KARA HAMALAINEN

FASHION & COSTUME PROFESSIONAL

CONTACT

973-870-2245
kara.n.hamalainen@gmail.com
linkedin.com/in/karahamalainen
karanicoledesigns.com

EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE
Fashion Institute of Technology
2026
Costume Design and Wardrobe Technician

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
University of Delaware
2019-2023
GPA: 3.97 / 4.0
Major: Fashion Design & Product Innovation
Major: Fashion Merchandising & Management
Minor: Business Administration

SKILLS

- Machine sewing (home, serger)
- Hand sewing
- Garment construction
- Textiles
- Fabric sourcing
- Patternmaking
- Draping
- Knitting
- Crochet
- Hand embroidery
- Beading
- Illustration & sketching
- Story boards
- Fittings (apparel & footwear)
- Budget management
- Product development

EXPERIENCE

DISNEY LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Costume Buyer — March 2025 - present

- Facilitate the purchase of raw materials and finished goods for character costume pieces, garments, and accessories
- Create purchase orders for domestic and international vendors, managing a high-volume order portfolio while ensuring that delivery dates are closely monitored and met
- Negotiate and communicate daily with large volume external vendors to secure quality products on time and at competitive costs while cultivating strong vendor relationships
- Review and approve fabric strike-offs to ensure color, quality, and design integrity across all garments
- Coordinate replenishment orders and partner with designers on approvals for new development
- Source new vendors by attending fabric trade shows, identifying innovative materials to support product development
- Collaborate with the inventory planning team to establish budgets and order timelines based on vendor capacity and production schedules
- Lead projects focused on raw material sustainability, fabric documentation, and fabric inventory optimization
- Partner with key collaborators and guide hourly union cast members in assessing and resolving fabric quality issues, ensuring costume safety, functionality, and show-quality standards are maintained

Associate Costume Buyer — May 2024 - March 2025

- Supported multiple buyers on the team with their purchase orders for character costume pieces, garments, accessories, fabrics, notions, and trims
- Managed a small portfolio of orders associated with low volume external vendors
- Assisted with resourcing projects for notions and trims, effectively communicating with external vendors to obtain and approve samples

Costume Buyer Intern — January 2024 - May 2024

- Documented and maintained physical and digital fabric libraries supporting character costume production by taking photos and entering key information into PLM systems
- Used technical acumen to update site-specific software that tracks production orders, providing visibility to the status of the orders and the ability to identify delays

CAPEZIO

Assistant Store Manager — June 2023 - December 2023

- Generated sales by providing expert product knowledge and guiding customers in selecting appropriate dance apparel
- Conducted fittings for a wide range of dancewear, including leotards and various styles of dance footwear
- Demonstrated leadership and communication skills by supervising staff, providing direction and constructive feedback

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SOFTWARE

- Microsoft Office
- Google Workspace
- Illustrator
- Photoshop
- Canva
- SAP
- Smartsheet
- Maximo
- PLM systems

CERTIFICATIONS

At-Desk Textile Testing
Cotton Incorporated
August 2025

Lab Dips
Cotton Incorporated
July 2025

Issues In Product Performance: Shrinkage
Cotton Incorporated
July 2025

SUMMARY

Motivated and creative professional with nearly three years of experience in costuming. Passionate about storytelling through clothing and translating creative concepts into cohesive, thoughtfully designed work. Possesses strong collaboration, problem-solving, and organizational skills, complemented by a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and commitment to continuous learning and professional growth.

EXPERIENCE

ATHLETA

Visual Merchandising & Brand Associate June 2022 - December 2023

- Assisted the visual merchandising manager in executing store displays, maintaining visual standards, and enhancing the overall customer shopping experience
- Engaged and connected with customers to provide excellent customer service and build brand loyalty
- Became an expert in product knowledge and offered information to customers on current merchandise and store promotions

SYNERGY FASHION GROUP

Event Coordinator & Award-Winning Designer February 2022 - May 2023

- Organized and executed fashion, networking, and fundraising related events to promote club involvement
- Designed and created a cohesive 4-look collection for the Spring 2023 fashion show, managing material sourcing, attending model fittings, and overseeing a professional photoshoot
  - Won the award for Most Innovative collection
- Designed and created a strapless gown for the Spring 2022 fashion show, translating the show theme into a unique and expressive design
  - First Place winner in the design's respective category

IMPACT DANCE COMPANY

Apparel Chair September 2021 - May 2023

- Designed team uniforms and a diverse merchandise collection for public sale, including sweatshirts, sweatpants, crewnecks, T-shirts, tote bags, and baseball caps
- Worked with University Tees Representative on sourcing high quality garment options while strategically managing costs to stay within the limited team budget
- Developed the team's first showcase-specific merchandise, creating designs aligned with the theme of the annual showcase

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant August 2021 - May 2022

- Assisted professor teaching FASH122: Apparel Product Assembly with 15 students
- Facilitated class sessions during professor absences by reviewing individual student project progress and offering technical guidance as needed
- Developed and organized a comprehensive course reference binder featuring physical sewing samples, detailed descriptions, and explanations of apparel construction techniques to support student learning
- Evaluated and graded student coursework, assessing project quality and student understanding of apparel assembly techniques