

Community

Public Notices C9 Classifieds C11

Section C

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Designing young women

Fashion students design and sew iris-themed clothes to be shown next week

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OF THE MONTCLAIR TIMES

Many Montclairites would give their eyetooth for a three-car garage. Fern Bass has one, but she doesn't use it. At least, not for cars. Her garage is an art school.

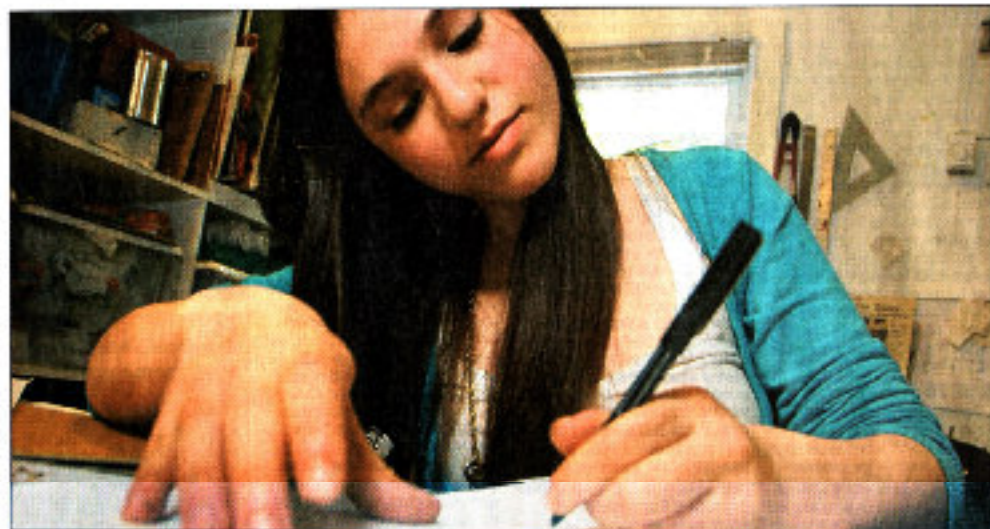
Bass, a graduate of Pratt Institute, has taught painting, drawing, printmaking, and other arts for several years at Bass Arts Studio.

She also offers classes in fashion sewing, and fashion design and illustration, taught by Fabiola Arias of New York. Students learn pattern making, draping and machine- and hand sewing, then design, sketch, and sew their own clothing.

There are field trips to the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute and to Mood Fabrics in Manhattan's Garment District, where "Project Runway" gets its fabric. The semester concludes with a fashion show and exhibit.

This spring's fashion classes have been working on iris-themed designs and clothes, and will show their work at the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens on North Mountain Avenue on Saturday, June 20.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, the little school was full. Four girls sat at a table working on their



sketches. Radio station 7.100 played quietly as they sketched, erased, stared into space, and sketched again.

Hanging from the ceiling by muslin strips were half a dozen duct-tape torsos, known as dress forms. Bass jokes that the dress forms are "DIY recession specials" because the clever design by one of her students saves hundreds of dollars over what custom-made dress forms would cost,

and the girls can design clothes knowing they'll fit perfectly.

The designing girls draped and pinned lengths of taffeta and grosgrain to the dress forms — and unplanned and redraped — as their one-of-a-kind dresses began to take shape.

Kiera Murphy of Verona is making a dress of hot pink polyester taffeta. She was too intent on her work to say much, but Arias said Kiera's taffeta "is nice to drape with because it has a papery quality."

Elery Romanko of Cedar Grove

draped her dress form with a pale lavender, trying to turn an idea in her head into an actual wearable dress.

With a fabric whose color she described as a "salmony blush" Andrea Latimer of Verona pinned together a poufy skirt that really did look something like an iris. She said it was hard learning the sewing skills that enable her to sew an original design.

Arias, a recent graduate of Par-

sos The New School for Design, launched her first line of clothing last year — all evening wear — attracting the attention of Iram Goldman, the boutique owner in Chicago who helps Michelle Obama choose her clothes.

"I designed some dresses for Michele," Arias said. She's hoping to hear that the First Lady has chosen one of her dresses to wear, but in the meantime she is the head designer for a new clothing brand called Bass Ring.

The fashion illustration students are designing their own lines of clothing. They began by assembling inspiration boards using clippings and photos of images that inspire them, and a fabric board with swatches of the fabrics they'll use. Then they began sketching.

For Carrie Basch, a student at Glenfield Middle School, the design process begins with an idea that she tries to draw.

"I'll see if it works. But I sometimes have to change," Carrie said.

Madi Bense of North Caldwell doesn't think before she begins drawing.

Bass said, "The (designs) become what they want to be. It's like they have a life of their own."

The public is invited to Bass Arts Studio's end-of-semester show of fashion design and illustration. It takes place on Saturday, June 20, at 6 p.m., at Presby Memorial Iris Gardens on North Mountain Avenue.



STAFF PHOTOS BY ADAM ARBY

At top, Carrie Basch, 14, of Montclair, sketches concepts for iris-themed couture to be presented in an exhibition at Presby Memorial Iris Gardens on June 20. Basch is a student at Bass Arts Studio, where she is studying fashion design and illustration with Fabiola Arias, a rising fashion designer. Above, Arias helps Kiera Murphy, 12, of Verona, pin the profile of the gown she's designing. At left, an iris-inspired sketch by Kiera Morkosien, 15, of Montclair. At right, Andrea Latimer, 17, of Verona, assembles a taffeta cocktail dress in a shade she calls "a salmony blush."

