

The Brother logo is displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font in the upper left corner of the page.A full-page photograph of Wiki Wang, the winner of the competition, standing outdoors with her arms outstretched. She is wearing a long, flowing, white and pink halter-neck gown. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery and a brick path.

BROTHER SPONSORS ST. LOUIS EMERGING DESIGNERS FASHION COMPETITION WITH A \$6 THOUSAND PRIZE PACKAGE

*Wiki Wang Wins Grand Prize at
'Pins and Needles' Fashion Competition*

Brother continues to make a difference in the lives of up-and-coming designers as they recently sponsored the 'Pins and Needles' St. Louis Fashion Competition for the first time this past August. Brother was front and center to support the popular competition for these aspiring designers and donated a prize package worth close to \$6,000.

For the past eight years, Dwight Carter, owner and producer of Brainchild Events, has hosted 'Pins and Needles' to create a platform for emerging fashion designers to showcase their talents and collections. "It's an exciting and rewarding feeling to know I can help bring exposure to such talented young designers," said Dwight. With over 20 years of experience in the music production industry, along with his fashion background in the retail business, Dwight has a winning combination of skill and know-how to make things happen. This year, Dwight also knew that he wanted to partner with a fashion-focused sewing/embroidery market leader. He reached out to Brother and asked them to sponsor. Brother was more than happy to oblige.

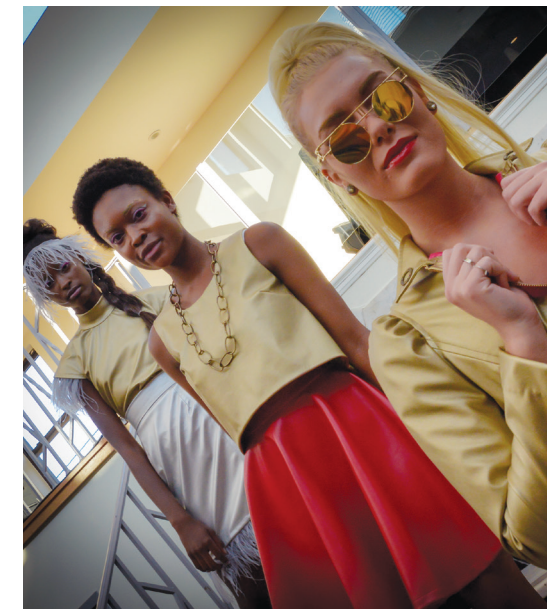
"I start the vetting process early by reaching out to students in fashion programs locally and nationwide, as well as contacting the heads of fashion departments in various markets," Dwight explained. This year, over 50 hopeful designers submitted applications for a chance to be one of six contestants to compete in the competition. To qualify, contestants had to meet specific entry requirements, which included a minimum of one year of semi-professional design experience, a five-year business plan, sketches of their

designs, and a brief explanation of their design influences.

After careful consideration, six finalists were chosen to compete. "The contestants had eight weeks to complete their collections," said Dwight. "The process is like a 'fashion boot camp' where they have to search for the right models to wear their designs, choose the music for their runway showing, select the appropriate hair and makeup, and tap into social media to market themselves. It's a great overall experience for them."

Judging the competition were nine fashion industry experts, including Kimberli MacKay, Product Specialist for Brother International Corporation. "I was honored to represent Brother at 'Pins and Needles,'" said Kimberli. "It was a privilege to participate as one of the judges to not only support the industry but to support our next generation of emerging designers." The prize package donated by Brother included the Brother Innov-is NQ3500D sewing and embroidery machine, 110-thread embroidery set (two wire racks of 1,100 yards per spool), concealed zipper foot, tear-away medium weight stabilizer, water soluble stabilizer, and the My Custom Stitch book. "Brother has redefined the sewing and embroidery industry and has strengthened the relationship between sewing and the fashion industry. We stand behind emerging designers and their dreams," said Dean F. Shulman, Senior Vice President, Brother International Corporation.

