



ע"ש נורי בלומפילד  
ומיסודה של ויצו העולמית

אוניברסיטת  
חיפה



# Religious Tolerance Through Fashion

Fashion Department Students

# INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, religious tolerance is essential for building peace and harmony. The video you're about to watch offers a glimpse into life within the Fashion Department at Haifa University—a vivid example of how unity can thrive across diverse faiths.

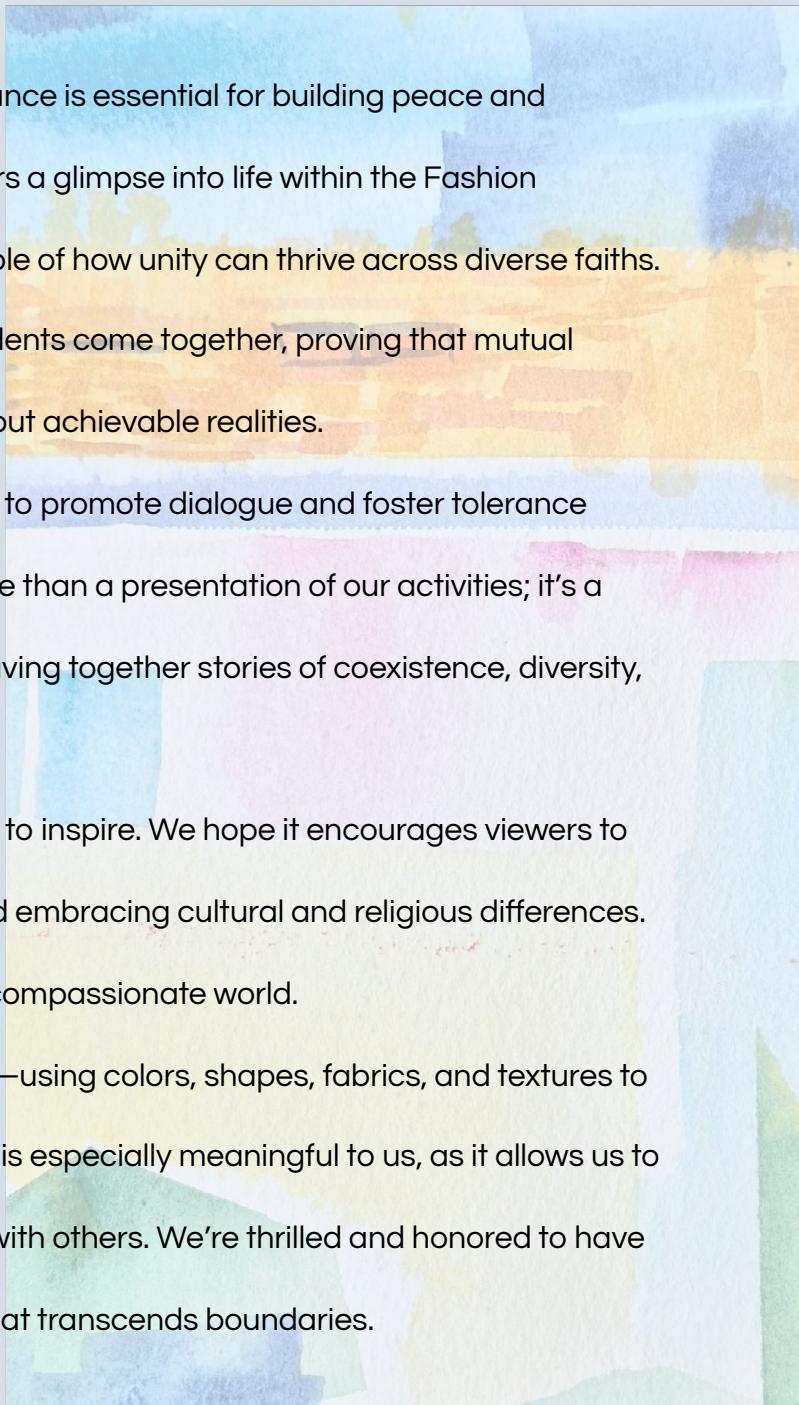
Here, Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christian students come together, proving that mutual respect and understanding are not just ideals but achievable realities.

This video showcases the department's efforts to promote dialogue and foster tolerance among different religious communities. It's more than a presentation of our activities; it's a testament to how fashion can be a bridge, weaving together stories of coexistence, diversity, and shared humanity.

