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Fashioning Experience

February 1, 2019



Mackenzie Miller in the studio.

Thimbles, thread, and miscellaneous pieces of fabric overtook Mackenzie Miller's work space. Miller (fashion merchandising and business management '21) commences each project with tenacity and endurance to see it through to completion. Creating something out of nothing provides Miller with a sense of accomplishment and artistry. Last semester, she had the opportunity to work professionally with the Averitt Center for the Arts in Statesboro, Georgia. She applied the skills obtained from her fashion and design classes to create a set of costumes for their production of *Orestes*.

For over two months, Miller worked with a faculty mentor, Dr. Addie Martindale, and a group of six students collaborating and creating pieces for this project. This Greek tragedy follows the consequences of murder, deceit, and injustice. Young actors, ranging in ages from seven to seventeen, undertook this mature play. "It was interesting to see a cast with a majority of fifth and sixth graders take on these very dramatic roles," Miller said.

Miller was unfamiliar with the play, so she conducted extensive research to gain a sense of its themes. Miller and her peers had complete creative authority from the initial sketch to the moment the curtains fell. "We decided to shift the design away from traditional Greek attire. Instead, we used a post-apocalyptic take on streetwear with both Greek and modern influences," she said.

After researching the play's origins and past performances, Miller began the design process. "I found inspiration photos and created a mood board with the overall conception of our design. When someone looks at your sketch or design, they should be able to see the mood and style for the project. We sketched out each of our designs for peer feedback sessions. We came together to converse and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of our designs. We explained the inspiration or reasoning behind what we made. Everyone was constructive and gave helpful feedback. Next, we sourced fabric and started sewing and patterning."

There were a total of twelve to fifteen costumes for the play, and Miller specifically aided in the creation of four.

Miller tries to incorporate her studies in other responsibilities she has at Georgia Southern University. Last semester, Miller was a peer leader in Dr. Steven Engel's FYE course, *The Examined Life*. She had the opportunity to teach several lessons, including a survival guide to college. She also created a lesson centered on the power of clothing.

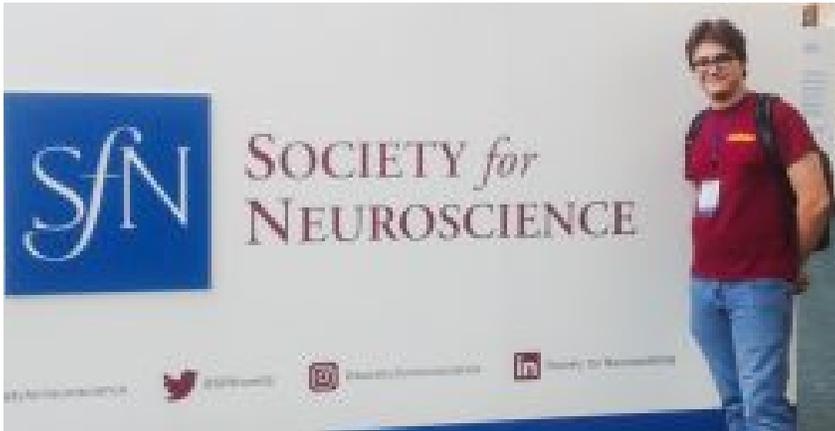
“One of the classes I taught was about the way your outward appearance can influence other things during your day. For example, how you dress can make you feel better and increase your self-confidence. This confidence can affect your presence in the classroom or during presentations. I know that many freshmen worry about doing presentations,” she said. “I wanted to stress how some confidence can come through your clothing, as an extension of your personality. Clothing and fashion are the way you can speak without using words.”

After graduation, Miller wishes to continue into the field of costume design, specifically for The Walt Disney Company. “Completing this project really got me interested in costume design. Before, creating costumes was not something I had on my radar. However, after this experience, I realized how rewarding the process is. It is very exciting to get to make something different than what people wear every single day,” she said.

Miller is not finished yet. This semester, she will be working with the Averitt Center of the Arts again, with their production of *Beauty and the Beast*. She has the opportunity to make both of Belle’s costumes, the blue dress and the yellow ball gown. Disney is on notice.

Alumni Update: Jordan Logue Wins Award for Research

February 1, 2019



1 Jordan Logue attending the Society for Neuroscience conference last fall.

Honors Program alumnus Jordan Logue (biology '13) won the Professional Training Development award at the Society of Neuroscience's annual conference last fall when he presented his team's research, "Effects of Social Isolation Rearing and Ketamine on Hippocampal Synaptic Plasticity."

"I presented our laboratory's work on the experimental anti-depressant ketamine. In humans, extended loneliness has been shown to cause a variety of mental health issues. What we did is model that in a rat and see if we could reverse some of the effects of chronic social

isolation using this new anti-depressant drug," Logue said of the research he is conducting while a graduate student in the Program in Neuroscience at Florida State University.

The award is designed to promote and to recognize ambitious scientists who will benefit from the exposure and give them the experience of sharing their research and adding to the critical conversation. Logue's research at Florida State University is impacting current medicine with human clinical trials

"It is nice to see the work actually make an impact out in the real world," Logue said.

Logue sees his experience in the Honors Program as preparing him for the rigors of graduate school, both at Mercer University where he earned his Master's degree and now at Florida State. Being in the Honors Program allowed him to challenge himself in the classroom while being among a community of like-minded scholars. And it gave him the opportunity to write a thesis.

"I studied the feeding and breeding behavior of sand fiddler crabs. Our research showed that the animals' behavior was linked to lunar cycles, where breeding and feeding cycles among the males gave insights to successful reproductive strategies," he said. After completion, Logue's thesis was published in the *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*.

"I love my friends that I made at Georgia Southern, and I'm really proud of all the work that I did," Logue said.

He also had an opportunity to present his undergraduate research at various conferences, including several with the University Honors Program—notably the National Collegiate Honors Council meeting in 2012.

"I couldn't have participated in all those conferences without the Honors Program funding," Logue said. "It was a great experience to talk about my research with other students and with faculty."

Conferences are a necessary aspect of a college education. Entering a field of professionals allows you to grow and to develop your ideas and research. Logue understands the benefits of participating in the scholarly conversation.

"Conferences allow you to talk to experts in the field about the cutting edge of research. At the Society for Neuroscience meeting, I listened to three lectures from world famous scientists. I met a Nobel Prize winner in person. I conversed with professionals from government agencies and drug companies, piquing their interest in my work," Logue said. "And sometimes you find a new technique. Sometimes you find a place you might want to work. Sometimes you find people you want to collaborate with in the future. I even got invited to speak at another conference next year at the Max Planck Institute."

Many Honors Program students choose to attend graduate school after graduation, and Logue has advice for those thinking about that path. “Research mentors doing specific work that you interested in,” Logue said. “Read the published literature. Find something that interests you. See where authors are from and contact them to learn more about their program.”

“Graduate school differs in terms of how you spend and schedule your time. Undergrad centered on attending classes and participating in extracurricular activities. Graduate school’s focus is spending every moment available to you in your lab,” he said. “The amount of time you use outside of class focusing on one research topic is the biggest difference.”