



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# school *of* design digest

Issue 03  
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# Introduction

In this edition of the **School of Design Digest** we celebrate a landmark achievement for the School of Design and University of Leeds, being awarded the [Queen Elizabeth Prize for Education](#), the UK's most prestigious national honour for higher education. This accolade recognises our **150-year legacy of research, education and innovation in textiles** and our ongoing global impact at the [School of Design](#) and [Leeds Institute of Textiles and Colour \(LITAC\)](#).

We highlight exciting developments across our community, including the School of Design's first in-person **Industry Advisory Board** meeting, which brought together industry professionals, academics and students to help shape the future of student education and provide opportunities for our students to network with industry professionals. We shine a light on our **talented students, staff and alumni** who continue to be recognised across national and international arenas including the **FUAM Graduate Art Prize, Papin Prize and Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize**. This issue also features inspiring alumni stories, updates on **employability workshops, industry and guest speakers, Graduate Fashion Week** preparations, and our recent School exhibitions including **Comics Practice and Theory and Assembloids**.

Our research updates highlight our involvement in global conferences, including the inaugural **International Textile and Colour Conference 2025**, news of **major research awards and projects** driving innovation in AI and textiles, and **recent staff publications**. We also acknowledge our growing partnership with **VeriVide**, which continues to advance colour science and sustainable innovation within the School. We hope you enjoy hearing about some of the brilliant things happening in our School and join us in congratulating everyone involved in making our School such a vibrant and successful community.



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# News Spotlight

01



# University of Leeds Awarded Queen Elizabeth Prize

The [School of Design](#) is delighted to announce that the [University of Leeds](#) has been awarded the [Queen Elizabeth Prize for Education](#) – the UK’s most prestigious national honour for higher education – in recognition of its **150-year history of innovation and excellence in textile research and education.**

**The Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education** (formerly the Queen’s Anniversary Prizes) celebrate outstanding work by UK universities and colleges that demonstrates quality, innovation and real public benefit through education and research. Around twenty Prizes are awarded in each cycle.

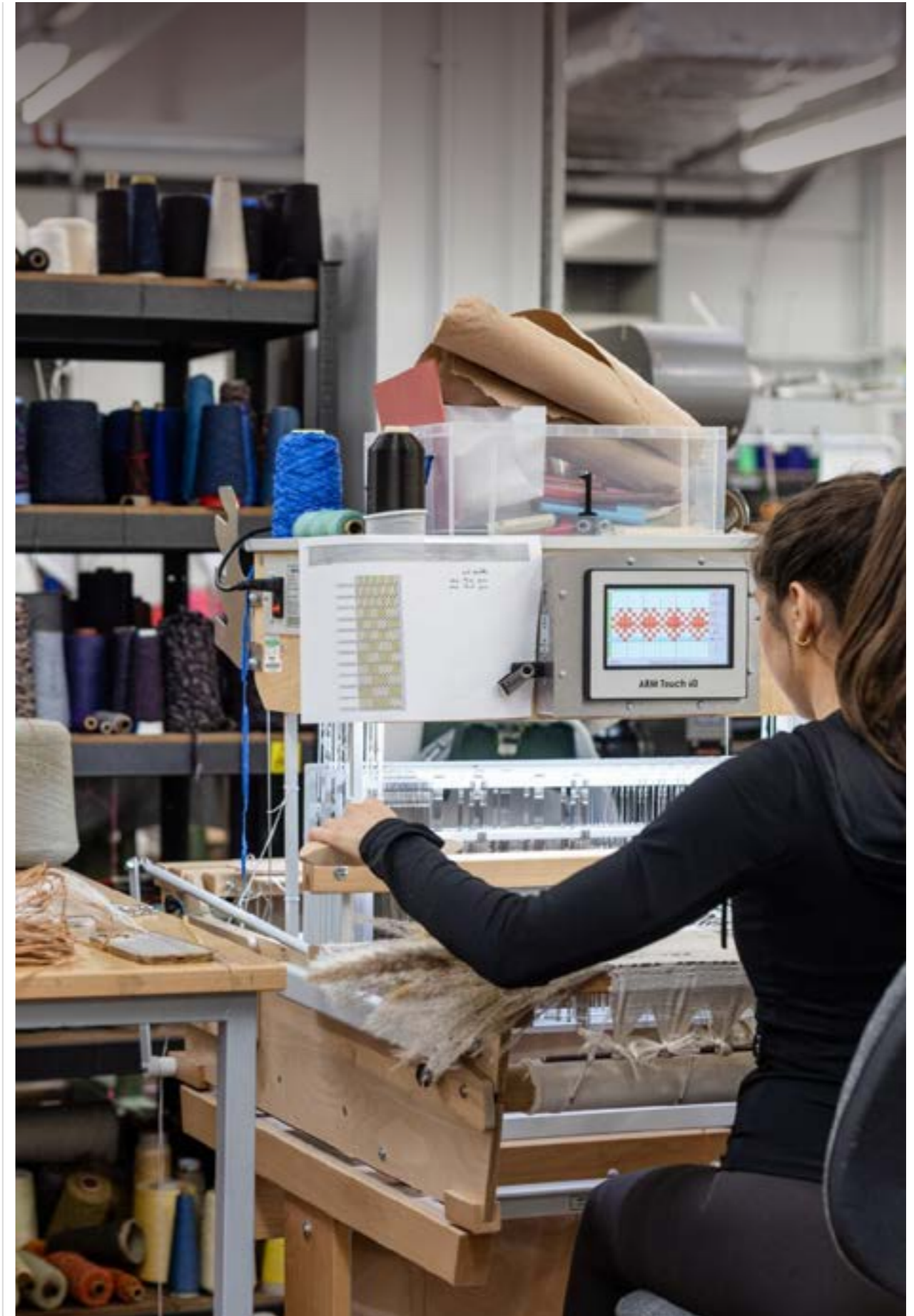
Leeds’ award highlights the **University’s global leadership in textiles**, from its **historic foundations** through to the **cutting-edge research**, undertaken at the **School of Design, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures**, and at [Leeds Institute for Textiles and Colour \(LITAC\)](#), that continues to transform industries, consumer practices and communities today.

**Professor Muhammad Tausif, Head of the School of Design, said:**

“This award honours not just the University of Leeds’ rich history of pioneering research and achievements in textiles, fashion and colour, but also our restless drive for excellence and innovation. At the School of Design, our curiosity and challenge-led research combines creativity, technology, and science to unearth new seams of knowledge and deliver solutions that truly make a difference for industry, for people, and for the planet.”

**Professor Stephen Russell, Director of LITAC, said:**

“Thanks to its wide-ranging research expertise and strong culture of collaboration, Leeds is exceptionally well-positioned to address key challenges in the textile industry and to drive innovative advances in colour and polymer science with applications across multiple sectors.”



# School of Design Hosts First In-Person Industry Advisory Board

In October the School of Design hosted its **first in-person Industry Advisory Board (IAB)**. Established in 2021, the IAB brings together industry professionals, academics and students to shape the future of student education and ensure that our students are equipped with industry relevant skills, knowledge and connections to become future leaders in their chosen disciplines. The meeting, attended by IAB members, School of Design academics and colleagues from the University's Careers team, focussed on building upon our existing strengths and links with industry, particularly in relation to providing our students with an authentic, industry-relevant education.

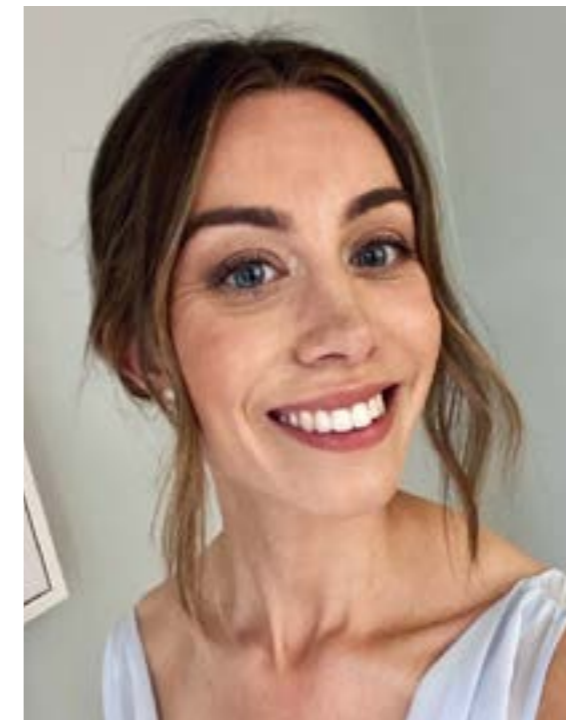
Industry panel members in attendance included **Chloe Baldwin** (Co-Founder and Director of [Buttercrumble](#)), **Mike Gregory** (Head of Design – Sports at [Sky](#)), **Milly Kraushaar** (Junior Designer at [Pearl Global Industries Ltd](#)), **Tessa Pierce** ([Freelance Senior Project Manager](#)), **Gerard Savva** (Co-Founder of [Magpie](#)), **Suzy Shepherd** (Founder of Yorkshire Textiles and Co-Director of [Future Fashion Factory](#)), **Becky Stevenson** (Head of Marketing at [WGSN](#)).