Our goal is not only to introduce our faculty but to inspire. We hope it encourages viewers to reflect on their role in fostering acceptance and embracing cultural and religious differences.

Together, we can create a more inclusive and compassionate world.

As designers, we speak through our creations—using colors, shapes, fabrics, and textures to tell powerful stories without words. This project is especially meaningful to us, as it allows us to share our story in a way that connects deeply with others. We're thrilled and honored to have this unique opportunity to make a statement that transcends boundaries.



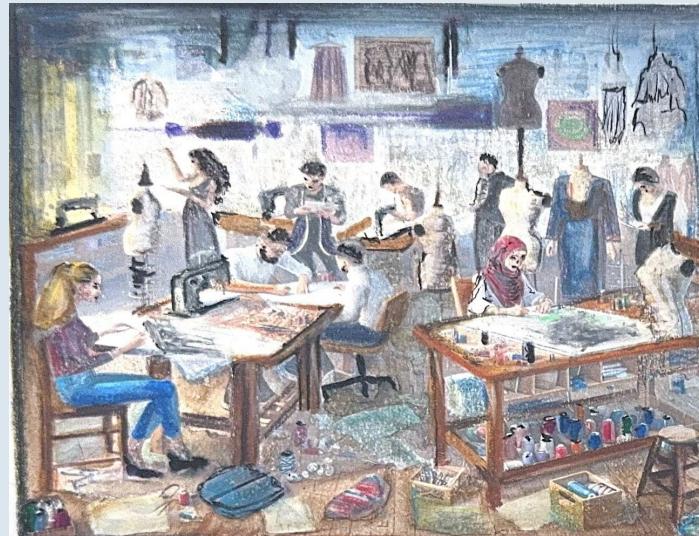
# Stitching Cultures Together: How the University of Haifa Redefines Fashion Education

Fostering design excellence through diversity and inclusion

## A Multicultural Melting Pot in Fashion Education

The Fashion Design Department at the University of Haifa is more than just a hub for aspiring designers—it's a thriving center of cultural exchange and mutual respect. Rooted in a commitment to inclusivity, this department offers a unique educational experience where students from various ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds come together to learn, create, and grow.

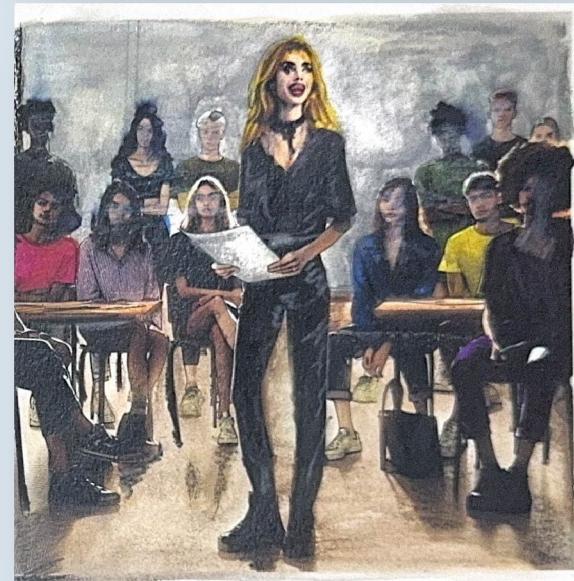
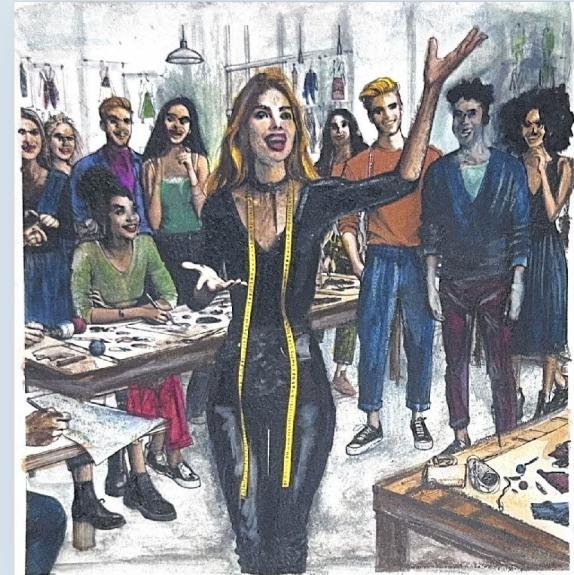
At its core, the program is a microcosm of multiculturalism, reflecting the diversity of the university itself. Beyond developing technical skills in fashion design, students gain a deep understanding of the richness and influence of cultural heritage on creativity. This harmonious blend of design and diversity cultivates an inspiring environment that champions coexistence. The Fashion Design Department at the University of Haifa champions collaboration as a key driver of both academic growth and personal development. By encouraging students to share creative ideas influenced by their diverse cultural backgrounds, the department fosters a dynamic learning environment where cultural identity shapes design aesthetics and trends. This approach not only inspires creativity but also promotes empathy, inclusivity, and mutual respect—skills essential for thriving in today's multicultural world. As Shin (2019) highlights, such inclusive and collaborative settings are vital for cultivating innovation and cross-cultural communication in design education.



