

WEAVING THE future

“I love buying software. It’s like buying paints or materials,” says fashion and interior designer Jhane Barnes. That’s a revolutionary statement in an industry where hand-tailoring and the vision of an artist pinning up swatches of material is the lingua franca. Barnes sees computer programs as simply another color on the artist’s palette.

“I’m not a great artist with my hands,” admits the creator of men’s clothing, carpeting and other textile designs. “I had great ideas, but I couldn’t always get them down. Now, when I sketch on the computer, even doing silhouettes of the clothes is easier. Because no line you make ever has to be erased: you just have to change the shape of it. I find that so liberating.”

More significant, Barnes keeps two mathematicians on her staff full-time to write programs geared toward her specifications—programs that are used to create patterns on the computerized looms in her office. Like artists who drip paint to add randomness to their paintings, Barnes uses these programs to create random patterns from her visual ideas.

Barnes’s groundbreaking work is also increasingly popular: She recently redesigned the uniforms of the Orlando Magic basketball team. Thanks to her elegant Website, Barnes keeps a personal connection with her clients, posting pictures of herself with her dog Genki, along with diary-like thoughts and ideas. Mathematics teachers, not too surprisingly, are big fans.

“Math teachers think what I do is so cool,” says Barnes. “I get e-mail from them saying, ‘Thanks for making my job easier. I wear your clothes in my classroom, and my kids get all excited that what I’m wearing was created using math.’”—*Michael Giltz*

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