

# Activity Idea

## Fashion Design with Anna Sui

*Recommended for Adults*

In the early 1980s, Anna Sui launched her eponymous fashion line out of her Manhattan apartment. Now, that bedroom business has blossomed into an international empire, with thirty-two boutiques in five countries and accessory and beauty lines bearing Sui's name, too. Sui was born in Dearborn, Michigan in 1955 to first-generation Chinese American parents. "I was already a novelty because I was the only Chinese kid in school, besides my two brothers, and I'd wear whatever I wanted," she explained to *Harper's Bazaar*. "I was the one in the big frilly lavender party dress in class pictures." Before the end of her senior high school year, she was accepted to Parsons School of Design in New York. After two years at Parsons, Anna styled with photographer Steven Meisel and designed for several sportswear companies before launching her first collection in 1981. Sui made her name with frou-frou dresses that married pop and antique inspirations. Her trend-setting collections hit the catwalk for the first time in 1991, and she has been a fashionista's favorite ever since, from design to price-point.<sup>1</sup>

Whether you aspire to one day helm a fashion empire like Anna Sui or simply want to get started on designing and sewing your own clothes, the following resources will surely provide some sartorial inspiration!

### eBooks:

*Anna Sui* by Andrew Bolton on Hoopla <https://bit.ly/2yTV8be>

*The World of Anna Sui* by Tim Blanks on Hoopla <https://bit.ly/3cviSAq>

*The Language Of Fashion Design* by Laura Volpintesta on Hoopla <https://bit.ly/3bukGcf>

*Sewing 101* by Quarry Books on Hoopla <https://bit.ly/2LDEfVb>

*Sew Me! Sewing Basics* by Choly Knight on Hoopla <https://bit.ly/2T3VP8O>

### Video:

*Anna Sui: Designer Marathon Volume 1* on Kanopy <https://bit.ly/2WWly31>

### Online Classes:

"Sewing 101" on Universal Class <https://bit.ly/2YYSjAk>

"Fashion Design Basics in Photoshop" on Lynda <https://bit.ly/2T2KiGW>

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<sup>1</sup> "Anna Sui." *Notable Asian Americans*, edited by Helen Zia and Susan B. Gall, Gale, 1995. *Gale In Context: Biography*, <https://tinyurl.com/y8r7bfgc>. Accessed 14 May 2020.



“Illustrator for Fashion Design: Drawing Flats” on Lynda <https://bit.ly/2yTFyML>

“Introduction to Photoshop CS5” on Gale Courses <https://bit.ly/2T3RORM>

“Introduction to Photoshop CS6” on Gale Courses <https://bit.ly/3bsx6S0>

**Magazines:** (all on RBdigital)

*Vogue* <https://bit.ly/3btQtKp>

*Harper's Bazaar* <https://bit.ly/3buCG6b>

*Elle* <https://bit.ly/2Z4Plor>

**Further Research:**

Gale in Context: Biography of Anna Sui <https://bit.ly/2T6uyCK>

NY Times Style Profile: The Technicolor World of Anna Sui <https://nyti.ms/3cqRDrg>

CFR Fashion Book: Anna Sui's Feminine Edge <https://bit.ly/3fMrntt>

**Spark an Idea!**

Now that you know more about Anna Sui and the basics of fashion design and construction, it's *your* turn to be the designer. Sketch out some of your own designs with pencil and paper or use a design app/software, if you have access. Take an even bigger leap and bring your creations to life by utilizing the sewing resources above. Learn how to construct and sew your own garments using your designs. No matter how you choose to channel your fashion creativity, we want to see! Share your photos on social media and tag us - @LACountyLibrary.