Following the meeting, our IAB members and final year undergraduate students took part in an immersive networking and feedback event. Students pitched their project work and ideas to industry members who then provided feedback and tailored industry insights to the students. The event was a huge success and a valuable experience for industry members and students alike.

**Jeffrey Thorpe**, IAB Director and School of Design Employability Lead, **reflects:** "The student immersive event was a resounding success with students having an opportunity to pitch their concepts to industry leaders and getting authentic real-world feedback. We will be definitely holding this event next year."

**Gerard Savva, Co-Founder of [Magpie](#) noted:** "It was a rewarding day, not just in seeing the next generation's creativity in action, but in recognising how our influence as industry advisors can help shape the kind of educational experience we want to see thrive".

**BA Fashion Design Innovation Final Year Student said:** "Speaking to an industry professional who also attended the university was great to not only learn about future pathways and roles after graduation but to additionally hear about their experiences and advice on how to approach final year. The opportunity to receive personal feedback was amazing and I came away with a clearer sense of direction in my project, supported by recommendations of techniques to look developing and resources to conduct further research."



**Becky Stevenson, Head of Marketing at [WGSN](#), reflects:**

"As always, meeting students and hearing their ideas is always really valuable, for me personally I find these experiences away from my desk and laptop provide me with inspiration, new ideas and space to think outside of my own 'bubble'. I'd love to thank everyone I met and look forward to more in the future".

# A Growing Partnership with VeriVide

The **School of Design** is proud to highlight its **expanding partnership** with [VeriVide](#), a collaboration that continues to advance colour science, digital imaging, and sustainable innovation.

Since 2004, **VeriVide** has supported our research and education through **world-class colour assessment and imaging technology**. Their latest contribution, including advanced **LED-based systems** now installed across our **Colour Lab** and **Textile Testing Lab**, ensures our students and researchers are equipped for the future of industry.

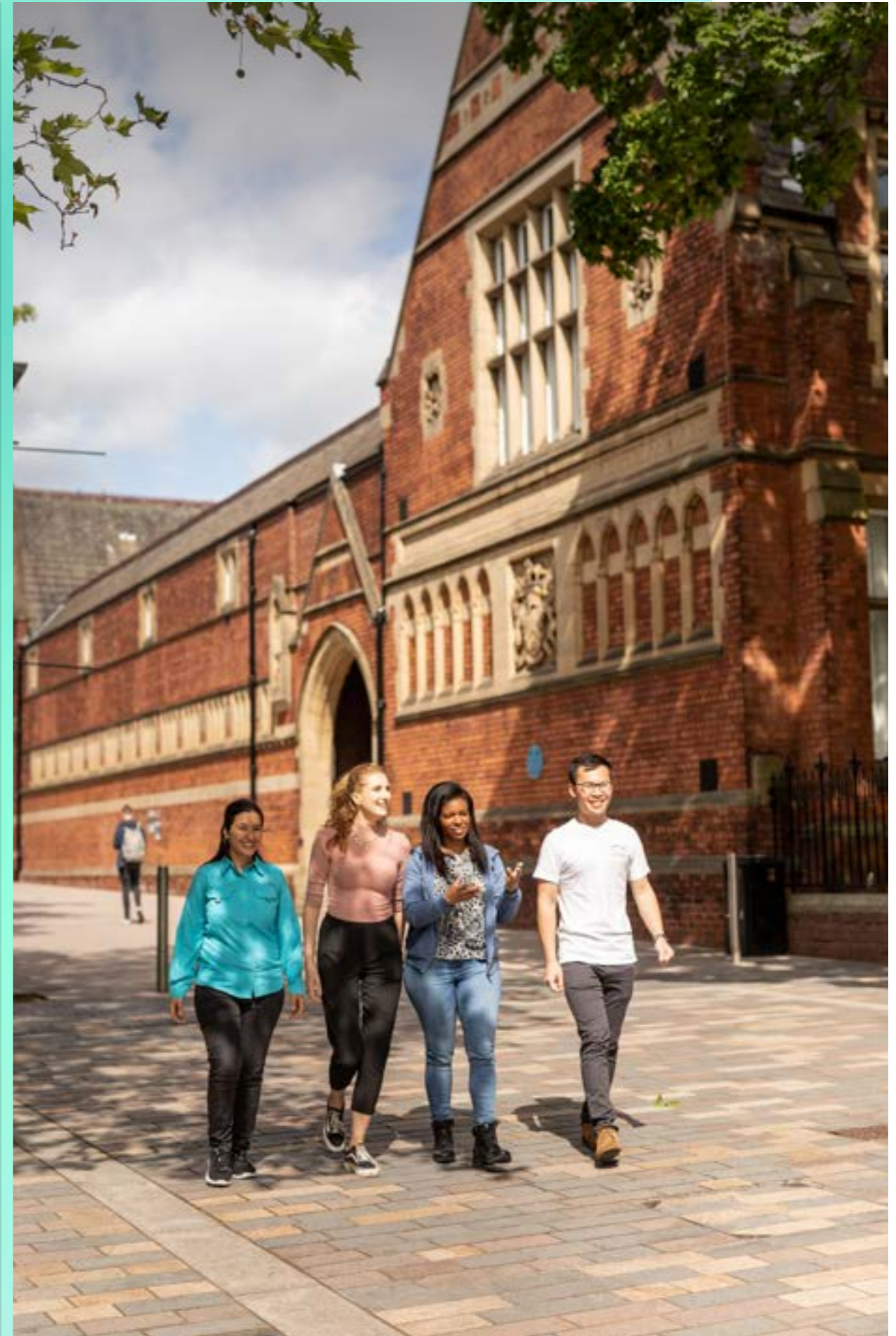
This partnership enhances hands-on learning, supports interdisciplinary research, and strengthens our links with global sectors adopting new LED standards.

[Read more](#) about how this collaboration is shaping the future of colour science and design.



# Success Stories

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## School of Design Students Shortlisted for FUAM Prize

Showcasing the artistic talents of **BA Art & Design** (School of Design) and **BA Fine Art** (School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies) 2025 graduates, the [Friends of University Art and Music \(FUAM\) Graduate Art Prize Exhibition](#) returned to [The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery](#) from 8th August – 1st November 2025.

The School of Design was delighted to see **BA Art and Design** graduates [Alexandra Rosenthal](#) and [Hannah Slater](#) shortlisted for the **FUAM Prize** and featured in the exhibition alongside shortlisted **BA Fine Art** graduates [Alice Boot](#) and [Esme McLean](#).

In her installation **Beyond the Façade**, **Alexandra Rosenthal** explored “the tension between the rigid exterior of architecture and the soft, complex reality of human identity within”. An accomplished brutalist-style architectural model based on the Barbican sits at its centre. Orbiting it, glowing wall-mounted tableaux reveal the imprint of individual lives in the rooms on the other side of the thrusting hard-edged concrete.

**Hannah Slater’s** work reimagined “the unique flowing contours and curves of naturally stacked rock formations, offering an appreciation of light and form” in her multi-functional modular lighting. Inspired by the eroded forms of Brimham Rocks and the sculptures of Henry Moore, Tony Cragg and Isamu Noguchi, her subtly amorphous lamps can be used as hanging pendants, clusters, or table or floor lights.

At a packed prize-giving event, **BA Fine Art** graduate **Alice Boot** was awarded the **FUAM Prize 2025**, with **BA Art and Design** graduate **Alexandra Rosenthal** awarded the **People’s Choice Award**. We wish all of the graduates involved our heartfelt congratulations and wish them all the best for their future careers.



# 2025 PGT Award Winners

The School of Design is proud to celebrate the achievements of our **2024/25 postgraduate taught (PGT) students**, whose creativity and academic excellence have been recognised through the **2025 PGT Awards**. These awards reflect the passion, rigour, and originality at the heart of our postgraduate community. **Congratulations to all recipients!**

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## **Barker Prize** – Guannan Han, MA Fashion Enterprise and Society

Awarded for the best extended piece of academic writing from a Masters Student. Guannan's work was of professional standard and achieved the highest grade in the cohort.

