

# ASBCI Student Design Award 2014

The Professional Clothing Awards 2014 had a new award this year; the ASBCI Student Design Award. A career in the professional clothing industry is not one which is often contemplated by young designers, and this award was created to highlight the sector as a viable career opportunity to the young students.

The new award was a national competition open to college and university students to submit designs for their "vision of workwear, corporatewear and PPE in 2020". The designs needed to have a specified end user and also needed to include elements of the latest fabric technologies.

When Dimensions Managing Director Hayley Brooks heard about the award, she knew it was something the company wanted to champion from the start. Dimensions sponsored the award by providing the prize; a placement within the in house design team at Dimensions for the winner to gain some invaluable work experience in the design industry and kick start their career.

Hayley says: "When the opportunity came up to support the ASBCI Student Design Award, it was an easy decision for the team at Dimensions. To encourage, support and nurture new talent entering the industry is a fantastic opportunity and one which is essential for the future of our industry. At Dimensions, we pride ourselves on having a fantastic design team with incredible talent. However it doesn't matter how strong your business is – a fresh pair of eyes, a new way of thinking is never a bad thing. This award is about showing young designers that the professional clothing industry is a viable career path with exciting, challenging projects that are showcased around the world.

The award's judging panel met in January 2014 to whittle the student design entries down the final 9 who were then required to turn their design drawings into the final products to be judged in March.



The judges were looking for suitability of the products in a working environment, wearability, fit and overall technical execution.

The final products were also showcased in the catwalk shows during the Professional Clothing Show and the winners were announced during the Professional Clothing Awards evening on the 1st April.

The winner in 1st place was unable to take up the placement due to other commitments, so it was then passed to 2nd place winner Emily Colley who commenced her placement in July.

We decided to interview Emily to find out how her placement is going...

### Professional Questions/ about placement:

- **Emily, congratulations on your success at the Professional Clothing Awards! Why did you decide to enter the competition?**

In my final year we were encouraged to take part in competitions which I think is really important, as for me it meant I was able to work alongside real live briefs. It was great experience and I was very intrigued about what corporatewear was and wanted to know more about the sector. The competition provided me with the opportunity to pursue a task of designing a collection for the NHS. I found it really exciting and challenging as I had never designed any corporatewear before so this was an interesting alternative for me as a fashion student. I had entered into a couple of other competitions too but this one was on a larger scale and highly competitive.

- **Everyone knows that the final year of any degree can be extremely tough, how did you manage all your university work with meeting the demands of the competition too?**

I went to the University of Leeds where one of the modules I selected was 'Fashion Innovation' which entailed undertaking innovative research, design and development and to ultimately create two outfits. For this module, we were able to gain sponsorship and work with industry professionals and I was very fortunate as I was able to integrate my work on my competition entry into this module. Although I could combine my efforts for two projects, I had to undertake a period of intense research at the early stages of the competition when I had other coursework deadlines due at the same time. I found the best way for me to balance my workload was to dedicate two days a week to my competition work as that gave me enough time to work on my uni projects too. It was a period of my life which saw lots of late nights and cups of coffee and very few nights out but I think it did pay off!

- **This placement did come as a slight surprise to you. What did you initially have planned after graduation?**

My plan was always seek further industry experience and I was looking to build my portfolio and become a more confident designer, by strengthening my skills and knowledge within design. My placement is offering me all of this which is great.

- **How have you found the adjustment of student life to working life?**

I undertook an industrial placement after my second year on university which gave me an insight into a work routine and working environment which was invaluable. That placement prepared me for the routine of the working world and the experience strengthened my confidence.

- **How do you think Dimensions can help you develop as a designer?**

This placement has already presented me with lots of challenges and opportunities. I'm gaining vital industry knowledge and experience which has boosted my confidence as a young designer as I have been reviewing my work with industry professionals and it's really satisfying to know it is backed up with my own research and development. I'm working with new time constraints and gaining a better appreciation of other people's job roles within the company. Learning about new ways of presenting my work has also been something I've enjoyed.

