

Textiles and Fashion Design

My enthusiasm for Fashion and Textile design originated at a Southwark Summer School in 2002. This course gave me an insight into the design process, and showed me how mood boards and thumbnail sketches contribute to the development of a final design. [Ok start, but could be more exciting. Remember that tutors will read hundreds of personal statements so your opening paragraph needs to be interesting and captivating].

Through my A-Level studies and further projects outside school, I have come to see the importance of the Fashion and Textile industries in society. This is reinforced by the emergence of Textiles in the other courses I study. Whether it is costume in Theatre Studies, or how, in English, Chaucer uses clothing to describe his characters, or even in History, where you can see the social context in which fashion is created.

Clothing can say a lot about a person. Fashion can define who someone is and directly portray their identity and culture as well as being a clear reflection and highlighter of social changes. Technology is also fundamental; changes in manufacturing technique and the availability of new materials and fibres keep the industry in a constant state of progression. [Good understanding of the various elements of the industry.]

Fashion, however, is not without controversy. The primitive and exploitative production methods in sweatshops and in the Third World attract disapproval. Yet the industry is so vast and plays such a vital economic role, that it is impossible to envisage a society without it. My concern about the 'throw-away' society and its impact on the environment led me to set up and host a fashion show, promoting second hand and recycled clothing. I wanted to show the benefits of recycling, and to encourage a more responsible attitude towards fashion. The overall experience was extremely valuable as it enhanced my leadership skills and developed my organisational abilities. [Excellent example of how you have demonstrated your passion about the subject!]

I subsequently visited many other fashion shows, particularly by 'Fashion Awareness Direct'. I was so impressed by their ethos that I arranged a Work Placement with them. This focused on workshops for year 10 students, encouraging them to develop their own skills in designing and making. I was then asked to return to help run more fashion shows and other events. Working with FAD reinforced not only my interest in the industry as a whole but my passion for the technical aspects of designing. [Good relevant work experience but maybe talk about what skills you developed whilst working for FAD.]

The role of technology was emphasised for me when my Textiles teacher selected me to join her on a professional training course for teachers about a new CAD programme: 'Speedstep'. This gave me insight into the technical advancements of design, as well as harnessing my ICT abilities.

I explored the function of Fashion and Textiles in other fields when I arranged to visit Sands Film Studios. I went to look at their collection of costumes as inspiration for my coursework - a dress for Darcey Bussell. This coursework revealed the reasons for my love of textiles: the combination of the creative and the practical.

My inspiration for the dress came largely from attending weekly dance classes for 5 years, during which I was involved in 3 major public performances. I also took part in many drama courses, including the Young Vic, the Globe, Central and RADA, as well as playing leading roles in two school productions. This, as well as my participation in a public speaking course, has helped me gain confidence and work successfully as part of a team. I found that these transferable skills also came in useful when I took the role of a mentor to a year 9 student, and during my weekly volunteering at an after school club for young children.

I hope to continue to volunteer with children in Kenya during my Gap year, as well as travel to Vietnam, India and South America. I anticipate this Gap year will allow me not only to develop as a person, but also intellectually through seeing different cultures and traditions. While I am away I will be collecting materials, fabrics and inspiration to expand my passion further. This, with the opportunities available at university, will extend my interest and knowledge in the subject but hopefully also further my career prospects.

[Overall, a very well written and well thought out personal statement. The candidate has not only demonstrated her passion in the subject through her studies but also through her wide range of work experiences. Well done!]