Name: Bethany Mullinix

Department: MFA Fashion Journalism

Title: MOXIE - A fashion magazine set to inspire young women to live with confidence, pursue their dreams and take risks by providing them with vibrant role models in the fashion industry.

Final Review: April 29, 2013
MFA – Fashion Journalism

**First Semester - SU 2009**  
6 units

FSH 616  MS: Dynamics of Fashion
GS 613  “Graduate Studies Elective” - History of 20thC Fashion Arts

**Second Semester - FA 2009**  
9 units

GS 601  “Art Historical Awareness and Aesthetic Sensitivity”
FSH 631  Elective by Advisement – Merchandising Principles
FSH 630  Elective by Advisement – Fashion Marketing

**Third Semester - SP 2010**  
6 units

FSH 629  MS: Introduction to Styling
FSH 634  MS: Textiles & Other Raw Materials

**Fourth Semester - FA 2010**  
9 units

FSH 627  MS: Writing, Researching & Reporting Features
GS 606  “Cross Cultural Understanding” – Crossing Borders: Art & Culture
FSH 619  MS: Developments & Current Debates in Fashion Journalism

**Fifth Semester - SP 2011**  
6 units

FSH 625  MS: Style Icons in Fashion & Media
FSH 642  MS: Visual Communication in Digital Media (SUB - COM 603)

**MIDPOINT REVIEW SPRING 2011**

**Sixth Semester - SU 2011**  
6 units

FSH 641  MS: News & Short Lead Boot Camp
FSH 900  Internship – Marketing

**Seventh Semester - FA 2011**  
9 units

FSH 617  MS: Intro to Fashion Journalism (waived/sub with FSH 615: Textile Design)
FSH 800  Directed Study - GR 182: Web Tools: Standards Compliant
FSH 800  Directed Study - Brand Marketing

**Fourth Semester - SP 2012**  
3 units

FSH 900  Internship – Public Relations

**Eighth Semester - SU 2012**  
6 units

GS 671  Professional Practices and Communication for Fashion
FSH 800  Group Directed Study - Journalism

**Ninth Semester - SP 2013**  
3 units

FSH 800  Directed Study - Journalism

**FINAL REVIEW SPRING 2013**

Total 63 units
For my thesis I chose to construct a fashion magazine. The magazine has gone through many changes over the course of two years, which I will outline below. My final project resulted in an online magazine called Moxie (www.moxiefashionmag.com), which aims to inspire young women to live with confidence, pursue their dreams and take risks by providing them with access to vibrant role models in the fashion industry.

Moxie’s mission isn’t about high fashion. It is focused on the discovery of the unknowns, those who aren’t already oversaturating the news or the runways, while only occasionally touching on popular designers and subjects in order to give young hopefuls a realistic expectation of their aspirations.

This project shows my ability to combine the skills I learned over the course of my master’s studies. The final website portrays my knowledge in writing, interviewing, multimedia, web/graphic design, marketing, branding and social media.

Step 1: Competitors/Inspiration
My research began with a search for outlets that focused the majority of their content on personal profiles or interviews. The following magazines portray a small sampling of those that became a guide and inspiration to me as I developed the ideas of those who had gone before me into something that was completely my own. However, they’re online formats also remain competitors to Moxie.

V Magazine
Fashion is about self-expression, originality and pushing the envelope. This is why “V Magazine” stands out to me in crowd of redundant and overly commercial fashion magazines, which continually repeat ideas and themes year-after-year to appeal to the general consumer. Through both its copy and photography, “V” allows the reader to step into the lives of people in the industry and truly discover what they are all about. It also steps outside the industry, covering the unknowns or the rising stars. These stories are also not just about the art or the clothes, but become about the lives of the people behind the creativity. Editorials and features are well written with an unbiased voice, allowing the reader to form their own opinion. V also avoids monotony by varying article styles from fully written editorials to one-on-one conversations with the interviewee.
**SOMA**

No, it’s not about the SOMA district in San Francisco. SOMA covers a wide variety of industries include fashion, design, music, film – anything that reflects creativity and ingenuity. I found inspiration here through the magazine’s clean lines and non-over bearing persona. The indie vibe given off by the magazine also attracts an audience different from mainstream glossies but is still recognized internationally, selling in U.S., European, and Asian markets. Using a grid style layout for the blog and online version of the magazine creates an easily navigated user experience.

