




Young
Creatives
Nottingham

YOUNG CREATIVE AWARDS 2026



Nottingham's Cultural
Education Partnership



Serenity
Emily Higgs, Visual Arts

WELCOME

Hello and a warm thank you for being here to celebrate our 18th year of the Young Creative Awards! 2026 marks another fantastic new generation of young creatives and our brochure showcases the diverse and exceptional talent in Nottingham's thriving arts scene.

I myself I'm a young creative! I'm a writer & visual artist born and raised in Notts who has submitted to the Young Creative Awards since the age of 11. My screenplay was shortlisted for the Creative Writing 19-24 age group category last year and exhibited in Nottingham Playhouse and then in Victoria Centre for ChalleNGe's Summer Arts Popup sessions. From that experience I facilitated my own creative writing workshops, met and connected with other creatively driven people and now I'm involved with Big City Reads, LeftLion Magazine, Tenx9 Storytelling, The Next Page, The Notts Review, Writing East Midlands (as well as being a very proud trustee for Young Creatives Nottingham!)

I'm extremely grateful for all the doors that have opened for me from being a part of this network. I hope those shortlisted will also seize the many creative opportunities Nottingham has to offer; such as joining the Creative Futures Network we have created with Connecting Notts (find out more about this later in this brochure!). Contributing to this charity is a joyful experience and if you're at all interested in joining us as a potential trustee or partner, we would love to hear from you! Please get in touch via email at info@youngcreativeawards.org

An enormous thank you to the charity's Chair, trustees, and Ops Group partners who work hard all year round to make Young Creatives Awards happen! Another massive thank you to the judges who take the weight of responsibility for the high standards of

creativity we find in each entry category and rise to the challenge every year - it's not an easy job! And we greatly appreciate it.

A **big** thank you to our wonderful generous sponsors who without their support, none of this would be possible! Thank you to everyone who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this happen. You are all part of our thriving creative community, doing your part to support Nottingham's growing ambition to be a Child Friendly Creative City.

A **huge** congratulations to all the shortlisted entrants and winners! And another big thank you to every single young creative who entered this year. Thank you for investing your time and imaginations; transforming an initial idea into an innovative piece of work. Putting your art out there and participating in the competitive awards itself is a proud achievement.

And to all the young aspiring artists, animators, architects, dancers, designers, filmmakers, musicians, photographers and writers who are thinking of applying next year, we can't wait to receive your entries. The future needs your creativity.



Katherine Monk-Watts
Trustee, Young Creatives Nottingham

Front and back cover credit: James Ennin, Graphic Design



INSPIRING, SUPPORTING & CELEBRATING YOUNG CREATIVE TALENT

The Young Creative Awards has been inspiring, supporting and celebrating young creative talent in Nottingham for 18 years. We have received nearly 7,200 entries and presented more than 480 awards.

Run by Young Creatives Nottingham (registered charity number 1168804) and supported by a brilliant network of partners and sponsors, the Young Creative Awards is open to anyone aged 11 to 24 who lives, studies or works in Nottingham urban area. The Awards champion creativity, celebrating achievements across 10 categories: Animation & Digital Media, Creative Writing, Dance, Design & Architecture, Fashion & Textiles, Film, Graphic Design, Music, Photography and Visual Arts. This year 476 young people entered the Young Creative Awards, +21% vs last year.

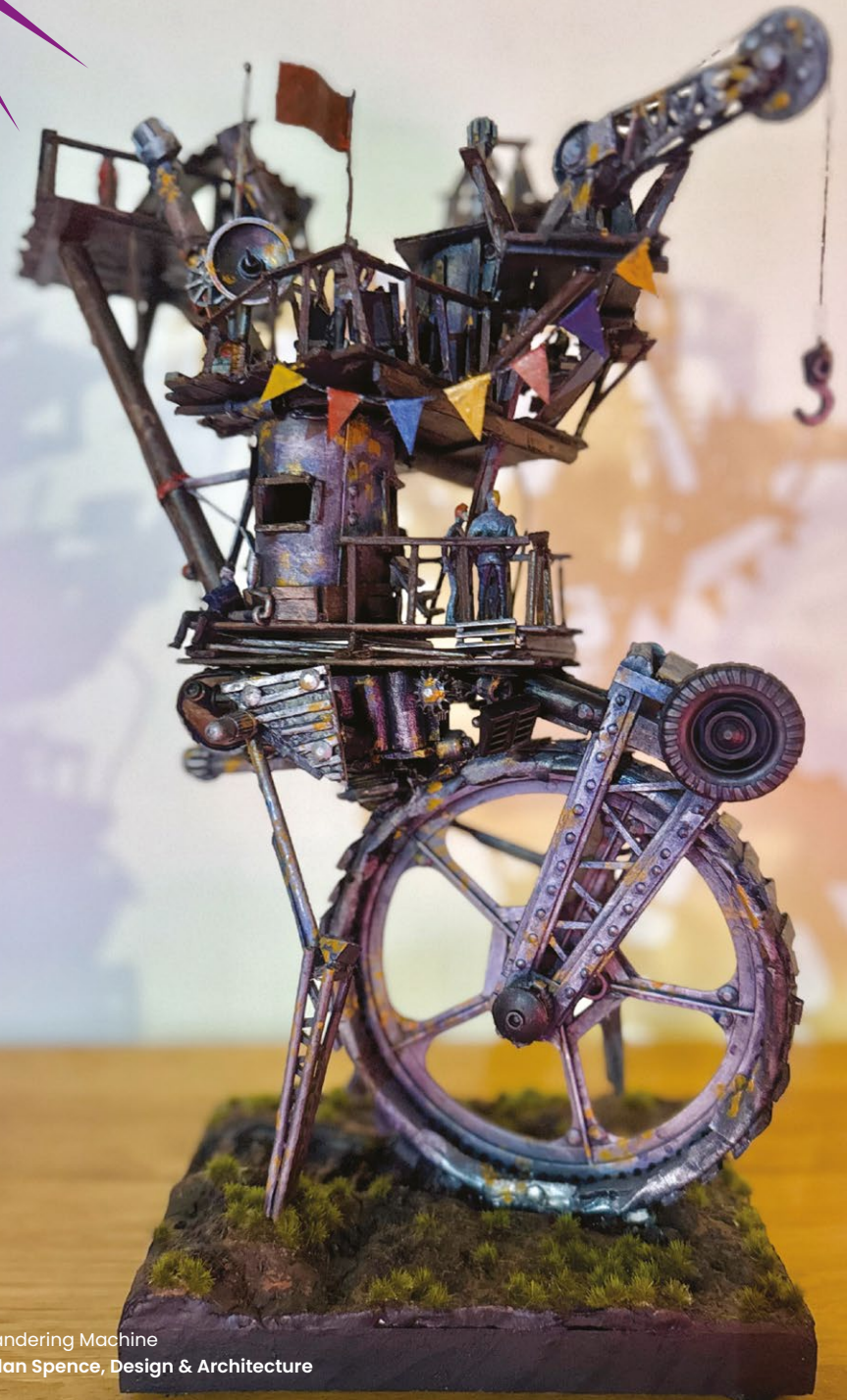
Past winners include successful musicians Rob Green and Philip George, writer and performer Bridie Squires, embroidery designer Liss Cooke, movement artist Jamal Sterrett

Phoenix, social media star R-J Tulloch, photographer Lamar Francois and award-winning theatre designer Nikki Charlesworth.

YCA winners are making a positive impact across the creative industries: setting up their own businesses, developing innovative projects and events, and bringing their skills, experience and creativity to benefit a wide range of organisations, companies and communities.

YCA winners often go on to access promotional and professional development opportunities. It is our aim to provide recognition, encouragement and support for young creatives - such as through the Creative Futures Network, which we've developed with Connecting Notts. We also strive to create paid work experience opportunities such as through delivery of workshops, which support education and participation, inspiring the next generation of Nottingham's young creatives.

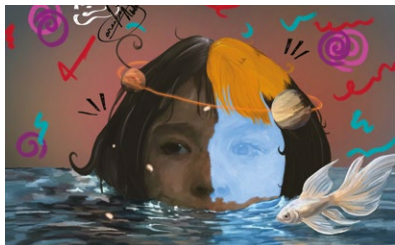
To find out more go to youngcreativeawards.org



Wandering Machine
Dylan Spence, Design & Architecture

ANIMATION & DIGITAL MEDIA

Judges: Lee Gillyon (Confetti College), Matt Gallagher (Confetti)



▲ **Laraiba Abbas Ali Shah, 11-15**
"The Infinite Playground"

A striking and imaginative artwork blending realism with surreal elements. Its strong concept and visual impact create a memorable piece with a distinctive artistic voice and confident creative approach.



