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GAZING AT THE STARS CREATES NEW DESIGN TALENT



Young people from inner London schools and colleges have created some “star” designs for the Royal Observatory Greenwich as part of a summer academy run by the Ideas Foundation at London College of Communication (LCC).

The project has been designed as part of a campaign to attract more young visitors to the Royal Observatory and other National Maritime Museum sites. Students were given a live brief to create designs and products for the Observatory’s Astronomy shop and its newly-opened Star shop that would appeal to visitors in a younger age group (14 to 25).

The 23 students, who come from ten schools and colleges in inner London all took part in the Talent Shop Summer Academy – a scheme run by the Ideas Foundation - held at LCC from 23-27 July. During the week students spent time researching ideas at Design Museum and other venues, then worked in teams to create a portfolio of designs and prototype products. They presented their designs, on 27 July, to a panel of judges comprised of senior representatives from the Maritime Museum, the Museums and Libraries Archives Council, Enterprise Insight, the Ideas Foundation, LCC and Newham College, London’s design industries and other organisations.

Great designs emerged, ranging from punk-style T-shirts, to exquisitely sculptured jewellery, stationery ranges, telescopic pens and time devices, based on astrological, nautical and time-based themes. The National Maritime Museum commercial team felt the students had come up ideas they described as “really ingenious and fresh”.

Elizabeth Nalumans, a student from St. Angela’s Sixth Form, Newham said :“The brief was exciting. It was difficult selecting the final design. Talent Shop was a fun learning experience that is invaluable.”

Anna Salaman, Head of Learning at the National Maritime Museum said: "This was a great opportunity to engage students in working with the unique collections at the Royal Observatory in an innovative and exciting way. The partnership with the Ideas Foundation enabled the students to see their designs through to completion and to truly experience the challenges of working within both the Heritage and Commercial sectors."

Asif Khan from the MLA (Museums and Libraries Archives Council) said: 'It was great to see students from so many different boroughs and backgrounds being inspired by the collection of the National Maritime Museum and putting their identity and interpretation on it.'

Heather MacRae, Programme Director for The Ideas Foundation says:
"Talent Shop was designed to develop student's creativity and skills across the process of new product design and marketing, and to help them gain understanding of how these industries work. The programme gives young people shop front for their creativity. We have found students with the creative 'X-Factor' and want to support them now to sell the items they have created and made. We're confident that the Talent Shop will have an ongoing impact on young people's lives and will develop the potential of our rising designer stars."

The National Maritime Museum is currently investigating ways of putting some of the prototypes into production for sale in their shops. Students will also have the added bonus of gaining a qualification in product design accredited by Newham College for Further Education – a Centre of Vocational Excellence for Enterprise.

This innovative project is funded through London Gifted and Talented with additional funding through the Newham College ESF Equal 'Cutting It' Action 3 programme funding.

Ends

For more information contact:

For further information and high resolution pictures contact Heather MacRae at The Ideas Foundation on 0781 5768699 or email heather@venturethinking.com

Notes for editors

The National Maritime Museum comprises The Royal Observatory Greenwich, The National Maritime Galleries and The Queens' House. In May 2007, the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, opened four new galleries exploring astronomy, adding to the new Time Galleries opened in 2006 and the new 120-seat Peter Harrison Planetarium. The Observatory stands on the site of the Greenwich Meridian Line so visitors are able to have one foot in the Eastern hemisphere and one foot in the Western. Further information from www.nmm.ac.uk and www.rog.nmm.ac.uk

The brief was to design products for the Royal Observatory shops that must

- appeal to visitors aged 14-25
- reflect the Royal Observatory's key collections
- incorporate the Museum logo whilst maintaining its own brand identity
- be flexible and sufficiently adaptable to represent the National Maritime Museum, the Queens House and other museums and art galleries
- be profitable.

Students had to research competitors, develop marketing plans, create ideas for display, work out costs and show how the identity of the Royal Observatory and Maritime Museums could be maintained.

The Ideas Foundation was established in June 2003 by Robin Wight, Director of Art & Business and Chair of WCRS Advertising and The Engine Group. Its aim is to "identify and nurture creatively gifted young people whose talents may have been

overlooked in the exam focused school system.” The Foundation’s main business is the Creativity Scholarship. This prepares students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the top end of the creative industries - such as advertising, media, design and architecture - where careers are usually only accessible to graduates and dominated by white middle classes. The Foundation works with young people in schools and colleges, introducing them to the industry, then inviting them to work on an industry brief and work placement. It also has mentors in the industry that work with disaffected youngsters outside education and employment.

LONDON GIFTED AND TALENTED DEVELOPS HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMMES THAT CHALLENGE LEARNERS AND SUPPORT TEACHERS. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL LEARNERS ARE ENTITLED TO BE STRETCHED AND CHALLENGED, AND THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE GIFTED AND TALENTED PROVISION IS ROOTED IN DAILY LEARNING AND TEACHING. AT THE HEART OF THE PROGRAMMES ARE CUTTING-EDGE E-RESOURCES AND ONLINE TOOLS.

LONDON COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION IS A PARTNER COLLEGE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS LONDON. IT HOUSES THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS AND HAS WORLD CLASS FACILITIES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS.

Newham College’s Centre for Innovation and Partnerships aims to develop new ways of learning that support the college's mission as an Open Access College committed to widening participation. In this respect its work is focused on the learning needs of individuals, organisations and communities that are not being met by more traditional or existing provision and substantially supports the college’s drive for social and economic regeneration in Newham.

Cutting IT, an EQUAL, ESF funded programme is developing innovative models to assist small businesses and their employees within the clothing and textile sector. The focus is to provide long-term solutions to current market problems through a unique partnership and has created solutions for training, business and workforce development, lean manufacturing and mentoring issues.

About the Students, students took part from the following schools and colleges in eight boroughs.

NewVic Sixth Form College, Newham
B Six Sixth Form College, Hackney
Skinners’ Company School for Girls, Hackney
Camden School for Girls, Camden
George Green Technology College, Tower Hamlets
Thomas Tallis School, Greenwich,
La Retraite School, Lambeth
St. Angela’s and St. Bonaventura’s Sixth, Form, Newham
Archbishop Michael Ramsey School, Southwark
Elliott School, Wandsworth

