



Left-right: Cover designs for The Guardian's Weekend supplement by students Holly Shepley, Fauve Wright and Chloe Fairweather.

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Redesigning their futures – no stopping the Fashion class of 2020

Fashion students from Northumbria University have proved that the Coronavirus pandemic is no obstacle to creativity after their work was selected to appear in a national newspaper.

A unique dress made from pizza boxes, created by final year Fashion Communication student Fauve Wright and inspired by her experience of lockdown, has been selected for the front cover of the Guardian's Weekend supplement, published tomorrow.

Cover designs by Fashion students Holly Shepley and Chloe Fairweather were also shortlisted and will appear inside the magazine, which is a special takeover issue dedicated to the work of final year art and fashion students across the UK.

All three had to drastically rethink their final year projects in light of the COVID-19 lockdown but used the experience to challenge their creativity and explore new ways of working.

Fauve's cover design is one of a series of images created using items from around her home which address the fears and concerns highlighted in the media during the pandemic.

As she explains: "I started researching the news coverage of coronavirus and decided to create a series of 'fashion forward' images based on the headlines I was reading. The idea was to try to put some fun and light into what was a devastating, anxious and scary time for everyone.

"The pizza box dress aimed to highlight the vital role that food delivery has played during lockdown. It's very surreal seeing an idea I had in my bedroom on the front page of a national paper. I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity."

Fashion students Holly Shepley and Chloe Fairweather also entered the front cover competition. Their designs were among 20 shortlisted and also appear within the supplement.

Holly's design is an embroidered depiction of the Coronavirus cell, surrounded by art and design tools in a digital collage. She used embroidery, beading, watercolour and photography to create the composition.

She said: "The detailed textiles used within this piece aim to reflect the juxtaposition of fashion students trying to work creatively while being confined to their homes during lockdown."

Meanwhile Chloe's design, entitled 'MAKE MY MESSES COUNT IN THIS CHAOS' was inspired by the feelings of displacement she experienced following lockdown.

She said: “While I completely understand the situation, it was impossible not to have a slight feeling of hopelessness as a soon-to-be graduate. After listening to the song ‘Jupiter’ by Sleeping at Last, the lyrics ‘make my messes matter make the chaos count’ stuck with me and I began to write an inspired sentence over and over in my sketchbook.

“I wanted my design to hold a sense of rawness and contain the simple message to all 2020 graduates that, while giving up sometimes seems the only option, we will be resilient.”

All three students admit they have struggled at times during lockdown, but they have also embraced the challenges they have faced and come up with new ways of working.

Fauve said: “Like a lot of people I found the first few weeks of lockdown really difficult as there was so much uncertainty. I had been planning my final year project since I started university but realised I would have to completely rethink much of the content due to the coronavirus restrictions.”

Chloe added: “I think as expectations and opportunities adjusted so did my motivation and overall mood. I began to think more about the new opportunities that were available digitally and the current change happening in the world, in all aspects of the industry and life, which made me realise that I should still work harder than ever before and keep motivated.”

Despite university campuses across the UK being forced to close due to lockdown, Northumbria University students have continued to be supported by academic staff, with students encouraged to take part in online competitions and design challenges.

Gayle Cantrell, Head of Fashion, said “We are so proud of the way our students have focused their creative energy in response to the pandemic, coming up with new concepts and realising excellent results despite limited access to resources.

“It’s fantastic to have this recognised on a national level, and it’s testament to the dedication of students, staff and technical teams that they are performing to such an impressive standard.”

Ann Marie Kirkbride, Programme Leader for Northumbria's BA Fashion programme, added: "The Fashion Team are always very proud of our students' successes, but particularly this year, considering the challenges they are all facing during the Covid-19 pandemic on top of the existing stresses of preparing to graduate and the disappointment of having all their shows and celebrations cancelled.

"However, fashion students are trained to introduce the feel good factor into people's lives, and to find opportunity even in the midst of adversity, so we are delighted that they are still doing what they do best. They are an inspiration to us all."

Find out more about Northumbria University's [Fashion BA \(Hons\)](#), [Fashion Communication BA \(Hons\)](#) and [Fashion Design and Marketing BA \(Hons\)](#) degree programmes.

Find out more about Fauve, Holly and Chloe and view further examples of their work:

Fauve Wright:

Instagram [@fauvewright](#) and [@fauvewrightphotography](#)

Chloe Fairweather:

Instagram [@chlofairweather](#)

LinkedIn [chloefairweather](#)

Holly Shepley:

Instagram [@gray_valkyrie](#)

Etsy store [www.etsy.com/shop/ValkyrieStone](#)

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