Through group projects and cultural exchange initiatives, students gain hands-on experience in approaching fashion design from a global perspective. Working alongside peers from different cultural contexts sharpens their technical abilities and broadens their worldviews, equipping them to navigate and excel in an interconnected, multicultural industry. The department's emphasis on diversity and mutual respect goes beyond teaching technical skills—it exemplifies how academia can foster inclusive environments while driving professional excellence.

Ultimately, the Fashion Design Department at the University of Haifa shapes students not only into talented designers but also into compassionate global citizens. In a world that increasingly values diversity, this program stands out as a model for how education can use fashion as a bridge to unity, cultural understanding, and shared creativity.

Haifa University stands out not only as a reflection of Haifa's rich ethnic mosaic but also as a proactive advocate for inclusivity within its academic walls. Nestled in a city known for its diverse Jewish, Arab, and Druze population, the university embraces this diversity to foster a learning environment that values coexistence and interaction among different cultural groups. Founded in 1963 with the vision to mirror the city's multicultural identity, Haifa University actively implements policies and programs to ensure broad representation from all of Haifa's communities, including special scholarships for underrepresented groups. The mix of students from various backgrounds enriches the university experience, allowing for a vibrant exchange of ideas and promoting social cohesion. By encouraging dialogue and understanding through both classroom dynamics and extracurricular programs, Haifa University doesn't just mirror the city's demographics; it actively enhances them, making it a pivotal platform for academic and professional growth across all communities.



## Haifa University Fashion Department: Promoting Tolerance and Coexistence through Design

At Haifa University's Faculty of Fashion Design, there's a strong focus on fostering an environment where diversity is not just respected, but celebrated. It's more than just talk; the commitment is woven right into what the students do and create. According to Ghosh (2017), the designs students come up with aren't just about looking good – they're about telling stories from different cultures, opening up dialogues, and promoting a sense of unity and acceptance through fashion.

Since fashion can communicate ideas without saying a word, the faculty uses it as a tool to encourage a society that values different cultures and perspectives. It's all about using what we wear as a way to connect with each other and build a community that's open to all cultures.

<https://www.haifa.ac.il>

As'ad Ghanem: Ghanem, A. (2024). The Israeli dominant BLOC system—the rise of the right and the prospects for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In Routledge Handbook on Palestine (pp. 326-342). Taylor and Francis.

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# Encouraging Tolerance and Coexistence

Haifa University's Fashion Department holds a strong commitment to inclusivity and diversity. The curriculum is designed with a global outlook, weaving together elements from a variety of cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. This approach equips students to be catalysts for change in a diverse world. Eck (2001) highlights how this curriculum prepares students to navigate and contribute positively in a multicultural environment. Students at Haifa University engage in discussions about how fashion can bridge cultural differences. They explore how clothing can break down language barriers and connect people worldwide. This type of education not only boosts their design skills but also positions fashion as a key element in promoting global peace and understanding. In practical terms, the department pushes students to incorporate diverse cultural elements into their fashion designs. For example, student projects often include elements from modest dress traditions of various religions including Druze, Islamic, Christian, and Jewish communities (Madan, 2007). This practice not only fosters inclusivity but also respects and celebrates cultural diversity.

## Translating Values into Visual Designs

Fashion isn't just about the latest trends or what's on the runway; it's a powerful form of communication. At Haifa University, there's a strong emphasis on how fashion can convey deep messages. Here, fashion design goes beyond aesthetics - it's about making statements on tolerance, coexistence, and human dignity. Students learn to create pieces that aren't just beautiful, but also meaningful, incorporating themes like modesty. This isn't just about covering up for the sake of tradition; it's a thoughtful choice to honor and embrace diverse cultures and religions.