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## **Marsden Prize** – Abhimanyu Sudhir Kaushik, MSc Textiles Sustainability and Innovation

Awarded for the best Masters show or project, Abhimanyu was awarded the Marsden prize for his challenging lab-based project which demonstrated a high level of research complexity and potential to make an impact on the textile sector.

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## **Tibor Reich Prize** – Yinqi Xu, MA Design

Awarded for the most innovative use of colour or colour theory in a final postgraduate project. Yinqi Xu worked on colour-coded wayfinding for academic libraries. The work was innovative, rigorous and detailed. The student worked hard, was very independent but listened to advice.



# Wei Wang Awarded Student Award at Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize

In October 2025, Practice PhD student [Wei Wang](#) was awarded the Student Award at the prestigious [Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize 2025](#) for her work “The Presentation of the Altar” (2024). The Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize, launched in 1994, is widely regarded as the UK’s leading annual open exhibition devoted to drawing.

The work, made using **watercolour, gold foil & fine liner on paper**, depicts a **traditional Minnan altar**, composed of **symbolic offerings** of fruits, flowers, tea, incense, and delicacies, **arranged with ritual precision**. Through a contemplative drawing process, Wei has transformed an ephemeral ritual into a meditative visual space, embedding layers of cultural memory, sacred temporality, and devotion within the work.

We extend our sincere congratulations to Wei on receiving this highly regarded award and wish her continued success in her doctoral research.





## Winter Graduation

This December, over 3000 University of Leeds students and guests took part in **Winter Graduation** on campus and online. In the School of Design, we celebrated our incredible graduates in-person on Thursday 18th December in the **Great Hall**. Following the special ceremony, we welcomed our graduates, guests and staff to continue the celebrations in the School of Design at a **festive reception**.

We would like to **congratulate all of our exceptional graduates** who graduated this December and **wish them every success** as they embark on the next stage of their careers.



# Student Education

03



## 2nd Year Employability and Placements Workshop

On 17th of November, our 2nd year undergraduate students gathered for an **Employability Workshop** with the School's Employability Lead, [Jeffrey Thorpe](#), and the [Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures \(AHC\) Employability Team](#). The workshop helped to prepare students with either applying for a year in industry or summer internships. Students received tips and advice on creating a professional and engaging C.V., cover letters, and preparing for interviews using the STARR method.

Our faculty of AHC Employability team were also on hand to review the **year in industry module** and support students in highlighting key transferable hard and soft skills that are relevant for pursuing industry placements.

Students found the workshop extremely helpful, with one **BA Graphic and Communication Design student** reflecting that workshops were particularly helpful in “**thinking about how to develop my C.V. and prepare for industry applications**”.



## Preparing for Graduate Fashion Week

On 25th of November the School of Design welcomed **Nicola Hitchens**, Managing Director of the [Graduate Fashion Foundation](#) to speak to final year BA Fashion Design Innovation, BA Fashion Marketing and BA Sustainable Fashion students about Graduate Fashion Week 2026.

**Graduate Fashion Week** is a fantastic opportunity for our final year students to **showcase their hard work, talent and portfolios**. **Graduate Fashion Week 2026** takes place between **15th-18th June 2026**, and is packed full of exciting events, including university fashion shows, industry competitions, industry talks, industry portfolio days, networking events and so much more.

Our staff and students are all looking forward to highlighting the extraordinary talent that our school graduates have to offer the fashion industry.





## Year in Industry

### Laura Gooch – Primark

During the 24/25 academic year, BA Art and Design student **Laura Gooch** spent her Year in Industry at **Primark, Dublin**. **Laura hugely enjoyed her placement, reflecting,** “I learnt a lot about commercial design and colour theory, and developed my Adobe skills designing trend-driven repeat patterns for lingerie, hosiery and nightwear. Highlights of my placement include being able to explore Dublin, getting to work with experienced designers, and seeing my designs sold on the shop floor”. Laura is looking forward to utilising her new Adobe design skills and knowledge in her final year projects, and to building upon her increased confidence, professionalism, and design-business knowledge, as she looks forward to her career post-degree.

### Rosie Allon – The 10 Group

BA Graphic and Communication Design student **Rosie Allon** spent her Year in Industry at **The 10 Group** during the 24/25 academic year. The 10 Group is an integrated creative and marketing communications agency in London, where Rosie worked as part of the design team. As a junior designer, Rosie supported the delivery of campaigns and content across a range of clients, helping to bring ideas to life visually and ensuring all work aligned with brand identities and campaign objectives. **Rosie reflects,** “During my time at the 10 Group, I developed significantly both creatively and professionally. I strengthened my design and software skills, learned how to work effectively within an agency environment, and grew my communication and teamwork abilities. I also learned to approach briefs with a more open and curious mindset – taking the time to understand them fully – something I’ve carried into my final year at university and will continue to build on throughout my career”.



## Study Abroad

[BA Graphic and Communication Design](#) student [Ella Godfrey](#) has recently returned to her final year of studies following a fantastic [Study Abroad year](#) in Australia at the [University of Newcastle](#).

**Of the experience, Ella reflects:** “Studying in Australia was the best experience, and I would recommend it to anyone considering studying abroad. I had always known I wanted to do a year abroad, but I never expected it to be so transformative and offer so much. Studying Graphic Design at Newcastle was enriching, giving me the chance to experience a new studio environment, use different specialist equipment, and take modules with different approaches to design”.

**During her year abroad Ella was able to travel alongside her studies:** “From spending Christmas in Byron Bay and trips along the east coast, to exploring New Zealand for a few weeks and going on the university ski trip to Japan – each adventure gave me experiences and memories I’ll never forget”.

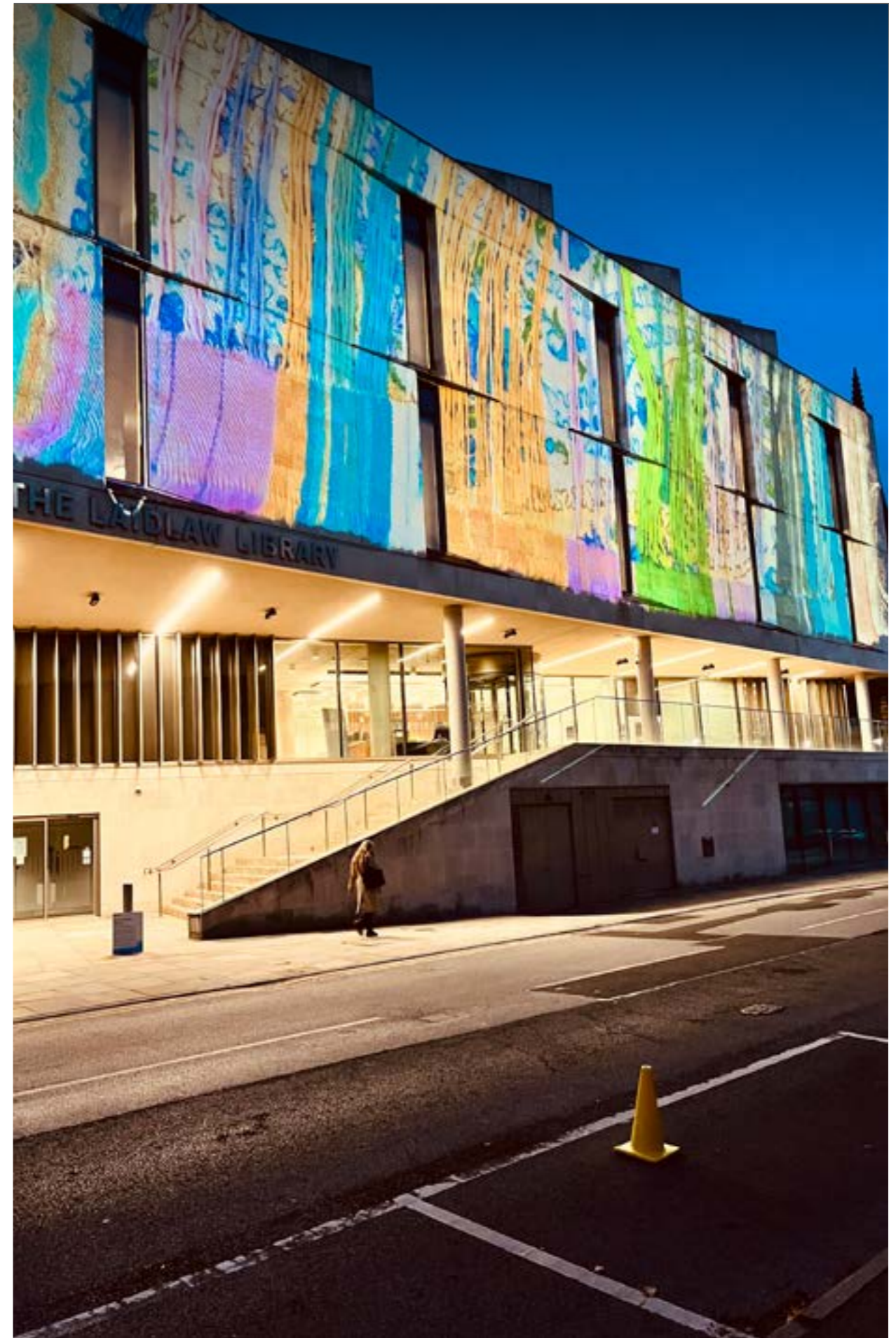
We wish Ella every success as she applies her new skills and increased confidence and independence to her final year of studies.

