

Anna Lee has worked in the fashion industry for 25 years as a designer, trend forecaster, textile designer, and technical designer- depending on what her clients need.

She has extensive experience in corporate design and product development, non-profit management, runway show production (she founded Fashion Week in Minneapolis and produced runway shows at nearly every art/museum venue in the metro, including Voltage: Fashion Amplified, a rock-n-roll fashion show that took place in the First Avenue Mainroom for nearly a decade), international contract/freelance design, and above all else, has helped countless fashion designers develop their careers in a way that is tailored to the passions and skills of the individuals.

She also produces multidisciplinary collaborations with creatives who want to “play” in their fields via the Gray Matter Series, teaches workshops on creativity + nature, and facilitates evolutionary community building through education and events.

*Who are your role models or inspiring folks?*

I find my deepest inspiration in meaningful conversation with folks who have bright ideas and a sense of curiosity and wonder.

*Outside of art and design fields, what inspires you?*

As a natural beekeeper, I am consistently inspired by honeybee ecosystems and the interdependence we have with nature systems. This work has made me an advocate for all pollinators, in particular the native and endangered species who truly need our help and support.

*What do you wish you had known when you started out as a student/in this field?*

The connections and friends you make when you are starting out are more important than you could realize. Some of my most exciting endeavors have either been initiated by or made better by some of my more formative and foundational collaborators.

*What was your most memorable meal?*

A couple of years ago I had dinner with my partner at The Water House Project in East London. It was a seasonal menu, utilizing local ingredients. Though I have to say what made it most memorable was how beautifully interwoven the music playlist was in bringing the whole environment together. It was like its own ingredient of the meal. We found out the chef makes seasonal playlists on Spotify, so I love having that music playing in the background. I have been introduced to so many new musicians through this and think about that meal each time I listen to it.

*In your office, you can only have three things, one book, one tool, and one picture. What would they be and why?*

Book: Emergent Strategy by Adrienne Maree Brown, a tremendous book about navigating change using the wisdom of nature systems.

Tool: Any pen, but preferably one with smooth ink and a balanced weight in the hand. I love to doodle with permanence, though a pencil will do if I don't have a pen handy.

Picture: An oversized print of a photo from by collaborative interdisciplinary project, Gray Matter Series, featuring one of my hat designs. It reminds me of the high-energy collaborative photo shoots and retail events that I have produced with some of my favorite artists and creative professionals.