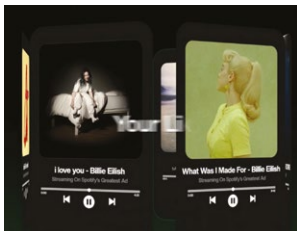
▲ **Elliott Groom, 11-15** "Late"

A clear, engaging and fun animation with strong storytelling and pacing. Its cohesive style and effective use of the medium create a confident and compelling piece that holds attention and communicates its idea successfully.



▲ **Libby Taylor, 16-18** "Distorted memory Portrait"

An expressive and concept-driven artwork exploring memory and perception. Its distinctive style and confident use of distortion create a visually striking and memorable piece with strong artistic voice and impact.



▲ **Jessica Bull, 16-18** "Spotify Promotional Video"

A confident motion graphics piece demonstrating strong understanding of digital media and user interaction. Its clear concept and effective pacing result in an engaging and well-executed animation.



▲ **Caitlin Leahy, 16-18** "Adidas Advert"

The piece communicates its message effectively, with consistent visual direction and a purposeful approach.



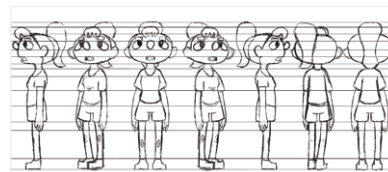
▲ **Debbie Watts, 16-18**
"Stickmin Animation"

A bold and cohesive animation inspired by Saul Bass. Strong graphic design and composition create a visually confident and engaging piece with clear stylistic direction.



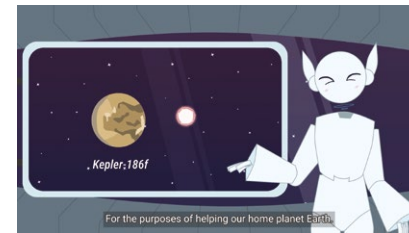
▲ **Stefen Ciechanowicz, 19-24**
"Lost Surreal Game"

An ambitious and original game showcasing strong technical skill and distinctive worldbuilding. Its experimental approach and concept create an engaging and memorable experience with a clear creative identity.



▲ **Tegan Rayson, 19-24**
"Unexpected Film"

A thoughtful short film exploring social anxiety through clear storytelling and perspective. Its relatable narrative and strong emotional focus create an engaging and effective viewing experience.



▲ **Calista Athaillah, 19-24**
"Kepler-186f Educational Animation"

A polished educational animation that communicates complex ideas with clarity and creativity. Strong technical execution, cohesive design, and a clear sense of audience result in a confident and impactful submission.

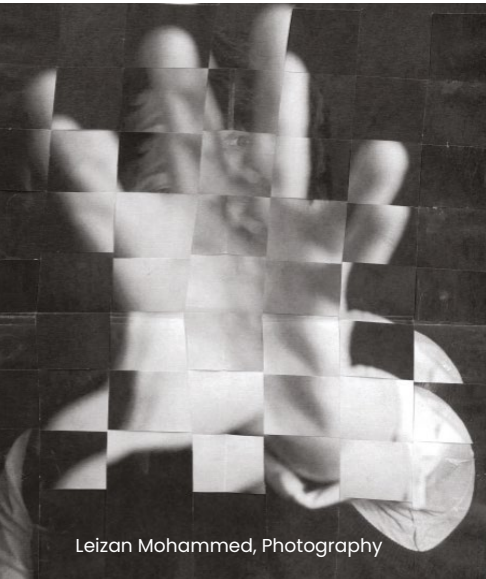


▲ **Andrew Leu, 19-24**
"Elves and the shoemaker"

A visually engaging animation with strong atmosphere and artistic direction. Its cohesive style and reflective tone create a distinctive and immersive viewing experience.

CREATIVE WRITING

Judges: Edwina FitzHugh (Potter Clarkson),
Claire Tomkins (Independent Author),
Leah Wain-Reid (Archway Learning Trust)



Leizan Mohammed, Photography

▼ Salman Akhelarab, 11-15 "At the Crossroads"

This is mature writing that shows an admirable sense of control: of scene-setting, characterisation and structure. It has the reader on the edge of their seat, not least through the wonderfully Byronic Hero created in the Devil.

"It was as though someone had reached into my chest and grabbed my heart with an iron fist. A burning pain spread across my chest and pooled in my stomach. I collected my thoughts and breathed in deeply to calm my ragged breath;"

▼ Tay Rone, 11-15 "Girl in the Classroom"

A powerful and beautifully written poem about the experience of a neurodivergent student in a classroom.

"and though her world is built for straight ink lines, she will find a place that welcomes and supports colourful and creative spirals,"

▼ Mia-Lilly Elliott, 11-15 "Silent"

A very powerful poem about absorbing other people's problems while not having a voice of your own. The structure of the poem was very effective.

**I'm tired.
I'm trying.
It's hard.
It's so hard not to fall through the cracks of my laminate flooring whilst I just lie here.
brain ticking.
fingers tapping.
breath gasping.**

▼ Amelia Burrows, 11-15

A very moving and well-written poem that captures how anxiety feels.

"I am lost inside my own head, with no map, no light, and no clear path back to reality."

▼ Flynn Chambers, 16-18 "Inside Us"

A classic gothic piece of prose that would make Poe himself sit up and take note! The control of writing creates just the right amount of tension and the overall piece is beautifully shaped to reward the reader with the twist at the end.

"I sat up and pressed my ear to the wall. The sound changed instantly as if whatever was inside had angled itself toward the exact spot where my head rested. My breath fogged faintly against the chipped paint."

▼ Lisa McArthur, 16-18 "Change of Heart"

This narrative has a strong sense of place, set in an alternative-universe Nottingham and the style of writing continues with this fun tone. You can sense from this short extract how compelling characters will develop.

"She could see Bea visibly freeze, her mouth dropping in shock. "I—I don't really know what to say," she laughed awkwardly and did her signature neck scratch. It took all of Clem's willpower not to squeal. "I guess I'm not doing anything right now so... come on in."



Nigella Israel, Photography

▼ Ayana Sen-Handley, 16-18 "My Umbrella"

This joyful poem captures a moment in time from the perspective of a teenager as clearly as a photograph, but it also speaks to a fracture between the generations which is extremely poignant.

"I poke out my tongue and I'm five again.
"Rain isn't clean, you know!"
Mama chastises me (fondly?).
I grin, unabashed,
And taste the sky capsules (wrongly?) anyway."



▼ **Ray Sharma, 19-24**
"My Blue Crayon"

This prose piece is pure and honest writing that reaches in, strikes a chord and causes the reader to utter "me too".

"I never worry about running out of you. Because you keep showing up in new shades. In new skies. In places I didn't know needed colour."

▼ **Ash Randall, 16-18**
"Mighty Wilderbeast"

This was utterly compelling story-telling, designed to repel the reader, but draw them in at the same time. Very well-written and also very disturbing.

**"And like beast
i do not forgive
Like beast i allow
myself a feral reprieve
For this time when
you try to put me
down
Like the beast you will
come with me."**

▼ **Cerys McGrath, 19-24**
Review of 'I'm a Muslimic – don't Panik'

This review is sharp, witty and fresh. It simultaneously stands on the edge of the stage, offering sensible comment and dives into the drama showing thorough joy.

"The show opened with a camp, Farsi-accented character who, almost like a Shakespearean jester, brought moments of light into hard-hitting moments, engaging the audience in a liminal space. And engaged we were!"

