

Fusion: The Inis Meain Knitting Company Project – 5 Years on

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Introduction

The project outcome of an Intertradelreland Fusion project, which involved Inis Meain Knitting Company on the Aran Islands (the Industrial partner) the Ba (Hons) Textile Art, Design and Fashion Course (Fashion knit) Ulster University (the academic partner and knowledge provider) and a graduate (the knowledge carrier). The sustainability of the project can be seen in continuous student placements and graduate employability

Objectives

The Industrial partner working with the University to avail of University resources and knowledge transfer opportunities, the continuous input from the placement students mining the Island for design inspiration and innovative approaches, with fresh approaches to each seasons collections

The academic partner gains access to state of the art CAD CAM systems and knitting technology, networking events, designers, buyers, Industrial trade fairs and production teams. The students gain valuable experience and graduate employment



Methods

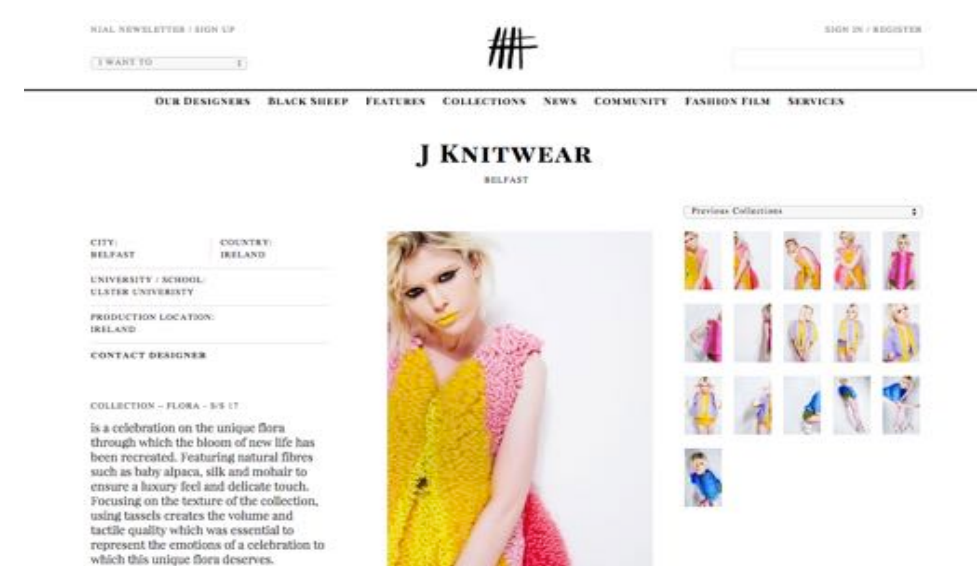
Research into the island, over the placement year and the academic visits to support and develop key looks for the upcoming season have included, the flora, fauna, island life and people. Understanding the unique knitted stitches and the handwork of the community from past years to survive the difficult and often bleak landscape forms the main focus of the design development. Aran stitches are always part of the collection, and the idea of warmth from the end of the world is how the company describes its own identity.

Results

- Training on the Apex Design System
- Training on the Shima Seiki Knitting Machines
- Understanding the cyclical nature of fashion design
- Attending and marketing at trade fairs including Pitti Filatti (Florence)
- Working with the Island Community
- Developing Adobe Skills
- Photography for recording and promotional materials
- Learning all the processes required in a successful knitting Company
- Future employment on graduation
- Support for Final year with sponsorship for Yarns



“‘Flora’ is my graduate collection which is based on the wild flowers of Inis Meain. It is a celebration of the unique flora through which the bloom of new life has been created. Featuring natural fibres such as baby alpaca, silk and mohair to ensure a luxury feel and delicate touch. Focusing on the texture of the collection, using tassels creates the volume and tactile quality essential to represent the emotions of a celebration to which this unique flora deserves” Jordan Currie Inis Meain inspired final collection



Conclusion

In conclusion the Fusion Project outlined the importance of developing partnerships between industry and university.

The academic partners' access to cutting edge equipment and contemporary practice impacted on pedagogy that was disseminated via curriculum design and content. The numbers of students going on placement increased, the company had a fresh influx of ideas and employed the students on graduation.