

## Silver Needle Runway: Out Walking the Competition

By Julia Tartaglia

The lights dim, the guest chatter subsides, and the show begins. But what unfolds on the runway is not just a fashion show—it's the culmination of months of tireless work, collaboration, and innovation. The Silver Needle Runway (SNR), Marist College's premier fashion event, is more than just a display of exquisite designs; it is a testament to the power of experiential learning and student-led creativity. The fashion industry is one of the most competitive, fast-paced, and ever-evolving fields, blending artistry with business astuteness. Marist College recognizes this reality and provides its students with a unique and invaluable experience—an entire Fashion Show Production course dedicated to planning, executing, and perfecting SNR. This is not just a class; it is an immersive, real-world venture where students take on the challenge of producing an event that rivals professional fashion showcases.

Unlike traditional lecture-based courses, the Fashion Show Production class requires students to take full ownership of SNR, making critical decisions about logistics, production, communication, creativity and branding. These 5 teams have their own tasks and responsibilities that contribute to producing the show. Under the guidance of faculty advisor JM Olivera, these students learn the complexities of the fashion industry firsthand. This level of cohesion—between students working toward a common goal and a professor guiding them through the intricacies of event production—is rare in higher education. The 41 students that are a part of the class this year have all been carefully chosen based on their skill sets and creativity. While other fashion programs may focus on theory and technical skills, Marist takes it a step further, allowing students to gain practical experience in fashion show production. They are not merely learning about event planning and execution; they are actively doing it. This immersive approach bridges the gap between academia and industry, providing students with an edge as they step into their careers.

Each year, the SNR show is defined by a central theme that guides the creative direction of the event. This year's theme, P3RS9ECTIVE, was announced at the annual launch party—igniting anticipation and inspiration among students and attendees alike. 'P3RS9ECTIVE' encourages the public to explore new ways of seeing fashion, art, and the world around them. Whether through sustainability, cultural influences, or innovative aesthetics, this theme challenges students to push boundaries and redefine expectations. The 39th annual SNR show will take place on May 9th in the McCann Center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The event will showcase the collections of senior Fashion Design students, marking the pinnacle of their academic journeys. For many, this moment is the culmination of years of dedication, creativity, and hard work.

Marist's Silver Needle Runway is more than just an event—it's a brand, an institution, and a launching pad for future industry leaders. Over the years, it has earned a reputation for excellence, drawing attention from industry professionals and fashion enthusiasts alike. By integrating real-world experience into the curriculum, Marist is setting the standard for fashion

education, ensuring its students are not only prepared but ahead of the curve in an industry that demands innovation and adaptability.

SNR is championed through its seven pillars: creativity and innovation, community, diversity, leadership, sustainability, social responsibility, and transparency. Each pillar is upheld throughout the show's inception to show day itself. The fashion show is the largest event produced by Marist, but is also supplemented by a digital fashion show, blog, podcast, lookbook, merchandise and a documentary. All centered around the theme of the year, these other deliverables increase SNR's brand and push the limits of students' creativity. New projects this year include the making of an SNR app and looking into the use of AI in both the fashion world and the show. Students in Fashion Show Production are problem solvers, and are invested in making the show the best it has ever been.

At a time when fashion is evolving toward sustainability and inclusivity, SNR continues to reflect these shifts, proving that student-led initiatives can drive meaningful change. Whether through their designs or the show's production, students embrace the challenge of creating a dynamic, forward-thinking event that embodies the very essence of fashion today. As the runway lights illuminate the latest creations, the significance of SNR becomes clear: it is more than just a night of glamour—it is a proving ground for the future of fashion. Marist students are not just learning about the industry; they are already walking the runway of success.