Imagine a garment that marries an old cultural motif with a slick, modern cut. This kind of design doesn't just appeal to a wide audience; it also bridges cultural gaps, fostering a sense of unity. It's about showing that different cultural identities can not only coexist but can enhance each other when woven together in thoughtful ways.

Moreover, weaving significant religious symbols into fashion isn't just tolerated at Haifa University—it's encouraged. This practice isn't about making a fashion statement alone; it's about weaving a thread of mutual respect and understanding amongst diverse groups. Its fashion designed to break barriers and build bridges, helping people from various backgrounds see what they have in common, promoting solidarity and upholding a collective sense of dignity.

## Religious Diversity and Freedom in Fashion

The department really focuses on the importance of religious diversity and freedom. It understands how crucial places of worship are for both communities and individual growth. In our courses, students learn to take ideas from different religious buildings and their spiritual vibes. They then use these ideas to create designs that are clean, peaceful, and elegant. By doing this, we not only respect the idea of religious freedom, but we also push back against beliefs that divide people. Instead, we aim to bring everyone together in harmony and peace, as noted by (Eck in 2001).

# Practical Effects and Impact

Hafia University's strategy has a clear influence on its graduates, who go on to shape the global fashion industry. These former students apply what they learned about cultural and religious respect during their studies. They use their influence to question common stereotypes and push for a broader, more inclusive view of fashion. This is particularly significant as they emerge as leaders and change-makers in their field. Moreover, the university's fashion department doesn't work in isolation. It partners with various interfaith and cultural groups, enhancing its reach and effectiveness. This cooperation not only enriches students' learning experiences but also establishes fashion as a powerful tool for social change. This approach demonstrates how education can extend beyond academic achievements to inspire real-world impact.

## CONCLUSION



The Fashion Department at Haifa University really focuses on creating a unique learning space where students not only learn about fashion design but also delve into deeper values like tolerance, coexistence, and religious freedom. It's not just about talking the talk; these principles are woven right into the fabric of their curriculum.

What the university does is teach its students to use fashion as a way to express and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures and religions that make up our world. This approach doesn't just broaden the minds of the students; it also plays a big role in showing society how fashion can be more than just trends and dresses—it can actually be a force for promoting understanding and unity among different people. At Hafia, fashion is more than just looking good. It's about making a statement of respect and empathy, showing that these clothes are a dialogue in the ongoing conversation about who we are as a global community. This perspective transforms fashion into a language that goes beyond colors and cuts into the essence of human values.

**"Cross-cultural collaboration in the fashion industry not only enriches creative content but also leads to more innovative outcomes, as evidenced by Jackson and Smith (2021), who assert that diversity in design teams contributes significantly to the richness and variety of creative solutions."**

# Detailed Description of the Video Production Plan:

The discourse of academic collaboration and project management, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the confluence of efforts that characterize the successful culmination of a scholarly endeavor. The present project, engaged upon over the course of the semester, stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication and profound commitment exhibited by the entire team. This collective endeavor was not merely an academic exercise but a passionate pursuit enriched by the substantial dedication of each team member (Smith, 2020).

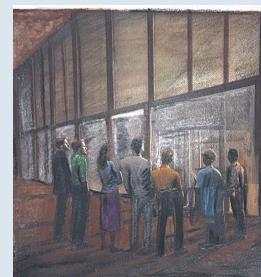
The genesis and successful execution of this project were underpinned by the invaluable contributions of distinguished academicians. We extend our profound gratitude to Dr. Rachil Gets Solomon and Mr. Ihab Jiryis, whose initial proposal set the intellectual groundwork for our research. Their ongoing supervision, monitoring, and support throughout the project lifecycle were crucial in navigating the academic challenges and ensuring the rigour of our investigative processes.

Moreover, our project was significantly enhanced by the involvement of the Manara Center, which boldly addresses the imperative issue of coexistence. The support from the Manara Center was not just logistical but also ideological, providing a foundational ethos that deeply influenced our project's direction. This project also engaged with the intricate tapestry of multiple students sharing a convoluted yet rich mosaic of history, culture, and emotions, articulated through the medium of design and dresses. This thematic exploration was not only an academic query but also a cultural dialog, underscoring the interconnectedness of diverse human experiences through the universal language of design (Kapoor & Singh, 2022).

