

A dress made from paper impressed competition judges

Young designers' creations put before expert panel

By **Sophie Sturt**

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A HILLVIEW School for Girls pupil scooped top prize in a competition to find the region's best young fashion designers.

Alicia Johns impressed judges – including presenter and weather girl Kaddy Lee-Preston – with her extraordinary creations in the Young Fashion Designer UK contest, held at Kent College.

Emma Donovan, from the school said: "It was a great celebration of the fashion and design industry."

Eighteen-year-old Alicia won her category of the competition with an origami dress made from paper.

Another category winner was Laura Salter, 17, of Kent College, who amazed the panel with a dress she designed and made – then buried in her garden.

Dress

Part of Laura's work looked at how material decays, so she buried the dress and monitored the various stages of decomposition. She then dug it up again and finished it off.

Alicia and Laura, were among 18 finalists whittled down from 172 entrants across the south east for the competition.

The winners in the three categories of the contest were Alicia in the A-level section, Laura in the AS level category and 16-year-old Anne Graveson Hepworth from Burgess Hill School for Girls in the GCSE category.

Anne's work was influenced by Manga, the Japanese style of animation and cartoons.

Kaddy Lee-Preston was joined by seven industry experts to judge the competition on Saturday.

Among these were Joanna Beatty, costume supervisor on



SHORTLISTING: The judging took place at Kent College

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shows including Miranda and Horrible Histories, and knitwear designer Juliana Sissons, a former fashion designer in residence at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Lizanne Senior, a marketing manager for luxury fashion brands and Lara Lambert, a buyer for top names like Harrods and Liberty, were also on the

panel.

Former Kent College pupils Abbey Rance and Samantha Probert judged the girls' work too with Karen Wintle, former head of textiles at the school who also founded the competition in 2010.

The entrants showcased work from their A-level and GCSE courses and also followed a brief set by the competition organisers.

Part of the judging process included a 30-minute interview with members of the panel to explain how they interpreted the brief and dreamed up their designs.

Each winner picked up a cash prize of between £200 and £100 and a glass trophy.

Miss Donovan, head of external

relations at Kent College, added: "The competition gives students the opportunity to meet people with a high profile in the industry who can pass on their advice."

"They are all so passionate about their subject and so are the students."

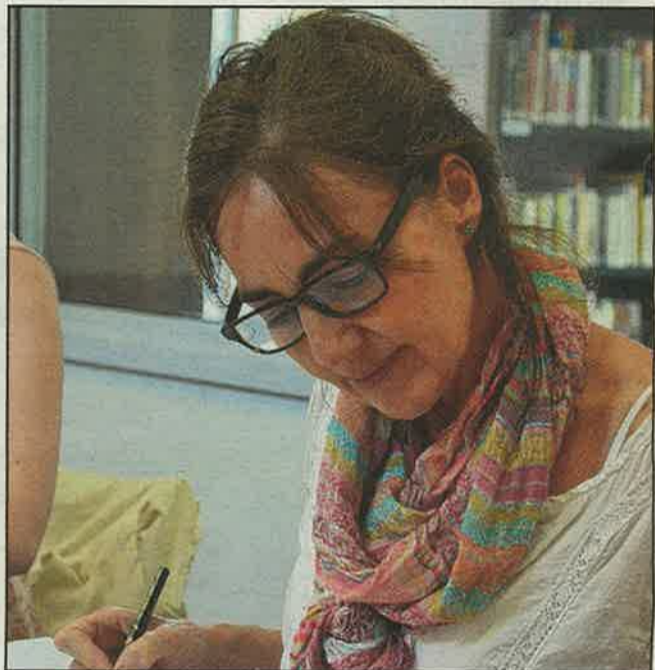
Organisers are already planning next year's contest which has grown from 80 entries when it started three years ago to 172 this year.

Miss Donovan said: "We are talking to Kaddy Lee-Preston about next year and part of the brief might be to design an outfit for Kaddy to wear on television."

"The standard of entries has really increased since the competition started and it was incredibly difficult to judge them."



TOP DESIGNS: Winners, front, with other finalists and the judges



ON THE PANEL: Joanna Beatty, a BBC costume designer



TOP PRIZES: Winners from left, Laura Salter, Alicia Johns and Anne Graveson Hepworth



CLOSER LOOK: Judge Kaddy Lee-Preston inspects the clothes



GRAND DESIGNS: Items of clothing on display

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