# Hannah Sabapathy Showcases Work at Light Night

In October [Hannah Sabapathy](#), Practice PhD student, collaborated with [Rebecca Smith](#) (Urban Projections) to produce **Recut, Retake, Regrow**, a major new **projection-mapped installation** for Leeds [Light Night 2025](#). The work brought the intricate beauty of **Kashmiri textiles** from the [University of Leeds Libraries' Cultural Collections](#) to life.

Displayed across the expansive exterior of the **Laidlaw Library**, the installation **transformed historic patterns** and **vibrant colours** into **dynamic visual compositions**. Motifs were reimagined, cut into new forms, mirrored, and expanded, inviting audiences to explore the **complex interplay between traditional South Asian textiles** and their **British imitations**.

The work is an extension of Hannah's PhD research, in which she is examining cut-up South Asian textiles, and British copies and imitations in various archives. **Hannah reflects** "The International Textile Collection at the University has some visually striking fragments from Kashmir and an unusual collection of woven and embroidered samples perhaps made in Kashmir but commissioned in Europe. It has been exciting to work with this material, and it also reflects the complex situation of copying and hybridity in textile design during the nineteenth century... In my practice I am exploring copying and cutting as ways of reclaiming the patterns and creating new work in the context of British South Asian design".



# Jihan Irfani presents VR Experience at Indonesian Embassy

[MA Digital Design Futures](#) student, **Jihan Irfani**, recently presented her specialist final Masters project “**Echos in Batik**” at the **Indonesian Embassy** in London (October 2025).

The **virtual reality (VR) experience** demonstrated the **Batik** making process for the **Mega Mendung** pattern. Passionate about user-centred design and user-testing, Jihan invited **Dr Desra Percaya** (Diplomat at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia) and **Dr Agus Mochamad Ramdhan** (Education and Cultural Attache) to test the immersive VR experience.

Presenting on **Indonesian National Batik Day**, Jihan was delighted to receive excellent feedback, and to be able to discuss the potential for future innovations in VR, technology and immersive art experiences.





## Fashion Technicians Nominated for Papin Prize

The School of Design is proud to announce that [Deborah Fowler](#) and [Faye Hindle](#), members of the **Fashion Design and Innovation Technical Team**, were **shortlisted** for a highly respected **Papin Prize** in the **Technical Team category**. Their outstanding contribution to supporting fashion design education and innovation has also earned them a **Highly Commended Certificate**, a testament to their dedication and expertise.

The **Papin Prizes** are the **only national awards** dedicated to **celebrating the very best technical staff and teams in academia and research**. These awards shine a spotlight on the vital role technicians play in higher education and research, ensuring that technical professionals receive the recognition they deserve. Over the past decade, the Papin Prizes have significantly raised the visibility of technical staff, acknowledging their essential contributions to teaching, research, and innovation.

Deborah and Faye's work is instrumental in supporting our students to explore **cutting-edge techniques** and develop **creative, industry-ready designs**. Their expertise ensures that our fashion programmes remain at the forefront of innovation, providing students with the technical skills and confidence to succeed in a competitive industry.

This achievement is a proud moment for the School of Design and reflects our commitment to delivering world-class technical support. **Congratulations to Deborah and Faye for this well-deserved recognition!**

# Featured Alumni

03





# Ria-Jasmine Ladva

## BA Fashion Marketing

“After graduating with a First Class Honours in Fashion Marketing, I felt a compelling drive to continue challenging my understanding of fashion’s intricate relationship with business. My fascination has always gravitated towards how fashion marketing navigates the complexities of global markets; from brand development to evolving consumer cultures, this curiosity has propelled my personal post-graduate research. While initially finding my path in the fashion industry presented some challenges, I solidified my drive to further my education, aspiring to cultivate the skills necessary to become a future leader in the fashion world.

This ambition led me directly to Parsons School of Design, specifically to pursue an MPS in Fashion Management. My decision to embark on further studies at Parsons was deeply rooted in a desire to embrace the current fashion management structures in a creative and strategic manner. The University of Leeds provided an invaluable foundation for my application, equipping me with essential critical thinking skills, a robust understanding of design principles, and a strong work ethic.

Parsons, with its unparalleled reputation for pushing creative boundaries and its vibrant New York City landscape, felt like the definitive next step. I was particularly drawn to the school’s emphasis on social impact and its wonderfully diverse community. Receiving a merit-based Scholarship from The New School was a truly pivotal moment, not only validating my aspirations but also transforming this dream into a tangible reality.

At Parsons, I aim to delve deeper into the consumer journey and deepen my understanding of how modern technological advancements can solve problems in the fashion industry. I also aspire to exercise my brand development skills I picked up during my undergrad, collaborating on projects that challenge conventional thinking and contribute meaningfully to the broader fashion design landscape.

I see Parsons now as an instrumental stepping stone for my future career in fashion; I couldn’t be more excited for the journey!”



## Danielle Breese

### MA Fashion Enterprise and Society

“Studying for my MA in Fashion Communications at Leeds was one of the most rewarding periods of my academic life. I loved being in an environment that encouraged experimentation, critical thinking and creativity, and the course allowed me to explore the intersections of fashion, culture and communication in a way that truly shaped my voice. Coming from working-class roots in Yorkshire, it was empowering to study in a city that felt like home while still pushing me to think globally.

My MA prepared me exceptionally well for life after university by sharpening my editorial instincts, strengthening my strategic approach and giving me the confidence to navigate the fast-paced world of luxury fashion. The blend of theory, research and hands-on practice has continued to guide me through every role and project since.

Since graduating, I have built a career across some of the industry’s most exciting and influential spaces. I have worked with brands such as Prada, Burberry, Commes Des Garçons and Dover Street Market, gaining insight into both heritage craftsmanship and cutting-edge retail culture. Alongside this, I work closely with personal clients, styling figures across sport and entertainment. Recent work includes styling Formula 1 drivers Yuki Tsunoda and Zhou Guanyu, as well as actress Lily Collins, and The Sugababes, allowing me to merge elevated fashion knowledge with the individuality of each client.

I am also developing my personal project: Low Maintenance, a magazine I created for my MA dissertation, centred on the belief that looking great should not require being high-maintenance or wealthy.

Each step of my journey traces back to the foundation my MA at Leeds gave me, and I am proud to carry that forward into every new chapter of my career.”



# Alma Palacios Marin

## PhD

“After completing my MSc in Textile Sustainability and Innovation at the University of Leeds, I continued into a PhD exploring how textile materials and structures influence the release of fragmented fibres and microplastics during washing. My research focused on reducing this pollutant at the source — through textile design — before it reaches the environment. During my PhD, I had the opportunity to collaborate across disciplines with other universities and to take part in significant projects, including an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funded initiative.

Since completing my PhD, I have joined the Apparel Impact Institute (Aii) as a Senior Sustainability Reporting Coordinator. Aii works with the industry to accelerate positive environmental impact around urgent climate action. In my role, I support our reporting and programme work by analysing environmental data, ensuring compliance with international standards, and helping maintain the accuracy and reliability of the information we publish.

