



The new Vaughan Oliver Scholarships are launching in September 2021.

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## Supporting the next generation of Graphic Designers at Northumbria

Aspiring Graphic Design students at Northumbria University will have the opportunity to enhance their learning experience, through the new Vaughan Oliver Scholarships, launching in September 2021.

Vaughan Oliver was one of the most influential British Graphic Designers and Art Directors of his generation.

Graduating from Northumbria University, then known as Newcastle

Polytechnic, in 1979, Oliver went on to earn a global reputation as a visionary in his field.

He is perhaps best known for his work with independent record label 4AD; building up an enviable portfolio of work for bands including Cocteau Twins, Pixies, The Breeders, Throwing Muses, Scott Walker and Modern English, to name just a few.

In an obituary following Vaughan's sad death in 2019, [The Guardian](#) said of his work: "With their clashing fonts and boldly allusive but mysterious symbolism, his sleeves became some of the most revered in modern pop".

Vaughan's work with 4AD and through his companies 23 Envelope and v23, earned him a host of devoted admirers and inspired not only graphic designers but fashion designers, film directors, photographers and art directors.

Vaughan spent more than four decades creating a body of iconic work, helping to reinvent the practice of graphic design.

His distinct approach to design attracted clients from across a wide variety of industries including, but not limited to, Ballet Preljocaj, Sony, The young Vic, John Galliano, Tyneside Cinema and film director David Lynch.

Following Vaughan's death, 4AD wanted to recognise his contribution to the music industry, graphic design as a whole and celebrate his legacy.

4AD therefore worked with Northumbria University and Vaughan's wife, Lee Oliver Widdows, to establish *The Vaughan Oliver Graphic Design Scholarships* – aimed at helping the next generation of highly gifted Graphic Design students – which will be accompanied by a memorial lecture each year in Vaughan's name.

Speaking about the creation of this bursary and lecture series, 4AD's Rich Walker said "It's a great honour for us to be working with Vaughan's wife Lee and his alma mater Northumbria University to help inspire a new generation of designers. We can't understate just how important Vaughan was in helping 4AD to become what it is today and as someone who also dedicated a lot of his time teaching others, we know he would have been delighted that his

legacy lives on back where he started and helping those starting out on a similar journey to his own.”

Over the next decade, three scholarships will be offered each year to support, enhance and extend students’ education and employability development within the sector.

The first scholarship will be awarded to a second year Graphic Design BA (Hons) student transitioning into their final year of study, helping them kick start their career.

The second and third will be given to students who live in the North East of England and are applying for Northumbria’s Graphic Design undergraduate programme, irrespective of their background.

Northumbria is committed to widening access to higher education and providing life changing opportunities for students. If a student meets the criteria, they will automatically be considered for The Vaughan Oliver Scholarship. This initiative reaffirms Vaughan’s commitment to art education for all.

Andrew Frith, Senior Lecturer, Northumbria School of Design said: “Staff have always been proud of the fact that Vaughan Oliver is an alumnus of the Northumbria Graphic Design Programme and these Scholarships will help manifest that relationship to a wider audience, whilst ensuring that for the next decade, talented graphic design students are provided with the opportunity to enrich their student experience and thrive at both Northumbria and moreover, into the creative industry.”

Dr Heather Robson, Head of Department, Northumbria School of Design said: “These Graphic Design Scholarships will enable students, to remove their barriers to higher education, making a lifelong difference to their lives. This support will ensure that talented graphic design students, for the next decade are provided with the opportunity to enrich their student experience and thrive at Northumbria.”

Find out more about [how your organisation can support](#) the next generation of innovative thinkers through a Northumbria University scholarship.

Find out more about [studying Graphic Design and Northumbria University](#).

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