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Ready to Share Event Featured Provocative Trend Forecasts, Sleek Fashion Shows and an Eclectic Mix of Experts, Artists From Fashion, Music, TV and Film Industries

Leaders discussed their creative process and views on the future of creative ownership, as well as fashion as entertainment, at conference presented by the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center.

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., (February 1, 2005) – Top names in fashion, music, television, film and academia converged Saturday at the USC Annenberg School for Communication in Los Angeles to consider the delicate line between inspiration and knockoff and legal and illegal sampling, as well as the future of creativity in fashion and entertainment, beginning an exploration that will continue to be studied in-depth by fellows at the school’s Norman Lear Center. At the groundbreaking conference event, Ready to Share: Fashion & the Ownership of Creativity, designer Tom Ford joined television producers Norman Lear and Michael Patrick King, along with music producers Danger Mouse, T Bone Burnett and Richard Nichols (The Roots) and singer-songwriter Sam Phillips, among other industry leaders, to delve into the cultural nexus of fashion and entertainment.

Spirited sessions were interspersed with live fashion shows, slide shows, films and videos. Television innovator Norman Lear discussed some of the riskier creative choices he made in his legendary career, such as allowing Archie Bunker to sing “God Bless America” without legal clearance, and Michael Patrick King explained how fashion – and Manolo Blahnik shoes, in particular – became a leading character in Sex and the City.

Tom Ford said he was flattered by knockoffs of his work – although Gucci, where he served as creative director, was not so pleased – as he discussed his creative process and his own practice of homage. Timely predictions came from The New York Times’ Guy Trebay, who anticipates a rise in limited editions from the premiere fashion houses who are struggling against piracy, and David Wolfe, America’s foremost fashion forecaster, announced the demise of youth-oriented celebrity culture and the rise of “deluxe minimalism,” which will appeal to well-to-do baby boomers.

T Bone Burnett railed against the outdated practices of the music industry, and The Roots producer Richard Nichols argued that sampling is here to stay while mash-ups may be a passing trend. In an ironic twist, Danger Mouse, the creative force behind the illegal mash-up of Jay-Z’s Black Album and The Beatles’ White Album, admitted his initial anxiety about the release of the Grey Video, an illegal mash-up of Jay-Z footage and Beatles footage, set to Danger Mouse’s mix. Impressed by the Grey Album, Grammy-nominated Sam Phillips asked Danger Mouse to “please mash me!”

In a live fashion show, renowned designer Kevan Hall showcased his glamorous spring collection, which was joined on stage by period garments that inspired him. Cameron Silver, named one of TIME Magazine’s “25 Most Influential Names and Faces in Fashion” produced a unique live fashion presentation on the evolution of the Chanel jacket and its many imitators. Silver ultimately challenged the audience – and notably, host Norman Lear, who took a turn on the catwalk – to differentiate the knockoffs from the originals.
Former Xerox PARC director John Seely Brown considered the correspondence between creativity in fashion and digital entertainment and the dissonance between new creative technologies and historic copyright norms. "In the digital environment, the only thing worse than being sampled," concluded NYU’s Siva Vaidhyanathan, paraphrasing Oscar Wilde, "is not being sampled."

Presented by the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center and sponsored by The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising/FIDM, the Ready to Share event included a keynote by David Wolfe; a conversation with former Gucci Creative Director Tom Ford and Guy Trebay; a panel on the future of music with producer Jon Taplin, T Bone Burnett, Danger Mouse, Richard Nichols and Sam Phillips; fashion shows produced by designer Kevan Hall, vintage clothier Cameron Silver and Women’s Wear Daily’s Rose Apodaca; a discussion on the fashion/entertainment nexus with Norman Lear and Michael Patrick King, joined by EMI Music’s Ted Cohen, Los Angeles Times’ Booth Moore and actress-director Sheryl Lee Ralph; and a mind-meld on the future of sharing, featuring John Seely Brown and Siva Vaidhyanathan, author of Copyrights and Copywrongs.

Following the event, guests attended a grand reception celebrating the opening of the 13th annual Art of Motion Picture Costume Design Exhibition at FIDM, featuring costumes from the 2005 Academy Award®-nominated films for Best Costume Design.

Video of the entire event and a photo gallery are available online at www.readytoshare.org. The Ready to Share project will publish new research on intellectual property law in fashion; a comparison of the fashion and music industries; and an examination of the nature of creativity in fashion, which mirrors the creative process in other industries now reeling from the effects of the digital revolution. Drafts are available on request. A DVD and book on the project are forthcoming.

For more information and interviews, please contact Michele Botwin Raphael at (323) 782-3316 or mraphael@usc.edu. More information is available at www.readytoshare.org.

Ready to Share is presented by the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center’s Creativity, Commerce & Culture project, funded by the Center for the Public Domain. FIDM is a proud sponsor of this event.