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New fashion talent in the spotlight

Northumbria University fashion students will showcase their conceptual collections at the annual Fashion Show next week.

This year's fashion show will be held at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art on Tuesday 14 May. For those attending, it will be a chance to preview the collections of final year students before they head down to London to compete for Fashion's highest accolades at Graduate Fashion Week in June.

Included among the students presenting their designs, are Rachel Bainbridge, Daniel Fradgley, Rosalind Borwick, Adam Hogarth, Victoria Schofield, Eleanor Layton and Lydia Mellor.

Rachel Bainbridge, from Newcastle, has mixed natural and synthetic fabrics for her textile collection, creating outfits incorporating bubble wrap. Entitled *'Entwined – The Reclamation of the Man-Made World'*, the 22-year-old's designs are inspired by a house that fell into disrepair.

She said: "I decided to document the gradual process of the demolition and thoroughly researched the background of the house. This led me to create a story behind the house in which a young girl visits her grandma's old home, however seeing the house in its decaying state takes her back to her childhood, causing the clothing to not only be oversized but also have a childlike feeling to it with elements of 50s design.

"The idea was to produce very experimental textile fashion with a recycling element but, rather than the outcome being incredibly outrageous, I wanted the pieces to be beautiful and desirable."

Adam Hogarth's menswear collection is inspired by vintage denim workwear from the 1890s to 1950s and early Japanese Samurai culture. The silhouettes are taken from Samurai O-yoroi armour, which uses six components to protect the different parts of the body from the sword.

The 26-year-old, from South Shields, said: "My collection is a celebration of denim and the indigo dye that provides its deep blue colour. Both America and Japan have long been associated with producing some of the finest denim globally and I wanted to merge these two worlds in my collection, using indigo as the common ground."

Adam's talent has already been recognised, winning internships at Dunhill and Old Navy during his time at Northumbria.

Womenswear designer Eleanor Layton, 21, has created a minimalistic collection called *'Refine'*. The collection features stormy shades of navy and dark maroon leather contrasted with bold duck egg blue textured knitwear.

Eleanor, from Darlington, has had work experience at Justin Davis in Sydney, Australia.

She said: "With a love of clean lines and design understatement, I found the starting point of my collection by referencing the minimalistic fashions of the 1960s. The challenge of taking inspiration from a concept and reducing it to

its simplest form is what appeals to me as a designer.”

Daniel Fradgley’s menswear collection involves creative cutting that pays homage to the uneasy feeling and powerful shapes of artist Mark Rothko’s work.

The 22-year-old, from Birmingham, said: “My menswear collection, *‘Misanthropy’*, is an exploration into the ideology behind existentialism, in particular the story of the artist Mark Rothko, then merging this with elements of Brutalist architecture of the 1960s.”

Last year Daniel and, fellow fashion student, Victoria Schofield were chosen to collaborate with weavers in a remote Indonesian village and produce a menswear collection that was featured in Indonesia Fashion Week 2012.

Textile student Victoria Schofield has designed a collection inspired by her experience in Indonesia, and referencing ancient IKAT weaving traditions and influences from India and the Far East. The printed fabrics used in *‘A Festival of Colour’* incorporate pixels taken from images of the IKAT weave pattern.

The 23-year-old, from Kendal, has already worked in placements with River Island and Whiston and Wright. She said: “As a designer I use colour and print as a powerful accessory and push the boundaries between artwork and fashion, creating beautiful and wearable printed and embroidered designs. My collection shows how colour and artwork have the ability to change moods and the power to create visually exciting garments and accessories.”

Menswear student Rosalind Borwick, 22, has created a fashion line-up inspired by the individualism and stylish effortlessness of the artists of the Bauhaus School of Art in Germany during the 1920s. *‘The Creative Uniform of Artists’* collection features cold, grey tones of concrete and metal highlighted with muted shades of the three primary colours.

“I create garments that excite the wearer with unusual and interesting proportions, texture and pattern rather than fashion ‘trends’,” Rosalind said. “I’ve produced an accessible and honest brand aimed at creative men who like to merge pattern with minimalist utilitarianism.”

Rosalind, originally from Suffolk, has experience as design assistant at

Margaret Howell and also won a three-month internship at Gap Inc in San Francisco.

Miranda Poppy Kale, 22, has created a menswear collection with a heavy focus on printed textiles, exploring alternative techniques through screen printing. The look is light-hearted, eclectic and experimental.

The collection, called '*Live at the Fillmore*', takes its inspiration from the hedonistic music scene and the artwork of the Fillmore music posters of late 60s San Francisco.

Miranda, originally from Basingstoke, won an internship with Old Navy in San Francisco last year. She has already had experience at Alexander McQueen. She said: "I worked in menswear textiles at Alexander McQueen for one season, gaining skills in hand-dying fabric and colour matching, and at Old Navy I worked within womenswear. This contrast has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the fashion industry at a range of market levels."

Lydia Mellor's womenswear collection is called '*Dazzling Disguise*' and takes influences from the camouflage technique of 'dazzle ships' used during WW1 and merges it with a 1940s feel, inspired by Ingrid Bergman's wardrobe in the film 'Casablanca'.

The 21-year-old, originally from York, has experience within the Womenswear Design team at Reiss in London.

She said: "I've fused crepe, wool and tweeds with contemporary cloths, such as leather, neoprene and organza, to create a modern twist. I aim to display craftsmanship within each garment and create a sophisticated collection with a bold use of colour and innovative construction."

Established more than 50 years ago, fashion at Northumbria is internationally recognised for producing innovative and hands-on designers. Graduates are now working for high profile companies including Ralph Lauren, Louis Vuitton, Abercrombie & Fitch and ESCADA.

Programme leader Emma Goldsmith said: "Northumbria University is renowned for producing and developing great fashion talent and providing

edgy, ground-breaking and inspirational designs for the catwalk. This year will be a prestigious fashion showcase and we will once again be part of Newcastle Fashion Week.”

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