▼ **Ali Aziz, 19-24** "Baggage"

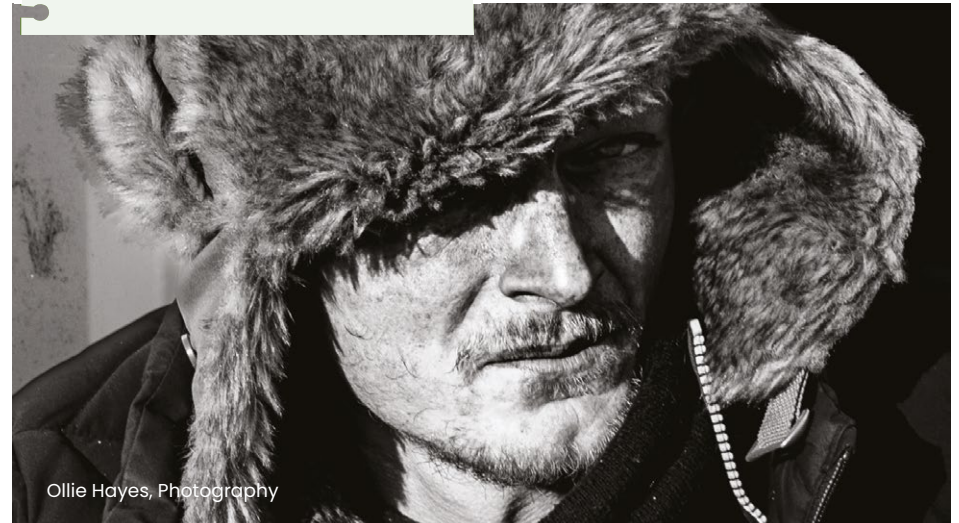
This poem really captures a fragmented sense of identity and a yearning to preserve precious moments from the past, using these to anchor one's sense of self.

"remember how fresh love tastes in grandmother's tabbouleh, it hurts to eat now. remember how heaven sounds in old umm kulthum tapes that only fit your grandfather's stereo, it's still there in the back."

▼ **Ruby Lloyd, 19-24**
"When We Were Alive"

This is a very well-written, atmospheric, and vivid piece of writing which the judges thought was excellent.

"The rain came down in needles, hard and cold, drumming a relentless rhythm against the corrugated tin above his head. It was the kind of downpour that blurred the line between sky and earth, turning the cracked asphalt into a sheet of black glass slicked with oil and old blood."



Ollie Hayes, Photography

DANCE

Judges: Chelsea Gordon (Fabric), Michelle Rensler (Nottingham College), Becky Bailey (Fabric)



▲ **Nottingham Academy Dancers: Lola, Thywill, Erinda, Diamond, Chioma, Joanna, Nhyiry, Mariam and Avani, 11-15 "Creepy Doll Dance"**

This group piece showed strong energy and was enjoyable to watch, with dancers clearly engaged in both creation and performance. Choreographically, the piece had an interesting use of space and levels throughout.



▲ **Naomi J, 11-15**

This solo showed a strong relationship to the music and a confident, assured performance throughout. A varied range of movements was explored and developed effectively, creating an engaging, controlled, and well-crafted overall performance.



▲ **Leia A, 11-15 "New Beginnings"**

The piece showcases strong musicality, with movement closely connected to the music. It is performed with confidence and passion, while exploring a diverse range of movements that create interest, variety, and a compelling overall performance.



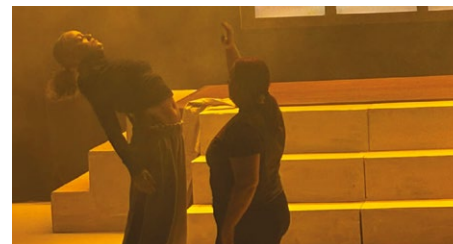
▲ **Georgia P, 16-18**

This piece stood out for its thoughtful exploration of the subject matter, supported by well-chosen music. Strong musicality, effective use of space, and a varied range of choreographic devices created a clear, engaging, and cohesive performance.



▲ **Lilly T, 16-18**

Engaging, well-structured choreography with a clear and developed motif. Strong musical choice enhanced the theme, while thoughtful composition and continuity created a cohesive, purposeful, and confidently performed work throughout.



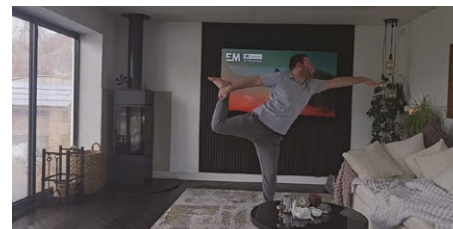
▲ **Kitty Allsopp, 19-24 "Kamikaze"**

This piece stood out for its detailed and layered use of choreographic devices, which demonstrated strong compositional awareness throughout. The choreography showed a considered and intelligent use of space, with effective attention to foreground and background, creating depth and visual interest.



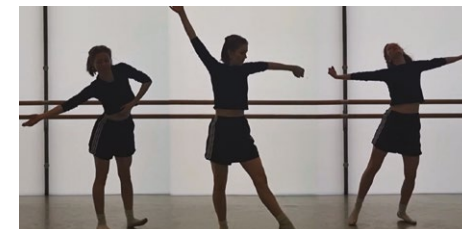
▲ **Olivia Demetriou, 19-24 "Humanity First"**

The judges loved this piece for its thoughtful exploration of a relevant contemporary topic, enhanced by purposeful use of technology. Strong concept, effective musical choice, and confident, musical performance qualities combined to create a compelling, engaging, and innovative piece throughout.



▲ **Brad Dutton, 19-24**

The judges loved this piece for its varied and engaging movement vocabulary, which kept the work dynamic and interesting throughout. Clear storytelling was evident, allowing the narrative to be easily followed and understood by the audience.



▲ **Flora Hawker-French, 19-24**

This solo has a strong performance quality, with the dancer demonstrating excellent musicality and clear technical ability throughout. The movement composition was engaging and well constructed, maintaining interest from start to finish.

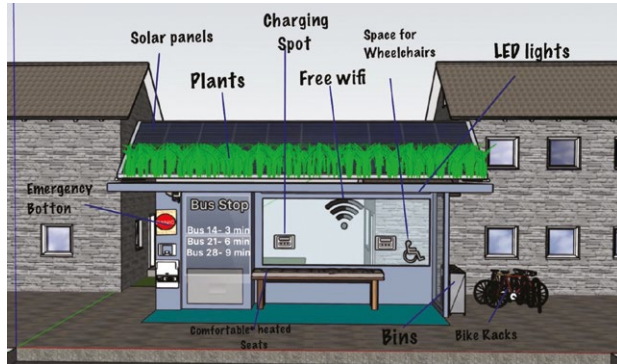
DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE

Judges: Alex Lipinski, Catherine Lambert, Hannah Harper, Becky Saunders (maber)



► **Halima Noor Bano Rafique, 11-15**

The judges enjoyed Halima's thoughtfully considered and community spirited design which shied away for the hostile architecture so often seen in public spaces.



◀ **Dylan Spence, 11-15**
"Wandering Machine"

Dylan has delivered a wonderful exploration of science fiction and dystopia through his entry. He has displayed both inspiring creativity and a keen aptitude for physical model making.



◀ **Paula Iosub, 16-18**
"Cocoon Lantern"

Paula has created an enchanting piece in her cocoon inspired lamp. It is highly effective, sincerely expressing organic forms through its softness and fluidity of shape.

► **Alesha Rafiq-Williams, 16-18**
"Character"

Alesha's delightful miniature city playfully captures the spirit of the urban realm in China, exhibiting a compelling sense of place through model-making. She presents exceptional artistic flair and an impressive degree of detail and skill.



◀ **Lilia Edwards, 16-18**
"Lollypop Lantern"

Lilia presents a beautiful and intriguing composition of geometry in her lamp design. The judges were impressed by her exploration of the medium using a lollipop as a modular element.



◀ **2.5 Collective, 16-18** "Nottingham Facades"

The judges particularly enjoyed this charming display of the character and variety found within Nottingham's built forms through a composition of ceramic elevations.

▶ **Zinedine Ezz El Arab, 19-24** "Learning to Dwell"
Zinedine has presented a thoughtfully considered building design. The impressive and convincing perspective images were of particular note to the panel.



▶ **Aylla Gill, 19-24** "BLOOM"
Aylla's Victorian-inspired lampshade shows imaginative material manipulation. Using only paper and cardboard to form a variety of textures, she imbues the work with a captivating level of depth in its play with light and shadow.



◀ **Carmen Simal Garcia, 19-24** "Rhythm of Imperfection"

Carmen's unique entry for the retrofit of The Carousel in Hockley caught the judges' eyes with her whimsical graphical presentation and use of colour and texture, that effortlessly embody the essence of the venue.