## Our Story

In the exploration of cultural dynamics within educational environments, particularly in the discipline of fashion design, our institution offers a unique vantage point. The narrative central to our inquiry delves into the manner in which students from diverse backgrounds, each with their distinct cultural heritages, incorporate these influences into their creative expressions. This theme is particularly prescient in a video profiling one of our distinguished students, Yasmina Eawedat a druze, from Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights.

Adruz's experience is emblematic of the complex interplay between personal identity and creative expression. As detailed in the video, her fashion designs do not merely serve as aesthetic endeavors but are profound mediums of cultural and familial connection. The video highlights her method of communication with relatives across the border — a poignant act facilitated by the use of microphones, symbolizing both separation and connection (Thomson, 2021).



Yasmina's story stands out as a compelling example of cultural and religious diversity merging into creative collaboration. Yasmina, a Druze student from the Golan Heights, brings a rich tapestry of cultural heritage that is distinct both geographically and religiously from many of her peers.

The Druze community, to which Yasmina belongs, is a religious minority primarily found in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. Originating in the 11th century from Isma'ili Islam, the Druze faith emphasizes philosophy, sincerity, and altruism, with a strong sense of community identity that discourages conversion. The Golan, Yasmina's home, presents a unique backdrop; it's a region characterized by its rocky terrain and panoramic vistas, quite different from the bustling urban life of Haifa.

In the microcosm of Haifa University's Fashion Department, Yasmina works alongside students of various backgrounds, including Jewish, Muslim, and Christian peers. This diverse setting not only enhances creative outcomes but also serves as a real-time model for coexistence. The collaborative projects here, possibly involving the fusion of traditional Druze motifs with contemporary fashion trends, illustrate how students from different backgrounds can bring their unique perspectives into a harmonious and innovative unity.

Highlighting Yasmina and her project within this context not only underscores the individual contributions of students from minority backgrounds but also showcases the university as a space where cultural and religious diversity is not just accepted but is a celebrated part of the creative process. This dynamic interaction enriches everyone involved, providing a fertile ground for learning and mutual respect that extends beyond the university into the broader society.

This act of communication is not just literal but deeply metaphorical. Through her fashion creations, Adruz articulates a narrative of cultural resilience and connectivity. Her designs, imbued with the essence of her cultural heritage, act as a conduit through which dialogues are fostered not only within the confines of the academic setting but also beyond, reaching out to the global community (Kaplan & Wang, 2019).

The academic setting of our faculty serves as a crucible for such transformative exchanges. It is here that the personal histories and cultural narratives of our students, like a druze, are woven into the broader tapestry of educational discourse, contributing to a richer, more nuanced understanding of the role of cultural diversity in creative industries (Fernandez & Apte, 2022).

In conclusion, the video featuring Yasmena a druze is not merely a student profile; it is a testament to the power of educational environments in nurturing creative professionals who are profoundly connected to their cultural identities while being active participants in a globally interconnected world. This narrative not only enriches our understanding of cultural influence in design but also underscores the importance of communication—both as a personal bridge to family and a professional tool in fashion design.

In the academic exploration of cross-cultural interactions within educational settings, the Fashion Design Department at Haifa University serves as a pertinent case study. This department exemplifies a microcosm of coexistence where students from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds converge to express and reshape their identities through the medium of fashion.



# Opening Sequence

The initial visual portrayal offers an aerial perspective of the campus, symbolically situating it as a nexus of cultural amalgamation. The ensuing scenes depict students from various backgrounds—Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Christian, and Druze—engaged in the creative processes of fashion design. This setting is not merely a backdrop but a dynamic space where cultural narratives and artistic innovation interlace.

The camera's focus on the students, energetically collaborating around tables laden with sketches and mood boards, underscores a collective engagement with fashion as both an art form and a form of cultural expression. Here, fashion transcends its conventional role, acting as a vehicle for cultural dialogue and mutual understanding.



## Case Study

Yasmina Ewidate, a student with Syrian roots, embodies the narrative of cultural resilience and creative expression. Her designs, inspired by Syrian prints, are not just aesthetic creations but narrations of her personal and cultural journey. The visual focus on her intense, purposeful demeanor as she works on her designs invites viewers to perceive fashion design as a meticulous, thoughtful practice.

