PARSONS THE NEW SCHOOL FOR DESIGN APPOINTS SHELLEY FOX
AS FIRST DONNA KARAN PROFESSOR OF FASHION DESIGN FOR NEW MFA PROGRAM

Professorship Endowed by Fashion Design Legend and Parsons Alumna will
Spearhead Development of Innovative MFA Program in Fashion Design and Society

NEW YORK, February 26, 2008—Parsons The New School for Design has announced the appointment of Shelley Fox as the first Donna Karan Professor of Fashion Design. In this role, Fox will spearhead the development of a new Master of Fine Arts Program in Fashion Design and Society at Parsons, which will be the first program of its kind in the United States.

Fox is an award-winning designer who has created numerous experimental and innovative womenswear collections that have been exhibited in the U.S. and internationally. She has built an international following as a conceptual designer renowned for her unorthodox pattern cutting and for her constant questioning of convention. For the past three years, she has focused on research-based projects, and most recently served as a Senior Research Fellow at Central St. Martins College of Art and Design and the Course Director of the Masters of Art in Fashion Design and Enterprise at the University of Westminster in England, where she led the development of the program.

“Shelley's extensive experience as a designer, research fellow, and educator whose work explores the boundaries of design and social practice makes her ideally suited to lead the development of our new Masters of Fine Art in Fashion Design and Society," said Tim Marshall, the dean of Parsons. "This new program is envisioned as an advanced academy for the study of fashion design for a select group of talented designers who want to further develop and broaden their skills. These students will learn how to become 'cultural barometers' as they explore the different ways in which societies utilize fashion as an expression of cultural tradition and personal identity."

With its focus on placing fashion in a global context, the program will be fully international in scope, with a faculty and student body from around the world. The program will also forge connections with the other disciplines of study at The New School, from the social sciences to business, marketing, technology, sustainability and design history.

"What appealed to me about the Donna Karan Professorship was the opportunity to create a new type of graduate program that embraces collaboration between the disciplines and draws upon the unparalleled resources to be found at Parsons and the larger university," said Fox. "My vision for the program is to provide students with the advanced design and research skills they need to become successful designers, including a critical awareness for self development and growth."

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The Donna Karan Professorship was made possible through a gift from the renowned designer and Parsons alumna, whose own career has embraced a broader view of fashion that helped define a new chapter in American fashion. She has played a crucial role in supporting the academic growth of Parsons as a member of its Board of Governors, as a guest critic and lecturer, and as an advocate for and generous donor to Parsons. In addition to her gift supporting the creation of an Masters of Fine Arts program, this support has ranged from special projects that have enabled students to engage in real-world issues to a lecture series dedicated to her late husband Stephan Weiss that brings innovative design and business thinkers to Parsons.

"As a student at Parsons, I gained an appreciation of the impact of fashion and all forms of design on the world around us," said Karan. "I am excited by the choice of Shelley Fox to lead this innovative program, which will open the eyes of young, talented designers to the many ways in which fashion influences cultures across the globe."

The MFA in Fashion Design and Society will be integrated into the larger fashion design program at Parsons, which includes a BFA in Fashion Design and AAS degrees in Fashion Studies and Fashion Marketing. The school is now searching for a Chair of Fashion Design at Parsons, which most recently was held by Tim Gunn, who was named Honorary Chair of Fashion last spring when he was appointed Chief Creative Officer of Liz Claiborne. The chair will help foster connections between these established programs and the new MFA program, as well as with other programs across the school and university, so that it can have a larger impact on general approaches to fashion studies and design at Parsons.

About Shelley Fox

Shelley Fox completed her MA in Fashion Design with distinction at the Central St. Martins College of Art and Design in 1996. Upon graduation, she has created numerous experimental and innovative women’s wear collections that have been included in exhibitions in the UK, Europe, and New York at such institutions as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Barbican Art Gallery, and the Crafts Council in London; the ModeMuseum in Antwerp; and the Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She is currently featured in the exhibition "Evolution/Revolution: The Arts and Crafts in Contemporary Fashion and Textiles" at the Rhode Island School of Design; and will participate in the forthcoming "Gothic: Dark Glamour" at The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, opening September 5, 2008. Her collections have also been included in British Council exhibitions that have traveled throughout Eastern and Western Europe and Tokyo. Her work has also received several awards such as the Jerwood Fashion Prize (1999), the Peugeot Design Award for Textiles (1999), and more recently she has been awarded the Stanley Picker Fellowship for Design (2006) and was one of six nominees for the Prince Philip Design Prize 2007. She has built an international following and is recognized as a conceptual designer, renowned for her unorthodox pattern cutting and constantly questioning design conventions.

