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Northumbria graduate scoops national design award

As Newcastle gears up to welcome legendary dance act, Basement Jaxx to the o2 Academy on 1st December, a Northumbria University graduate has won a UK-wide competition to create designs for their upcoming singles.

Heather Louise Smales, a Graphic Design graduate, scooped first prize in JDO:Raw - a new competition from leading creative agency JDO Brand Design & Innovation to uncover the UK's best emerging design talent.

The coveted prize will see Heather's designs influence Basement Jaxx' new

look, while boosting her graduate CV with a three-month industry placement with JDO, and £3,000 prize money.

Heather said: “I’ve always been a fan of Basement Jaxx so as soon as I saw the competition I jumped at the chance to enter. We were asked to consider their brand identity and communicate it through a new single cover, typeface and logo, working with a number of possible song titles and themes. It was a really exciting project to take part in.”

The shortlisting process also saw another Northumbria University graduate, Dan Underwood make the top five out of a vast number of high-quality entries. Dan’s submission included the design of headwear, which he has been invited to wear on stage at the Basement Jaxx concert in Newcastle.

All entries were judged by a panel of industry heavyweights and creative gurus, as well as the Basement Jaxx band themselves.

Fiona Florence, JDO Client Director, who devised the RAW concept as part of her agency marketing strategy, said: “We toured the UK’s leading schools of art earlier this year to launch RAW and the Basement Jaxx competition. I first contacted Northumbria’s course leader Andy Reay about the brief and we were delighted when we got two of the very best entries in the entire competition from Northumbria.

“Both Dan Underwood and Heather Smales were whittled down to the final ten then, after a telephone interview, both made it to the last five who had to come down to London for their face to face interview with JDO creative directors. They both showed such passion, enthusiasm, out of the box thinking, and professional maturity – hard to believe they have only just graduated. They will be an asset to whichever agency they work for as they start their careers in design and we’re looking forward to Heather starting her placement with us. I’m especially looking forward to seeing Dan up on stage at the Basement Jaxx concert wearing the helmet he created for RAW!”

Heather was announced as the winner at a party at London’s exclusive LoungeLove bar that was attended by all finalists. Heather said: “It was a great experience for all of us as we got to meet so many people from the industry – as well as Basement Jaxx themselves and I was absolutely thrilled to be announced as the winner. Being able to work directly with the creative directors at JDO is a real privilege and I can’t wait to get started!”

JDO hope to make JDO:RAW an annual competition to support and celebrate the next generation of design talent.

To find out more about BA (Hons) Graphic Design at Northumbria University in Newcastle, prospective students and their families can sign up for its open day on 26th October. For further details, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/opensday.

To find out more about JDO visit www.jdouk.com.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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