Designing for corporate protective wear encourages me to think about the whole manufacture and distribution processes as my designs need to be suitable for mass manufacture. I've been introduced to menswear design which has made me appreciate a whole different level of attention to detail. I've already become quicker at specific tasks and multitasking to manage my workload.

- **You have only been at Dimensions for a short while, but what have you enjoyed most about your time here so far?**

Meeting new people, learning new skills and gaining new levels of responsibility have been the things I have enjoyed most. I've been able to work on varied exciting projects, one of which meant I was able to travel to London to be briefed on a new top secret project, which has meant my time here at Dimensions so far has flown. Of course I also had a great time at the "Only Way is Dimensions" summer party!

- **What types of projects have you been working on during your placement?**

It's been really varied actually. I've worked on retail, financial, and care home client project. Created illustration boards, new male and female ranges, prepared presentation boards for a design proposal and also undertaken a trend report prediction project.

- **What has been your favourite project you have worked on?**

I don't have an overall favourite, but I've been given a taste of the whole design process. Being given a level of responsibility from the get go has meant that I have learnt a lot quickly which has been really interesting.

- **Is there any element of your placement which you have found particularly difficult?**

I feel like I've become a sponge trying to take in everything that goes on in Design – it's a very busy department! Something which I have found challenging is the fast pace at Dimensions and how everyone's jobs link together to make projects possible in such a short space of time. I had also never really had to speak to suppliers before and that was a real challenge for me but has proven to be a huge confidence boost too. I've moved away from family and friends which has been daunting but I have made new friends at Dimensions.

- **What's the best part of working at Dimensions?**

The amount of tea there is! As well as that, getting to know some lovely people within the design team and appreciating how hard they work and their passion for design and thriving on their projects. I really admire and respect their dedication and I'm learning an awful lot because of them.

- **Now you have been exposed to the professional clothing industry, has there been anything which has surprised you about the sector?**

Basically, the vast scale of corporatewear has been a huge surprise! The number of uniforms produced a year is something I wouldn't have considered before as corporatewear is so different to the high street. I've found that the duration of time it takes for the whole process – initial design ideas to the final product being worn – is something I was unaware of. I didn't know the timescales before or the amount of processes and stages required to keep attention to detail on all elements, so overall, this has been a huge learning curve!

- **What would be your dream job?**

I want to work my way up and learn as much as possible about the clothing industry as I can whilst continuing to be passionate about what I'm designing. I eventually would love to have my own business in the future designing evening wear and bespoke bridal wear.

- **Finally, if you hadn't have chosen to go down the design path, what do you think you would have done?**

Well I've always been creative and interested in arts and textiles from a young age and my family have always encouraged me along this path. However, my other passion is animals. I think I might have considered becoming a vet or working for a charity that supports and rescues endangered animals.

## Quick Fire getting to know Emily questions:

- **What are the 5 things you can't live without?**

- 1) Chocolate
- 2) Bubble Baths
- 3) Foundation
- 4) Rose wine
- 5) Holidays

Please can I have 6? I also want to say my family & boyfriend!!

- **Where was your best holiday?**

In 2013, my friends and I went on a week long trip to Paris as one of my housemates studied French. She took us to all these amazing museums and exhibitions and she took me to a flea market and managed to barter on my behalf and bought some beautiful lace for me.

- **What was your most recent purchase?**

The J'adore Dior perfume, no real reason - I just needed a new one!

- **Who is your favourite designer?**

Stella McCartney. I really like her soft tailoring and her designs are always fresh. She is also an avid campaigner and her designs have a real sustainable theme running through them. I can see how her designs are changing fashion and how it is represented.

## Quick fire round

- **Tea or Coffee?**

Tea of course!

- **Red or green milk?**

Green

- **Chocolate or crisps?**

Chocolate

- **Summer or winter?**

Summer

- **Working world or student world?**

I don't know enough about the working world yet to know if I like it! So I'll have to say student world.

- **X-factor or Strictly?**

Definitely X-factor

- **Night in or Night out?**

Can I say both please?