

'STOGA'S GOT STYLE

Written and designed by Vanessa Chen and Aren Framil, Staff Reporter and Co-Design Editor

ASPIRING FASHION DESIGNER ISA BORST

Senior Isa Borst began designing clothes during the COVID-19 pandemic and now plans to make it her career.

Q: How did you get into fashion design?

A: It's funny actually, during COVID-19 I was watching a lot of movies, and I started to fall in love with the costumes and dresses in them. So one day, I thought, "Okay, let me just try (designing clothes)" and ever since, that is what I wanted to do.

Q: What has your design journey been like since then?

A: I've taken multiple courses, including pre-college courses, and gotten college credit for certain classes I've taken. I'm the costume head (for 'Stoga Theatre). I designed mountains of sketchbooks, making designs and collections. I've recently started making some (clothing) of my own. I'm attempting to make my prom dress.

Q: What do you do as costume head for the spring musical?

A: As costume head, I work hand in hand with our costume director, Susan DeJong, and the rest of the costume crew. Together we research settings, time periods and (outfits) for the show. For example, "She

Loves Me," (is) based in 1930s Hungary. We researched more in depth and put together, made and repaired any clothing or accessories.

Q: You said you were making a prom dress. Can you talk about your process?

A: I haven't really made anything before; I've made one blouse. This is probably the biggest project I'm doing. I want to make a red prom dress with a V neckline. To make a dress, you have to first design what you want to do. Then you have to use this (fabric) called muslin, and you drape it on a form so that you can get the right measurements. After that, you make your pattern based on that muslin first base. Then you use your fabric. It sounds easy, but I have no idea how it's going to work out.

Q: Do you want to continue making and designing clothing?

A: 100%. I want to go to college for fashion design and garment construction. Hopefully, in the future, I'll be able to have my own big fashion house, do runways, go to Fashion Week and sell

clothes. Using my clothing, I want to make people happy and (help them) feel more confident with themselves, no matter who they are.

Q: What's your favorite piece you've designed?

A: I recently created a collection of adaptive wear. I have only designed it. I haven't made it. It's clothing that is more accessible for (people with disabilities), and especially for people in wheelchairs. There (are) straps, (which) you can rip off to take the clothing off and vice versa. (I also designed) these ribbons that you can use to lift your legs up. Another one of my favorite pieces I've created is a sportswear collection based on deep sea creatures. Each piece was based on a different deep sea creature that I found.



Courtesy Isa Borst

Junior Raj Methi thrifted these jeans from Malaysia and modified them to better fit his style.

VINTAGE-INSPIRED CLOTHING CREATOR RAJ METHI

In his search for unique clothes, junior Raj Methi began remaking thrifted pieces.

Q: How would you describe your style?

A: I feel really inspired by military clothes. More of older styles like 90s, 2000s. Especially clothes with more a technical background, (such as) jackets that have purpose. I like to have clothes that have meaning to me, and especially those that are a little different and hand-made sometimes.

Q: How has your style developed over the years?

A: I used to wear more fitted pants. Now you see my pants are really baggy. And I used to wear a lot more brown and khaki colors (but now) I'm more leaning towards black and green — the two colors I probably wear the most. I think growing

up, my parents would just always tell me what to wear. So that freedom is kind of difficult at first, to find out where you want to go and how (you want to) express yourself. But I don't look back and think that what I wore wasn't right for the time because you have to wear that to figure out what you really like. And I'm sure in a few years or even next year, I won't even like what I'm wearing right now.

Q: What types of clothes are you working on now?

A: Right now I'm making some pants. I want to make a jacket soon. That's what I do to save some money, because sometimes what I want is pretty unique. Usually I just go to Goodwill and buy old jeans and just tear them up because it's the cheapest source (and) I feel good about giving that

money to Goodwill. If I see something that influences and inspires me that's out of my budget, (such as) some designer clothes that cost thousands of dollars, I'm more than happy to try my hand at (making) clothes because it's just a good learning experience.

Q: How do you go about putting together outfits?

A: It's not too difficult not to clash colors because it's very intuitive to me. And I think you have to try things that you don't wear very often in your closet. So at least for me, I try not to repeat outfits, even though it's not sustainable. To me, it's important because that allows me to be more creative and wear something that I usually wouldn't. If I don't wear something in my closet, it'll just go to the back and I'm never gonna wear it. A lot of times the weather also has an impact because I walk 10-15 minutes from the train station to the school — so I'm a little warmer than I usually would be. It's really just stepping outside of my comfort zone a little bit and putting some of my favorite clothes in combinations that I don't usually wear.

