

# **Amanda Cardwell-Aiken**

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## **Teaching Philosophy**

As a scholar, designer, and creator I teach my students to see the world around them from the tiniest details to abstract concepts . I give students the skills to use their minds to design new worlds while researching historic ones. I simplify the base techniques and ask students to tell a story building upon what they have learned. As I encourage their collaboration and use of critique to have them better understand multiple perspectives and biases in their work. Motivating them to work independently to improve their skills once they are beyond the classroom because one is a student is for life.

In my classes, I ask students to participate in the discussion. I want them to be able to see how something as simple as clothing has affected the past and present, and how it will shape our future. In Historical Clothing, we explore global events, technology, and culture that impact is impacted by clothing. I help them deconstruct the Western European Centric History as it is written in most academic books and evaluate how slavery, colonization, and war have impacted clothing production and history, like understanding American economics before and after the civil war. Once we get to the 21<sup>st</sup> century we unpack how fast fashion is one of the biggest creators of pollution in the world. Then they are asked to look to the future they want to create with their fashion choices.

I teach classes to pass down generations of knowledge and skills. Sewing used to be an option that was always available to learn through public schools but with the commodification of clothing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is no longer more affordable to sew one's own clothes. Sharing these traditional skills and the spirit of "Make Do and Mend" with my students. They learn about the fiber content which impacts design, drape, and comfort as well as alternatives to traditional polyester/plastic clothing.

My goal is for students to better understand the world around them and have the confidence to create their own designs and research. I want them to think critically about the systems in place around them and work to better the world. I want to research, experience, and create contemporary art that captivates audiences and share that with students and see them do the same.