**BULLET**

I first discovered BULLET two years ago while on a trip to San Diego, picking up what happened to be the premier issue. The magazine initially drew me in because of its simplicity and over the past two years it has held this standard in its layout and design. Its crisp white pages allow the reader to navigate through the magazine without being bombarded by too many load images or cluttered content. The profiles within range from long editorials to short blurbs to simple fashion photographs with status and contact information, serving as a directory to readers. However, the website feels more cluttered and selling product on the site seems to lessen the magazine’s journalistic integrity.

**Step 2: Platform**

I chose to build my magazine on a web-based platform with no supporting print format. Through my research I found that technology is currently pushing every industry imaginable in the direction of online content. Even the education industry is beginning to see a drastic shift in the way people are learning, as online courses and the rise of MOOCs (massive open online courses) attempt to lessen the need for traditional universities.

For the written word specifically, the future is in social networking, blogging and online publications. The need for print has sufficiently decreased over the past decade as seen in the development of the Kindle,
iPad, and the bankruptcy of the billion dollar international chain of bookstores known as Borders. Companies are failing to transition to an online interface as increasingly more people acquire their information through electronic sources.

My time spent working in public relations has also provided me with more insight into this trend, as even seasoned journalists are being laid off as budgets decrease. More to my point, a number of magazines closed their print publications this past year—SPIN, Martha Stewart’s Everyday Food, Dow Jones Smart Money Magazine, and Newsweek, after 80 years in circulation.

**Step 3: Social Media**

In researching different outlets and their presence on social media, three main sources for social interaction prevailed: Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, which rose to fame during the process of this project, driving more referral traffic than LinkedIn, YouTube, and Google+ as of January 2012 and currently hanging on the heels of Twitter.

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**CHALLENGES & MODIFICATIONS**

**Changes in social media** - As mentioned above, social media has changed since the start of this project and thus my project had to adapt.

- **Pinterest** – One of the newest social media platforms, Pinterest is now the third most popular social network in the U.S. in terms of traffic. But how is it affecting women’s magazines? Since the majority of Pinterest’s 10 million users are women, these magazines are quickly seeing an increase in traffic driven specifically from Pinterest. In fact, Martha Stewart.com has recently seen more traffic driven to its site from Pinterest than both Facebook and Twitter combined. Outlets are even beginning to assign editors to pin boards related to their beat. I was able to research how these outlets are using Pinterest to drive this traffic and what types of images they are posting, incorporating these ideas into a Pinterest for Moxie.

- **Facebook** – This leading social media platform has changed its layout and policies an unprecedented amount of times—no one seems to have a definitive answer or record of every single change. Facebook’s changes most affected businesses in early 2012, when the company introduced the Timeline (already active on personal profile pages) to organizations who used Pages for business. With the introduction of Timeline came the cover photo, which proved to be an opportunity for businesses to brand themselves in a large way. This had to be a consideration when building a Facebook page for Moxie. The challenge here was in designing a custom photo/look and building it to the correct scale.
Discovering my skill set – At the start of this project, I set my goals high and had an overly ambitious outlook. So ambitious that I thought I could channel the minor graphic design skills I had from my minor in undergrad into building my own website. As one of my directed studies, I chose to take a web design course, where I had the privilege of designing my own online portfolio and a small business page from scratch. However, when starting to write code for an entire magazine, I realized that my vision for the magazine exceeded my skill set. Therefore, I decided to develop the site on WordPress, which built the site out based on a template, but allowed me to easily modify, without writing code, to fit the look I wanted.

Revamping editorial direction – For two entire semesters, I worked on the WordPress version of Moxie. It wasn’t until a little over a month ago during my last directed study and a class discussion on editorial direction that I realized the current look and feel of Moxie did not fit with the Moxie mission. The branding was not cohesive; the design of the site was cluttered and did not visually hold the reader’s attention. So, I scrapped everything except for content and started all over. I rethought the entire look and went in search for a layout that embodied the definition of Moxie in all her sass and confidence. The final version of Moxie fits into this persona through clean lines, bright but limited colors, easy navigation, and unified branding across social media platforms.

Discovering my passions – Finally, while creating Moxie, I decided that I wanted to stay completely focused on the writing aspect of fashion journalism and not include styling. In researching numerous fashion and women’s magazines in preparation for this project, I found that many outlets are more focused on styling, photo shoots, and advertising then actual written content. This is where I wanted Moxie to be different.

