

DESIGNING



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**DESIGN &
TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION**

Inspiring Textiles through recycled fashion

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Over the course of three years, Marling School, a boys’ grammar school in Gloucestershire, has undergone a remarkable transformation in its D&T department. Previously devoid of a dedicated textiles offering, the school has now not only introduced textile rotations for all KS3 year groups but also extended the subject to students in all exam years, including the introduction of a new A-Level breadth option. The catalyst for this success lies partly in the achievements of the students in the recycled fashion competition, Junk Kouture.



Junk Kouture

Junk Kouture aims to inspire students to create fashion for the next generation, re-using and re-imagining materials to create catwalk ready fashion. Junk Kouture is a global fashion competition that challenges young designers between the ages of 13 and 18 to create innovative and creative fashion pieces using recycled materials. The competition aims to inspire and educate students about sustainability, fashion, and design by encouraging them to repurpose discarded materials to create stunning and unique runway-worthy outfits.

Rethinking textiles

As a traditional boys’ grammar school, Textiles had never been taught separately, only as part of the prescribed theory for GCSE and A-Level and the department sought to change this. With the strong belief that there is no reason why boys can’t learn and have the opportunity to sew, design and create fashion, the department started by securing a grant to buy five sewing machines and equipment, changing their schemes of work using expertise from both their own and other local teachers, and shortly after, advertising the opportunity to enter Junk Kouture to main school and their mixed

sixth form, a world-wide recycled fashion competition open to 13-18 year olds.

In 2021 two Year 12 groups entered the competition. All three students across both teams had never studied fashion before and spent many hours after school with the department to create their designs. Out of the two entries, both reached the London Finals in 2022, with Archie’s entry of an Umbrella ‘We All Fit In’ reaching the World Finals, held in Abu Dhabi in January 2023.

London Finalist 2022 – Disorder

Disorder, created by Biba and Hope in 2021 reached the London Finals of Junk Kouture. Inspired by Iris Van Herpen designs, the dress aimed to showcase the way in which eating disorders can make a person feel. Made from scrap black fabric donated by the school community after a plea through their school systems, the dress was commended by the judges for showcasing an important message whilst also being incredibly stylish. It was showcased on YouTube as part of the digital London finals and commended highly by all judges. It was also available to watch on the planes’ TV screens to the public travelling with Etihad Airways to Abu Dhabi.