◀ **Sarah Jerman, 19-24** "Lincoln Hemp Institute"

Sarah presents a well-rounded and aesthetically pleasing design for a research institute. She demonstrates a high degree of technical skill across all elements of her proposal, along with a sound understanding of architectural design principles.

FASHION & TEXTILES

Judges: Samantha Crowe (Nottingham College),
Katie Freeman (Nottingham College), Liss Cooke (Hand & Lock),
Donna Goodwin (Victoria Centre), Rebecca Parker (Victoria Centre)



▲ **Erykah Mbende, 11-15** "Mad Hatter"
Outstanding fashion illustrations demonstrating confidence and finesse, with a sophisticated approach to colour through a balanced palette and thoughtful fabric placement. Sustainable design informs a creative reimagining of an iconic hat, contemporary and distinctive clearly.



▲ **Felicia Panter, 11-15**
A refined and understated design, executed with precision and care, this expertly constructed upcycled dress uses found fabrics imaginatively, showcasing resourcefulness and craftsmanship while conveying a thoughtful, sustainable approach with a clear, meaningful message strong.



◀ **Isla B, 11-15** "Toad Stool"
Demonstrates a thoughtful, well-developed design process with clear planning and attention to detail, strong pattern cutting and construction, enriched by decorative elements and styling. Lace trim and gloves elevate a playful, original, expertly presented outcome.



◀ **Imogen C, 16-18** "Architectural Monochrome"
Exceptionally clear development boards present a thoroughly documented and well-considered project. The final piece is expertly constructed and tailored, demonstrating strong technical skill alongside a confident and creative design approach.



▲ **Lexa Lambert, 16-18** "Catalyst"
Lexa's courageous submission presents bold, cohesive boards and a compelling journey, balancing dark themes with an uplifting message. Thoughtful details, including meaningful text placement, embroidery, and intricate embellishments, create powerful, unified wearable art of depth.



▲ **Lilly Austin, 16-18** "Selfridges Gift Guide"
An outstanding digital gift guide showcasing creativity in fashion marketing. Lilly demonstrates clear audience understanding through relevant imagery and product placement, with thoughtfully designed pages, carefully chosen fonts, colour palettes, and varied layouts that fully engage the reader.

► **Niamh O'Brien, 16-18**
"Gothic architecture & brutalist style"

Niamh's bold, striking final piece captivates with inventive proportions and technical skill. Dramatic styling, atmospheric photography, and standout features - harness, cut-out skirt and oversized sleeves create a unique, forward-thinking, and memorable fashion statement.



◀ **Abena Akuoko, 19-24**
"Monochromatic Architecture"

A distinctive, sophisticated garment celebrating Nottingham's architecture, showcasing diverse processes, inventive textile techniques, and precise construction. Creative, professional development boards reflect the design journey, resulting in a carefully considered, cohesive, visually compelling, and conceptually strong collection.



◀ **Halima Mahmood, 19-24**
"Second Skin"

A truly exciting submission, featuring a captivating final piece that showcases advanced fashion and textile techniques. A thoughtfully written statement sparks curiosity, creating a cohesive, compelling narrative highlighting creativity, craftsmanship, and strong conceptual cultural vision.



▲ **Bronwyn Crooks, 19-24**
"Prismatic Order"

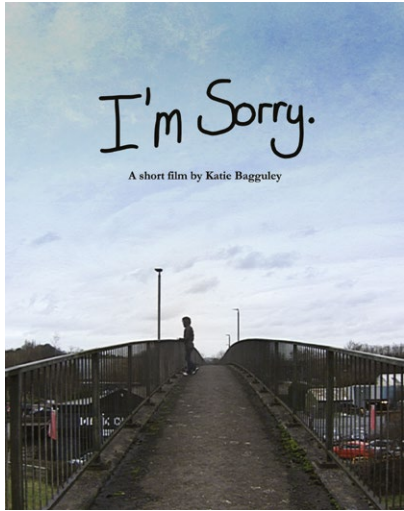
Bronwyn's clear, detailed statement supports a contemporary, expertly constructed collection. Demonstrating strong brand understanding, inventive details in ruched dress shoulders, lace-up trouser sections and effective print placement translate a multi-layered concept into a cohesive, creative, commercially aware collection.

▲ **Anya Parekh, 19-24**
"A window into my home"

A striking translation of Indian Jali into laser-cut fashion, featuring hand drawn designs, intricate technical detail, and standout elements - beaded neckline, riveted leather, fluid skirt, and laser-cut back culminating in a bold, creative, and cohesive garment.

Judges: Sharon Walia (YCN Trustee & Independent Film Maker), Richard Leonard (Studio Canal), Georgianna Scurfield (Film Maker)

Sponsored by
David S Stewart, OBE DL



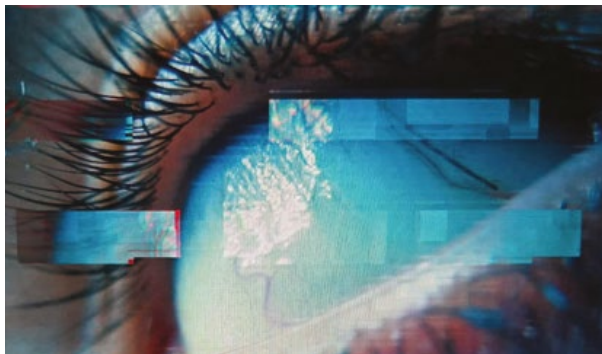
▲ **Katie Bagguley, 16-18**
“I’m sorry”

A beautifully crafted film that delivers a powerful message of hope and forgiveness. The judges found it to be both impactful and important in its storytelling. This is a very gifted creative, and the judges are eager to see more from them in the future.



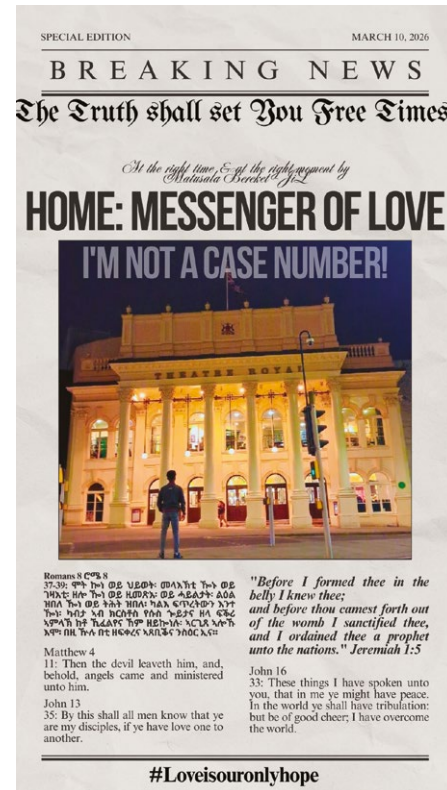
▲ **Kieran Donnelly with Zak Rothera-Oxley, Isaac Savage, Cam Wilson, 16-18** “The Mirror”

This was a joy to watch. The judges were impressed with the editing and the inventive use of cuts, which enhanced the rhythm and storytelling. A very talented filmmaker who has a promising career ahead.



◀ **Joshua Wimbledon, 16-18** “CN3CTD”

An exceptionally creative piece, with the filmmaker crafting an atmosphere and emotional tone that is both immersive and evocative.



▲ **Matusala Bereket, 16-18**
“Home Messenger of Love”

This was a beautifully crafted film with a clear vision and a powerful message. The judges particularly admired the striking composition of the chair in front of the window, casting a shadow over the character, which added strong visual symbolism.



▲ **Jude Harris, Laurence Harris, Marcel Boswall, Nial Barnes, 19-24** “Hennessy Hammock”

The judges loved this piece; it was effortlessly stylish, with a clever message and stunning imagery throughout. The framing of each shot was beautifully executed, giving the film a highly polished, professional feel.



