What we wear and what it says about us!

On Thursday, November 24, Dr. Nancy Butler spoke at the Ban Righ Centre about the significance of clothing and fashion, and their interconnections with self, culture, society, and economy. Dr. Butler, an adjunct professor, in the Department of Gender Studies at Queen’s University, teaches a Gender, Dress, and Fashion course that encourages students to explore their relationships to dress and fashion, through an examination of some of the many ways clothes and fashion matter. With a final project that requires students to design an article of clothing, students are required to illuminate some of the gendered and gendering complexities of “just” getting dressed. Former student Parker O’Connor described what inspired a dress he made from the pages of a Vogue magazine. The audience was fascinated by the student’s response, and understood the pertinence of O’Conner’s and Dr. Butler’s words about how we comprehend ourselves and operate in the world. With this idea in mind, in this newsletter other Queen’s community members share a little bit more about the physical and metaphorical fabrics in our everyday lives.

Student Research Spotlight by Sheilagh Quaile

I’m a first-year PhD student in Art History at Queen’s. My thesis will look at the design and designers of Paisley shawls (that is, shawls made in Paisley, Scotland) during the nineteenth century. The shawls are of interest to me not only because they were a popular and enduring fashion, but because their story is international. Imported to Europe in the mid-eighteenth century from the Kashmir region of India, the cloth that inspired the shawls was favoured due to the softness of its material (which was made from the wool of Himalayan goats) and its ornate and intricate handwoven designs. Some European women fashioned and wore the cloth as shawls. As this trend caught on, French and British manufacturers experimented in replicating the shawl cloth for their domestic markets, and, naturally, the designs and materials were adjusted to suit European climates and manufacturing technologies. Shawl manufacturers in Paisley saw particular success. This was
As promised, on Tuesday, October 18, 2016 the Ban Righ Foundation’s “Inspiring Women: An evening at the Isabel” event inspired! Nearly 500 women, as well as a few men, gathered at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts to celebrate the achievements of Dr. Katherine McKittrick and Ms. Georgette Fry, who received the inaugural Ban Righ Foundation Mentorship and Leadership Awards, respectively. Guest host Shelagh Rogers (BA ’77) guided the four panellists through a series of interesting questions; the panel included Sarah Harmer, Dr. Jane Errington, Reena Kukreja, and Carol Ann Budd. The panellists spoke honestly and humorously, much to the delight of the audience, about their experiences and motivations. The panel was followed by Fry’s Shout Sister Choir, and by singer Chantal Thompson. The evening was not complete without PhD Candidate Sarah Kastner sharing her story, Dr. Elizabeth Greene delivering an original poem (see the next page), and singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer singing three melodious songs. What a wonderfully heart-warming and thought-provoking evening! As one attendee noted, “my soul and mind felt enriched and re-aligned.” What beautiful sentiments! Thank you to all those involved; without your contributions, the event would not have been a success.
Recipe for a miracle:  
form a circle.
Transformation happens  
one cup of tea at a time  
one bowl of soup  
one word after another  
on ordinary rooms become  
sacred space  
where so many  
have found  
voices  
dreams  
woven our stories  
into this tapestry  
which becomes history  
hanging invisible  
in the air  
of these comfortable modest rooms.

At the beginning  
the founders strung  
warp and weft  
with vision, precision.  
Unstoppable Helen Anderson  
Bonnie Judge with her far-seeing eyes  
Margaret Hooey and Jean Royce  
shuttled the thread across  
the loom with such finesse  
the tapestry was begun  
steadily, speedily,  
before anyone could propose objections or more study.  
First director Helen Mathers giving radiant welcomes;  
warm, wry Janet Troughton always making time  
for bottomless pots of tea  
and endless talks— welcoming that lasted through Mary, Barb, Suzi, Karen,  
to now, to Lisa, Gamila, Carole.

Still something in the air:  
Belief, support, connection.  
Form a circle.  
Offer words, thoughts, feelings.  
As voices blend,  
transformation happens;  
miracles occur.  
We add new pictures.  
The tapestry grows longer.  
Silken threads, we become  
Part of the weaving.
The Drug Smart Pharmacy located in the Queen’s Centre has stocked the Ban Righ Centre’s cabinets with emergency supplies of various kinds. They donated several baskets of supplies for women. Mothers of infants will find the change table stocked with diapers and wipes. From Band-aids to cleaning supplies, the Ban Righ Centre now has what it needs to help mature women students address any trials and tribulations. Thanks Drug Smart!

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Visit our website:
http://banrighcentre.queensu.ca
Open 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Monday - Friday

The Bread and Butter Bakery continues to provide fresh, delicious and nutritious loaves of bread to complement the BRC soup lunch for mature women students. The smell of fresh bread and soup are a powerful antidote to the challenges of any day.

On Saturday, October 15, 2016, Women of the Class of Science ‘81 presented their gift to be used for an endowed emergency bursary.

Thank You!