

The Invisible String of College Fashion Connections

By Blythe Weninger

Sitting at the kitchen table as a late teen, deciding what college to go to or what path to take in our lives is a common struggle among us. The stress of choosing the right place, with the right people, to eventually accomplish your dreams and ambitions. A young boy in Louisiana once wanted to find his place in the industry, where several obstacles and people he met along the way carried him to become one of the most celebrated young American designers today.

Christopher John Rogers, born and raised in Louisiana, always had an eye for fashion design, sketching inspiration from his Southern Baptist upbringing. Rogers knew from the beginning he wanted to be in Fashion and even designed a line for Louisiana Fashion week at age 18. When it was time to look for fashion schools to apply to, Rogers immediately gravitated toward one of the best in the nation; the Parsons School of Design. But what Rogers did not anticipate was an obstacle to his dreams as he would later find out his acceptance letter to Parsons was lost in the mail. Crushed but determined to find another school to accomplish his ambitions to be a designer, Rogers enrolled in the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), where he soon met his future team that would help accomplish his dream of launching his label.

Under the lights of The Metropolitan Museum of Art at age 28, Christopher John Rogers had his first live interview with journalist Alina Cho. Within the audience were numerous students, influencers, and most notably Roger's team dressed in their CJR trademark neon patterns and extravagant silhouettes. Christina Ripley Brand & Strategy Director, Alexandra Tyler Production Director, and David Rivera, Studio Director are all former SCAD students who stood

by Rogers throughout his college years and the launch of his label for his Senior Thesis Collection in 2016.

Among the most notable attendees is Luke Meagher, a fashion blogger and critic who brings in over 800,000 subscribers on YouTube.

Speaking of his accolades and most notable success being named the CFDA Womenswear designer of the year in 2019, Rogers blushed with humility in speaking upon such a well-deserved accomplishment.

“To go from cutting 5-dollar fabric in our kitchen to winning that award is insane.” Post six year grad, Roger’s titled the “Darling” of the fashion industry by Cho continues to amaze and achieve major fashion moments including his garments featured at the forefront of the Met “In America: An Anthology of Fashion” Exhibit in the costume institute. “I am acutely aware of the coming and going of the fashion darlings in the industry... but I try my best to keep my head down, not dip into too many trends and stay aware of my own path,” said Rogers. While Rogers talks about his career and accolades, his body language gestures towards his team in every word he says.

The connections you meet in college can be the most crucial for your career, dreams, and ambitions. Roger’s story proves just that. The people you meet along the way are some of the most crucial parts in developing the skills to accomplish your biggest dreams.

Being a fashion student in college, we are all trying to find our own path and how we can make a change in this industry. This story of how four college students banded together to create one of the most awarded young American brands proves that the difference and diversity

of backgrounds and ideas can create a collaborative masterpiece that is a force to be reckoned with.

The story of Roger's upbringing in his early career told under the auditorium lights of the Met Theatre illustrates and mimics a lot of other stories of success in the fashion industry; there is never one conventional way to go about it. Our experiences and people we meet shape us into the people we are. Some obstacles along the way and a lost mailed letter in the process may be the biggest blessing yet; it sure was for Rogers.