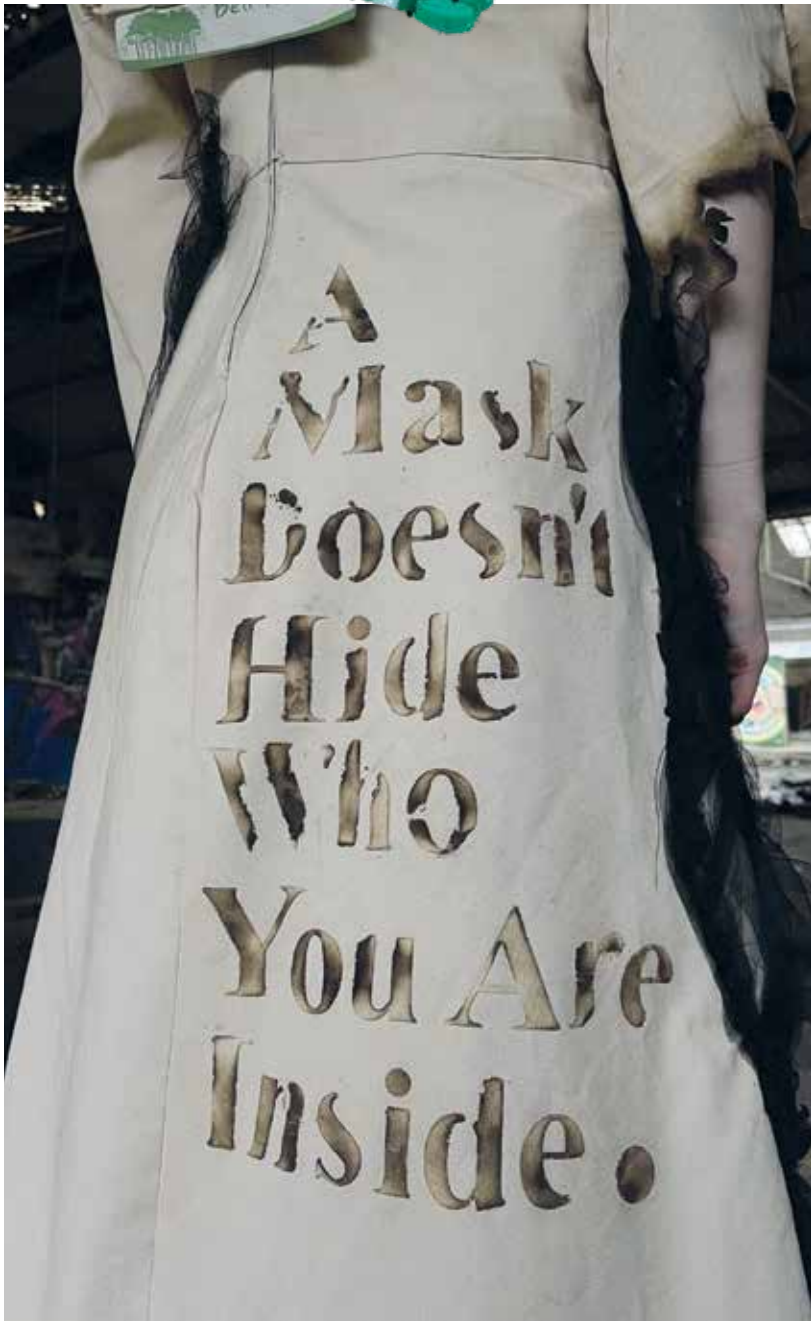


World Finalist 2022 – The Umbrella We All Fit In

This design made by Archie reached the 2022 World Finals, held in 2023 in Abu Dhabi. Archie’s design was made from old golf umbrellas and consists of a tailored, fitted skirt with dip hem, scrap acrylic necklace, old net umbrella accessory and scrap plywood heels made from old plywood offcuts from KS3 projects and two old umbrella handles. The back of the dress is supported by umbrella poles and the last section of the dress not only changes colour using smart materials, found on an old umbrella donated by a neighbouring school, but also changes from midi skirt to train through a string system installed at the hem. This was designed by Archie to give the dress movement and was released on the catwalk to form part of the performance. Following Archie’s success in Junk Kouture, the demand for textiles soared at the school, especially lower down the year groups.

London Finalists 2023 – Nomad and Veiled

Archie entered again for 2023 alongside Hope creating a men’s wear look named Nomad aiming to highlight the problem with high fashion and homelessness. The garment was made from old sleeping bags and scrap fabric. With high praise again from the judges, the design was noted as being incredibly on-trend. Veiled was also another London Final entry for 2023 from Marling School students Noah and Ben (Year 12). Having never sewn before or even thought of using the machine, this project has inspired Noah to take forward his passion and not only look to take it at university but use the skills he has learnt in his final A-Level coursework project. The design itself was made using an old Bell Tent and detail was added through use of old tulle to create a face and the department laser cutter. This design was highly credited by the judges for its technical detail and strong message. Noah and Ben spent hours tailoring the garment, learning not only how to sew, but also how to tailor to a model, line and the properties of different materials and their flammability. Not only does the competition push students to think outside the box, but it also allows them space to be creative, experiment with materials and follow their passion.



World Finalists 2023 – End of an Era

Hannah and Chiedza, both Year 12 Product Design students, made their design out of over 1500 plastic milk bottle lids. Using their A-Level knowledge about plastics, they used a soldering iron to melt four holes into each one and then tied each one together with scrap jersey T-Shirt fabric.

The design aims to showcase how the green milk bottle lids are being scrapped in favour for the white, which are easier to recycle, hence making it an end of an era. It also has an impressive 1.5m train which sounds like the sea as it is walked by model Carys. The design was highly praised by the judges, with student judge Maxim looking forward to its performance on the catwalk at the World Finals held in the OVO Wembley Arena in London.

As part of their success in getting to the World Finals, Hannah and Chiedza also had the opportunity to showcase their design as part of the Westfield Good Festival in London. Alongside Archie being involved in several panel discussions for this event, Hannah's design was showcased in one of the largest shopping centres in the country as part of a push for sustainable fashion shopping. The students have received a letter of good luck from our local MP and the dress has been featured in both the local newspaper and several online papers, not only being seen in the UK, but across the globe.

We hope from this, students can follow their passions, whether it be creating a couture dress from milk bottle lids, trousers from old sleeping bags or a three-piece suit from an old DofE tent, there is nothing which cannot be not thought of. Design isn't always about what we traditionally think of; in fact, that is the whole point of our subject: innovation. So next time you are wondering what to do with that old sheet or scrap offcuts of acrylic from your Year 7 project, maybe, just maybe, one of your students could go on to win a World Final with it? ✕

Links



London Final 2022:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2a3FXhnWaFM&t=1197s



London Final 2023: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpU7p1G6TRU&t=1088s



Junk Kouture: junkkouture.com/



