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Interview with Chris Cone, Portland Fashion Week, 2011 (audio)

Chris Cone

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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
SUSTAINABILITY HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW INDEX

INTERVIEWEE: Chris Cone

Interviewer: Daniel Grey

Date: Feb 22

Location of Interview: Via Delicia

Research Assistant: Chris White

Interview Series: Documenting Sustainable Practices in the Pacific Northwest

Recording Equipment: DIGITAL RECORDER (WINDOWS MEDIA AUDIO FILE) WITH AN
EXTERNAL, OMNIDIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

Time	Notes
00:38	When did you move to Portland?
00:44	What brought you to Portland from California? School, family members.
01:14	What did you study in California? Nothing of consequence.
01:32	What did you study in Portland? Reed College, Sociology.
01:36	How did you like it at Reed College? Look back on it fondly, unique experience due to age, sophomore year he was 28.
02:16	How did you get involved with your current work at BFW? Worked for Vestes, a wind turbine company located in Portland, also held small fundraisers, Low quality shows very high quality products. 2006 he formed a company and developed the Portland fashion week. Eco friendly base
04:22	Who were the first designers to turned you on to this? Ana Cohen, Michelle Decorsy, Alice Dobson, Allison Covington, other outside designers.
05:19	What do you do as fashion show manager? Recruiting designers models, Production, Schmoozing politicians and fire marshals.
06:19	Could you tell us any particularly juicy schmoozing experiences? Pure Space, fire marshal, practical joke, however it was just a joke.
07:50	How much of what we see is the product of Chris Cone? The actual show, Manage

	from the top down, Model Selection, Line ups, how to put designers together, collaboration.
09:11	How do you find those people? Volunteers, Elizabeth Malo, travel to other fashion shows in NYC and LA.
10:20	How did you get into the journalism aspect of your job? Examiner, Eco Fashion World.
11:32	Can you tell us one of those stories that move you? Fern Malice, Exec V.P. IMG, networking, professional hero, NY media tour.
13:55	What makes fashion week a unique animal? Not many resources, featuring under-known designers, multiple hats: Marketing, PR company, Business coaches,
15:55	How do you get designers to get there? Self Promotion, Customers, Get them talking, Viral Market, Sell tickets, Trunk shows.
17:16	What does corporate sponsorship entail? Self promotion, instead of charging design, high production values, provide high level showcase for independent designers
18:58	How do you engage with sponsors? Corps, approach Fashion week, partner Tito, networking, past sponsors.

20:16	Can you give us an example of that, old participation with sponsors? 2010, Solar World, Backyard Budgets, Co-sponsored Designer, funded photo shoots, tag line, campaign.
21:59	How do you define a sustainable fabric? How and where they are grown, Fair Trade, Carbon Foot Print, shipping.
23:12	How do you learn those facts? Designers
23:53	What is an exciting fabric for you? Bamboo, organic cotton, organic silk, traditional fabrics, increase in demand for eco-friendly projects, growing trend in diversification.
25:42	How much demand for more diverse materials have you seen? More options, more selection, stigmas.
26:32	What are those stigmas? Potato sack, Hippy-ish clothes, Stella McCartney
28:00	What if anything is different to you about the visual aesthetic of eco friendly materials? Difficult, diversified, core group of eco-conscience customers and

	designers, “green” price of admission, style, quality, durability.
30:40	Tell us about the sustainable fashion markets in Portland? Market is challenged, independent boutiques, dedicated green stores,
31:52	Have you seen market penetration in the department stores? No, Stella McCartney, Ana Cohen, many too small.
33:20	What role have you seen mass production and the bottom line in sustainable design? Bridget Catice, same as anyone else, Gerona, recycled fabrics, recycled garments.
35:20	Does Portland Fashion Week help with meeting those challenges? Not very much, lack of funds, produce size runs, artisan designers, displays, live models, installations
37:09	How do you choose designers? Local businesses, designers, consultants, paneled juries
38:55	Tell us about Catapult. Free shows, prize pack, Portland monthly magazine, competition, auditions, and audience participation.
39:58	What role have you seen community play in developing Portland fashion industry? It’s everything, independent designers, all about community, multiple industries, Project Runway, 3 of the last 4 winners of Project Runway, bridging with other communities, Solar World.
43:00	In your experience what role does “fun” and fashion play in sustainability? Ana Cohen, “Fashion + Sustainability”
44:58	How much do you work with the Designers? Mostly support.
45:55	What are some of your proudest achievements? Raised Portland’s Fashion Week, International Events, Eco-Press.
47:22	How did you get PFW, on their radar? World book Moda, Italy, Milan, Networking, Sweden, UK, Spain, Pakistan.
49:09	Tell us about how you met and decided to found Portland Fashion week? Portland fashion incubator, Todd Folk, event production.
51:26	What are some of your persistent challenges? Money, corporate sponsorship, volunteers.
52:46	Tell us about those challenges. Production services, graphic design and Web management.

