



Jasmine Bennett's graduating fashion design portfolio from 2019.

Nov 12, 2021 09:00 GMT

## Fashion forward: Northumbria celebrates 30 years of Graduate Fashion Week

While 2021 has heralded the return to the runway for in-person fashion shows internationally, it also marks the 30th anniversary of an event which has become one of the world's most important sources of new talent for the global design industry.

[Graduate Fashion Week](#) was founded in 1991 to unify both the UK and later international universities to create a stronghold for the industry to help find the best creatives of the future.

Northumbria is one of just a few universities where staff and students from Fashion programmes became involved in the London-based event from the very beginning.

Since then, more than 80 leading universities around the world have become involved with the annual showcase and 100,000 graduates have been supported to display their skills.

In June, a hybrid approach saw the 30th event go ahead with design exhibitions, a live-streamed runway show and a digital portfolio platform to make the work of up and coming designers more accessible all year round.

[Northumbria School of Design](#) has an established reputation at Graduate Fashion Week, with students winning over 40 awards in the last few years, including New Designer of the Year, the Fashion Innovation Award and the Ethical Award.

[Emma Jane Goldsmith](#), Senior Lecturer in Fashion at Northumbria, said the event helps to bridge the gap between graduation and employment and is responsible for launching the careers of some of the most successful designers of our time, including Stella McCartney and Christopher Bailey.

“What is most impressive is the platform Graduate Fashion Week gives students to be recognised within the industry,” she explained. “We support them through the event to understand what employers are looking for in ways which remain relevant to current trends.

“There’s a lot of nostalgia around Graduate Fashion Week for me. I’m one of a number of Northumbria alumni who now teach here.

“We remember the event as students and recognise the excitement of being able to showcase something so personal to you – that doesn’t go away.”

Douglas MacLennan is Chairman of the Graduate Fashion Foundation which organises Graduate Fashion Week, and former Design School Director - International Development and Recruitment at Northumbria.

Reflecting in the past 30 years, he said: “In 1991 the vast majority of the UK high street fashions were supplied by UK manufacturers and Graduate

Fashion Week was seen as a 'one stop shop' for industry to engage with Higher Education and source the best UK-trained fashion talent.

"The event started with just ten Fashion and two Fashion Marketing programmes, including Northumbria, and has grown considerably to become the world's biggest showcase of BA Fashion talent, attracting global attention and participation from industry, including Ralph Lauren, Gap Inc. and LVMH.

"The last two years, have brought a unique set of challenges. Covid-19 had a huge impact but, crucially, it never succeeded in quelling the incredible creativity and innovation our Fashion graduates are world renowned for.

"We are proud to state that in the darker days of 2020 we were the only art and design subject area to retain and deliver a national graduate exhibition. Showcasing and elevating the work of our graduates has been the focus of the foundation for 30 years and we were determined not to deliver any differently for those working and graduating in the midst of Covid restrictions.

"As we move forward towards 2022 and beyond, I am delighted to see that the global fashion industry is once again reviving catwalk shows, and no doubt providing huge inspiration for those that are embarking on a new academic year."

Emma Jane added: "To celebrate three decades of Graduate Fashion Week, we wanted to showcase a retrospective of our alumni and their current roles in industry. Here, we celebrate their success and the past graduate collections of these former Northumbria students, who have excelled across all fashion disciplines and genres since graduating."

Visit [northumbria.ac.uk/fashion](https://northumbria.ac.uk/fashion) to discover more about studying Fashion at Northumbria.

### **30 of Northumbria's fashion alumni – 1991 to 2021**

- 1991 Louise Trotter – Creative Director at Lacoste
- 1993 Sasha Kelly – Senior Vice President of Design at Purple Label and Polo Brands Outerwear
- 1994 Julian T. Roberts – Subtraction pattern cutting inventor and

British Fashion Council collaborator

- 1996 Shaun Kearney – Chief Design and Merchandising Officer at Goop.com, Gwyneth Paltrow's design company
- 1996 Melissa Dick – Vice President Global Head of Creative Strategy and Studio at Coach
- 1999 Sophie Cranston – Creative Director and owner at Libelula
- 1999 Thomas Walker – Global Design Director for Football at Nike
- 2004 Alec Maxwell – Founder of fashion film company, KLOSS Films, and Digital Creative Director at large of British Vogue
- 2006 James Lawrence – Head of Menswear Design at ASOS.com
- 2006 Kate Ablett – Design Lead at Berghaus, Pentland Brands Ltd
- 2009 Miriam Sucis – Senior Menswear Designer jersey/sweat/active/fleece at Marks and Spencer
- 2009 Dulcie Dryden – Menswear Designer at Next Ltd
- 2009 Nicola Morgan – Creative Director at Perfect Number, Los Angeles
- 2010 Naomi New – Womenswear Design Controller at River Island (womenswear, outerwear, knitwear, tailoring, jersey, lounge, active and studio)
- 2011 Charis Younger – Senior Womenswear Designer at H&M
- 2012 Hannah Harrison – Senior Accessories Designer at Paul Smith
- 2012 Oliver Moores – Head of Menswear Design at Paul Smith
- 2013 Miranda Poppy Kale – Print Designer at Dries Van Noten
- 2013 Rosie Janes – Product Developer for Knitwear and Jersey at Alfred Dunhill
- 2013 Adam Hogarth – Associate Director of Design at Filson, Seattle
- 2014 Hannah Donkin – Product Developer and Production Manager at Simone Rocha
- 2014 Katrina Wagster – Multi Product Technologist at Burberry
- 2015 Bethan Schad – Product Developer for Outerwear and Wovens at Belstaff
- 2016 Samuel Beaumont Perkins – Menswear Designer at Hackett, Aston Martin range
- 2017 Katie Linacre – Senior Assistant Designer for Reclaimed Vintage at ASOS
- 2017 Harriet Eccleston – Founder of Harriet Eccleston
- 2018 Niran Blues Nair – Lot 1 Tailor at Levi Strauss & Co
- 2018 Penny Gibbs – Junior Womenswear Outerwear Designer at

- Tommy Hilfiger
- 2019 Jasmine Bennett – Junior Designer for Girls' Knitwear at H&M
- 2020 Katie Gedling – Design Assistant for Outerwear at J. Barbour & Sons Ltd

**Notes to editors: Images supplied are dedicated to Northumbria Fashion alumni. Photographs either show the BA (hons) Fashion graduating collections of some of the 30 graduates listed, as captured by photographer Chris Moore, or more recent work as indicated. Please use photo credit information as supplied.**

---

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk) --- Please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339



### **Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

[andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk)

07708 509436





**Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

[rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk)

07377422415



**James Fox**

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

[james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk)



**Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk)



**Gemma Brown**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk)