



Sophie Woodward pictured with her Student Artist of the Year award from the Fine Art Trade Guild.

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International recognition for Fine Art student

A talented Northumbria University student, known for her large-scale vibrant oil paintings, has been presented with the Student Artist of the Year award from the Fine Art Trade Guild.

Sophie Woodward, who is in her final year of the Fine Art BA (Hons) programme at Northumbria, was selected for the international honour at the Guild's [Art and Framing Industry Awards 2022](#) held in Stratford upon Avon.

“I was encouraged to submit my work to the awards by one of my tutors,” explained Sophie who said she was honoured to be chosen as the overall winner. “All of the staff have been extremely supportive and there to offer advice and encouragement, but otherwise let me take the lead on where I want my work to go.”

The 22-year-old, who is now considering continuing her studies with a postgraduate programme at Northumbria, describes her favoured style of painting as “maximalist”. “I’ve tried lots of other things, including photography, but I always come back to painting,” said Sophie. “I loved Greek mythology as a child and I’m really inspired by views of cities like Newcastle, so those things often feature in my work.”

[Mark Rohtmaa-Jackson](#), Senior Lecturer and module tutor on the [Fine Art BA \(Hons\)](#) programme, congratulated Sophie on her award and explained what made her work stand out from the crowd: “In the time I’ve known her, Sophie has developed a series of works that are both personal and intuitive, yet also manage to communicate the disparity between our sense of ourselves as bodies, and the representation of such bodies in public space.

“Sophie’s paintings are pretty fearless things. They use bright colours over a ground of local newspapers, celebrating the local, but then you’re thrown into a series of disorienting, overlapping planes: cityscapes of Newcastle; a series of classical statues. These cities are unnavigable but thrillingly disorientating and there is warmth in the cold stone of these embracing bodies.”

The Student Artist of the Year Award was established in 2015 inspired by Jorge Aguilar-Agon, a successful international artist, who wanted to encourage artists at the beginning of their careers. Sadly, Jorge passed away in 2020 and Sophie was presented with her award by his son and daughter, Daniel Aguilar and Salome Laschinger.

Louise Hay, Managing Director of the [Fine Art Trade Guild](#) said: “This international award provides recognition for an up-and-coming artist’s talent. The emphasis of the competition is to find a student who exhibits a talent and skill in traditional drawing, painting, or working with mixed media. We’re all looking forward to seeing Sophie’s career as an artist develop and wish her the very best of luck with her degree.”

Northumbria has a wealth of creative graduates who have honed their skills under the watchful eye of experts in their field, be it successful artists, filmmakers, creative professionals or ground-breaking designers and architects.

Sophie has displayed her work at the University's City Campus as part of the annual REVEAL showcase, which sees degree shows staged throughout May and June by students from programmes including Architecture, Design, Fashion, Fine Art, Media and new for this year - Computer and Information Sciences.

“REVEAL is a very student-led event which provides hands on experience of organising an exhibition from curating work as groups, to physically hanging paintings,” explained Sophie.

“Everyone is allocated a space to clear out and prepare ready for visitors to come along.”

Industry professionals, friends and family, staff, students and alumni are invited to view the innovative showcases in person, while all programmes also showcase student work as part of an online show at www.northumbria.ac.uk/reveal, which launches at 6pm on Thursday 16th June.

On campus events began in May, with the Fine Art MA and Fine Art BA shows wowing visitors to [Gallery North](#), the University's recently refurbished exhibition space. Invitation-only launch evenings for Animation and Film and TV studies students will be held at venues in the city, including the Tyneside Cinema.

The on campus events for Architecture, Computer and Information Sciences, Design and Fashion programmes will launch on Thursday 16th June at 6pm and continue until Saturday 25th June. These events are free and open to all.

Visit the [REVEAL 2022 events page](#) for full details of locations and opening times.

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