

EDUCATION

Parsons fashions couture course after Norman Norell archives

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Norell design from 1952

By STAFF REPORTS

The New School's Parsons School of Design is teaming up with Parlux and Neiman Marcus for a couture curriculum that redesigns historic looks.

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"Norell x Parsons" will guide students as they create modern adaptations of American designer Norman Norell's iconic garments, learning how to run a contemporary fashion business in the process. Adding a commercial component to this challenge, one of the student designs will be chosen by a Norell to be featured in the Neiman Marcus Christmas Book.

Past to present

Mr. Norell, who designed ready-to-wear styles for the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Jackie Kennedy and Lauren Bacall, was one of the first American designers to launch a fragrance. The Norell New York scent was originally created in 1968, and was revamped by Parlux Fragrances Ltd. in 2015 ([see story](#)).

A follow-up Norell New York, Norell Elixir scent premiered exclusively at Neiman Marcus this past fall.



Norell New York fragrance campaign

Now this reimagining of Norell's archives is happening in fashion form through the Parsons coursework.

"Creative directors at today's fashion houses often look to a company's archives for history, inspiration, and creativity to understand a brand's DNA before establishing their own, modern imprint for the brand," said Burak Cakmak, dean of Parsons School of Fashion in New York. "This course will offer our students important hands-on industry experience, and help prepare them to enter a new era of creative direction in the fashion industry."

After the students' designs are complete, a selection committee that includes designer and Parsons alum Jason Wu, Mr. Cakmak, Neiman Marcus fashion director Ken Downing and Parlux Ltd. president Donald Loftus will judge their work.

Norell's leadership team will then pick one design to be featured in Neiman Marcus' Christmas Book. This winning look, which will be announced in May, will be available for purchase as a special order.

As the fashion industry evolves courtesy of technology and a changing retail environment, education needs to evolve with it, according to panelists speaking at Polimoda's "Fashion Displacement" discussion on Nov. 16.

Courtesy of digital media, aspiring designers and industry hopefuls have access to information and resources even outside of the traditional fashion school environment, allowing some to build success years before they would be entering college. However, even with this possibility of early achievement, the speakers stressed the continued importance of the education that fashion schools can impart, providing designers with a maturity and background that will enable sustainable careers ([see story](#)).