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Fashion graduate's creative collection wins international award in Italy

Katrina Wagster's stunning menswear designs took the 'Absolute Award for the Most Creative Collection' at Mittelmoda The Fashion Award, in Vicenza, Italy, this month. This annual awards show, now in its 22nd year, saw 26 young fashion designers from 20 countries compete against each other, with collections showcased on an exclusive Mittelmoda catwalk in one of Italy's most important manufacturing districts.

Katrina, who graduated from Northumbria in 2014, was the only British designer to be shortlisted said: "It feels pretty amazing. I never would have

thought I would win the Absolute award for the most creative collection. There are so many talented designers within this show and everyone's collections are incredible. To know that a prestigious panel of judges see potential in me as a designer is an incredible feeling.

“My collection was inspired by the history of the traveller, largely influenced by work wear and vintage references to the 1930's, the sourcing and manipulation of the fabrics became the main focus to drive my collection forward.”

The graduate said her time at Northumbria's internationally renowned School of Design has played a massive part in her success.

“Northumbria as an institution is brilliant. My time was largely spent within the School of Design, which is a great place to study and really prepares you for industry.

“Studying Fashion Design at Northumbria has definitely been one of the best decisions, I have learnt a lot from all the lecturers and tutors within the department. A big thank you for my success has to go to Anthony Brotheridge. He is an incredible tutor and has pushed me to achieve great success throughout the past four years. I have developed hugely as a designer and that is with thanks to Northumbria.”

This year's final year students recently held their graduate show at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art with the best work being chosen to go onto Graduate Fashion Week in London. Katrina's work was selected for this prestigious event last year and she described it as a 'great experience'.

She said: “It opens your eyes to the industry, what companies are looking for, and it gives you a great feel of achievement. Plus you get to see the competition and speak to some well-established designers.”

More than 500 schools of art and design across 55 countries take part in Mittlemoda, whose annual awards are internationally recognised as a key talent-scouting competition in the global fashion industry.

Director of Fashion at Northumbria, Janine Hunt, said: “We are delighted that Katrina has won this coveted award. Her menswear collection was

outstanding and we will be proud to show this and all other students' collections and portfolios again at Graduate Fashion Week later this month.

"Menswear has been a particularly strong subject at Northumbria for many years and Katrina's international success is a great example of our design philosophy based on an understanding and application of traditional craftsmanship and future creative design trends."

Principal Lecturer for Fashion at Northumbria, Douglas MacLennan, said: "Mittelmoda is one of the longest established international competitions held in Italy to promote creativity in Fashion.

"In their 22-year history, I am delighted to confirm that Katrina Wagster's graduate menswear collection was unreservedly awarded the Absolute prize for the most creative collection.

"Katrina's collection was simply outstanding and a reflection of Northumbria's qualitative training which aligns industry and creativity to provide graduates who successfully contribute to the worldwide fashion industry."

Now in its 60th year, Northumbria's award-winning BA (Hons) Fashion course is renowned for the calibre of its business-ready graduates, with 97% of last year's students in full-time employment within six months of graduating. The University has a hugely impressive portfolio of alumni graduates employed internationally with renowned global brands such as Lanvin, Burberry, Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, Alexander McQueen, Worth Global Style Network, Concepts Paris, Nike and L'Oreal.

To find out more about Fashion at the University, register for Northumbria's Open Days on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 June at www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday

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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