CREDITS

- Fashion Illustrations - Bree Leman
- Web Design Support - Scott Mullinix
- Web Hosting & Layout - Wix.com
- Fashion Images for TRI - Audrey Hannah Brooks
- Pinterest Research
  - Mashable - http://mashable.com/2012/02/26/pinterest-womens-magazines/
- Facebook Research
- Online vs. print research
Style Impressed by Nature
Profile on Kyla O’Neil

In the early 1960s, Billy Ray Williams and his wife Hazel made and sold paper flowers on Haight Street in San Francisco. The flower trend soon caught on with young hippies, who began wearing them in their hair and stringing them together around their necks. Today, the trend stays alive with designer and full-time elementary school teacher Kyla O’Neil, who uses pressed flowers to bring this flower child style back to San Francisco with a modern twist.

Kyla’s designs, aptly named Impressed by Nature, are made of pressed flowers, laminated in plastic, strung through cooper and beautifully transformed into necklaces, bracelets and earrings. The idea first came to Kyla one day after receiving a bouquet of flowers for completing her teaching certification. As the petals of the bouquet fell to the ground, Kyla held a piece to her ear and thought to herself “how beautiful.”

That single moment propelled Kyla through a series of events that landed her in a place she never imagined.

Just as an experiment, Kyla quickly decided to take her idea to the next level. After using her school’s laminator to laminate the Peruvian lilies she pressed, Kyla took a trip to a local jewelry store, where she picked up jewelry bindings with which to experiment. Feeding her obsession with the color copper, Kyla chose copper bindings, which she still uses today. To Kyla’s pleasure, she discovered that copper matched well with most skin tones, didn’t distract from the colors or details in the petals and complimented even the brightest or dullest of colors.

Having never before attempted to make jewelry, Kyla had no idea what she was getting herself into. Luckily, before leaving the jewelry store that day, the store’s owner gave Kyla a short tutorial on how to make jewelry.
Kyla immediately took her first attempt at turning these pressed flowers into jewelry and undoubtedly won praise from everyone around her. Friends and family loved the beauty and uniqueness found in each piece of jewelry.

However, it was not until visiting family back east, that a stranger would push her even further toward the idea of turning her newfound love into more than just a hobby.

While out shopping, Kyla wore a pair of her earrings into a store where the owner inquired as to their origin. Kyla told the woman her story and she immediately fell in love with the idea. Amidst showers of praise, the woman convinced Kyla to put together a collection of jewelry to sell in her shop.

“Things were just falling into my lap,” Kyla recalls thinking.

Although the partnership never came to fruition for one reason or another, it encouraged her to make the decision as to whether or not to pursue her hobby as a business.

“There are always things like that come along that are really nice but don’t exactly go as planned,” Kyla says of the situation. “They just push you to do the next step.”

A year later, Kyla now sells her jewelry on Etsy.com and at different craft shows around the country, including the Renegade Craft Fair in San Francisco. These craft shows are how Kyla earns most of her profits, although she often hosts trunk shows at her home for people on her mailing list as well as friends and family. In fact, her business with friends and family has inspired her vision for the future of Inspired by Nature – designing jewelry for brides and wedding parties.

She has also become quite the expert on flowers. She prides herself in never letting a flower go unnamed. Providing specific flower names to customers is important, so they know exactly what they are buying due to an end result that sometimes makes it hard to determine the flower’s original look. As the flowers are pressed over a four-week period, the colors change, fade and even bleed together, creating unique patterns and textures. But Kyla even knows how each flower will turn out when pressed thanks to spending hours with Google studying flower families and an abundance of friends who are more familiar with native Bay Area plants than she.

Despite her expertise and a large number of shows under belt, Kyla still blushes when people praise her work and has a hard time taking the compliments.

“I’m not creating these unique pieces,” says Kyla in awe. “The flowers are just incredible on their own.”
However, at the same time, this feeling is what inspires her to keep pressing on.

“I get so excited every time I make a new piece because every petal is so different. It’s really wonderful and I couldn’t have ever dreamed anything up like this.”

Even her kindergarten and first graders see the love and excitement she exudes and will surly be disappointed to see her make the change to working for the school in a part-time aspect. Yet “taking a little leap” of faith into concentrating on her business full-time is just what Kyla needs to keep her passion strong. As she so gracefully puts it, you must “always come back to your passions – to the basics – and not lose sight of why you started in the first place.”

“There are unpredictable things that come up that are some of the most amazing things,” Kyla says. “Just let them happen naturally as they will.”

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**Fashionably Restoring Hope to India**

Profile on Liz Lewis

In recent years, the fashion industry has started turning from its egocentric ways and recognizing that there’s more to life than style and vanity. Designers such as Stella McCartney with her waterless T-shirts, colored using pressurized CO2, are focusing on sustainability and protecting the environment. Others are revealing their altruistic nature by donating sales to charity, including Gucci, who this past fall donated 25 percent of the USA GG Flag Collection Duffel Bag purchases to UNICEF in support of the "Schools for Africa" and "Schools for Asia" education initiative.

