

Meet the Student Designers who launched LFW 2016

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Ahead of London Fashion Week, designers from across the world are gearing up to prepare for the highly anticipated week of fashion shows and events.

On Thursday 15th September, the eve of London Fashion Week, On|Off celebrated emerging fashion talent, showing works by designers who are both on and off the official London Fashion Week schedule.

MA Fashion Design students from Winchester School of Art are among the emerging designers taking part in the Tomorrow's Talent showcase for On|Off, held at the Vinyl Factory.

I had the personal pleasure of interviewing four MA students, Gavin Guo, Yan Zhao, Zoey Huang and Lanna Lu from Winchester School of Art, to find out how they were feeling in the days leading up to the Tomorrow's Talent show.

Gavin considers it to be a "huge honour to be one of Tomorrow's Talent."

"I can't wait for the show!"

He was "not that into fashion before coming to university", but was encouraged by others to study fashion design as his hometown in China is known for its garments industry. To his surprise an interest and passion for the subject took a fierce hold of him, from studying fashion history, and reading fashion magazines, he fell in love the subject and came to crave an opportunity to broach the industry. He is now "interested in everything about fashion", listing amongst his interests "fashion design, but also fashion photography, styling, fashion management and so on."

Gavin describes his garments as "interesting and funny", based on the narrative of two girls visiting a museum: "I created a conversation between these two girls. One... can't help to say 'amazing', 'gorgeous' and so on." The other girl asks her to "shut up", preferring to walk around the museum in silence.

The inspiration for the collection's concept comes from his interest in British museum culture: "Museums offer me endless inspiration".

In her designs, Yan explores fashion psychology by using the theme of confusion as her main sources of inspiration to create unique, expressive garments. Within her collection are references to punk culture, and she focused her research on steampunk and Victorian fashion.

The more Yan studies fashion, the more she loves it. With still much "knowledge of fashion that I don't know", Yan hopes to continue learning, developing and furthering her creative abilities.

As she continues working towards a career in fashion design, Yan hopes to "learn the market, the whole industry environment, [and] customers" through interning and working for fashion brands following her master's study.

Finding Winchester to be "a beautiful place" and Winchester School of Art's study environment to be "very happy and comfortable", Yan describes her year studying at Winchester School of Art as a "very useful and important



experience.”

Having been working hard on finishing touches for the On|Off show, Zoey told me that she is “so excited.”

With “a minimalist shape and using fine fabrics... I like to make the look more feminine to refresh work clothes,” Zoey told me. For inspiration, she looks towards the iconically classic style of Yves Saint Laurent.

The minimalism of Zoey’s designs is reflective of her focus on designing ready-to-wear garments in previous collections which require simpler designs and a heavier emphasis on pattern-making in the design process.

Aware of the challenges of being a designer in the fast-paced fashion industry, Zoey seems prepared for the challenges posed by her chosen career path, I detect in her tone an understated awareness of what it takes to keep up with the constantly changing trends to succeed in contemporary fashion.

In comparison to her BA Fashion Design degree at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology, Zoey has found her studies at Winchester School of Art to be, not only a more complex and in-depth study of fashion, but also a much more free and personal approach to fashion education. As an MA student, Zoey feels less restricted by the teaching and has delighted in being able to explore her own individual style.

As she looks forward to the On|Off show, Lanna told me that she feels “fantastic.”

Lanna has been working on the collection due to be displayed at the On|Off show for around three months. She will have four outfits on display, all of which are inspired by traditional Asian culture and dress, focusing on Japanese and Chinese fashion designs.

Lanna talks highly of her time at Winchester School of Art. Unsure whether to return to China, where she is from, or to stay in the UK, Lanna hopes to continue studying fashion following her MA Fashion Design degree at Winchester School of Art. She is also considering doing internships to further her fashion education and gain more direct experience within the industry.

She describes Winchester School of Art as a “great experience” and recommends it to any prospective fashion students.

These four student designers, whose works were displayed at the Tomorrow’s Talent showcase, are deservedly enthralled by this unique opportunity to present their works to leading industry professionals. With each of their unique styles and approaches to fashion design, and am confident that they made an impact.

To find out more about Tomorrow’s Talent and On|Off, you can visit the website [here](#).