

For Immediate Release

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Chicago History Museum and Brentano say “I Do” to *FashioNext* Design competition combines fashion and interior design

Wheeling, IL (March 2010) — *FashioNext* is an ongoing, ground-breaking fashion design competition that challenges established Chicago designers to create a garment inspired by select pieces from the costume collection of the Chicago History Museum (CHM). Following the success of last year's *FashioNext* competition based around *Chic Chicago*, the Museum has revamped the contest to accompany *I Do! Chicago Ties the Knot*, a wedding-themed costume exhibition that will open on May 22, 2010. The three finalist's gowns will be featured at Brentano's NeoCon exhibit in June, and then will be returned to the Museum. The winning piece will be displayed in the *I Do! Chicago Ties the Knot* exhibition for the remainder of its run, and then will go on to become a permanent part of the Chicago History Museum's acclaimed costume collection.

Brentano has once again partnered with the Museum to provide the fabrics for the competition. By using textiles developed for interior design applications, the fashion designers are challenged to rethink the way they use materials. Additionally, the use of upholstery and drapery fabrics creates a unique opportunity to fuse elements of fashion and interior design. Ovation TV and Comcast are the presenting sponsors, with additional support provided by the Costume Council of the Chicago Historical Society, Frost Lighting, and Mercedes Benz.

In December of 2009, eight Chicago-based designers submitted sketches complete with Brentano fabric samples to the panel of judges. The judges have now narrowed the competition to three uniquely inspired designs by Caroline DeVillo, Carla Hwang and Kenneth Park from VWIDON, and Katrin Schnabl, each of whom will bring their vision to life using their selected Brentano fabrics.

This year's judges are:

- D. Graham Kostic, Style Editor, Modern Luxury Magazines, LLC
- Tim Long, Curator of Costumes, Chicago History Museum
- Roger Price and Tommy Walton, Price Walton, *FashioNext* 2009 winners
- Andrea Kalish Reynders, Professor, Department of Fashion Design, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
- Gaynor Strachan-Chun, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Ovation TV
- Noren Ungaretti, President, Costume Council of the Chicago Historical Society
- Cassie Walker, Senior Editor, *Chicago Magazine*
- Iris Wang, Vice-President, Design and Marketing, Brentano

Additionally, the public is invited to act as a ninth judge by voting for their favorite gown from May 20-June 20. The winning garment will earn one vote in the judging process.

The winning garment will be announced live at the *FashioNext* finale event held at the Chicago History Museum on Thursday, June 24, 7:00 p.m. Hosted by CHM Curator Timothy Long, the three finalists will share their inspirations and experiences as models showcase the gowns, with a cocktail reception to follow. Tickets for the *FashioNext* finale party can be purchased from the [Chicago History Museum](http://www.chicagohistorymuseum.org).



Designer: [Caroline DeVillo](#)

Inspiration: Givenchy Wedding dress and cape, 1967

Brentano fabrics: [Eco-Satin-Paper Birch](#)



Designer: [Carla Hwang and Kenneth Park](#), [VWIDON](#)

Inspiration: Scassi Wedding dress, 1958

Brentano fabrics: [Spring Morning-Snowfall](#), [Spring Morning-Ivory](#), [Spring Morning-Pollen](#)



Designer: [Katrin Schnabl](#), **Lineamente**

Inspiration: Scassi Wedding dress, 1958

Brentano fabrics: [Eco-Satin-Gladiola](#), [Garcon-Bow Tie](#), [Siam-Melon Seed](#), [Mao Mao-Tai](#), [Blouson-Felicia](#), [Tranquility-Koi Pond](#)



©All designer sketches and inspiration photos courtesy of the Chicago History Museum.

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About Brentano:

Founded in 1990 by Design Director Iris Wang and her husband and President E-Kwan Chen, Brentano has grown from a modest beginning of eight patterns to an internationally represented textile house. Brentano's fabrics stem from Wang's philosophy of balancing beauty + performance. Their growing collection of eco-fabrics expands this ideology by demanding textiles to meet thoroughly researched standards of environmental consciousness while maintaining their beauty. Celebrating their 20th anniversary in 2010, Brentano continues to offer a variety of innovative and interesting textiles, including eco-friendly faux leather, high performance upholstery, fire-resistant, outdoor and Crypton and Nano-Tex fabrics. Please visit www.brentanofabrics.com for more information.



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