Even outside of the mainstream fashion world, entrepreneurs are looking for ways to give back. Liz Lewis is one of those people. Her desire to help others and love of fashion brought her to become a partner and advocate for TRI (The Restoration Initiative). The company sources beautifully handcrafted accessories from India, bringing them back to the United States, and donating the proceeds to various charities back in India “restoring hope to oppressed individuals.”

TRI was founded in 2011 by Liz’s mother-in-law, Brenda Lewis. Over 20 years ago, Brenda started working with various non-profits and doing missionary work internationally. In 2003, Brenda made her first trip to India, where she fell in love with the country and the people, seeing a deep need and opportunity to support Indian children and women financially.
Although Brenda was already working with many charitable organizations in India, she saw that individuals who were in just as much need as the people they were striving to assist were leading these charities.

“Since of course these people were native to the country, they didn’t have a lot of people to reach out to for money,” said Liz. “They needed support for education for the children, food, lodging and all those different things.”

Brenda continued for several years returning to India to bring money she raised through non-profits in the States back to support the groups with which she worked. As a woman who loves accessories and fashion, she would always take time on these trips to shop in the local marketplaces. Here she would find and stock-up on stunning handcrafted products. Friends, family and women from conferences Brenda would speak at fell in love with these Indian accessories. As women began asking how they could help with the financial need in India, she would propose they buy an accessory. In turn, she would bring the money back to the children in India. This is the moment she realized what a remarkable business she could build.

Liz, along with her husband Jordan, joined in helping Brenda bring this dream to life. In 2011, TRI was born. The company, run by direct sales, now has ten advocates nation-wide who hold parties or “socials” at their home to promote the accessories that Brenda brings back from India.

“We chose direct sales because we wanted to empower women who had a burden for kids in different countries and wanted to be a part of something bigger than their little lives here in the U.S.,” said Liz.

“They are able to hold these socials, talk about the non-profits and the children that we work with, and know that what their doing supports their family on an individual level but also that 20% is also going back to the kids in India.”

Through the sales at these socials and online, TRI has already raised over $10,000 in support of a number non-profits in India. Although TRI operates mainly on a project basis, bringing in new non-profits as need arises, there are currently about six initiatives which profits and donations go toward.

Since Liz has been busy raising three young boys of her own – five, three and a one-year-old – at their home in Lafayette, Colorado, she has not yet had the chance to travel to India to see first-hand how the money TRI is raising is enhancing the lives of so many children and families. However, she keeps close tabs on all initiatives and the people involved.
She particularly holds close to her heart the ‘Hope of Glory Foundation’ in Pune, India. The foundation focuses on rescuing children off the streets and from brothels in Pune. The children are not necessarily orphans, but are being trafficked by their own parents or simply living in extreme poverty. The foundation convinces parents that they can provide their children with a better life – hot meals, an education, a safe place to live – and parents generally optimistically agree to sacrifice their children.

Despite how inexpensive many things in India are, the founders of the foundation, Joy and Liliana Dongerdive, have found that land is extremely valuable to the Indian people, making it difficult to own land or a home. Currently, close to 35 children are continuously shuffled from rental home to rental home.

This is where TRI steps in, providing a portion of social profits to this initiative to raise money for housing, hoping that these children will soon have a more permanent place to grow up.

“I get excited about each [project] that we bring on,” said Liz. “I think that this one is close to my heart in wanting to provide [these children] a home even though I can’t be there working one-on-one every day with them.”

With TRI socials being such a success, the company is now in a position to move onto their next venture – opening a retail store.

“We have an office space that is also a store front so we’ve decided to convert this into a type of fair trade, local market place,” said Liz. “We have a few different people that make different products participating and will have all our jewelry combined with a few vintage retail finds.”

Tentatively named TRI Market, the retail store will be located in downtown Lafayette. Customers who visit the retail store will have an opportunity at the POS to donate a portion of their sale to the different non-profit initiatives in India.

Along with the accessories Brenda sources from India, partnering with other local families will bring in products from all over the world. Many of these partnerships are still in the works, but TRI has already locked down Zambezzi, a family-owned company that works with honey bee farmers in Zambia to make organic products honey products – soaps, body scrubs, chap sticks, etc.

“These are the types of fair trade products and people we are trying to pull in,” said Liz. “People who are doing similar things to us all around the world.”
Of course TRI is still always looking for advocates to host socials and bring further awareness to the project. If you’re interested in becoming an advocate or hosting a social, please email Liz at info@tri-socials.com.

