

## Dog Models Take Over NYC Fashion Institute

**Bark Is the New Black event showcased 11 dogs wearing various designs from students.**

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Zoe, a Miniature Poodle, wearing a design by student Margaret Nawrot. New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) hosted its first-ever pet fashion show, Bark Is the New Black, on April 22. The event showcased designs from 14 students enrolled in the new Pet Product Design and Marketing professional development certificate program, which is offered through FIT's Center for Professional Studies.

"We very much wanted a vehicle by which we could show the students' work," said Joan Volpe, managing coordinator of the Center for Professional Studies.

While FIT has hosted fashion shows for its students majoring in human fashion design, this was the first show of the canine variety. The show, which was organized by students in FIT's special events marketing and public relations class, featured day and evening wear. Knitted sweaters and the color pink were prominent in the day wear segment. Evening wear ranged from simple — a sleek velvet tunic — to flashy — a red and black gown inspired by Moulin Rouge.

A total of 11 dogs big and small decked in one-of-a-kind designs trotted — sometimes raced — down the faux grass runway. All together, 22 looks were presented.

The students whose designs were featured in the show have diverse cultural backgrounds, but most had a professional background in design and fashion. Some work in the pet industry, such as Gladys Delgado-Garced, who owns Dog Gone Couture, a pet apparel and accessory design company based in Philadelphia, Pa.

In addition to the catwalk, the event included an exhibition area of pet products and accessories also created by students enrolled in the certificate program. Among the products on display were dog beds, bowls, collars, and leashes as well as other apparel not featured in the show.

FIT's Center for Professional Studies launched the Pet Product Design and Marketing certificate program in spring 2008. About 45 students are enrolled in the program, Volpe said. The program consists of six courses: fashion design for pet apparel; pet accessory design studio; pet accessories and lifestyle product design; introduction to pet product branding; how to get your apparel and product concepts to market; and quick sketching for the pet product business.

The first group of students to complete the program is expected to receive their certificates in June.