▲ **Jack Campling, 19-24**
“SI SI SI SI SI”

The judges noted echoes of David Lynch, Luis Buñuel, and Salvador Dalí, contributing to its surreal and thought-provoking tone. Overall, it left a lasting impression on the judges. A highly talented creative who has clearly found a compelling niche in experimental filmmaking.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

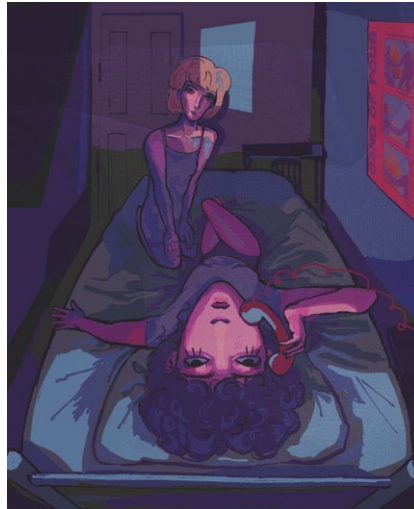
Judges: Sam Bowles (STENCIL), Rosie Dean (STENCIL), Charlotte Smith (PKF Smith Cooper), Charlotte Greig (Freelance)

STENCIL



▲ **Jessica Bull, 16-18**

At just 16 years old, Jessica has demonstrated strong editorial design skills in executing her magazine design. The judges all 'felt the story', creating a very credible work that recreates the distinctive aesthetic of the mid-1980s and early skater culture. Excellent photography selection and restrained use of type contribute to a very confident magazine concept.



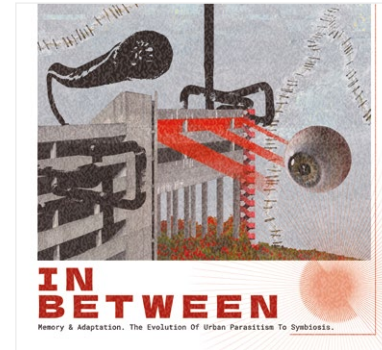
▲ **Poppy Gibbons, 16-18 "In Limbo"**

This composition has been constructed with classic proportions, pulling the viewer deep into the image. There are lovely touches of shading, and clever projections of light across the piece. The figures are skilfully drawn yet retain an otherworldly feel.



◀ **Jake Mason, 16-18**

Built out from one of Jake's favourite TV shows, the playing cards created feature unique interpretations of the characters, morphed into believable card designs. Nicely presented and building on the show's distinctive colour palette, this piece could conceivably be mistaken as a genuine brand extension.

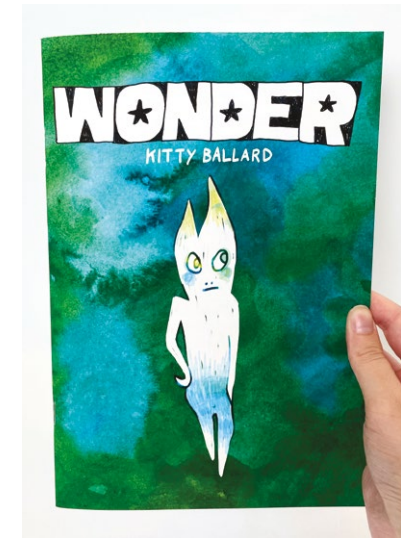


▲ **Carmen Simal Garcia, 19-24**

This submission generated a great deal of debate for the judging panel – which feels entirely appropriate for a piece of work that clearly shows Carmen's passion for the subject matter. The various elements that make up her work demonstrate high levels of artworking and typographic proficiency.

▼ **James Ennin, 19-24**

James' intricate design is as much about the seabed environment as the whale itself. An artwork that draws the viewer deeper into its composition, fish and other sealife reveal themselves the more closely you look. This is a beautifully executed work in James' distinctive style, using colours with energy and skill.



▲ **Kitty Ballard, 19-24 "Wonder"**

The zine that Kitty has produced builds on a lifetime spent drawing and 'making crazy comics'. This piece demonstrates a very high level of artistic control, despite its almost chaotic first impressions. The judges loved the unique illustrations that weave through the narrative – and the joy found in discovering the small details hidden throughout.



MUSIC

Judges: Claire Dyer, Ben Thompson, Rhys Davies, Emma Robinson, Rajae Wright, Jovi Chung, Cindy Lin (all from Nottingham Music Services), Joe Patten (DHP Group), Tommy Farmyard (The Hustle Collective)



▲ **George Stone-Bodinar, 11-15**
“I Don’t Know”

A well-rounded and well-executed piece of music. Sections are signposted by changes in timbre and a convincing stylistic approach. Clear consideration has been given to the instrumentation, and the final passage is full of intrigue.



▲ **Lourdes A, 11-15**
“Make It Out”

An infectious drum groove and well-executed vocals, with clever changes in texture throughout. The syncopated 7th chords create an exciting urgency that keeps the track moving forward and a synth ostinato dances around the head of the listener.



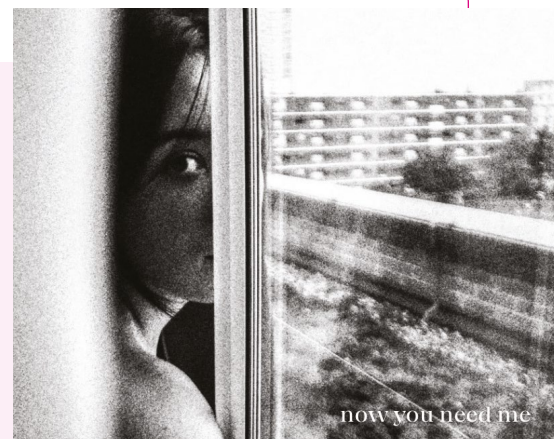
▶ **Yelena E, 11-15** “Is This?”

Stunning low-range singing and arpeggiated guitar create a palpable atmosphere, drawing the listener fully into the song’s strong emotions. Through beautiful chord choices, the song demonstrates a clear, in-depth understanding of the instrument and musical style.



◀ **Sylvie M, 11-15** “Shadow”

Strong chord choices and a great understanding of melodic continuity. The vocals float through the track. The song demonstrates more urgency as the strumming becomes more complex, before returning to more familiar ground and fading to silence.



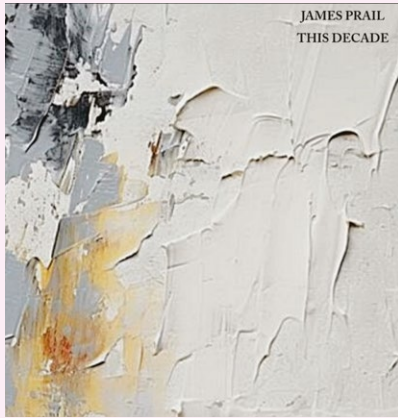
▶ **Amber S, 16-18**

An emotive piece, full of beautiful strings and piano that build, then disappear. The layering of instruments creates texture and harmony, bringing the music to swooping climaxes before stripping it back down to solo piano again.



◀ **Ehren Doherty, 16-18**
“Sextet in C”

Complex rhythms and a polyphonic texture make this a stand-out track. The orchestration is original and refreshing, and the melodies transport the listener to another place. The mellow ending contrasts with the lively beginning and dramatic midsection.



JAMES PRAIL
THIS DECADE

▼ **Bobby Earl with Maggie Mckechan, 16-18 "Broken Shape"**

A well-crafted song with simple orchestration of vocals and guitar. Effective chord and rhythm changes bring the song to life, with vocals that move seamlessly between subtle and soaring.

"there's a blank circle on the page, holding thoughts but doesn't tell, causing me to fill up with rage, all i want to do is come out my shell"

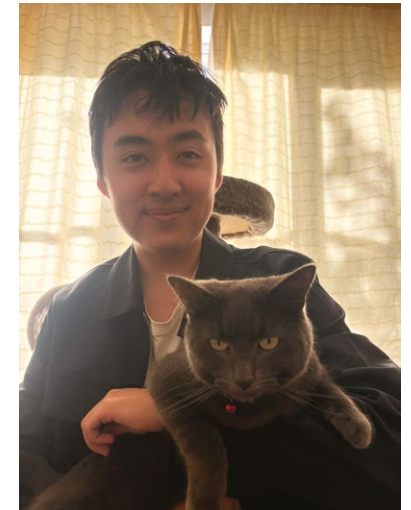
▲ **James Prail, 16-18 "Live and Lose"**

An atmospheric piece with gently pulsating synths that create a relaxing wave-like sensation. Interesting musical ideas form a rich texture of sound. The varying percussive beat introduced midway is a refreshing change, just when you'd melted into your chair.



