwalk show or is it going to be broken up into 'scenes' or 'looks' with a short break in between? If so, how are you going to fill the break, remember you need to entertain the audience at all times?

Here is a list of things you might want to consider:

- ♣ If you opt for a continuous catwalk show, you must give the models time to get changed. Estimate the rough time it will take a model to walk down the catwalk. Allow 3 minutes minimum for a change. Work out how many models must go in between a models first and second appearance. THIS IS NOT AS COMPLICATED AS IT SOUNDS!
- ♣ Perhaps there is a band or singer who would like to perform. Or perhaps some dancers who would like to perform a routine.
- ♣ A poetry reading or short drama piece.
- ♣ A magician or jugglers always entertain the audience.
- ♣ Use the breaks to highlight some of thinking behind the show. EG if you want to highlight the use of child labour in the fashion industry you could show a film¹ or read an account of children working to produce clothing for Europe.
- ♣ If the show is being organised as a fundraising event then a spokesperson from the charity could make a short speech about the nature of the charity.
- ♣ Think about how you are going to introduce the show. Are you going to have a *compere* to introduce the different sections of the show? Consider whether you will have amplified sound. Or perhaps at the

¹ An informative film about the farming of cotton is available for free from the Environmental Justice Foundation. See www.ejfoundation.org for more details.



beginning of each section the first model can hold a sign signifying the new 'look'.

- ♣ What music are you going to use?

Themes :

Just because the show is about 'ethical fashion' does not mean it has to follow any particular format. Be as inventive as you like. Enjoy it. Fashion should be responsible but FUN and enjoyable. A few ideas for themes are:

- ♠ Minimalist - think clean lines, simple colours, and black and white, Cream and grey. Sophisticated and grown up.
- ♠ Bold, striking and flamboyant - bright, garish colours, crazy unconventional make up. Very fun.
- ♠ Wild and natural - think greens, browns, Mother Nature and our relationship with the planet.
- ♠ EMO/Goth/Punk - black, red, purple. Dark eyes, loud music. Angry about damaging the planet?
- ♠ The 60s, 70s, 80s and/or 90s - want a historical reference? Research the key looks www.fashionera.com is a great site for over viewing the key trends in the different decades.
- ♠ Junkyard angel - recycled fashion, with heavenly make-up and accessories. Think peaches, pinks, golds, silvers and sparkles.
- ♠ Childhood Innocence - pale colours, soft shapes.

Feel free to interpret any of these ideas as you like. They are just there to get you started. Keep in mind what the purpose of the show is and try to think of ideas and themes around that.

The Clothes :

Without clothes there will be no show. Since the show is about ethical issues you must ensure that the clothes you use have been produced in an ethical fashion. Be clear about this in your programme. If you are finding it hard to find clothes, make a point of this. Your show could be used to highlight the fact that ethical clothes are hard to come by. Find out about designers and brands that are using organic or fair trade items and approach them with information about your show.

Approach local boutiques and stores, who stock an ethical range, to ask if they will lend them to you for the



evening. Go in and ask in person but take a letter with you which explains about the show. More and more of the high street stores are stocking organic or fair trade clothes. Most likely they will be keen to promote the fact that they are now taking an interest in the larger issues in the industry.

Also approach second-hand shops and charity shops. A creative eye can put together great outfits and you can find lots of really unique bits and bobs. This is a really cool way of making your show stand out from the others.

You could also organise a re-fashioning event for other students at school. Get them to customise or re-style an old item of clothing. Then show them on the catwalk. This is a great way to get more people involved and interested in what you are doing. The crazier the designs the better they will look on the catwalk.

You must look after very, very carefully any clothes that you are lent. You will have to return them after the show in excellent condition. You must ensure the models know this.