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For the past three years, rather than producing commercial collections, she has focused her work on research-based projects with private exhibition funding. In a project sponsored by the UK Medical Research Council, she is currently collaborating with Nobel prizewinning scientist Peter Mansfield, who pioneered the MRI, on a collection. The project is part of "Fabrics of Life," a series that explores the interface between the science of design and the designs of science. She has received three awards from the Arts Council England for research and development; including a Research Fellowship from Central St. Martins College, where she most recently served as a Senior Research Fellow, working on refining the theory and methods used in practice-based research to allow for groundbreaking innovations that have cultural and social benefit. In addition to her research fellowship position at Central St. Martins College, she also served as the Course Director for the MA in Fashion Design and Enterprise at the University of Westminster, leading the development of this new graduate program.

She has taught courses in Womenswear, Knitwear and Textiles, taking a "hands-on" approach in a studio environment with students, providing feedback and critiques, as well as advising students on their final-year collections at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. For the past ten years she has taught at a variety of institutions in England, including the Royal College of Art, Goldsmiths University, Kingston University, Nottingham Trent University, and the Bunka School from Tokyo at the London College of Fashion. Most recently, she taught Second Year Women’s Wear Knitwear and Textiles for the Central St. Martins College of Art and Design.

**About Donna Karan**

Donna Karan established her signature label in 1984 with her late husband Stephan Weiss, which was acquired by the French luxury conglomerate, LVMH, Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton in 2001. The company’s phenomenal success stemmed from Karan’s desire to “design modern clothes for modern people,” founded on a simple bodysuit that became an instant fashion classic. Karan conceived of a system of dressing based on "seven easy pieces" that work together to create an entire wardrobe. After finishing her second year of studies at Parsons in 1966, Karan was hired by Anne Klein (she later received her bachelor’s degree in 1987, and also earned an honorary doctorate from Parsons in 2004). After three years as an associate designer, Karan was named successor following Klein’s death in 1974. Louis Dell’Olio, a classmate and friend of hers from Parsons, joined her a year later and together they designed The Anne Klein Collection. In 1982, Karan created Anne Klein II, originating the concept of bridge and lifestyle dressing in fashion. Karan has received numerous accolades throughout her career. The Council of Fashion Designers of America has saluted her an unprecedented seven times, including its lifetime achievement award in 2004. That same year Fashion Group International gave Karan its “Superstar Award," the first ever given to an American designer.

**About Parsons The New School for Design**

Located in the heart of New York City, Parsons The New School for Design is one of the most prestigious and comprehensive colleges of art and design in the world. Parsons has been a pioneer in the field of art and design since its founding in 1896, establishing the first degree programs in Interior Design, Advertising and Graphic Design, and Fashion Design in the nation and an early pioneer in Design and Technology. This visionary leadership has led to five generations of graduates who are some of the most highly recognized individuals in their fields.

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With the launch of the first fashion design program, Parsons is credited with giving birth to Seventh Avenue, the epicenter of American fashion. Today, it is estimated that 70 percent of the design talent on Seventh Avenue is Parsons educated. Parsons graduates form a who's who list in fashion, from such legendary designers as Adrian, Claire McCardell, and Norman Norell, to industry leaders Tom Ford, Marc Jacobs, Donna Karan, Reed Krakoff, Isaac Mizrahi, Narciso Rodriguez, and Yeohlee Teng, to emerging talents such as Doo.Ri, Derek Lam, Proenza Schouler, Behnaz Sarafpour, Peter Som, Vena Cava and Ashleigh Verrier. Parsons offers a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in Fashion Design, where students confront the challenges of the real world of the fashion industry while cultivating a personal design philosophy that is fully realized in a senior year thesis collection. The school also offers AAS Degrees in Fashion Studies and Fashion Marketing, which are intensive one- to two-year courses of study geared toward professionals from other fields that are looking to break into the fashion industry.

Today, Parsons focuses on creating engaged citizens and exceptional artists, designers, scholars, and business leaders through a design-based education. Parsons students learn to rise to the challenges of living, working, and creative decision-making in a world where human experience is increasingly designed. As a vital part of The New School, Parsons is forging new ground at the intersection of design and the social sciences. Embracing the principles of interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation and social responsibility, the Parsons curriculum engages students with a critical awareness of complex social issues such as sustainability and globalization. For more information, please contact www.parsons.newschool.edu.

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