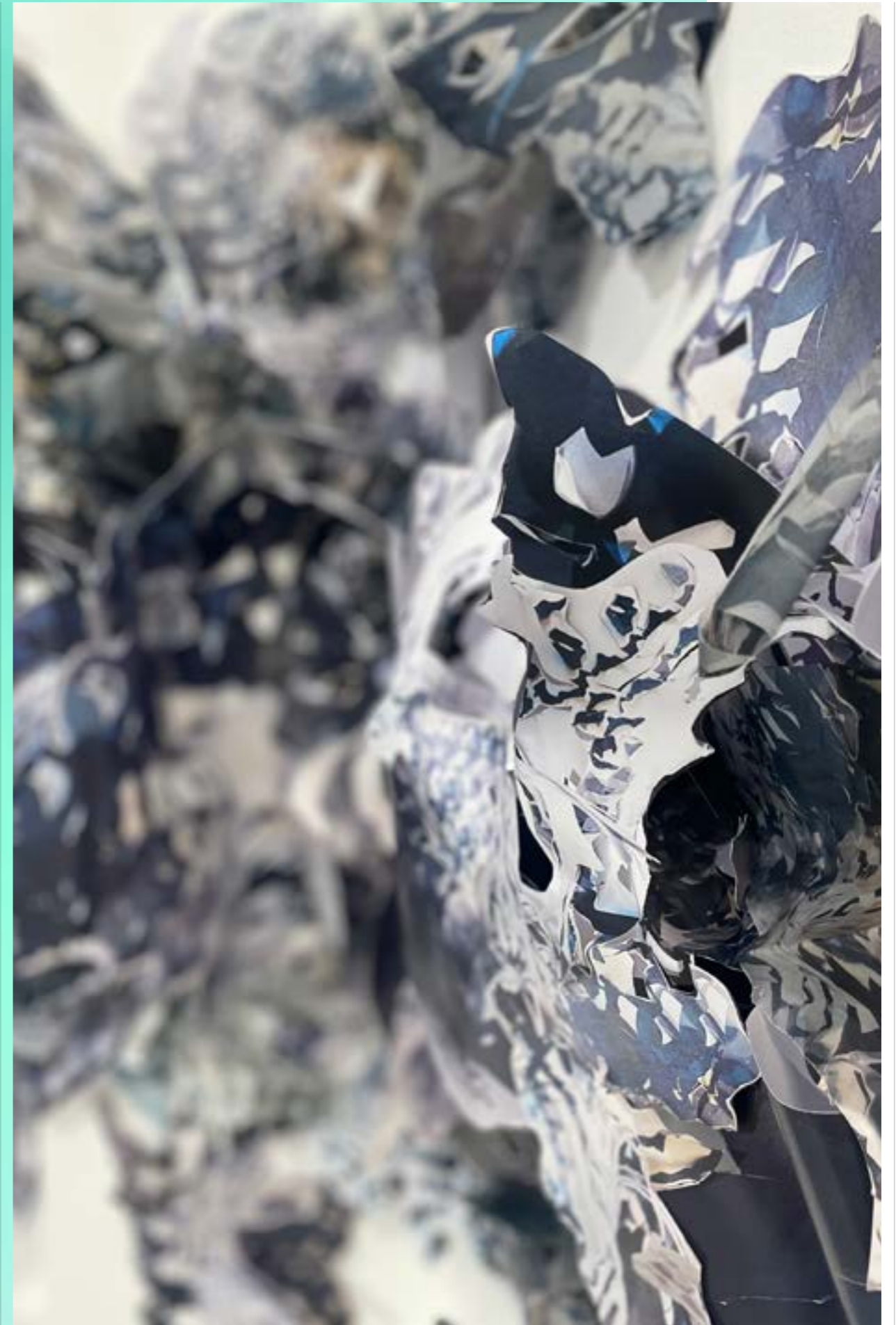
My PhD developed my critical thinking, research capacity, and ability to analyse complex datasets. It strengthened my independence as a researcher, deepened my expertise in textile technology, and taught me to collaborate across universities, companies, and organisations. These skills now guide my work in an applied, industry-facing context.

My advice to current and future PhD students is to make the most of every opportunity: collaborate widely, engage with industry whenever possible, and remember that a PhD trains you not only as a specialist but as a researcher with skills that can be applied far beyond your field.”

[You can read more about Alma's journey here.](#)

# On Display

05





# Sustainable Stitches

## Exhibition

Curated by [Dr Hye-Won Lim](#)

The **Sustainable Stitches** exhibition showcased work from **second-year BA Fashion Design Innovation students (2024–25 cohort)**.

Featuring **upcycled fashion**, each piece told a unique sustainability story, reflective of how **sustainability is embedded within the students' curriculum**. By integrating sustainable practices into their work, students explored **innovative approaches to repurposing materials** and **embedding ethical principles** into design strategies.

The work not only celebrated emerging talent but also highlighted the importance of fostering a future where fashion and sustainability go hand in hand.



## Cut and Paste

### A Collaborative Project and Exhibition on Inclusion with School of Design Students

Curated by [Dr Helen Clarke](#) and [Dr Paul Wilson](#)

This exhibition showcased collages created during a **collaborative workshop with students** exploring **experiences of inclusion**. The workshop was part of a [three-year scholarship research project \(2024–2027\)](#), funded by the [Leeds Institute of Teaching Excellence \(LITE\)](#) at the University of Leeds. The project aims to co-produce a **Code of Practice for Inclusive Learning and Teaching** with learners in the School of Design, capturing and communicating diverse experiences and perspectives of students, and providing a method through which inclusive policy can be developed going forward.

In the workshops, participants engaged in conversations about **what inclusion means** to them, using **collage as a creative practice** to connect visual elements with personal experiences (past or present). This collaborative process highlighted how art can foster dialogue and reflection on shared and individual experiences.

The exhibition showcased the collaborative and creative outcomes of the workshop, including initial themes emerging from visual analysis of the collages, and was kindly supported by student collaborators **Joel Cross, Sara Martin Crispin, Rebecca Parr, and Hannah Wen**. Documentation was also generously provided by School of Design PhD students **Yuki Koswara** and **Barbara Urrutia-Badilla** and displayed in the **Foyer Gallery**.



# Comics Practice and Theory

## Exhibition and Round Table

Curated by [Dr Eirini Boukla](#) and [Dr Miriam Kent](#)

As part of the [Thought Bubble Festival](#), a week-long festival of comics, the [Comics Practice and Theory](#) exhibition took place in the School of Design in November. The exhibition, which also included a public roundtable event, explored the **relationship between comics, creative practice, and academic research**, and featured work by international artists and scholars, including **Nick Sousanis, Kay Sohini, Jordan Collver, and Kate Evans**.

The [public roundtable](#), convened by **Dr Miriam Kent** (School of Media and Communication, University of Leeds) and **Dr Eirini Boukla** (School of Design, University of Leeds), featured artist **Karrie Fransman**, scholar **Paul Fisher Davies**, and comics writer **Rik Worth**. The panel examined research through comics alongside diverse perspectives on comics as both creative and academic practice, using the works on display in the exhibition as a catalyst to interrogate the event's core themes and exemplify practice-led critical inquiry.

You can also now explore a new online [Comics Research Collection](#), celebrating comic books as a medium for learning, research and creative expression, curated by **Eirini Boukla, Miriam Kent** and **Rik Worth**.

Thank you to [Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute \(LAHRI\)](#) and the [School of Media and Communication](#) at the University of Leeds for making the roundtable event possible.

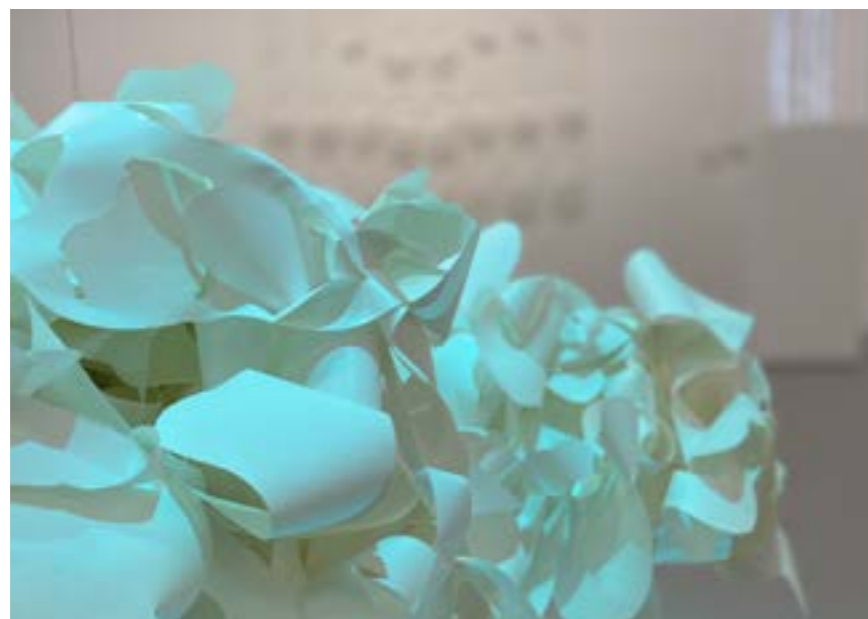
# Assembloids: Drawn a Life

Curated by [Kelly Cumberland](#)

Practice PhD student [Kelly Cumberland](#) is currently exhibiting her work “Assembloids: Drawn a Life”, a body of work exploring how cellular life is continuously drawn into being - materially, conceptually, and perceptually.

