

# Case Study: Virtual Catwalks – Southampton Solent University



## REQUIREMENT

The School of Design at Southampton Solent University was looking for a more engaging way to teach their fashion and creative arts students.

## OUR SOLUTION

Working from mood boards provided by the University Daden created a stunning Second Life island for the University, dominated by a large “glass” structure designed to allow easy movement by flying avatars.

Within the building were dedicated areas for workshops, a gallery and a bar. A key requirement was to be able to use the space to give the students more practise in setting up and running fashion-shows, so Daden built a large auditorium with a cat-walk and a complex light rig controlled by a lighting desk.



The desk lets students set up, store and sequence lighting in a similar way to real-life. Once combined with avatars wearing fashions designed by the students, and a full sound-system tutors and students were able to recreate the whole fashion-show experience within the virtual world.

The virtual environment allowed more than just simulation though. Around the edge of the main

building Daden built a mall of small shops and exhibition spaces.

Students are then able to use these spaces to concept their own ideas around store display and visual merchandising, to exhibit their fashion photography work or to present and discuss their portfolios to industry professionals using the power point screens provided.

*Suzie Norris, Head of the School of Design from SSU said “We have identified opportunities to explore new teaching practice and methodologies within the virtual learning environment and embarking on developing a virtual Fashion and Lifestyle university campus within Second Life has been truly exciting”.*

Staff and students have also engaged in live debate and conversation with academics across the world exploring the potential of virtual worlds as a dynamic, responsive and accessible media with which to communicate.

The student projects the University have run this year are:

- Fashion/Visual Merchandising
- Media Styling/Cultural contexts and social identity
- Interior design/Interior design concepts
- Digital Music/Design spaces.

## RESULTS

The University has presented their research on 'New Learner types and VWE's' at several national and international conferences. The University have also been invited to give a talk at the British Computer Society in October 2009

Further research work is being explored concerning Immersive sensory perception and the fashion narrative developing a practice-led framework to create new discourse of the designer experience in a virtual world environment.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Following on from the success of the Creative Arts build Daden were asked to build a second sim for the Library Information Department. Working with Library staff

Daden turned the usually staid lecture on information science into an underwater maze which students could explore in order to learn about the topic.

## MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the Southampton Solent video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyCb\\_MkjjN0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyCb_MkjjN0)
- Visit the Southampton Solent island in Second Life
- Contact us