

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Last September, on a cross-country flight, a fashion designer grabbed an open seat next to the director of outreach for the Institute for [Quantum Information and Matter at Caltech](#). The two—[Alicia Hardesty](#) and [Spiros Michalakis](#), respectively—hit it off, spending the next five hours talking about math, fashion, education, and how to engage the younger generation.

From the high-altitude meet-up, a collaboration was born: Project X Squared, a clothing line “for the nerd in all of us.”

Hardesty, well known for her work on season 10 of the fashion reality show *Project Runway*, has been visiting campus regularly, brainstorming with grad students, postdocs, and professors. She was even a speaker at the [TEDxYouth@Caltech](#) event for school children back in January.

Project X Squared will link science and street wear, but it is also focused on inspiring interest in art and science, especially in children. “I wanted to find a way to bring the art world to the science world and excite kids,” Michalakis says.

And so, even as the collaborators have worked on designing the line’s first featured items—including a lab coat that actually fits properly and can be worn as street wear (shown at right on graduate student Crystal Dilworth)—they have also been thinking ahead, planning to use their proceeds for educational outreach efforts. Make it work! —KF

For more about Project X Squared, check out their website at <http://projectxsquared.com>.