The exhibition emerged from an ongoing creative exchange between the artist and neuroscientists in the Stem Cell and Brain Tumour Group (SCBT Research) at the [Leeds Institute of Medical Research](#), University of Leeds. Working with [Dr Heiko Wurdak](#) and [Dr Sabrina Samuel](#), the work reimagines cellular growth, segmentation, differentiation, and self-organisation through the visual language of expanded drawing. This form extends beyond the page into light, movement, and space. As part of the exhibition, [Kelly Cumberland](#) gave an **Artist’s Talk** alongside [Dr Heiko Wurdak](#) and [Dr Sabrina Samuel](#) on Thursday 11th December. **Assembloids: Drawn a Life** runs until 23rd December.

The artist would like to thank Dr Heiko Wurdak and Dr Sabrina Samuel from the Stem Cell and Brain Tumour Group (SCBT Research) at the Leeds Institute of Medical Research. SCBT Research is a Clinician–Scientist Partnership and is co-led by Dr Heiko Wurdak and Mr Ryan Mathew.



# University of São Paulo Visit and Exhibition

The **School of Design** recently welcomed academics from the [University of São Paulo \(USP\)](#) for an inspiring few days of **knowledge exchange and creative exploration**. The visit highlighted the **ongoing international collaboration** between our institutions, a result of our **Memorandum of Understanding** between the School of Design and USP, and celebrated our shared innovative approaches to design research and practice.

A **pop-up exhibition** in the **Glass Studio Corridor** featured as part of the visit and included work on fashion communication by **USP PhD student Sarah Rocksane**, and posters exploring issues of design and gender created by **USP undergraduate Design students**.

In addition, USP presented their **approaches to design research and practice** to [BA Graphic and Communication Design](#) second-year students, enriching the students' learning experience and fostering cross-cultural dialogue. Our guests also had the opportunity to visit the School of Design's [Yorkshire Fashion Archive](#), gaining a deeper understanding of the region's rich fashion history.

Finally, [Dr Andrea Thoma](#) and [Dr Paul Wilson](#) (School of Design) worked on a collaborative funding application with **Dr Gustavo Curcio** (USP), paving the way for future joint projects and research initiatives to further strengthen ties between the University of Leeds and USP. This visit exemplifies **our commitment to international engagement and collaborative learning**, offering students and staff opportunities to connect with **global design communities**.



# Guest Insights

06



# Paul Young: Building Authentic and Meaningful Brands

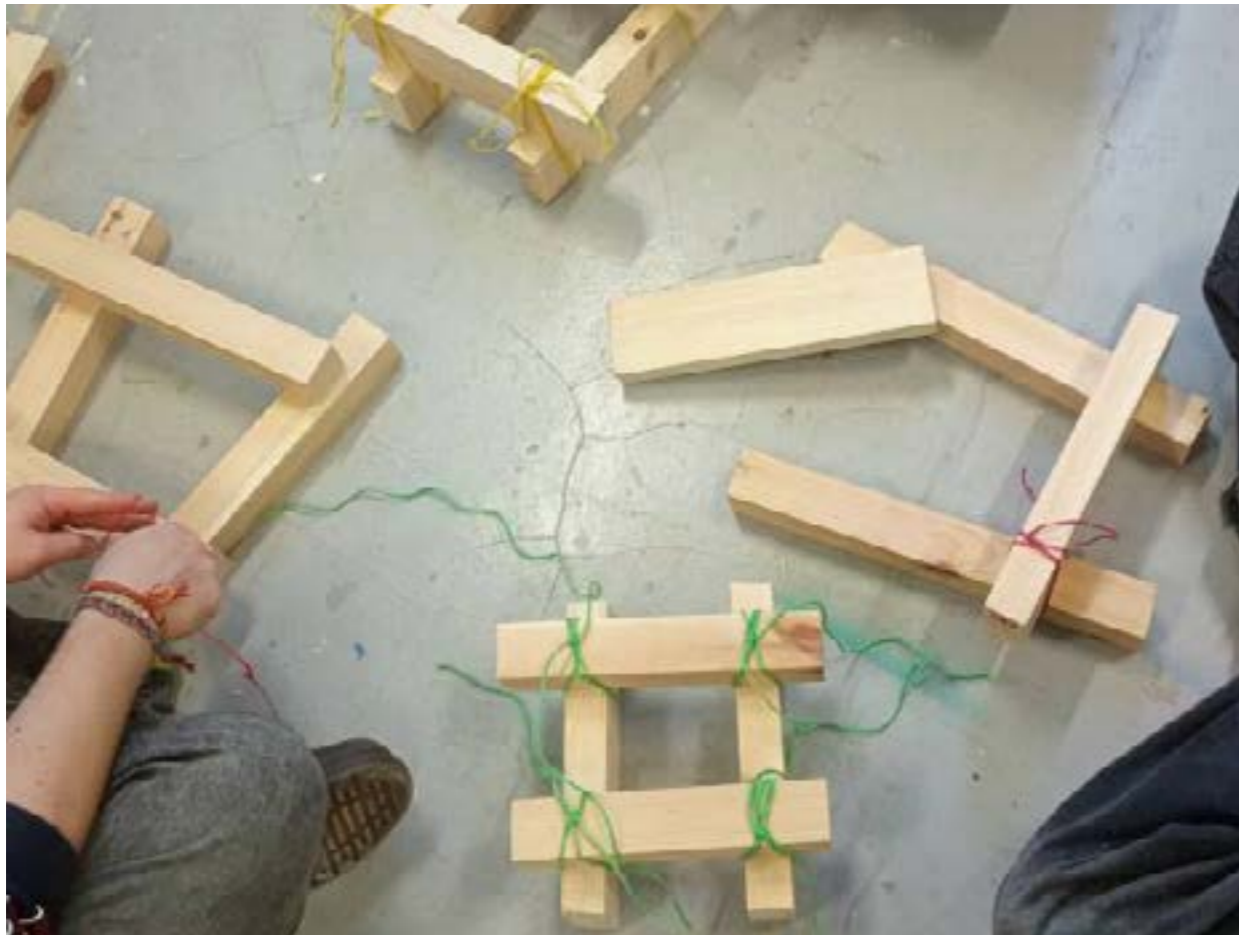
Final year [BA Fashion Marketing students](#) were recently treated to an inspiring lecture on brand invention delivered by **Paul Young, Founder and Chief Executive of Nirva** and **Co-Founder** of strategy agency [A New Kind](#). Paul has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Leeds for almost eight years, generously sharing his industry insight with the next generation of creative thinkers.

With a career that includes work with global names such as **Vans, Adidas** and **Braun**, Paul is recognised not only as an **entrepreneur** but as a **respected brand strategist**. While his roots lie in fashion, his portfolio now stretches across beauty, wellness, technology and sport, reflecting his belief that powerful ideas can thrive in many different fields.

This year, Paul unveiled his latest venture. [Nirva](#) is a low and no flavoured tequila brand that has recently launched, debuting in Leeds at Headrow House, Belgrave Music Hall and Water Lane Boat House. His talk guided students through the **journey from commercial thinking to creative development**, ending with a launch strategy that demonstrated the **importance of storytelling in building momentum**. This perfectly aligned with students endeavour to create their own brand as part of their **final major project** for the **BA Fashion Marketing** degree. Paul provided invaluable evidence on how research is at the base of any successful project, and not just a university requirement.

At the heart of Paul's practice is a compelling philosophy. He reminded students that people do not simply buy products, they buy meaning. **Brands with soul, built around authentic narratives, are the ones that truly resonate**. His lecture was a passionate reminder that story is not decoration but the engine of lasting connection.





## Flock to Gather

Flock To Gather was a thought-provoking talk and design/collaborative making workshop offered by [RESOLVE](#) to 15 [BA Art and Design](#) students on Wednesday 19th November.

Celine Topsakal and Jana Dardouk from [RESOLVE](#) asked the students to consider how **building together** from **gathered material**, as well as the **gathering of different experiences**, might aid in our **collective imagination** of the **chair**, both as a symbol and a tool for fairer, more equitable coexistence in the built environment.

