

**LETTER FROM THE 2008 GEOFFREY BEENE DESIGN SCHOLAR – Ghazaleh Khalifeh**

Dear CFDA:

It was such a true honor to be selected as the 2008 Geoffrey Beene Design Scholar! Mr. Beene's designs have always greatly inspired me, and it meant a lot to be selected for my personal homage to his legacy by those who knew him well and the Council of Fashion Designers of America. I put a lot of passion, thought, and dedication into the portfolio submission I created, and I also put a lot of *who I am* into it as well- so to be praised with the honor of being the inaugural Geoffrey Beene Design Scholar meant so much to me. More than any words could ever adequately describe!

Being named the 2008 Geoffrey Beene Design Scholar has impacted me in many ways. It truly gave me a strong sense of validation and made me believe in myself even more. I have always felt strongly about my beliefs and philosophies, and even more so in the power of my own passion and imagination. After putting so much of who I am into my portfolio submission, and then being selected as the winner, made me experience *first-hand* that one can be successful simply by being who they are. I have confidence that I can accomplish all of my dreams with my belief in myself, my passion, and my imagination.

When creating my portfolio for submission, I approached my process of design with a particular focus on 360° designing. I spent more time than I had ever spent before, on draping as well as sculpting, triangles of fabric into three-dimensional forms. I did so before sitting down at my desk with a pen and paper to sketch two-dimensional designs. I truly viewed each garment as a wearable sculpture. This process of designing is something that has stayed with me since. These valuable lessons I learned from my application of Geoffrey Beene's design philosophies to my process will forever have a lasting impact on the way I design and create. I am so thankful for what I have learned and how it has affected my approach to design. The knowledge I have gained through this new approach is priceless!

I am spending one year studying abroad in Paris! (\*at the same school where Geoffrey Beene studied for some time!) Every year the Academy of Art University in San Francisco as well as L'Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne in Paris select two students from each school to participate in an exchange program. Therefore I am currently studying at L'Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne and will be doing so until the end of this school year, June 30 2009. I will later return to the Academy of Art University in San Francisco to participate in my senior year. I am very excited for the day I begin my senior year at AAU- I am very much looking forward to applying everything I have learned from Mr. Beene, as well as everything I have learned in Paris, to my senior collection! I am not sure what will happen after my senior year as that time is quite far away, but the future is vast, my passion is grand and I plan on always continuing to do what I love---creating fashion/art!

The *scholarship award* will have a huge impact on the senior collection I create during my final year at the Academy of Art University. It will give me the financial freedom needed to create my ideal and perfect collection of garments, as well as the portfolios which I will carry on with me into the industry even after I graduate.

All in all, the entire experience of being the 2008 Geoffrey Beene Design Scholar has had an impact on me which will follow me for the rest of my future.

Sincerely,



Ghazaleh Khalifeh