



Northumbria University Fashion student Kamile Kartunaviciute

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## Gen Z fondness for moments of self-care inspires winning fashion collection

**A final year Fashion student from Northumbria University has been named the winner of the prestigious Next Graduate Fashion Foundation Design and Trend Competition.**

The competition, which challenged emerging designers to forecast trends and design a capsule collection for Autumn/Winter 2025, attracted entries from fashion students across the country.

But it was a collection by Northumbria's Kamile Kartunaviciute, inspired by a growing social trend among young consumers to 'slow down' amidst the hustle of everyday life, which the judges selected as their winner.

Titled *Thoughtful Indulgence*, Kamile's collection won praise for its unique concept, sustainable approach, and nostalgic aesthetic.

The 23-year-old, who is originally from Lithuania, carried out extensive trend forecasting research and conversations with her peers, during which she noticed a recurring desire for small moments of self-care – for example, time to unwind with a sweet treat or a cup of coffee during their busy days.

This insight became the foundation for her collection, which evokes the calm, cozy feeling of drifting through the fast-paced city life with ease and confidence.

Speaking about her work, Kamile said: "My collection is about romanticising the everyday moments that we often overlook. I wanted to capture the feeling of enjoying small, thoughtful indulgences in the middle of a busy world. It's a nod to nostalgia, yet reimagined through a modern lens, inspired by the 1970s New York scene."



Northumbria University Fashion student Kamile Kartunaviciute pictured with some of her work

The *Thoughtful Indulgence* collection features a range of oversized garments, versatile layering pieces, and a rich colour palette that brings a vintage-inspired glow.

The collection's design focuses on comfort, adaptability, and functionality, with garments that can be mixed and matched for different occasions – perfectly tailored to the 18-25-year-old demographic the competition aimed to represent.

In addition to its aesthetic appeal, Kamile's collection takes a sustainable approach, with all fabrics sourced from a company that uses circular fabrics, repurposed from designer overproduction and dead stock.

This environmentally conscious design method highlights the importance of collaboration between brands and sustainable fabric suppliers, a key consideration in the future of fashion.

Kamile's victory in the Next Graduate Fashion Foundation Design and Trend Competition marks a significant milestone in her career as a designer.

With previous industry experience working on placements with smaller businesses during her time at Northumbria, Kamile is eager to expand her expertise and gain insight into the operations of a large retail environment.

As part of her prize, she will have the opportunity to undertake a four-week placement with Next – the biggest fashion and lifestyle retailer in the UK – allowing her to further develop her skills and explore the dynamic world of womenswear design. She also wins £500 and an interview for Next’s graduate trainee programme.

She said: “I am beyond thrilled and excited about this opportunity, it’s a dream come true to see my work recognised on this scale, and I’m incredibly grateful to Next and Northumbria University for making this possible. I look forward to learning from this experience and continuing my journey in fashion design.”

Sarah Walton, Director of Fashion Programmes at Northumbria University, said: “The opportunities offered through winning the Next Design and Trend Live Competition for Kamile are so valuable as a young designer - the whole team are thrilled for her.

“The opportunities our Fashion students have through Graduate Fashion Foundation act as important catalysts for their career journey.

“This is the second year a Northumbria student has won this award. We are so proud of all our students and continue to be impressed by their creativity and drive to engage with exciting live briefs and competitions.”

The [Graduate Fashion Foundation](#) (GFF) is a charitable organisation that supports young people in the fashion industry by bridging the gap between education and employment, and is the organiser of Graduate Fashion Week, a major annual showcase of emerging fashion talent.

Nicola Hitchens, Graduate Fashion Foundation Charity and Event Director said: “We are thrilled by the level of work submitted by our British Universities this year for the Next Trend Design Competition, students have gone over and beyond to deliver professional standard entries that both the GFF and NEXT judging teams were very impressed by.

“Kamile was selected for her strong trend led research and clearly defined capsule collection ideas. We wish her well on her placement experience with the NEXT team at their head offices.”

This is the second year in a row a Northumbria University student has won this award, with Fashion Design and Marketing graduate [Abbie Inwood](#) [named last year's winner](#) for her knitwear collection.

Find out more about [studying Fashion at Northumbria University](#).

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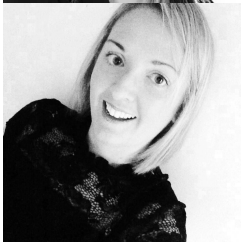
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