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Designs by Fashion Design and Marketing final year student Max Telford

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Double success for Northumbria students at Fashion awards

When Northumbria University student Max Telford found a small red tin while clearing out his grandmother's house, he never dreamed its contents would provide him with the inspiration for his award-winning final year project.

Inside he discovered photos and documents going back to the Second World War and linked to his family's Danish heritage. Among them, accounts from his great uncle William's time on the front line, including diagrams of plane

engines, sketches of maps, passports, and a postcard of his grandmother's birthplace Hjørring, in northern Denmark.

As a final year Fashion Design and Marketing student, Max was determined to share his unique family story through textile and design, while at the same time combining this with his passion for sustainability and ethical fashion.

The result is a collection of stunning designs which impressed judges at this year's [Graduate Fashion Foundation Awards](#) – the world's largest showcase of undergraduate fashion talent – leading to Max being named winner of the Zandra Rhodes Fashion Textiles Award.

The award is presented to a student who has created a distinctive and thought-provoking exploration of the creative textile process, and who has challenged the established boundaries of technical excellence.

Speaking about receiving the award, Max said: "I've always been interested in telling stories without words, so to create a project that articulated my family's history through a visual context was a truly fulfilling experience.

"Winning the award was very emotional because this work carries the memories of my family within it. It is a story driven project that honours my past and those lives that have led me to be here today.

"My prints weren't just the results of random drawings, they were the product of hardship, and by winning the award I feel like I'd done my nana proud – I wish she could have seen it.

"There were so many amazing students in my category, everyone deserved to win, so to see such a wide array of talent and to be classified amongst them it was really humbling."

Max was one of two Northumbria University students recognised at the prestigious Graduate Fashion Foundation Awards this year, with fellow Fashion Design and Marketing student Victoria Archer named winner of the Tu Challenge 21.

The £5,000 prize is awarded by Sainsbury's Tu Clothing, and challenged students to create a product which had sustainability at its heart. As one of

two winners, Victoria will work alongside Tu's in-house design teams to see her idea come to life.

Victoria follows in the footsteps of fellow Northumbria Fashion alumni Genevieve Devine, who won the Tu Scholarship in 2016; and Josephine Roberts, who won the prize in 2019.

Students from across Northumbria's three Fashion programmes impressed at this year's Graduate Fashion Foundation awards, with 15 students shortlisted and five named as finalists.

Naomi Pugh was named finalist in the Fashion Digital Portfolio Award, Reuben Neill in the Fashion Photography Award, Gabrielle Kayley in the Sportswear & Leisurewear Award, and Sara Carney in the Fashion Concept Award. Meanwhile Conor McLaughlin was a finalist in both the Fashion Innovation Award and the Fashion Illustration Award – and all this was achieved despite the difficulties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As Max explains: “This year has been an extremely challenging year for all students, but I didn't want covid to define my final year and was motivated to work even harder to bring my ideas to life. I saw it as an opportunity to pursue my research and really broaden my academic skills.

“All the students supported each other and took what was barrier and channelled it into something to be proud of, and that in itself is a skill.

“Our tutors have also been a huge support network and, although we had to manage through a computer screen, they've been really supportive in helping us realise our ideas.

“When everything felt so uncertain, and we didn't think we'd have anything to show, they reassured us and did what they could to make sure our final year was as fruitful as it could be.”

Gayle Cantrell, Head of Subject for Fashion at Northumbria, said this year's cohort had showed exceptional creativity and determination.

Speaking about the students' success at this year's Graduate Fashion Foundation Awards, she said: “We are so proud of our students and their

thoughtful, imaginative approach to their final projects. Their recognition at this level is well-deserved, and we anticipate great things from them as they launch their professional careers”

Sarah Walton, Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Fashion Design and Marketing, added: “As a team, we have been continually impressed by the resilience, positivity and creativity of the Fashion Design and Marketing students. Their ability to adapt to make their design ideas come to life during this year’s challenges is a testament to how they have grown throughout the course into confident graduate designers ready for whatever creative challenges come their way as they start their exciting careers.”

The [Fashion](#), [Fashion Communication](#) and [Fashion Design and Marketing](#) BA (Hons) programmes at Northumbria have seen many graduates going on to enjoy successful careers at brands and agencies across the globe, including Louis Vuitton, Ralph Lauren and Nike, with the University’s School of Design having an established reputation at the annual Graduate Fashion Week exhibition.

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