



Move with the tide

A system of repurposing steel from decommissioned oil rigs, to convert tidal streams into subsidised energy for remote communities in Scotland, creating socio-economic opportunity and contributing to a carbon-neutral future.

Jonathan Birch was recognised in the Steel Appeal category of the RSA Student Design Awards, which looks at how we might apply circular economy principles to increase and encourage the re-use of steel from decommissioned oil platforms.

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Two Northumbria students highly commended in prestigious design awards

Students from Northumbria University have been hailed for their visionary work to highlight issues such as health inequalities and the sustainable re-use of steel in the world's longest running awards scheme for design.

No fewer than eight students from the University's [Design for Industry BA \(Hons\)](#) course were shortlisted in five out of the nine possible categories of the 2021-22 RSA Student Design Awards from the Royal Society of Arts,

Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA), more than twice the number of students than from any other University.

Of the eight, Jai Mistry's *Chalo kawana (Let's eat)* won the accolade in the *Healthy Hearts* category, looking at how we might improve cardiovascular health and address health inequalities, while Jonathan Birch was successful in the *Steel Appeal* category, which looks at how we might apply circular economy principles to increase and encourage the re-use of steel from decommissioned oil platforms.

Jonathan's work, named *Move with the Tide*, was shortlisted in this category alongside two of his fellow students, Hector Owles and Sam Willcox. Together, the trio made up 60 per cent of the contenders in the running for the *Steel Appeal* gong.

All of the awards celebrate the work of emerging designers who want to make a difference, with winners receiving their prizes at a ceremony in London.

Four more of Jai and Jonathan's peers were also shortlisted for awards in the prestigious scheme, which is now in its 98th year. They were: Francis Hall for the *Railspace* community art gallery project, which was in the running for the *Transformation Station* award, given to projects that leverage unrealised spaces as catalysts for communities to thrive, Angus Douglas for *InnoTraits*, part of the *Hybrid Home* category, which looks at how we might improve the experience of hybrid working, and Harriet Almond and Rob Swan for their *Dots* and *Strip Medication* projects respectively – both part of *Without the Waste*, looking at how we might use circular economy principles to rethink the storage, delivery and dispensing of tablet medication.

Andy Haldane, the RSA's Chief Executive said: "These awards represent the very best of what the RSA is about; finding and empowering talented young people, helping to showcase their vision and using the power of the RSA to supercharge their efforts.

"Huge congratulations are due to all the winners – they join the ranks of some of the greatest designers in modern memory. There are some seriously impressive ideas in the mix this year, and it will be very exciting to see how the prize money will help take them to the next level."

Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader Ian Hewitt, who teaches all eight of the shortlisted candidates said: “The thought, creativity and innovation that has gone into each of these projects highlights how much we have to look forward to in terms of future design, with talent and pragmatism demonstrated in equal measure.

“I could not be more proud to work with these skilled and intuitive individuals, all of whom are more than worthy of this recognition. As a department, we’re incredibly proud, as all eight individuals should be, and I look forward to celebrating all these achievements with them.”

Previous winners in the RSA Student Design Awards include Northumbria alumnus, Sir Jonathan Ive, former Chief Design Officer at Apple. This year’s judges included Nerys Anthony, Director of Youth Programmes and Innovation at The Children’s Society, Frank Anatole, Principal Architect at Network Rail, and Valerio De Vivo, Head of Transformation at LEGO Design.✉

Northumbria University is ranked fourth in the UK for its research power in art and design in the [Research Excellence Framework 2021](#), with the research environment given a 100 per cent rating as both world-leading and internationally excellent.

Discover more online about the [Design for Industry course](#). To see the respective vision of all the successful entrants from this year’s awards, including Jai and Jonathan’s work, visit thersa.org.

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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