Celine and Jana noted that chairs typify design's "everyday objects", providing a range of functions from "ordinary" seating to bespoke commodities. However, "as symbols or metaphors, we need only to think of their verbal implications – "a seat at the table", "the seat of government", "backbenchers and frontbenchers", the "chair" of an organisation, assembly, or debate – to remind ourselves of their relationship to the idea of power over others in our society". As part of the workshop, students were shown how to use a combination of clamps and ratchet straps to make joints for furniture.

[RESOLVE](#) is an **interdisciplinary design collective** that combines architecture, engineering, technology and art to address social challenges.

# Fashion Forum

November's **Fashion Forum** welcomed industry experts **James Clark**, Wholesale Sales Director at [Adidas](#), **Emma Davidson**, Owner and Managing Director of [Denza](#), and **Sonia Yousaf**, Head of Fashion at [Dubit](#) to the School of Design.

Our experts provided our students with valuable insights into the **changing landscape of the fashion industry** and discussed **what the future of fashion might look like**. From global industry trends, to digitalisation, virtual fashion, and future graduate opportunities. It was a truly inspiring discussion.





## Sustainable Fashion

In October, [BA Sustainable Fashion](#) students heard from a range of inspiring industry specialists. This included School of Design alumna **Dr Katy Stevens**, now **Head of CSR and Sustainability at the European Outdoor Group**, who delivered an insightful lecture on sustainable fashion trends, policy developments, and emerging areas of research within the outdoor sector, followed by a Q&A focussing on industry skills and career preparation.

Students also heard from **Julia Roebuck**, **Founder of Upcycle Fashion** and **organiser of Thread Republic**. Julia shared her experience leading community-based circular fashion initiatives across Yorkshire and facilitated a hands-on session where students engaged in a practical discussion and introductory upcycling activity that highlighted the value of community engagement in sustainability work.

Finally, **Felicity Lammas**, **Senior Sustainability Manager at Global Fashion Agenda**, introduced Global Fashion Agenda's strategic work and approaches to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting. Felicity offered practical guidance on developing final-year projects and preparing for a career in sustainable fashion.

# Research Highlights

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## International Textile and Colour Conference 2025

The inaugural [International Textile and Colour Conference 2025 \(ITCC\)](#) marked a significant milestone for [LITAC](#), the [School of Design](#) and the wider global textile community. Over two days, the event brought **academics, industry leaders, and innovators together** to explore urgent **sustainability challenges** and **emerging pathways** shaping the **future of textiles and colour**.

The programme showcased the breadth and impact of **research across textiles, robotics, dyeing, digitalisation, circular fashion technologies, smart materials** and more. Discussions ranged from **colour communication and accessibility in design** to breakthroughs in **healthcare textiles**. Panels featured representatives from brands such as [Marks & Spencer](#), [ASOS](#), [VeriVide](#), and [X-Rite Pantone](#) underscored the importance of cross-sector collaboration, while the strong representation from international universities reflected the conference's global reach.

With a vibrant mix of **academic and industry delegates**, ITCC 2025 embodied a forward-looking, solutions-driven spirit. As the **legacy of textile science at Leeds continues**, the next iteration of the conference in **2027** promises to build on this momentum, expanding international partnerships and accelerating sustainable innovation across the textile and colour sectors.

## Colour Technology Group take part in AIC 2025

During October 2025, several members of the School of Design attended [AIC2025](#) in Taiwan to present their research. AIC2025 is the annual meeting of the [International Colour Association](#), one of the most prestigious international colour conferences. The conference was opened by Associate Professor [Dr Vien Cheung](#), past-President of the AIC, and the Keynote on the first day was given by Professor of Colour Science and Technology [Stephen Westland](#), who spoke about the future of AI.

PhD students [Arsaika Widasati](#), [Jinbi Jiang](#) and [Qinxin He](#) presented posters about their research. In a session chaired by Professor of Colour and Imaging Science [Kaida Xiao](#), PhD students [Sally Angharad](#) and [Qinyuan Li](#) gave oral presentations, and on the final day, post-doctoral Research Fellow [Yan Lu](#) also gave an oral presentation. During the conference the group from Leeds were also invited to visit the Head Office and research labs of [BenQ](#), a manufacturer of high-quality displays, who are long-term collaborators of the [Colour Technology Research Group](#) at Leeds. School of Design Visiting Professor, [Ronnier Luo](#), also attended the conference. Leeds had the largest representation at the conference outside of Taiwan itself.

The week after AIC2025 some of the [Colour Technology Research Group](#) also attended the [Colour Imaging Conference \(CIC2025\)](#) in Hong Kong. The next AIC meeting will be held in Florence (Italy) in September 2026.



# Artificial Intelligence Researcher Development Network Plus (AI.RDN+)

A joint project by [Aston University](#) and the [University of Leeds](#) to set up a network to assess publicly available **artificial intelligence (AI) tools for PhD research** has been [awarded £3.4m](#) by the **Research England Development Fund**.

The **Artificial Intelligence Researcher Development Network Plus (AI.RDN+)** is being led by [Professor Phil Mizen](#), **Professor of Sociology and Policy at Aston University**, and [Dr Hosam Al-Samarraie](#), **Associate Professor in Digital Innovation Design** and [Professor Arunangsu Chatterjee](#), **Dean of Digital Transformation, from the University of Leeds**. The network will also include the eight [Midlands Innovation](#) research universities and the 12 universities that comprise the [Yorkshire Universities](#) consortium.

**Publicly available AI tools**, like ChatGPT and Microsoft CoPilot, are being rapidly adopted in academia, but as well as the potential to reduce workloads, streamline processes and offer innovative ways to carry out research, the tools present challenges. This is especially true for PhD-level research, which occupies an important position when it comes to new findings and the translation of that knowledge. Very little work has been undertaken to understand the uses of publicly available AI tools used by doctoral researchers, their supervisors and examiners, in contrast to the attention directed towards usage by undergraduate students.

**AI.RDN+ will respond to these challenges.** It will carry out an extensive consultation process with PhD researchers, supervisors, examiners and research-enabling staff, such as professional services staff and technicians, to understand how publicly available AI tools are used to innovate and how its challenges are identified and negotiated. Using this information, AI.RDN+ will create a resource base with guidance on what AI tools are available, how they can be used, and identify case studies of best practice. This information will be made available on a newly created AI.RDN+ portal.

# Revolutionising Textile Colouration with Amphico

School of Design colleagues [Professor Stephen Westland](#) and [Dr Caroline Hemingray](#) have been working with [Amphico](#), a material science company committed to transforming the textile industry through **innovative and sustainable material and manufacturing technology**, aimed at **increasing resource efficiency and reducing chemical pollution**.

Their collaborative project, funded by [Innovate UK](#), combined **innovative waterless coloured textile production** with **data-driven, machine learning (ML)**. By cleverly combining a colour creation method with dope dyeing, the project has enabled Amphico to develop a **low minimum order quantity, low impact, low carbon and low-cost waterless coloured textile**.

[Watch Innovate UK's case study video on the research here.](#)



# Staff Publications

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Recent publications, ranging from fashion and textile sustainability, to wellbeing and healthcare, colour science, extended reality, and environmental and behavioural design, include:

[Understanding household food waste behaviours in Jordan: ethnographic research](#)

Ahmad, Q., Ceschin, F., Abdulla, D. (2025).  
Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences.

[Exploring sentiments and topics in Extended Reality learning environments: A comparative study](#)

Al-Samarraie, H., Sarsam, S.M., Alzahrani, A.I., Aldowah, H. (2025).  
PLoS One.

[What to wear to a contemporary UK funeral: The impact of cultural diversity on mourning dress](#)

Almond, K. and Simpson, J. (2025).  
Clothing Cultures.

[The Potential of Social Commerce for Small Fashion Businesses in Pakistan: A Case Study Approach](#)

Ashiq, R. (2025).  
Bulletin of Multidisciplinary Studies.

[Multiple perspective problem framing in the design of self-administered treatments](#)

English, S. and Elmansy, R. (2025).  
Design for Health.

[Data-Driven Predictive Modelling of Agile Projects Using Explainable Artificial Intelligence](#)

ForouzeshehNejad, A.A., Arabikhan, F., Gegov, A., Jafari, R., Ichtev, A. (2025).  
Electronics.

[An infection-responsive collagen-based wet-spun textile fibre for wound monitoring](#)

Gorman, J., Brooker, C., Li, X., Tronci, G. (2025).  
Polymer.

[Method to analyse and quantify the propensity of hair dyes to desorb from human hair fibre](#)

Hetherington, K., Tidder, A., Tack, B.J., Benohoud, M., Nowlan, D., Zahar, A., Li, X., Prater, D., Zguris, J.C., Tokle, T., Rayner, C.M., Blackburn, R.S. (2025).  
Heliyon.