As Yasmina shares her experiences and the challenges of living near the Israel-Syria border, the narrative deepens. The garment she creates serves as a confluence of her Syrian heritage and her present reality in Israel, thus fashioning a tangible representation of hybridized cultural identity. This segment effectively utilizes close-up shots of the garment's details, emphasizing the intricate melding of traditional patterns with contemporary design elements, to highlight the dual narratives of heritage and modernity.

## Interactive Dynamics

The presentation scene is particularly poignant. As Yasmina explains the significance of her garment, the camera captures the rapt attention of her peers, reflecting a shared engagement with her story. This interaction is not merely academic but is imbued with empathy, respect, and emotional connectivity, illustrating the potential of fashion education to foster community and understanding across cultural divides.

Post-presentation interactions further underscore the theme of unity and mutual appreciation. Visuals of students exchanging ideas, compliments, and smiles serve as affirmations of the department's role in nurturing an inclusive community where creative and cultural exchanges flourish.

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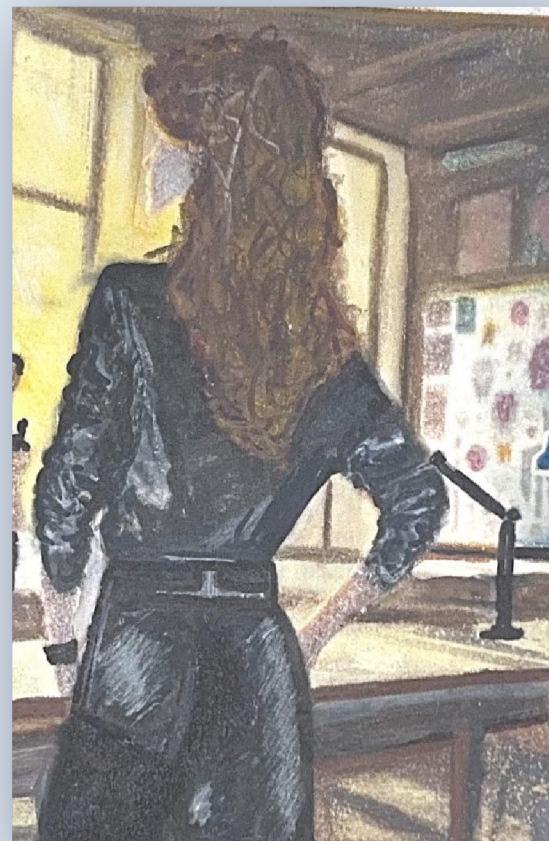
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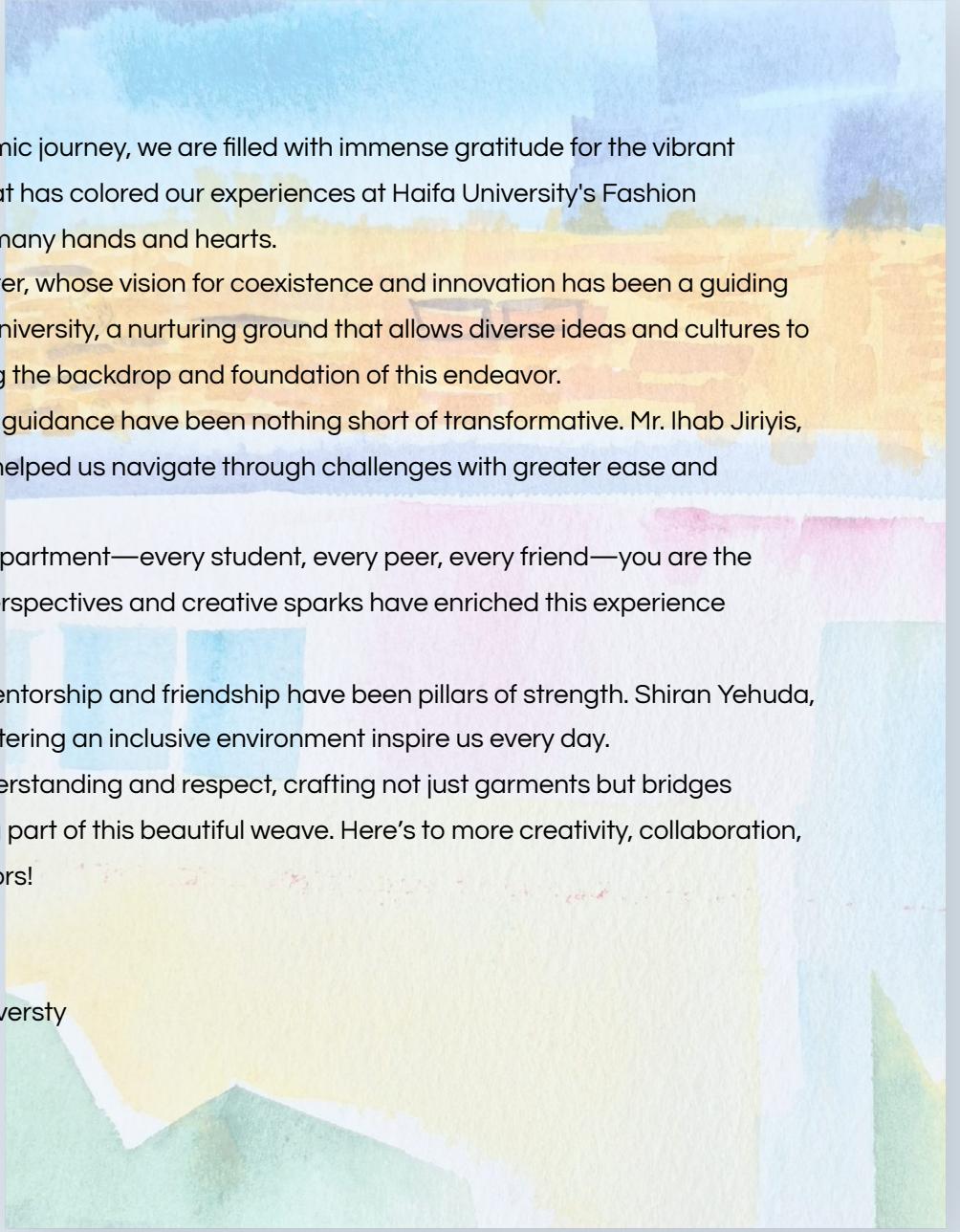
## Conclusion

