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FASHIONEXT: THE CHARLES JAMES PROJECT
Public Vote Launches Today
Winner to be announced at *Dress Code* on Wednesday, October 19, 2011

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (Tuesday, September 20, 2011) – The Chicago History Museum presents its third annual *FashioNext* design competition, featuring top students from four of Chicago's fashion design schools. This year's competition challenges students to create a garment inspired by the design, pattern work or construction details from a Charles James original design from the Museum's costume collection. The exhibition, *Charles James: Genius Deconstructed*, opens Saturday, October 22, 2011 at the Museum in connection with the competition. *FashioNext: The Charles James Project* will be judged by the public through an online voting campaign and an expert panel of judges. The winner will be announced live at *Dress Code* on the evening of Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at the Chicago History Museum.

Dress Code is an annual student runway show featuring the designs of top students from four local fashion design schools: Columbia College Chicago, Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago, the International Academy of Design & Technology – Chicago, and School of the Art Institute of Chicago. *Dress Code* originated in 2007 to support and recognize the work of local, emerging student designers. This year, *Dress Code* takes place at the Chicago History Museum on the evening of Wednesday, October 19, 2011.

FashioNext was created by the Chicago History Museum to support Chicago's fashion design community. The top four designs from the *FashioNext* finalists will open the *Dress Code* runway show on the evening of Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at the Chicago History Museum. The winner of *FashioNext: The Charles James Project* will be announced live at the end of the show. This is the second consecutive year that *FashioNext* will be included as part of *Dress Code*.

The winner of *FashioNext: The Charles James Project* will be awarded a Spring 2012 Museum internship, \$500 stipend and Museum membership.

The public vote launches online today at <http://www.chicagohistory.org/charles-james> where viewers can learn more about the finalists and place an unlimited number of votes. Online voting participants will automatically be entered to win four tickets to *Dress Code* on the evening of Wednesday, October 19, 2011. Monday, October 17, 2011 is the last day to place online votes.

To purchase tickets to *Dress Code*, please visit <http://www.chicagohistory.org/charles-james>. Tickets are \$25 for Adults and \$15 for students.

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ChicagoHistoryMuseum

Dress Code is sponsored by the Chicago History Museum, Columbia College Chicago, Factor Women, Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago, the International Academy of Design & Technology – Chicago, School of the Art Institute of Chicago and ULTA Cosmetics.

For more information on *FashioNext: The Charles James Project* and the finalists, please visit <http://www.chicagohistory.org/charles-james>.

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About The Finalists:

Tina Hillesheim, International Academy of Design & Technology – Chicago

Tina Hillesheim discovered her interest in sewing and textiles at a young age. In her early college years, she honed her talents through freelance work in costuming for various theater companies before deciding to enter into a dedicated fashion design program. This decision was also motivated by her frustration with the lack of fashion-forward clothing tailored to plus sizes. She believes in creating styles that are flattering and edgy for everyday women.

William Jiang, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Born and raised in Mississippi, **William Jiang** was drawn to clothes and design at a very early age. After high school, he was admitted into the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and enrolled in SAIC's fashion department determined to make an impact on the menswear industry. As an upcoming senior at SAIC, William dreams to eventually work alongside top designers like Hussein Chalayan and Mihara Yasuhiro and eventually start his own line of work as a way to present his voice and vision.

T.K. Perry, Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago

A graduate of the Illinois Institute of Art – Chicago, **T.K. Perry** has been living and working in Chicago where she focuses on costume design for the theater and film industries. She has worked with companies such as Redmoon, Lookingglass and Steppenwolf and is currently interning with Anna G. Costumes. In her formal fashion design side, she specializes in structural and three-dimensional design.

Cynthia J. Roman, Columbia College Chicago

Cynthia Roman is no stranger to succeeding despite the odds. She has worked to put herself through college, having studied at Wright College and Triton College before transferring to Columbia College in Chicago's fashion program. She is a wife, mother of two and a star design student, as evidenced by her selection as one of this year's FashioNext finalists.

The **Chicago History Museum**, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 adults with audio tour, \$12 seniors/students with audio tour, free for children 12 years and younger. Please call 312.642.4600 or visit us at www.chicagohistory.org. The Chicago History Museum is affiliated with the Chicago Historical Society and acknowledges the Chicago Park District's generous support of all the Museum's activities.

Charles James: Genius Deconstructed will explore the life and work of American couturier, Charles James, and why nearly 40 years after his death he is still a relevant force in the fashion world. 15 of James's most iconic designs will be on display, including touchable reproductions of four of his most celebrated garments, allowing viewers to explore their unique interior construction. Every garment in the exhibition has a Chicago connection due to James's time working as a milliner in Chicago and his loyal Chicago clientele. Original sketches from fashion illustrator Antonio Lopez, who worked closely with James during nocturnal drawing sessions at the Chelsea Hotel, will also be featured in the exhibition.