

## Student Presentations

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Summary by Gabrielle derKinderen

### Visual Merchandising

Presented by Alexa Foggia, TMD

Visual merchandising is the creative process that goes into designing the layout of a store. Fifty percent of profits made by brick and mortar stores comes from effective displays. This is what entices a consumer to walk into a store and shop. It is important for visual merchandisers to know their target customer and gather information on them from point-of-sales analysis. Many companies send out a “planogram” for inspiration for store layout so that there’s uniformity across all stores. When designing the layout of a store, it’s important that the merchandising tells a story with the products. This is done by integrating all five senses into the displays, through different fabric textures, and even smells. Usually, stores display their clothing using three mannequins with various height differences so that the customer’s eyes will travel across the display, and more often than not, big-ticket items will be spotlighted. Visual merchandising is meant to control foot traffic, create convenience for the customer, and display items in a manner that the consumer can see everything.

### Is New York Fashion Week Broken?

Presented by Megan Spindell, TMD

In 1943, Eleanor Lambert founded New York Fashion Week with the intention of promoting American fashion. At this time, it was known as Press Week, and it went so well that it gained attention from major magazines. In 1993, the New York shows were consolidated to a single location in small tents located in Bryant Park. Throughout the early 2000s, the New York Fashion Week switched sponsors causing the name to change based on the companies that sponsored it. The front row seats for these fashion shows were originally meant for major magazine editors and fashion directors to see what designers were creating. However, over the past two years, there has been a shift. New York Fashion Week is beginning to seem less about top tier fashion directors and editorial elites, and more about bloggers, social media influences, and social climbers, such as the Kardashians. An event that was once impossible to get tickets for has slowly become something for which it is easy to get a front row seat.

### Fashion Blogging as a Business

Presented by Elaine Feola, TMD

With social media becoming bigger and bigger as the 2000s progress, fashion blogging has become a way not only to share ideas and inspiration with the world, but also to promote yourself and your brand if you so desire. When starting a new blog, it’s important to completely commit yourself 24/7, become your own brand, and find your audience. Along with hiring a web

designer and either hiring or being a good photographer, you have to use your personality to expand your blog beyond just your web page. Many fashion bloggers out there have become so successful that they make good money from their blogs. They do this by attending red carpet events, fashion weeks, and networking and collaborating with important fashion icons. With the shift toward social media, fashion bloggers have snagged the front rows of fashion shows because they have become a networking resource for fashion designers.

### The Decline of Department Stores Presented by Sierra Herrmann, TMD

The first department store in the United States was called the Marble Palace. It was opened in 1846 by A.T. Stewart. The store was designed to be a middle ground between wholesale and luxury. Then in 1846, Stewart opened another department store, designed specifically for women, called the Iron Palace, which sold ready-to-wear clothes and fabric. The layout of these stores was neat and orderly, unlike the then-common street vendors. The first Macy's was opened in 1858, but didn't find success until 1877. It was the first retailer to use one-price systems and it revolutionized business and advertising practices. Today however, Macy's is downsizing, and due to close 100 stores. The department store decline has been blamed on online retailing, which gained momentum in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Many department stores have outdated business models and lack consumer research. Possible solutions to the decline of department stores would be starting from the beginning, and remodeling business strategies to work more with online appeal. Brick and mortar stores would also do well to have more in-store promotions to make consumers want to come into them again. Despite the recent decline, department stores are not in danger of closing down for good. More than half of sales in retail still come from in-store purchases. Nordstrom is one of the stores that has been leading by example, by successfully knowing what their customer wants, and keeping in-store foot traffic flowing.