Q: Why do you think fashion is important to people?

A: I think fashion is one of the best ways to express yourself because of how open you are. You really have to be unashamed of who you are when you're expressing yourself. Even I don't think that I'm at the level where I have the money or resources or even maybe confidence to wear what I really want. I'm getting there, but I think once you have the clothes you want, you feel very confident and comfortable no matter who you are. For me to wear the clothes that I don't like I would feel a little bit less like myself. I wish a lot more people tried to just wear things they really like because it really can lend to your self-esteem. It's not just about a sense of materialism but when you feel like yourself inside and out, you feel a lot more in tune and cohesive.

VELCRO STRAPS
- allows the wearer to take apart the pants at different lengths with ease
- allows for the wearer to easily pick up their leg if needed

lightweight and breathable fabric

- coat breaks apart at the arm if necessary
- pants can completely detach at the front

soft and sensitive fiber

DETACHABLE
- jacket is detachable
- pants come apart with Velcro at each section for easy removal when the wearer is sitting

Senior Isa Borst's DEPARTURE collection includes adaptive clothing designed specifically for people with physical disabilities.

TRIPLE THREAT NEEDLE-WORKER NICOLETTE RONDEAU

In her free time, French student-teacher Nicolette Rondeau crochets, knits and sews.

Q: How did you get started making crochet?

A: It was Christmas morning, and I wanted to learn, so I just taught myself. It was this past Christmas. But before that, I (knew how to) knit.

Q: Can you talk about your process when crocheting?

A: Normally I'm either on Pinterest, where you can find something that's interesting and then you go from there. That's how I learned honestly, just copying a YouTube video and going that way. I go to Michaels or a few small craft shops, though of course it's expensive. If I want to splurge, I go that way or just good old Amazon. Jeff Bezos has a grip on us all. And then, obviously, you mess up a million times, but I kind of love the frustration of the process. Maybe it's a little crazy of me, but it makes me think "Yeah, I will eventually get this. Someone's done it before, so why can't I?" I think that's a good philosophy for life; just try and try again.

Q: You said you have knit before. Was it a big learning curve, going from knitting to crocheting?

A: Yes. Everyone says that crocheting is so much easier (than knitting). I can say that it is faster, but in my opinion, it's much more difficult than knitting.

Q: You said you have knit before. Was it a big learning curve, going from knitting to crocheting?

A: The only one that I'm in the process of making is the cardigan. I'm missing two balls of yarn, and I just can't find them because they're out of stock everywhere, so I have just a bunch of patchwork sitting there like a giant pile. But I do have some tops that I've crocheted, and they're fun to wear out during the summer. I

There's so many different names (involved in crocheting), I don't know the terminology of anything. I don't know the terms, I just crochet. Knitting takes a lot of time,

really love that "making" (aspect) to it. It's the same thing as sewing.

Q: What do you sew?

A: Clothes. And of course, like everyone during the pandemic, masks. I taught my friend (how to sew) and I used to cosplay. It's just nice to be able to make and adapt things. Even when you go to Target and you buy a top, you can always take it home and fix it. You can fit (clothes) more to your personality and your style.

Q: For people who are starting out crocheting, sewing or knitting, what advice would you give them?

A: Just start with (crocheting) squares, and even if you mess up and take the whole thing apart and restart, it's not the end of the world. If you don't want to unravel it, just cut the string, throw it in the trash and call it a day. I've restarted (projects) multiple times; the first time I did a hat (I restarted) 10 times. It was a tiny (project) for a stuffed animal, but it took me forever. But slowly you will get better and better, and it'll become easier. When I started using that fluffy textured yarn, I thought, "This is impossible." Now, I'm starting to get the hang of it a little bit more, and I think, "Yeah, I can do it." It's just practice and time, and you'll reap the rewards.



Courtesy Isa Borst



Courtesy Nicolette Rondeau

Made with love: A small white dog sits on a blanket wearing a miniature orange crochet hat. French student-teacher Nicolette Rondeau started crocheting this past Christmas, making clothes and accessories for herself and others.