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Feisty, Sustainable Designers Brings Eco-Chic to San Francisco
Profile on Leslie Yang

It seems that everyone has a DJ name – a play on words created amongst friends and bestowed upon them with Tenacious D like seriousness.

Feistyelle is no exception. However, this DJ name stuck beyond Leslie Yang’s own inner circle. Leslie’s DJ career didn’t take off, but instead, feistyelle developed as an accessory business and the name hung on, representing all women who have a punch of feisty in them.

“It is for women who are outspoken and kind and know who they are. They dress how they want and they love color like I do,” says Leslie of feistyelle and her customers. “Those are my people. I love feisty women and I feel like that company is emblematic of life. I’m pro girl all the way!”

Leslie started feistyelle more than five years ago, making broaches and hair clips as a hobby, and it has grown into a profitable eco-chic accessory business comprised of vegan products crafted from vegan suede, both to wear and for the home.

Never having attending any type of design school (Leslie was a sociology major at Berkley), graphic design happened organically for Leslie, a benefit she was afforded through her full-time job at a non-profit policy think tank in Oakland. As the company she worked for grew, it had design needs, and with an all hands on deck atmosphere, Leslie raised her hand to help.

“I’ve always liked design, always been creative – but I am a self-taught designer on the job,” said Leslie.

“I feel like I have a growth mindset when it comes to design and I was also really excited to learn more. I still really want to learn more and be a better designer everyday.”

Experimenting on her own free time with different designs, Leslie wasn’t thinking about feistyelle as a business. She was more interested in the love of her craft than turning a profit.
It wasn’t until three years ago, when Leslie started experimenting with laser cutting, that a simple Dahlia flower design and encouragement from co-workers would lead her to expand her portfolio beyond broaches and hair clips and start pitching her designs to local San Francisco Bay Area stores.

“I love dahlias and you can see this in a lot of my designs,” said Leslie. “One day I was just like, ‘I wanna make a Dahlia broach.’”

Leslie mimicked this native Central American flower, with its circular shape and layered ring of petals, and created a new two-dimensional design for her broaches. Since laser cutting often leaves small scraps, Leslie experimented making smaller versions of the dahlia broach with the excess material. After showing these smaller dahlia designs to a co-worker, Leslie received a request for a new type of accessory – earrings.

Not knowing at the time how to construct an earring, Leslie made her way to the bead store where she was kindly walked through the process. Her friend was soon sporting the dahlia earrings around the office, making them a knock out hit.

“There was a stampede to my office!” explained Leslie, “It was all ’I want a pair! I want a pair!’”

“All I had was a cardboard box in my purse and I would literally sell earrings out of that thing.”

Finding it hard for business to thrive out of a cardboard box, Leslie began pitching her accessories to local shops. Candystore Collective in San Francisco’s Mission District and Lavish in Hayes Valley became two of the first stores to carry feistyelle.

Today, feistyelle has grown into a full-time business and Leslie’s feisty styles can be seen worn all over San Francisco.

“I see earrings on people I don’t know and I’m such a dork for it,” admits Leslie. “I think I will be forever ‘cause it doesn’t seem real sometimes. It always feels really good to see that for sure.”

Not only does seeing her designs on strangers bring her joy, but Leslie also prides herself in remaining sustainable and make sure her concerns about society are incorporated into her business.

“Most of the core values that I carry through from studying sociology, to doing right by people, and the non-profit work I’ve been doing for the past over 10 years – those values carry themselves very strongly into my own company,” said Leslie.
She has built her company on two types of sustainability – location and environmental based.

Leslie remains environmentally friendly through her use of vegan suede and using every last bit of scrap material possible in her work. However, keeping money within a community, especially for small businesses, is also of extreme importance to Leslie.

This is where the location-based sustainability comes in. Every part of her business from where she sources her fabrics to the printer she uses stays within Northern California. Keeping her business located in San Francisco is also important, as she vows never to outsource to another country due to unknown labor standards and laws.

Although Leslie will never outsource her products, she still has plans to grow her business in other ways. Her next endeavor – iPad cases made of vegan suede with a wool felt lining. Plans were to manufacture this product prior to Christmas, but creating a sewn product proved to be much more challenging than laser cut items which are fairly easy to assemble.

However, Leslie still continues to work away and has no plans of giving up any time soon, especially since her one piece of advice to young entrepreneurs is to not give up after the “first pancake.”

“If you make crap that’s fine. But don’t let it eat up your soul,” Leslie advises. “Have a growth mindset and keep trying and trying. And after all, this is a really exciting process and I’m excited to see where it can go.”