▲ **Oli Sharp, 19-24 "Scuttling Around"**

A fun and energetic piano piece bursting with blues notes, a catchy bass riff, and improvisation. The music grows from a single tune to a busy combination of chords and fast-flowing melodies, evoking its title perfectly.



▲ **Ethan Tanigawa, 19-24 "TERMINUS"**

An atmospheric piece with a clear musical arc, building through soft layers until it reaches a climax of intertwining melodies. Clashing notes follow, creating tension, before the piece slows again and all tension is released.



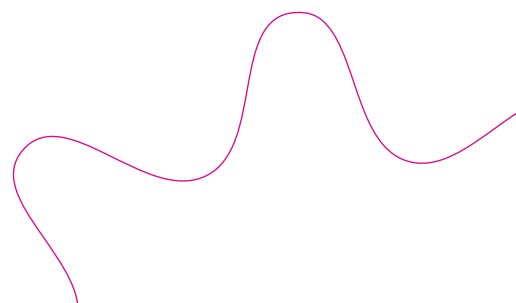
◀ **Jack Fong, 19-24 "Kill The Music"**

A musical exploration of interesting sounds and ideas. Gorgeous, relaxed vocals and ambient, floaty instruments complement the song. A loose structure adds interest, and the late addition of an electric guitar creates intrigue.



◀ **John Daseco, 19-24 "Chemical Roulette"**

An engaging song full of bass fuzziness, interesting rhythms, and laid-back vocals. Minimal instrumentation but maximum impact that makes the listener want to hear more.



PHOTOGRAPHY

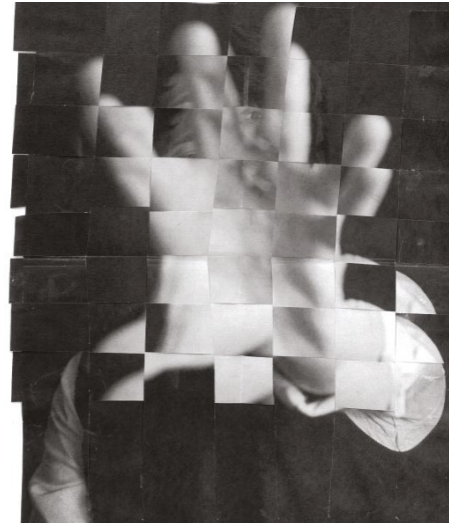
Judges: Mandi Chandler (Nottingham College), Rob Smalley (Scene Photography), Dani Bacon (LeftLion), Trevor Melton (Freelance), Matthew Robertson (Nottingham Trent University)



▲ **Zuzanna L, 11-15** "Modern day portraits, the EGS way"
The judges felt this vibrant triptych draws on a multimedia, video art aesthetic. Dynamic and engaging, it suggests strong potential beyond still imagery, with an exciting possibility to evolve into a compelling moving image piece.



▲ **Matipa G, 11-15** "Glitch Photo"
The judges felt this imaginative work combines strong research, dreamlike colour, and confident technique. Inspired yet original, it uses striking gestures, framing, and multiple exposures to create a visually distinctive image with creativity, technical skill, and artistic voice.



▲ **Leizan Mohammed, 11-15**
The judges felt this visually striking image combines gritty grain with creative weaving, evoking a tactile, mixed-media feel. Influenced by collage artists yet distinctly original, it carries an editorial quality suited to album covers or magazine spreads.



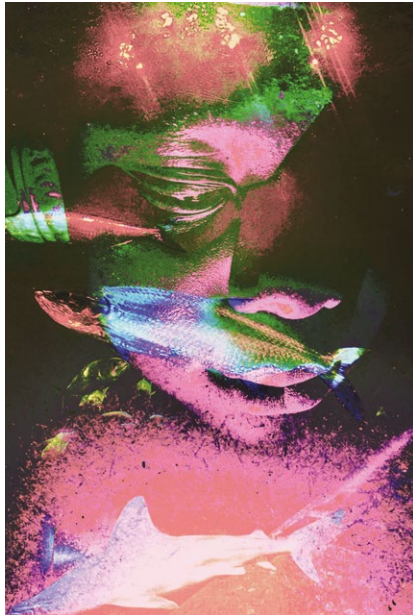
▲ **Kye Fryer, 16-18**
The judges felt this image's timeless, mixed-media aesthetic evokes Spike Jonze and Glen Friedman, capturing the energy and spirit of 1970s skate culture with striking vitality.



▲ **Nigella Israel, 16-18**
The judges felt this brave and compelling concept shows promise. A quiet, intimate exploration of masculinity, these portraits challenge traditional perceptions while revealing vulnerability. With strong narrative potential, the work is shortlisted as an emerging series with striking emotional depth.



▲ **Liza Sternberg, 16-18**
The judges felt this series shows sensitivity, capturing moments with care and authenticity. With strong composition, energy, and a palpable connection, the work explores the juxtaposition of gentle and giant, beautifully rendered in soft yet powerful black and white imagery.



▲ **Khady Diene, 16-18**

The judges felt this visually striking series explores memory with a dreamlike, uncanny quality. Khady's innovative self-portrait and two-colour approach create a unique, reflective work, perfect for a photobook or zine.



▲ **Edith Orlanda Brown, 19-24**

The judges felt this cinematic series, captured in golden hour light, combines rich colours and careful composition. Evoking Spike Jonze and Glen Friedman, it balances timeless storytelling with editorial potential and the energy of 1990s skate culture.

► **Sam Williams, 19-24**

The judges were impressed with this black-and-white street photography series, which captures intimate, visually compelling moments of a daily commute in London. Technically sharp and well-composed, the images work as a cohesive set and were a moving submission to this category.



► **Harvey Tomlinson, 19-24**

The judges felt this filmic image, evoking Wes Anderson and 1950s sci-fi, combines surreal, sculpted composition with clever editing, dramatic contrast, and cinematic technique to create a visually striking and memorable piece.



◀ **Ollie Hayes, 19-24**

The judges felt this striking black-and-white series captures raw, gritty connections with strong lighting and composition. Evoking Don McCullin and Brandt, it demonstrates bravery and skill, with the potential to grow into a powerful photo essay.

VISUAL ARTS

Judges: Tom Godfrey (Nottingham Trent University),
Helen Garrigan (Nottingham Trent University),
Lucy Davies (YCN Trustee)



▲ **Sultana Ahmad, 11-15**

Sultana's painting demonstrates striking emotional depth and conceptual clarity, translating complex personal and political experiences into a compelling visual narrative. Her powerful statement adds maturity and impact, resulting in a poignant, well-composed and highly accomplished artwork.



▲ **Emily Higgs, 11-15 "Serenity"**

Emily's painting shows exceptional technical skill, using colour, tone and light to create movement and contrast. Her thoughtful statement adds depth, using the tiger to express resilience and calm. A striking, mature and compelling piece.



◀ **Yasmin Benarab, 11-15**

The judges found Yasmin's entry to be a powerful painting, uniting the pictorial with the typographic in the depiction of a casbah with red writing over the top. The story of Algeria's national anthem, created through Moufdi Zakaria's suffering, is reflected very movingly in this painting.



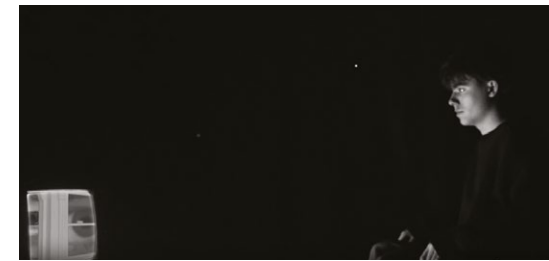
▲ **Shane Kelley, 11-15**

Shane's work shows strong focus, expression and curiosity, engaging thoughtfully with materials. His sculpture presents a clear narrative about journeys and belonging in the Pride Lands, enriched by personal creativity. A meaningful, distinctive and engaging contribution.



