



Press Release

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Dazzling degree show spotlights fresh creative talent

A playful interpretation of shop small talk, an exploration of digital art using rocks and neon colours, and a reimaging of a city in India are some of the highlights of the annual Edinburgh College of Art Postgraduate Degree Show.

The dynamic new wave of creative talent from a range of subjects is showcasing its creations on the College's largest virtual degree show.

The website is a celebration of the enduring spirit of this year's graduates. The online hub developed for the undergraduate degree show following the constraints imposed Covid-19, has already attracted a global audience, with viewers from more than 100 countries since its launch earlier this summer.

The hub showcases 3,000 pieces of work from 38 degree programmes – including paintings and drawings, architectural plans and models, animations and digital visualisations, musical compositions and performances, film and photography, textiles, jewellery and interior design – and has created online portfolios for over 400 graduating students.

This year there are around 170 students displaying work from their postgraduate study.

Previous Postgraduate Degree Shows have acted as the bridge to students entering professions as artists and creatives, and have helped launch the careers of future Turner Prize and Bafta winners.

The arresting display of students' creativity includes Katie Hallam's dramatic works inspired by the shape and form of digital culture including the glitches that can occur in human and technology interactions.

Her works as part of the Contemporary Art Practice programme mix motifs of geology, representing ancient power, with the digital age, captured in flashes of neon green and ultraviolet.

Contemporary Art Theory student Sophie Purchase has created a portfolio of playful visuals and texts exploring customer service experiences in museums and department stores as part of her MA Contemporary Art Theory.

Her website, www.friendlyuser.co.uk, forms part of an exploration into performed phrases used in customer interactions and how these can be presented online.

Juliet Seger's MA Design for Change portfolio explores social and environmental practices in the clothing industry. Juliet's work highlights the ever-present role of human touch in manufacturing – and how that differs from other tech driven industries.

To present this narrative Juliet covered her hands in paint while sewing, resulting in dramatic imprinted designs demonstrating the human connection to garments.

Yanjie Song's Architectural and Urban Design concept explores the use of fabric in architecture through reimaging Ahmedabad – one of the textile industry centres in India.



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Yanjie's portfolio creates a new vision for the city to help resolve its water issues. The work is presented through a series of layered fabric spectacles at Calico Mills – one of the City's earliest textile mills established in 1880.

As well as hosting a captivating array of exhibits the online hub is home to a series of digital events to help students engage with the creative professions.

The closing event on Friday 11 September features a show reel of work and a panel discussion on how will cultural and creative education need to change as we adapt to the Coronavirus pandemic, and what opportunities does this change of context present.

Personal Chair of Interior Design Professor, Ed Hollis chairs the event with a panel featuring Reader in Technological Embodiment and Creative Practice, Bev Hood, Professor of Contemporary Visual Cultures, Professor Richard Williams and Programme Director Digital Media Design - MSc Online Distance Learning, Dr Denitsa Petrova.

Other highlights have included presentations by curators from the University's Talbot Rice Gallery who have held discussions online with students about their work – replicating the conversations exhibitors might have with visitors to a degree show on campus.

Guest speakers have also presented on the themes of freelancing, funding for the arts and how to develop a creative network.

As part of the celebration of the graduating students, curators, art historians and critics were commissioned to share their assessments of a selection of work.

Contributors included art critic, writer and lecturer Lauren Dyer Amazeen, artist and curator Peter Amore, arts journalist Anahit Behrooz and art historian and curator Alice Strang.

A mentorship programme led by the Performance Costume programme and two ECA alumni – award-winning costume maker Patti Amat and London-based costumer designer and maker Rosie Whiting – gave students access to support from more than 20 successful graduates with experience in film, museum and stage work .

The Degree shows have also been celebrated with displays of student work outside the ECA Main Building and staff are exploring opportunities for a physical show when that becomes possible.

ECA Principal Professor Juan Cruz said: "The class of 2020 has responded with vitality, energy and great adaptability in this challenging year and we wish them all well in their future endeavours. The shows are the bridge to our students establishing themselves in the creative landscape, and we hope that their work is enjoyed by an international audience via the degree show online platform."

To access the degree show, please go to <https://www.degreeshow.ed.ac.uk>

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