In conclusion, the poignant visual of Yasmina gazing contemplatively out of the window in the final scene of our video serves as a powerful symbolic gesture that captures the overarching sentiment of optimism and potential unity that permeates the environment of Haifa University's Fashion Department. The choice of soft, warm lighting coupled with the serene backdrop are not merely aesthetic decisions; they are imbued with significant metaphorical weight, suggesting the immense possibilities inherent in educational settings that prioritize cultural integration and harmony.

This narrative construction goes beyond the mere portrayal of individual experiences, such as that of Yasmina. It strategically positions the Fashion Design Department at Haifa University as an exemplary locus where the confluence of creative vigor and educational principles fosters a dynamic platform for cross-cultural dialogue and mutual comprehension. Here, fashion is not just an expression of personal identity but also a dialogic tool that stitches diverse cultural narratives into a cohesive fabric, showcasing the potential of creative disciplines to bridge societal divides.

By documenting these stories and embedding them within the academic pursuit of fashion design, the department underscores its commitment to cultivating an environment where cultural diversity is not only accepted but celebrated. This approach not only enriches the student experience but also elevates the educational discourse to one that is fundamentally inclusive and integrative, making a compelling case for the role of specialized education in spearheading societal transformation and cultural coalescence.





As we turn the final pages of this academic journey, we are filled with immense gratitude for the vibrant tapestry of support and collaboration that has colored our experiences at Haifa University's Fashion Department. This work is a mosaic of many hands and hearts.

A heartfelt thank you to the Manara Center, whose vision for coexistence and innovation has been a guiding light throughout our research. To Haifa University, a nurturing ground that allows diverse ideas and cultures to flourish side by side—thank you for being the backdrop and foundation of this endeavor.

Dr. Rachl Gets Slomon, your insights and guidance have been nothing short of transformative. Mr. Ihab Jiriyis, your support and encouragement have helped us navigate through challenges with greater ease and confidence.

To all the spirited souls at the Fashion Department—every student, every peer, every friend—you are the heartbeat of this journey. Your diverse perspectives and creative sparks have enriched this experience immeasurably.

Alina Yanover and Lali Fruehling, your mentorship and friendship have been pillars of strength. Shiran Yehuda, your enthusiasm and commitment to fostering an inclusive environment inspire us every day.

Together, we have woven a fabric of understanding and respect, crafting not just garments but bridges between cultures. Thank you all for being part of this beautiful weave. Here's to more creativity, collaboration, and coexistence in all our future endeavors!

With warmth and appreciation,

Fashion department students- Haifa University

# Biography

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