Winning the grand prize at the competition was Wiki Wang, a 32-year-old aspiring fashion designer who created her entire winning collection on her Brother CS6000i



**PINS AND
NEEDLES!**

sewing machine. Wiki earned a degree in English in her home country of China and moved with her husband to St. Louis seven years ago to start a new life and launch their careers. Wiki explained how sewing was a part of her life at an early age, as she watched her mother and aunt sew custom clothing at their sewing studio in China. She said her true passion is fashion illustration, and describes her love for painting as the inspiration to become a fashion designer. In 2012, Wiki decided to go back to school and she earned her second degree with a bachelor of arts in fashion design last May. Shortly after graduation, she formed her company, Wiki Wang Fashion Apparel, where she designs custom clothing for her followers.

Nature and the arts are the inspiration behind Wiki's elegant and eclectic designs. "I love visiting botanical gardens to study the beautiful flowers and their colors," Wiki said. She explained how – for this collection – she also went to parks and museums to absorb the passion behind the art and the beauty of nature. "I don't look for the inspiration," she said, "I let the inspiration come to me." Her winning 10-piece collection was designed for spring 2017 and included skirts, dresses, tops and a coat. "I changed my entire way of thinking for this collection," Wiki explained. "I chose more feminine colors that reflected the feeling of sunshine, and used nature for my inspiration." Even before winning the prize package, Brother was at Wiki's side as she created this collection. "My Brother sewing machine and Brother serger were my perfect partners to help me create this collection."

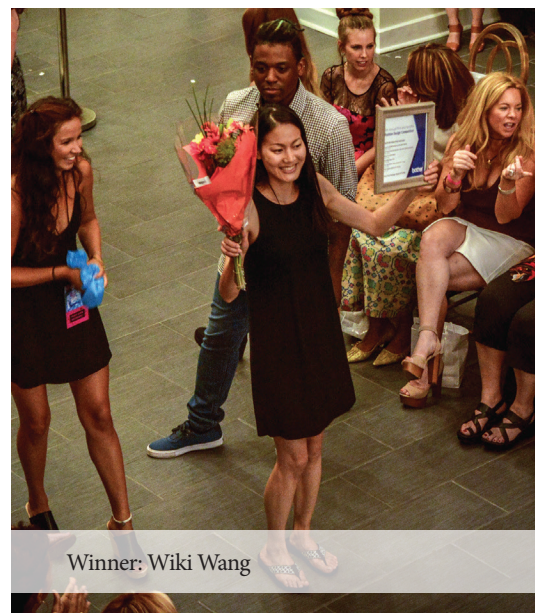
The Brother prize package arrived shortly after she won the competition, and Wiki

"Having Brother as a sponsor was a perfect fit for the competition," said Dwight. "Their generous prize package included the right tools to help Wiki continue her passion to design."

said she couldn't wait to begin designing on her new Brother sewing and embroidery machine. "The Brother Innov-is NQ3500D is amazing!" Wiki exclaimed. "I'm new to embroidery and always wanted to include it in my designs," she said. "Thanks to Brother, I can now explore all the incredible features and possibilities with this machine to expand my design capabilities."

Fashion competitions like 'Pins and Needles' is not just an incredible opportunity for emerging designers to get exposure in the industry, but it is a perfect way for a stellar company like Brother International Corporation to show its support for the upcoming generation of fashion designers. "Having Brother as a sponsor was a perfect fit for the competition," said Dwight. "Their generous prize package included the right tools to help Wiki continue her passion to design."

As Wiki looks to the future, she said she reflects on how far she's come since moving from China. "I've only had one sewing machine in my life, and it was my Brother 60-Stitch Computerized Sewing Machine, CS6000i," Wiki said humbly. "I can't imagine what I can do with my new one! My passion may be fashion designing but my ultimate goal is to create clothing that make women feel unique, beautiful and confident."



Winner: Wiki Wang



Winning machine: Innov-is NQ3500D combination sewing & embroidery machine

Brother continues to support designers and enthusiasts by creating reliable machines that offer a wide range of user-friendly, advanced features, such as the Innov-is NQ3500D, combination sewing and embroidery machine. In addition, Brother also offers an exclusive collection of *Project Runway* Limited Edition machines, which allows all users to replicate the experiences of the designers featured on the show.

To learn more about Brother products and where to buy, visit us at BrotherSews.com.