[Colouration mechanism of chrysoprase: insights from colourimetry, spectroscopy and mineralogy](#)

Jiang, Y., Guo, Q., Wang, Y., Cheung, V., Westland, S., Han, J., Zong, X., Guo, Y., Wang, D. (2025).  
RSC Advances.

[Thermal deprotection: a sustainable and efficient strategy for synthesising  \$\alpha\$ -polylysine adsorbents](#)

Jin, X., Thornton, P.D. (2025)  
RSC Advances.

[An augmented reality board game to work ocean literacy dimensions](#)

Leitão, R., Yao, S., Guimarães, L. (2025).  
Education and Information Technologies.

[Color rendering evaluation model for lighting of traditional Chinese freehand brushwork paintings in museums](#)

Li, Z., Wang, H., Bai, Q., Xiao, K., Lu, Y., Ma, L., Dang, R. (2025).  
NPJ Heritage Science.

[Multispectral Reconstruction in Open Environments Based on Image Color Correction](#)

Liang, J., Hu, X., Li, Y., Xiao, K. (2025).  
Electronics.

[Influence of Gender and Emotional State on Tooth Colour Perception: A Clinical Study](#)

Mazur, M., Ndokaj, A., Westland, S., Ottolenghi, L., Ripari, F., Ardan, R., Piroli, M., Grassi, R., Nardi, G.M. (2025).  
Prosthesis.

[Comparing the Use of Scientific Software and Generative AI Art Tools: Exploratory research and future agenda](#)

Oliveira de Queiroz, F. (2025).  
Inmaterial.

[The impact of cultural background on lighting preferences for viewing paintings](#)

Qin, L., Dong, L., Luo, M.R., Xiao, K. (2025).  
Energy and Buildings.

[Transitioning from STEM to STEAM engagement mechanisms: a Yorkshire-based creative industry collaborative ecosystem approach for fashion and textiles](#)

Rainton, S., Almond, K. (2025).  
City, Culture and Society.

[Fashion and textile waste management in the circular economy: A systematic review](#)

Shamsuzzaman, I.M., Al. Mamun, A., Rayyaan, R., Sowrov, K., Islam, S., Sayem, A.S.M. (2025).  
Cleaner Waste Systems.

[A review on the biodegradation of textiles in the environment](#)

Skilbeck, O.J., Blackburn, R.S., Kay, P. (2025).  
Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

[“This man represents China”: The Racist Rhetoric of “object lessons” in W. W. Peter’s Health Lectures](#)

Stones, C. (2025).  
Journal of Design History.

[Explainable AI for Federated Learning-Based Intrusion Detection Systems in Connected Vehicles](#)

Taheri, R., Jafari, R., Gegov, A., Arabikhan, F., Ichtev, A. (2025).  
Electronics.

[Unveiling implicit and explicit packaging design features on commercial baby foods in the UK: a content analysis](#)

Tang, T., Chu, R., Hetherington, M.M. (2025).  
Design for Health.

[Design for Behavioural Change, Health, Wellbeing, and Sustainability](#)

Tang, T., Zhang, J. (2025).  
Sustainability.

[The impact of knitted linked seams on comfort and friction perception](#)

Temel, M., Scott, E., Cain, R., Johnson, A.A. (2025).  
Ergonomics.

[A systematic review of natural colourants and trend forecasting practices for the textile and fashion industry](#)

Titisiari, B., Sinha, P. (2025).  
Coloration Technology.

[Enzyme-Responsive Porous Scaffolds by Electrospinning Polyalanine](#)

Wall, P.A., Brooker, C., Tronci, G., Thornton, P.D. (2025).  
Macromolecular Chemistry and Physics.

[Testing colour-difference formulas from LMS colour spaces inspired in CIELAB](#)

Wang, L., Li, C., Melgosa, M., Xiao, K., Gao, C. (2025).  
Lighting Research & Technology.

[Self-sorting multi-scale materials by self-assembling multi-component nanostructured gels in nonwoven fabrics](#)

Wheeldon, E., Dennis, M.R., Mao, N., Smith, D.K. (2025).  
Chemical Communications.

[Injectable magnesium-bisphosphonate MOF-based bone adhesive prevents excessive fibrosis for osteoporotic fracture repair](#)

Xiao, T., Gong, Z., Duan, D., Yu, H., Liu, S., Jiang, Y., Xing, X., Wu, Z., Wang, L., Yang, X.B., Tronci, G., Ning, C., Tan, G., Zhou, L. (2025).  
Nature Communications.

[Exploring the impact of map visualization features to improve campus wayfinding efficiency through user-centered design methods](#)

Yang, D., dos Santos Lonsdale, M., Oliveira de Queiroz, F., Westland, S., Baxter, M. (2025).  
Information Design Journal.

[Tuning Into Affect and Appetite in Caregivers, and Its Association With Recognising and Responding to Infant Appetite Cues](#)

Yu, S., Fildes, A., Birtill, P., Tang, T., Hetherington, M.M. (2025).  
Maternal & Child Nutrition.

[The role of text alignment on response speed and accuracy when reading Chinese/English bilingual traffic signs](#)

Zhang, Y., Moys, J-L., Lickiss, M. (2025).  
Visible Language Journal.

[Self-powered multilayer impact sensor consisting of CFRP integrated with soft and hard piezoelectric layers](#)

Zhao, Z., He, L., Lin, Z., Wang, Z., Kurita, H., Shi, Y., Narita, F. (2025).  
Composites Part B: Engineering.

[A New Method for Camera Auto White Balance for Portrait](#)

Zhou, S., Xiao, K., Li, C., Lai, P., Luo, H., Sun, W. (2025).  
Technologies.

[Smart Textile Systems for Loneliness Monitoring in Older People Care: A Review of Sensing and Design Innovations](#)

Zhou, Y., Ratcliffe, J., Molteni, E., Patel, A., Liu, J., Mexia, N., Rees, J., Matcham, F., Antonelli, M., Tinker, A., Shi, Y., Ourselin, S., Liu, W. (2025).  
Advanced Electronic Materials.

## Customer Journeys in Fashion: From Linear to Multilevel

Kent, A.M, Pearson-Smith, A. and Siregar, Y. (2025). Palgrave Macmillan.

**This book**, co-written by School of Design Associate Professor [Dr Yuri Siregar](#), explores emerging and alternative customer journeys in fashion. Customer journeys are typically defined by decision-making in three stages, pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase that have a well-ordered, linear sequence. However, the influence of digital technologies, social media and other macro factors, has created a different and more complex variety of journeys. The first section begins with a review of the stages of the journey and current research that challenges its linearity, taking a management perspective through the lenses of retail, digital and social media.

The second section has a consumer perspective, recognising the increasing agency of consumers to determine their shopping journey that questions conventional assumptions about producers and consumers, sellers and customers. The third section examines three themes, the conceptualisation of customer journeys, ethical problems and the connection between customer journeys and sustainability. The book concludes by looking forward to a constellation of different journeys.



## Robert Barry, The Defining of It...

Copeland, M (2025). Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König. Casebound, 544 pp., 190 × 220 mm.

Teaching Fellow in Graphic Design, [Joe Gilmore](#), has worked with [Dr Mathieu Copeland](#) (Leeds Beckett University) to design a book on the American conceptual artist Robert Barry.

**This book** is the first comprehensive monograph to explore the complete body of work by one of the most influential figures in contemporary art. Spanning from Barry's formative years in the 1950s to his pivotal contributions to Minimalism and Conceptual Art, this landmark publication offers an unprecedented look at the artist's evolution and legacy. Developed in close collaboration with the artist, the book presents a critical and far-reaching analysis of Barry's work alongside a rich and largely unpublished iconography sourced from international collections and the artist's personal archives. It is an essential resource for scholars, curators, and anyone interested in the radical redefinition of art in the 20th and 21st centuries.



# Upcoming Events

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## Space@Design Exhibitions

We have a range of **fantastic exhibitions coming up** in the School of Design's **Space@Design gallery**. We hope that you will be able to join us:

**26th January – 6th March 2026**  
By Design

**16th March – 24th April 2026**  
PhD exhibition by Yimiao Dai

**4th May – 29th May 2026**  
Colour4CRAFTS

Please [follow us on Instagram](#) for more updates.

## PACE On-Campus Courses

Upcoming on-campus courses delivered by the [Professional Academy for Creative Enterprise \(PACE\)](#) include:

**14th January 2026**  
Garment Pattern Cutting: Fundamental Techniques

**19th January 2026**  
Introduction to Textile Technology

**26th January 2026**  
Introduction to Textile Testing