



## NIA CENTRE INTRODUCES “CARNIVAL ARTS” PROGRAM WITH RYERSON DESIGN FABRICATION ZONE EVENT

*Students Participate in “Organicism in Costume Design” Hack-a-Thon*

What an amazing day we had at the Ryerson University Design Fabrication Zone (DFZ) on Saturday, April 8, 2017! A collaboratively planned event between the DFZ and Nia Centre for the Arts, it was the beginning of a year-long celebration of Toronto’s popular Caribbean Carnival, and the surrounding events. The concept of the Hack-a-Thon, entitled “Organicism in Costume Design” was the result of five months’ worth of discussion, planning, meeting (sometimes internationally via Google Video), and the group’s decision on how to introduce the Caribbean tradition to a group of fashion, architecture, and design students.

Celebrating 50 years in Toronto, the Caribbean Carnival is an important event in the city as it brings in 4.5 million visitors/tourists per year, and never fails to be an action-packed series of events. Nia Centre, through their new Carnival Arts programming, will participate through conceptualizing and creating carnival costumes. By introducing the rituals, the historical significance, and of course the intricate artistic elements of design, Nia is celebrating the event and also helping to ensure it is sustained into the future by training the young people and welcoming their influence of new technologies, processes, and ideals.

Using the theme “Chrysalis,” the DFZ and Nia Centre invited students and graduates of design disciplines like fashion, interior design, and architecture, to participate in a one day Hack-a-Thon, designed to challenge participants to leverage advanced digital design and fabrication methods to create an innovative carnival costume.

There were four teams in total, and at the end of the day-long event, a group of judges gave the winning team/costume a cash prize of \$500. All student participants were also invited to collaborate with Nia Centre on the development of a special summer project celebrating carnival.

Special thanks to Tom Bessai, director of the DFZ, for his leadership, and for introducing Nia Centre to the various material systems and digital fabrication elements in costume design. We would also like to give thanks to Cira Nickel, DFZ coordinator, and SugaCayne Designs for sharing their expertise. We look forward to continuing to study fashion and arts technology through our ***Carnival Arts*** program, year round.

For more information, or an up close look at Nia Centre’s ***Carnival Arts*** program, as we engage and prepare for this year’s carnival festivities in August, connect with @NiaMasToronto on social media, or visit the ***Carnival Arts*** section of Nia Centre’s website and Facebook page.