

Gallup resident's artistry seen on runways from New York to Paris

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 29 March 2019 05:39



Person of the Month for March 2019

Ever since she was four years old, Goldie Tom says she knew what she wanted to be when she grew up: a cosmetologist.

"I knew what I wanted to do a long time ago, but it took me a while to go to school for it," Tom said.

Tom, originally from Iyanbito and currently in Gallup, spoke with the *Sun* March 18 about her path to becoming an independent artist.

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Despite her passion for hairdressing and makeup that goes back to her early years, Tom said that she was told that pursuing those fields as a profession would not be financially sound.

"I was told that if I become a cosmetologist, I would always be broke," she said. "Then I asked myself, 'What can I do that will make me money?'"

Tom said going to school to pursue what others told her would be a stable career did not feel right.

"I wasn't fully invested in it, or interested in what I was going to do," Tom said.

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The lack of passion in the path she was placed on was a turning point for Tom.

"I decided I was going to go to school for cosmetology," Tom said. "I didn't care what anyone said or did."

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Tom then enrolled in the cosmetology program at the University of New Mexico-Gallup, and graduated with honors in 2013.

That same year, Tom's work debuted on New York City's Runway for the 2014 New York Fashion Week. She has since done work with PLITZS Fashion Marketing in New York as a backstage creative hair and makeup manager.

Tom's work in New York was the catalyst for new opportunities, both across the United States, as well as internationally.

"Since then, everything's taken off," Tom said. "It's been an amazing journey ever since."

Going to New York and seeing her work presented was a fabulous experience, Tom said. She added that this trip was the first time she traveled far from home, which led to a culture shock for her.

"Everything was so different, so fast-paced," she said.

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Despite any initial pressure or doubts she faced, Tom said that she approached the fashion show determined to work hard and be professional.

As a result of her hard work, Tom has been invited to return annually to New York Fashion Week.

Since then, Tom has met numerous fashion designers and worked in various photo shoots, which have allowed her to find new friends and build good connections, she said. These networking opportunities also led her work being featured at LA Fashion Week and Miami Fashion Week.

But the biggest opportunity for Tom came a few weeks ago, when she traveled abroad for the first time to showcase her makeup creations at Paris Fashion Week.

"It felt surreal, like a dream, like I was there but I wasn't," Tom said. "This was something I always wanted to do, travel across the ocean and see the Eiffel Tower, see the landmarks that are out there."

Additionally, Tom has worked in the New Mexico film industry, doing hair and makeup work for select movies that have filmed in New Mexico, such as *Voice from an Unmarked Grave*.

Tom said that working on a production and helping it come to life brings her joy.

"When I'm sitting in a movie theater and I see the things I've worked on, it's so awesome," she said. "I think, 'So long ago I was doing hair and makeup for this person, and now I'm seeing them on the big screen.' It's crazy."

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A HOME TO RETURN TO

Throughout her career, Tom said that she has been offered opportunities to move and work full-time in New York or Los Angeles, but she has chosen to live in Gallup.

"My family's here, and it's home," Tom said.

Locally, Tom has worked with both hair and makeup with regular clientele, many of whom were eagerly awaiting her return from Paris, she said.

"I'm really thankful for them," Tom said. "I work on catering to them and doing what I need to do to take care of them."

In addition to staying close to her family and roots, Tom said that she sees this decision as an opportunity to inspire local youth and aspiring artists.

"I also want to encourage and motivate our youth and people from the area that it doesn't matter where you're from, you can still achieve big things," she said.

To that end, Tom said that she wants to eventually become a motivational speaker.

"I want to share my stories of my journey, from going to school to where I am now," she said. "I want to be able to share my knowledge, tell the youth what it takes to achieve your goals."

This also includes setting up a series of workshops where participants can learn how to apply makeup, Tom added.

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LOOKING FORWARD

Tom said that she was once called a trailblazer, a sentiment she found powerful.

"I was honored to be called that," she said. "It was one of the things that inspires me to keep going forward."

As for her future projects, Tom said she has work in movies that she was unable to talk about due to non-disclosure agreements. Her next big fashion goal is to attend Milan Fashion Week, she said.

"I do eventually want to own my own business," Tom said. "[I'm focused on] getting to that next goal and next achievement."

Tom's hair and makeup work is heavily featured on her Instagram page, where she said she has amassed a large following.

"They're excited because they feel like they're traveling with me," she said. "These are real people from home who watch me."

By sharing her work and her story, Tom said she wants to be able to inspire and motivate at least one person.

"It would mean the world if someone were to say, 'You motivated me to achieve my dream and

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goal," she said.

Goldie Tom is a licensed cosmetologist who provides hair and makeup artistry for all occasions, including weddings, photo shoots, proms, and more. For more information and links to her work, visit her website at <https://goldiehamu.wixsite.com/hamu> .

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