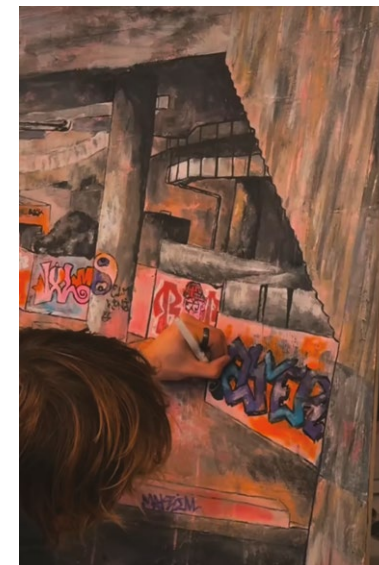
▲ **Cai Adams, 16-18**

The judges were impressed by the bold mark making and prolific approach to making drawings, with a large number already created this year. It's great to see an artist committing to a creative process, trusting their instincts, and seeing where things go.



▲ **Danny Abbott, 16-18 "Watcher"**

The judges were very impressed by the range of sophisticated methods and approaches that Danny has used in the making of this film work, clearly demonstrating a high level of ambition and an advanced position in his filmmaking journey.



▲ **Kye Fryer, 16-18**

The judges greatly enjoyed the labyrinthine composition and surface quality in the painting, that has a unique and individual identity to it. The eye explores the space, in the same way as the skateboarders might, and you become wholly absorbed by the image.



▲ **Sophia Henderson, 16-18**

One of the rare sculptural entries this year, the judges were impressed by the ambitious scale of the work, and how the piece was worked upon and developed outside of college requirements, showing a burgeoning independently led practice. The judges also enjoyed seeing the sculpture taken outside, into a location beyond the gallery, and seeing how it can connect to the public space.



▲ **Yu Han Cheng, 19-24 "Desire"**

The judges enjoyed the collision between contemporary imagery and traditional materials, and the personal story told through the inclusion of specific objects such as the book and shoes. The presentation of the work as a diptych encourages a more active viewing experience and resists formal and conventional approaches to composition.



◀ **Lily Warren, 19-24**
"Why wait for the best when I can have you"

The judges were impressed by the oblique composition of this self-portrait, which resists a clear viewing experience through its use of mirrors and camera angles. There is also enjoyment to be taken from some of the smaller details in the painting, such as the palettes, postcards and headphones – the supportive ingredients that help assemble a practice, as well as a well composed painting.

▼ **Tin Yu Chow, 19-24**

The judges were impressed by the emotional 'load' that this painting conveys, through its exploration, belonging, migration and what constitutes home and the familiar. These ideas are brought together in a surprising way, and command an extended view and a period of deciphering, as well as quiet contemplation as you become absorbed by the space and colours.

▶ **Imarni Boyer-Nugent, 19-24**
"Cover Letters"

Imarni's series of textile works intricately & explicitly reflect the conditions of their own production and what it takes to manage an artistic career – considering both artistic and administrative labour. Exploring time & duration's relationship to value and worth shows an artist working at an advanced position, who can consider themselves and their work within broader contexts and positions, valuing process and legacy as much as the artwork itself.



ENTRIES FROM ALL OVER

This year, we received +21% more entries than last year and were delighted to see a wide spread of entries from the below schools, colleges and universities across Nottingham urban area. A big thank you to all educators, teachers, lecturers, parents and guardians for supporting and encouraging young creatives to enter the awards.

- * Arnold Hill Academy
- * Bilborough College
- * Bluecoat Academy
- * Bluecoat Beechdale Academy
- * Confetti College
- * Ellis Guilford School
- * Hall Park Academy
- * Nottingham Academy
- * Nottingham College
- * Nottingham Free School
- * Nottingham Girls' Academy
- * Nottingham High School
- * Nottingham Trent University
- * NUA
- * Rushcliffe School
- * The Becket School
- * The Nottingham Emmanuel School
- * The Trinity Catholic School
- * The West Bridgford School
- * University of Nottingham

YCA TIMELINE 2027

To support planning for entering the awards next year, we're delighted to share our ambitions for the 2027 awards timeline

16th

YCA entries open:
Monday 16th November 2026

15th

Closing date for entries
Monday 15th March 2027

May

Date of Awards event
Mid to late May 2027 (To be confirmed)

Please look out for further information and updates on Facebook and Instagram



@ycreativesnottm or
visit youngcreativeawards.org

YCA ALUMNI

Shortlisted and winning Young Creative Awards entrants often tell us the Awards helped give them the confidence to kick start their creative careers. Here's what some YCA Alumni have been up to:



Dan Ottewell

Highly Commended, Music (16-18) 2024

Dan Ottewell began performing after joining the Greenpeace kids' band at Glastonbury in 2015, an experience that inspired him to take up guitar and return to the festival repeatedly. He has since completed 18 Glastonbury performances and holds the record for the most appearances by an 18-year-old artist.

Touring nationally, Dan has supported artists including Frank Turner, Terrorvision and Ferocious Dog, and performed at major festivals such as Boomtown and Beautiful Days. He is currently developing new material with Libertines drummer Gary Powell.

danottewell.co.uk/

Madeleine Clews

Highly Commended,
Fashion & Textiles (19-24), 2025

Madeleine has been drawn to fashion design since childhood, fuelled by sketchbooks, fabrics and the freedom to express ideas through clothing. Her work now blends creativity with purpose, using fashion to explore issues that affect both people and the planet. In 2025, she transformed that passion into a major milestone when she travelled to Paris Fashion Week. Through determination and hard work, the Nottingham College Fashion student secured an internship with luxury fashion house Elie Saab, spending 8-16 March immersed in one of the world's most prestigious fashion events.

Instagram - [@maddieclews](https://www.instagram.com/maddieclews)
& [@madeleineclewss](https://www.instagram.com/madeleineclewss)
Tik tok - [@madelllllline](https://www.tiktok.com/@madelllllline)



Rachel Aryee-Brown

Highly Commended, Music (16-18), 2024

Rachel discovered her passion for composing and performing music in secondary school, where exposure to film scores and a range of instruments sparked her creative curiosity. Today, she remains inspired by music's constant evolution—its expanding emotional landscapes, growing creativity and the exciting role of new technologies. Winning a Young Creative Award was a pivotal moment that encouraged her to keep pursuing her ambitions. Now a Technical Operator Apprentice at BBC Nottingham, Rachel is gaining wide-ranging industry experience, from editing and directing to sound, lighting and graphics, and is excited for where her creative journey will lead next.

Isobelle Farrar

Winner, Visual Arts (19-24), 2024
& Winner Graphic Design (16-18), 2017

Isobelle has been creative since childhood, but it was in college when she discovered illustration could be a real career that her path truly began. She won the Young Creatives Award in 2017 (her category & overall winner) and 2024 winning the Visual Arts category. Continued success followed by being awarded the Association of Illustrator's Spotlight Award in 2024. This gave her the confidence to believe her work was valued and her future in the arts achievable. Isobelle's passion is driven by a genuine love of creating, something she can't imagine a day without.

[@isobellefarrarillustrations](https://www.instagram.com/isobellefarrarillustrations)





ChalleNGe & Child Friendly Creative City

Nottingham is committed to becoming a Child Friendly City, ensuring children and young people have a meaningful say in local decisions, services and spaces. To support this ambition, arts organisations across the city have come together to increase participation and access to arts and culture for 0-25 yr olds, led by ChalleNGe, our local Cultural Education Partnership.

A host of arts partners are collaborating with community groups, schools and creative practitioners to deliver 5 exciting strands of work;

Loud & Clear

Participatory projects – get involved in local arts festivals, summer programmes, Connecting Notts, the Creative Futures Network and find regular music, theatre, dance and art groups across the city. Have your say in shaping the cultural life of the city!

Cultural Rucksack

A city-wide schools programme, supporting a broad and adventurous 'cultural guarantee' for every child across all educational settings.

Creative Taskforce

Regular training and networking opportunities for artists and teachers, supporting the 'Art of Belonging pledge' for refugee and asylum seeking families, and celebrating our diverse living heritages and languages.

Nature Connections

Action learning projects to increase access to arts and nature locally, while building links with other Child Friendly Cities and UNESCO Cities of Literature around the world.

Children's Fund

New collective fundraising campaigns, business support and social value projects that enable more children and young people to enjoy, express and champion creativity!

This year, ChalleNGe are our headline partner – find out more about them at www.challengenottingham.co.uk Follow them @ChalleNGeNottm



Schools can sign up to the Cultural Rucksack Programme online

Parents and Carers newsletters sign up



Summer Arts Pop Up – championing free creativity for everyone!



