



**Top left:** Industry professionals with decades of real-world experience teach students at Haute Couture

**Right:** Students hone their skills in a variety of design-focused programs, including dressmaking, leatherworking and fine arts

**Bottom left:** Joanne Dice, left, and a group of her talented students

# DESIGN: PURE AND SIMPLE

How the individually tailored curriculum at Haute Couture, Vaughan's leading design academy, gives students the advantages they need to excel

**W**hen Joanne Dice, founder and owner of Haute Couture Academy of Fashion, Fine Arts & Design, meets a prospective student, she asks a simple but very important question: What are your goals?

"I ask because I customize every student's individual program," Dice explains, "and I'm constantly meeting with them over the year to make sure they're on track and developing the skill set they need to excel in their chosen field of design."

A fashion designer with more than 30 years of experience, Dice has used her expertise to mentor aspiring designers from her exclusive Vaughan academy since 1998. The advanced, university-level programs she provides give unparalleled preparation, allowing students to shine in even the most competitive university and college courses. It's this superior training that's established Haute Couture as the area's premier design academy.

"We specialize in one thing: Design. And we do it better than everybody," says

Dice. "We're teaching the same programs that they're teaching in university, so when our students get to that next level they are head and shoulders above the pack."

Haute Couture's students hone their skills in a range of design-focused programs, such as sewing, couture dressmaking, leatherworking, fine arts, fashion illustration and related arts, graphic and interior design and more. Instructors are seasoned industry veterans who all work professionally in design. And the results are beyond impressive: 100 per cent of Haute Couture graduates who follow Joanne's custom tailored curriculum are accepted into university and college courses annually.

While portfolio preparation is key, Dice strives to do more than just get her students into the door. She uses her vast industry network to go above and beyond, arranging for students' work to be featured in art galleries, connecting them with internships with designers in the Greater Toronto Area, using her vast array of industry contacts to help them find

employment and helping with tuition costs through a recently established \$1,500 scholarship program.

"We also just secured 10 spots for my students to work backstage with designers at next year's Rome Fashion Week," says Dice. "These are the opportunities that will set my students up for success."

Every July, Haute Couture also hosts an end-of-year fashion and art show gala that attracts well over 500 people. The evening allows students to showcase their beautiful work, and the audience — especially the parents — are always blown away. "They feel like they're at a real, professional show," says Dice. "They can't believe the amazing work these children create," especially considering how Haute Couture's programs are so affordable.

"We're all about design, pure and simple," Dice concludes. "The kids love it, and when they leave, they're confident and more than ready for the road ahead."

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