

Good Company

Yui Yasuda

Global Fashion Management MPS '15

Tell me about Hokkaido, the island you're from in Japan.

It's the second largest island in the country, and it's famous for two reasons—the seafood and the beauty of the countryside. The capital is Sapporo, known for sight-seeing. The atmosphere is a bit like Toronto. The island is also known for its ramen.

Do you miss that when you're in New York?

The noodles here are either too salty or boiled too soft. There is one good place to get Sapporo ramen—Misoya, on Second Avenue.

Is your family in the fashion industry?

No, my hometown is in the countryside. My parents own an animal hospital. When I first became interested in fashion, in high school, I would wear Martin Margiela, or this avant-garde brand called G.V.G.V. Here in the U.S., everyone wears whatever they want. But in my hometown, people said, "Are you crazy?" Fashion gave me confidence.

You're one of the first recipients of a Tomodachi-Uniqlo Fellowship, which is sponsored by the company Uniqlo and the U.S.-Japan Council. For all three semesters of your FIT program, your room, board, and expenses are covered. What made your application stand out?

Uniqlo is a leader in corporate social responsibility, which I'm very interested in. When I applied to the program, I wrote an essay about it.

Through their recycle-reuse program, Uniqlo donated hundreds of thousands of garments to refugee camps in the Philippines and Jordan. My fellowship includes an internship with that part of the company this summer.

What's the most interesting project you've worked on in the Global Fashion Management program?

For one presentation we researched what it would take to launch Michael Kors Collection in Brazil. My group was very diverse. One was a fashion designer, another had a production background, one worked in editorial, and I come from merchandising: I was a buyer for Brooks Brothers Japan for more than two years.

What was it like to collaborate with students from all over the world?

Japanese always want to make something in a professional style, so I organized everything for my team. Some people are really good speakers. Some people are better at collecting photos than writing. The hard thing is, how do you organize everyone's good characteristics?

Have you changed since you came to New York?

I first came a few years ago to get an associate's in merchandising at Parsons. At first I thought Americans talked too much. For Japanese, it's hard to express strong opinions. Now that I'm in this program, I'm learning how to be more assertive.

