



DRIEHAUS DESIGN INITIATIVE PRESENTS *REFLECTIONS*
THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY DRIEHAUS AWARDS FOR FASHION EXCELLENCE

**Competition Features Emerging Fashion Design Students
and Celebrates the Success of Alumni Designers
Friday, April 29**

CHICAGO (March 23, 2016) -- Driehaus Design Initiative will celebrate the future of fashion by showcasing the talents of emerging Chicago fashion design students at The Driehaus Awards for Fashion Excellence. The 15th anniversary show and competition also will spotlight six student alumni who have since launched successful ventures. Themed *Reflections*, the event will be held Friday, April 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Hosted by Inese and Richard H. Driehaus, The 15th Anniversary Driehaus Awards for Fashion Excellence will take place at 700 S. Des Plaines Street, Chicago. The private space in the warehouse district offers a perfect setting for designers to highlight their concepts, from design room to showroom. The students' innovative collections mirror their knowledge of textiles, excellence in sewing techniques and garment construction.

Judging this year's high-energy runway competition will be industry insiders: **Caryn Klein**, Costume Director, Steppenwolf Theatre Company; **Kpoene' Kofi-Nicklin**, Creative Director, Mignonette Bridal; **Wendy Krimins**, General Manager, Neiman Marcus Michigan Avenue; and **Kristin Larson**, Chicago Correspondent, *WWD*.

The elegant fashion soirée includes a pre-party with hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, a live auction hosted by Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, and an exclusive VIP after-party. Linda Yu of ABC 7 once again returns as master of ceremonies.

In addition to the top designers winning cash honorariums, one will receive the Neiman Marcus Distinguished Designer Award with a showcase at the Michigan Avenue location.

Participating students will be invited to join Driehaus Design Initiative and the Chicago History Museum for the *Runway to Showroom: Driehaus Business of Fashion Symposium*. The symposium helps emerging designers elevate their brand and launch and sustain a successful business or career. Students may bring their portfolios and engage in an open discussion of experience sharing, while receiving beneficial insight and personal advice. A behind-the-scenes tour of the Museum's costume collection with Costume Curator, Petra Slinkard and Costume Collection Manager, Jessica Pushor is included.

Local fashion & design schools participating are: Columbia College Chicago, Dominican University, The Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

In addition, to reflect on the past 15 years of fostering fashion design success, Driehaus Awards for Fashion Excellence alumni will send their work down the runway to showcase their career accomplishments since placing in the fashion competition. Alumni include:

- **Hector-Javier Monàrrez**, 2009 First Place Winner, graduate of International Academy of Design and Technology-Chicago;
- **Fraley Le**, 2010 First Place Winner, graduate of International Academy of Design and Technology-Chicago;
- **Laura Lanzerotte**, 2012 Second Place Winner, graduate of Dominican University;
- **Gabriel Saldana**, 2013 First Place Winner, graduate of Columbia College Chicago;
- **Liz Bahl**, 2015 First Place Award Winner, graduate of The Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago; and
- **Samantha Sipos**, 2015 Honorable Mention Award Winner, graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Reserved seating VIP tickets are \$300 and include access to the DJ-hosted VIP after-party. General admission tickets are \$175. For more information and to purchase tickets please visit driehausdesign.org. Proceeds benefit local fashion and design programs that encourage education and appreciation of fashion design and history in Chicago.

About Driehaus Design Initiative

Driehaus Design Initiative, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was established to promote and encourage design education and to foster public appreciation and understanding of all aspects of fashion design and history. Driehaus Design Initiative contributes proceeds from The Driehaus Awards for Fashion Excellence to support fashion and design endeavors in Chicago.

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