

CHIARA VINCENZI

TEACHER EXCELLENCE GRANT



WEAVING FOR FASHION

One of the challenges of being a classroom teacher is creating projects that not only teach students something they didn't know but also introduce hands-on learning. That is the goal of Chiara Vincenzi, clinical assistant professor in the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois, Urbana. Before moving to the US, Vincenzi worked as a fashion and product designer, and as a graphic designer at fashion companies in Italy. As a weaver and fashion designer Vincenzi has contributed to expanding the formation of classes in fashion and textile design and in developing a new fashion concentration in studio art. She was awarded the *Fiber Art Now* Teacher Excellence Grant for her project that involves teaching students to design, laser cut, and construct a rigid heddle loom. "Working in



groups in class, they will first build, then use the loom to design and create textile samples,” said Vincenzi.

Vincenzi introduces students to the fundamentals of fibers and textile characteristics in her fashion and textile design class. Students learn weaving techniques, how to design and plan a textile design, and how to transform their design into a wearable 3D sample. At the end of the academic year, students participate at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign *Re-Fashioned* fashion show, showcasing their works and demonstrating how their designs and textile techniques have translated to fashion. “It is important for students to know the historical heritage behind the textile and fashion design industry practices,” explained Vincenzi. “My goal is to teach how to choose materials, fibers, and yarns, and how to repurpose textile waste by adopting sustainable techniques and processes.” In her own work, Vincenzi uses mostly natural materials, recycled fibers, and recycled clothing and textiles. Her experimental work focuses on the “relationship between the physical, tactical, and natural visions of reality, and the transcendent aspects of life.”

Funds from the grant will help with the purchase of materials for constructing rigid heddle looms. Students will be exposed to a new weaving tool, learn new skills, and will learn to use an additional typology of loom.

chiaravincenzi.com | [@cvvincenzi](https://twitter.com/cvvincenzi)

This grant was generously sponsored by Jane Dunnewold, artist, writer, teacher, and the founder of the online Creative Strength Training community.

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TOP: Lucy Quin, **Aquatic Daydreams**; 2021; mix of fibers; hand weaving, upcycling
 BOTTOM LEFT: Chiara Vincenzi, **Mamathones**; 2020; wool, silk; hand woven; 27.5 x 17.75 x 2.75 in.
 BELOW: Chiara Vincenzi, **Duna Verde**; 2021; wool, cotton, hemp, sisal, jute; hand woven tapestry; 31.5 x 15.75 x 1 in.

OPPOSITE TOP: Chiara Vincenzi, **Linen Shawl**; 2022; linen; hand woven, weaving (work in progress); 75 x 15.75 in.
 BOTTOM: Chiara Vincenzi, **Artist’s Studio**; 2022; wool, cotton, cork, linen; tapestry (work in progress)

