



Fred Dunbar was recognised with the Tom Faulkner Award for Best Furniture Design and the London Design Fair Emerging Talent Award. Photography by Mark Cocksedge.

Aug 01, 2023 11:23 BST

Students and graduates shine in national design competition

The talents of creative and ethically aware students and graduates from Northumbria University's School of Design have been recognised in a national awards scheme for their final year work.

[Northumbria School of Design](#) excelled once again in London with Industrial Design being recognised at [New Designers 2023](#), which recognises rising stars whose unique work highlights key themes such as sustainability, mental

health, diversity and other vital areas of responsible design.

Fred Dunbar was awarded the Tom Faulkner Award for [Best Furniture Design](#) for creating three bronze bowls, an ash stool and an ash dining chair, angular yet fluid products inspired by sharks and the way they move through water.

Fred was also awarded the [London Design Fair Emerging Talent Award](#) for the same creations and has been given an opportunity to showcase his work to thousands of designers, architects, retail buyers and design-conscious consumers at the London Design Fair in September 2023.

Henry Davison was recognised by the Design Council and won their [Design for Planet award](#) for making environmentally friendly furniture out of seaweed. Henry collected kelp – large brown algae that live in cool, relatively shallow waters close to the shore – and devised a novel process that preserves the seaweed from rotting and transforms it into durable leather. The judges praised Henry’s project for helping to preserve the health of coastal communities and rewarded him with tickets for the upcoming Design Council Sustainability Conference.

Henry Davison won the Design Council’s Design for Planet award. Photography by Mark Cocksedge.

Fred and Henry both graduated recently from Northumbria’s [3D Design](#) (Furniture and Product Design) programme.

Students from the [Design for Industry](#) programme came out on top in their respective award categories.

Graduate Helen Wat was awarded the [New Territory Award](#) for her Chá Table, a fusion of eastern design and western timber inspired by Chinese tea – a symbol of heritage and hospitality which reflects the traditionally strong relationship between Britain and Hong Kong. Helen is being mentored by industry experts as a reward for her achievements.

Helen Wat won the New Territory Award. Photography by Mark Cocksedge.

Meanwhile, Gruff Jones was the winner of the [DCA Futures Award](#), which champions sustainable design concepts that mix the physical environment

with the digital world. His winning Terra-nova innovation is an experimental set of three unobtrusive smart home devices – a thermostat, smart assistant and light controller – which takes inspiration from the material properties of terracotta (heat insulation, acoustic insulation and light reflection). The judges praised Gruff for his practical application of terracotta, a 100% natural, recyclable material and a more environmentally friendly alternative to home devices made primarily from plastics.

Both Helen and Gruff were also recognised by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) for their design and innovation.

Gruff Jones was the winner of the DCA Futures Award. Photography by Mark Cocksedge.

Trevor Duncan, Associate Professor in Industrial Design at Northumbria University, said: “A huge congratulations to all of the students and graduates, whose combined efforts meant that Northumbria was the most successful exhibiting university at this year’s New Designers Awards. It gave them the ideal opportunity to showcase their creative talents and their ability to apply design concepts and solutions to real-world situations.

“Our programmes are created to encourage our students to develop new and innovative practices within design, and engage in critical, ethical innovation and research through design.”

Dr Heather Robson, Head of Northumbria School of Design, said: “I am so privileged and proud to have been able to watch this work in progress. Everything we teach and deliver is through live projects so that our students can encounter and address real challenges on their journey to the responsible, creative critical designers the world needs.”

Northumbria’s School of Design was ranked fourth in the UK for research power in Art and Design in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework. It offers study programmes in fashion, industrial, communication and innovation design. Discover more online by visiting www.northumbria.ac.uk/design

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally. Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact 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
07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact
Student Communications Manager
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk