IIDA Southwest Chapter
Changemaker Submission
In the fall of 2022, the IIDA Southwest Chapter held its biennial fashion show event, “Couture.” It was the first time in four years (due to COVID) that this event could be held in person. The theme “Cirque du Couture, the Weird and Wonderful” brought down the house with enthusiasm and energy like never before! The spirit of the event was electric as the entire design community, including product representatives, design firms and our design students celebrated together. The excitement and attendance of over 300 people from our design community proved that this was our crowning achievement of 2022!
The Mission
The mission, after a long and stressful pandemic, was to reconnect a design community in person with a show-stopping event that included design, volunteering, and collaboration. The event was a massive success in achieving just that!

Planning and Goals
The main goal was to successfully pair up product representatives and design firms so that they can work closely together, planning for an ensemble that would wow the judges and unite their team.

Marketing and Communications
Social media, eblasts, website promotions and word of mouth are all ways that the event was promoted throughout not only the design community but also reaching out to the local community to be a part of something stunning and inspiring to all!

Membership
Couture is voted a favorite IIDA Southwest Chapter event by most members and prospective members. The event encourages designers to think outside the box and teaches them how important teamwork really is to a final outcome. Volunteering at the event for discounted access has given prospective members more reason to join IIDA.

Financials
Our financial goals going into 2020 were to make a 10% profit from the event. Proceeds to go to another IIDA Southwest biennial event called Connect 4, a community driven charity renovation effort in our four city centers. The overall budget was $40,000 with goals to make $4,000 in profit.

Having to put the original venue contract on hold for several years due to the pandemic, the venue unfortunately decided to increase their prices exorbitantly for food and beverage the night of the event. Although Couture did not make a profit, it paid high dividends to our community and was worth every penny through the impact made on our community.
How it Begins

Couture is a runway show created by the IIDA Southwest Chapter and brought to life by our local product reps, interior designers and design students. The event begins with a “Pairing Party” blind draw to pair up design firms with product representatives.

The Challenge: Create a “Weird and Wonderful” runway piece while working and staying within budget

Designs were created with the award categories in mind:

- **Best Craftsmanship**
- **Best Haute Couture** (most fabulous)
- **Best Prêt-à-Porter** (most wearable)
- **Best Vendor** (hard material)
- **Best Vendor** (soft material)
- **People’s Choice** (voted on by audience during Intermission)
- **Best of Show** (Student Team)
- **Best of Show** (Professional Design Team GRAND PRIZE!)

Event Timeline:

- **Pairing Party**  
  March 23, 2022
- **Sponsorship Launch**  
  June 1, 2022
- **Order All Materials**  
  June 10, 2022
- **Snippets of Progress**  
  August 5, 2022
- **Couture Event**  
  October 20, 2022
It’s all in the details

This competition challenges interior designers to create high fashion garments using architectural finish materials, blurring the line between fashion, design and architecture. These teams then begin to develop their costume design using award eligibility requirements. The assigned material product and theme must be clear to the judges and the assigned materials must be clearly defined. The team’s model must be a participating member of the design team. The creative genius is in the imagination and every detail was designed, created and assembled by the product/design teams creating their “magic”! With intense planning, innovation working with unconventional materials to create a work of art, each team hopes that theirs will stand out and catch the judges’ eyes to win the prize!
Fundraising and Planning

Design Team Names
- Design Team Model
- Team Vendor Names

- Two weeks before event day schedule will be emailed to model.
- Rehearsal will be the Monday before event at Clayton house.
- Time TBD, set by venue.
- Only one helper will be able to come in the model room the day event.
- Snacks and refreshments will be available that day.
Guests Arrive

As guests are arriving, they’re greeted by the check-in volunteers, handed a lanyard and directed to happy hour to enjoy good company and entertainment as the excitement rises from months (years, really) of anticipation.

While guests are enjoying the happy hour, models are making their final preparations backstage. Final photos are taken, documenting every painstaking detail of the outfit each team has created. And prejudging takes place to allow judges ample time to review the outfits before the models head down the runway.
Let the Show Begin!

Shown above are some images of the models showcasing the outfits on the runway. Judging takes into account the way each model displays the outfit, as well as the creativity captured in the runway walk.
What’s a show without a little entertainment?

Having been on a Couture - hiatus of sorts, we were excited to wow our design community with a Cirque revue. The performers blew everyone away with their talent, and the group even featured a former design industry product representative!
Summary

The IIDA Southwest Chapter was honored to finally host this highly anticipated event and breathe new life into this biennial showcase of talent. The incredible teamwork by the Chapter’s Couture Committee, the design teams, volunteers and supportive leadership all make up the Changemakers. Our Chapter is grateful to these individuals, who have worked tirelessly together to build this community event to its crescendo. The detailed preparation for a gathering like this has brought together individuals and created new relationships across our industry. Creativity was on display through the garments, and show how versatile our interior designers’ imaginations can truly be, and what this event did to inspire and lift the human spirit!