



Alex Slack, Bigg Market Project Manager at NE1, pictured with two of the Northumbria students involved in the project, Chang Shi Qian and Franz Pancho

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‘Big Ideas’ on show at new exhibition

One of Newcastle city centre’s most iconic locations is the inspiration behind a new exhibition of work by Northumbria University students, launching next week.

The Bigg Market dates back to the Middle Ages and is currently undergoing a multi-million pound regeneration project, with support from the National Lottery Heritage and delivered by Business Improvement District company NE1 Ltd.

Students from Northumbria's School of Design were asked to support the project by creating a pop-up exhibition of art and design that responded to the history of the buildings and people of Bigg Market.

In total more than 200 students from Northumbria's Fashion Communication, Graphic Design, Interaction Design and MFA Fine Art courses took part, with 30 of the best final artworks, concepts and design prototypes selected for the 'Bigg Ideas' exhibition.

As Associate Professor Jamie Steane, of Northumbria's Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences explains: "We readily agreed to support this initiative as we could see the obvious benefits for the city and the great learning opportunity for our students, many of whom are new to the city. We felt the project would give our students an invaluable induction to the city's rich history and inspire them to invest their own creativity in the world immediately around them."

The students were given individual briefs to work on, each designed to allow them to explore the heritage of the Bigg Market through their particular interests and experience.

In recent years the Bigg Market has been best known for its bars and nightclubs, attracting an evening crowd. One of the aims of the regeneration project is to transform the area's economic fortunes by restoring its buildings and public realm and encouraging private sector investment, as well as changing people's perceptions of the area and highlighting its rich history and heritage.

Alex Slack, Bigg Market Project Manager at NE1, said involving the students in the project had brought a fresh perspective to the challenge of bringing a daytime audience back to the area.

He explained: "Working with the Northumbria University students has been an incredible experience, especially as an alumni. The talent and creativity that the students have demonstrated gives a real sense of encouragement for the future of the art and design sectors. On a personal level I have been afforded the utmost professional courtesy from all involved and I truly hope this just the beginning of our collaborations."

Among the design briefs set by Northumbria academics and NE1 was a challenge to Master of Fine Arts students to create a new piece of public art or a temporary exhibition piece inspired by the Bigg Market's culture and history.

In Fashion Communication, students were asked to plan a promotional VIP launch and create a press pack for a Bigg Market open day, along with creating a concept for an exciting visual and experiential installation, to promote the Bigg Market in a fresh light for old and new audiences.

In Interaction Design, first year students were asked to design a visual identity and website for a fictitious new craft brewery, heritage bakery or upmarket tailor's shop in the Bigg Market. Meanwhile final year students created prototypes for innovative digital installation concepts, celebrating the area's history and heritage.

And in Graphic Design, first year students were tasked with creating a space for day-time visits to the Bigg Market, making it an area where young families and older generations would want to spend time.

The 'Bigg Ideas' exhibition takes place at [Baltic 39](#), in High Bridge, Newcastle from Tuesday 25 June to Sunday 29 June 2019. Opening hours are 12pm to 5pm daily. Find out more here - <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/events/2019/06/big-ideas-exhibition-public-view/>

Find out more about the [Northumbria School of Design](#) and Northumbria's [Department of Arts](#).

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