During the first summer of the Child Friendly Creative City programme, we worked in partnership with ChalleNGe Nottingham, the Victoria Centre and a range of arts organisations to help transform an empty retail unit into a fabulous creative hub for families and young creatives. Showcasing the Young Creatives Awards exhibition; offering free Creative Futures sessions each week and providing opportunities for YCA winners to lead free drop-in workshops throughout August, we engaged with over 900 families and created a welcoming and exploratory space for creativity.

A team of young facilitators and creative workshop leaders helped make it all possible, alongside established artists and organisations like Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, Ignite!, Nottingham City of Literature, Tom Dale Company and Nonsuch Studios. Huge thanks to Victoria Centre for providing the space, Sarah Manton, the lead

artist, and all those involved; especially the families who loved the space and took part!

"Such a lovely idea for all the children in Nottingham. We had an amazing time and we will be back next week. The staff have gone above and beyond and really encouraged my little girl to be creative."

"It was a great opportunity for me to be inspired, network and be creative! It opened my eyes to the opportunities in Notts." Esther McKenzie, YCN Writer

"It was an enriching and enabling experience that has affirmed my belief in the power of arts education. Not only was a space provided for children's entertainment and wellbeing during the school break, but also a space for children to play, learn, experiment and create." Kate Lawrence, Connecting Notts youth board member.

Scan the QR code to read the Summer Arts Pop Up report





CREATIVE FUTURES NETWORK

Whether you're dipping your toes in for the first time, or well on the road to establishing your creative practice in Nottingham, Connecting Notts and Young Creatives Nottingham have joined forces to bring you a range of networking events and workshops to meet others starting out! From event producers to community artists; writers and performers to lighting designers and photographers, we aim to share hopes, challenges and support creative collaborations!

Join the Creative Futures Network to receive:

- Practical advice and support
- Opportunities to share creative ideas and practice your facilitation skills
- Regular e-news to your inbox, with invites to networking events, webinars and special events!

The Connecting Notts Youth Board oversees the Creative Futures Network, with support from Challenge and Young Creatives Nottingham.

Scan the QR code to find out more and join the network mailing list



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

The Young Creative Awards is only possible because of the generosity and hard work of our incredible sponsors and partners. We would like to say a HUGE thank you to the following organisations whose support for young creatives in Nottingham is so important:



Additionally, we'd like to thank: David S Stewart OBE DL for sponsoring the film category this year; It's in Nottingham and Ken Wilkins Print Ltd for their supporting donations; Ibis Hotel Nottingham for exhibiting YCA winning and highly commended entries, and providing trustees with a meeting room for Board meetings; the Archway Learning Trust academy schools who contributed as Education Partners for Creative Writing; Bluecoat Aspley Academy, Bluecoat Beechdale Academy, Bluecoat Trent Academy, Bluecoat Wollaton Academy and The Nottingham Emmanuel School.

We are also very grateful to the following grant funding organisations who have supported the work of Young Creatives Nottingham over the last 12 months: Arts Council England, Jesse Spencer Trust and The Gemini Fund, administered by Forever Notts - Community Foundation for Nottinghamshire.

Archway Learning Trust
Archway Learning Trust academies are places where staff thrive and children flourish: equipped for a world of possibilities, and ready to make a difference to others.
archwaytrust.co.uk

ChalleNGe
ChalleNGe is Nottingham's Local Cultural Education Partnership, bringing schools, communities and arts organisations together to increase engagement in arts and culture across the city through the 'Child Friendly Creative City' programme.
challengenottingham.co.uk

Confetti College
Specialist creative technology education provider, delivering future-driven courses to support graduates into careers in music, gaming, E-Sports, TV, film, live events, graphic design, VFX and more.
confetti.ac.uk

Fabric
Fabric is a strategic dance development organisation based in the Midlands with sites in Birmingham and Nottingham. Fabric nurtures talented young performers, choreographers and leaders; runs an extensive outreach and education programme; leads the Midlands Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) programmes; and produces a range of multi-partner community, health and inclusion projects.
fabric.dance

It's In Nottingham
Nottingham's central hub for news, information and events. Whether you are visiting or a resident of our fine city, It's in Nottingham - brought to you by Nottingham BID - has all the inspiration you are looking for.
itsinnottingham.com

LeftLion
Nottingham's print and online guide to culture, art, music, food, sport and community.
leftlion.co.uk

Maber
Award-winning architecture, interior and landscape design practice, aspiring to deliver great buildings for our clients and end users.
maber.co.uk

Nottingham College
Offering a comprehensive range of further and higher education training opportunities, including a wide range of expressive and innovative courses for those with a creative flair.
nottinghamcollege.ac.uk

Nottingham Music Service
Award-winning charity committed to broadening young people's access to music-making through world-class music education and life-changing programmes.
nottinghammusic.org.uk

Nottingham Trent University
With its internationally recognised Nottingham School of Art & Design, NTU is one of the city's creative cornerstones. Uni Compare 'Best university in the UK' and '1st in the UK for Employability' 2025.
ntu.ac.uk

Potter Clarkson
A full-service IP firm helping organisations protect, enforce and maximise the value of their patents, trade marks, designs and related rights through expert legal, litigation and strategic advisory services.
potterclarkson.com

STENCIL
A purpose-led creative agency offering meaningful and accelerated opportunities to aspiring designers in Nottingham. STENCIL delivers the best in brand strategy and storytelling.
stencil-agency.co.uk

Victoria Centre
At the heart of Nottingham for over 50 years, at Victoria Centre, our community is important to us. We're proud to support and celebrate the city's next generation of talent and provide a platform where young people can showcase their creativity, ingenuity, be recognised, and feel inspired to keep growing.
victoria-centre.com



Young Creatives Nottingham Board of Trustees
 Jim Brown, Ian Burton, Nigel Cooke (Chair), Lucy Davies, Addie Kenogbon, Katherine Monk-Watts, David S Stewart OBE DL, Sharon Walia, Kate Wand

The board of Trustees would like to extend their sincere thanks to:

YCA Patrons:

Wolfgang Buttress, Rob Green, Jamal Sterrett Phoenix, Nina Smith

YCA Operations Group:

Chelsea Gordon (Fabric), Claire Dyer (Nottingham Music Services), Mandi Chandler, Samantha Crowe, Michelle Rensler, Alexandra Raynor, Rose Tucker, James Bradley (Nottingham College), Lee Gillyon (Confetti College), Helen Garrigan (Nottingham Trent University), Alex Lipinski (Maber), Cathy Mahmood (ChalleNGe), Rebecca Parker (Victoria Centre)

YCN Project Co-Ordinator:

Alice Veldtman, supported by Caroline Pissides

Brochure Design:

STENCIL

Accountancy:

Terence Maxwell

Young Creatives Nottingham is a registered charity number 1168804.



**Young Creative Awards
 Nottingham**

To see more work by the 2026 winners and finalists and to find out how to enter the 2027 Young Creative Awards go to:

youngcreativeawards.org

CAN YOU HELP YOUNG CREATIVES IN NOTTINGHAM?

At the heart of the annual Young Creative Awards is Young Creatives Nottingham, a registered charity (number 1168804).

It is the aim of Young Creatives Nottingham to nurture and support the next generation of writers, musicians, designers, actors, architects, artists and entrepreneurs; helping young people to find ways into education, training and employment; and feeding the creative minds needed to help our communities flourish.

As well as organising the annual YCAs, Young Creatives Nottingham works with local organisations to inspire creativity in young people and support the careers of young creative practitioners, we recently set up the Creative Futures Network with Connecting Notts to help achieve this.

To do any of this we are reliant on the generosity and support of our sponsors and partners and the time and energy of volunteers – a growing community of magnificent individuals and organisations committed to investing in creativity and young people.

If you would like to find out more about how you can join this community, and help to inspire, celebrate and support the next generation Nottingham creatives, then please get in touch by emailing info@youngcreativeawards.org or donate via the QR code below.

Thank you.

I'm supporting Young Creatives Nottingham and the Young Creative Awards



Scan the QR code to donate



A purpose-led agency, offering accelerated opportunities to the next gen of creatives icons.

STENCIL offers internships and experiences for young people making careers in the industry.

Talk to us about... Graphic design, Motion design, VFX, Journalism, Creative writing, and Illustration.





Young
Creative
Awards
Nottingham



@ycreativesnottm
youngcreativeawards.org

Donate to support Young Creatives
Nottingham and the Young Creative Awards

