



Yoo (left) and her model showing off her original creation at the Mercedes-Benz Stylo Emerging Designers Competition.

Designing the future at UCSI

MAKING a career out of artistic and creative aptitude is the ultimate dream for many people.

Such individuals are able to use their creative gifts and artistic talents to create something unique for various applications.

Fashion designers are among this elite group, transcribing ideas on to paper and seeing them materialise on the runway.

At UCSI University, fashion design students get to see their creations on the runway before they start working for the industry. This exposure is important, as their talents are made known to the industry at an early stage.

Recently, UCSI University fashion student, Yoo Ai Ling was among 12 finalists at the Mercedes-Benz Stylo Emerging Designers Competition, which showcased two of her designs involving recycled paper.

According to Yoo, the avant garde piece was made to look complex, yet elegant and sophisticated. "It is about a lady seeking hope in every step that she takes. Each patch of flowers on her dress symbolises the hope of breaking through obstacles to reach her goal in life."

Yoo was inspired to be a fashion designer after seeing haute couture fashion by John Galliano when she was a teenager. After completing her Textile and Fashion Design Diploma course, Yoo looked for a suitable degree course.

She was first attracted to UCSI University's Fashion degree course when she found out that it included a business component. UCSI's Bachelor in Arts (Hons) Fashion Design with Marketing course is designed to equip graduates with business skills that would take their creations beyond the runway.

The global fashion market today demands more strategic planning, innovation and inventive marketing concepts to remain sustainable.

Fashion design skills alone will not suffice in a world that is increasingly commercialised and competitive.

The speed of delivery, quality of production and creativity in design are also critical aspects of this new technology-driven industry.

Market intelligence, fashion trend forecasting plus the fundamentals of business and marketing management are invaluable areas

necessary to keep fashion fresh, alive and up-to-the-minute.

Realising the competitive nature of the industry, Yoo still hopes to market her own clothing line in the future in spite of the risks involved.

"It's risky to have your own line, not to mention it also requires a big capital. I plan to work in the industry dealing with branding, merchandising as well as customer relations before delving into my own business," she says.

"With a few years of experience, I am confident that I will be able to launch my own line one day."

At the moment, Yoo is busy attending to her next project. She works closely with the university's lecturers who draw lessons from their industrial experience.

Lecturers at UCSI School of Design are always on hand to guide and encourage their students.

UCSI Fashion programme leader Nur Mashita Kamalun Ariffin, realises that a student's potential should never be confined to the classroom.

"As we are geared towards globalisation, the participation of students in industry-level competitions plays an important role in promoting creativity and innovation.

It also motivates students to take up challenges that they will eventually need to face in the working world," she says.

Nur Mashita adds that the university creates opportunities for students to be engaged in such competitions for them to effectively apply what they had learnt in the classroom.

"It inspires them to be the best that they could be, while giving them the best exposure there is in the industry," she says.

Yoo advises young students out there who aspire to join the fashion industry to have passion, courage, conviction, as well as a strong sense of self-confidence in order to tackle all the obstacles ahead.

"You must always have faith in yourself," she adds.

• For details on UCSI University's design programmes and activities, visit the university during its Open Days on June 11 & 12 (10am - 5pm). The counsellors can be contacted at 03-9101 8880 or log on to www.ucsi.edu.my/onlineenquiry/. UCSI University website: www.ucsi.edu.my.