



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leeds students visit China to showcase designs to fashion industries

Two first year BA (Hons) Fashion students from Leeds College of Art have just returned from a two week, all-expenses paid, trip to Beijing with the Business Confucius Institute at the University of Leeds (BCIUL) Chinese Summer Camp; after they won a cross-cultural fashion competition set by the BCIUL.

The two winning students, Jodie Reynolds and Bethan Smith were selected by a judging panel from the BCIUL; following their live brief, which was open to all first year fashion students at the College, which asked them to explore Chinese culture and utilise their findings when designing an outfit based on the traditional Chinese dress (the Qipao). Jodie and Bethan took their winning designed dresses to China and presented to leading fashion companies MENG LUOCHUAN (a traditional Qipao company) in Tianjin and LALABOBO (a contemporary high street label) in Beijing, where they were accompanied by Ms Stephanie Jackson of the British Council.

Whilst in China they enjoyed a jam-packed itinerary, which included a visit to the British Council, cultural lectures, Chinese language classes and visits to the Great Wall, the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Terra-cotta Warriors and museums and galleries.

Jodie Reynolds designed a sports luxe Qipao created out of laser-cut scuba jersey and Chinese silk. The silk was sponsored by Leeds based silk specialists James Hare. Bethan Smith created a fully lined digital printed tweed dress taking inspiration from the Qing Dynasty.

Sam Hudson, Programme Leader of BA (Hons) Fashion said: *"This collaborative project has been an excellent opportunity for our first year fashion students to experience designing for a global market, and an exciting one for the two winners. The synchronicity between Chinese traditional dress with contemporary fashion concepts has been*

embraced by all the students, and, considering this is their first year of study on the BA (Hons) Fashion programme, the staff team are very proud of the design outcomes".

Ellen Wang, Operations Manager, Business Confucius Institute said: *"The collaboration between Leeds College of Art and BCIUL was very successful. It offered design students the opportunity to understand and explore Chinese culture, both for its rich heritage and its future influence in the fashion industry. Whilst presenting their designs to the fashion companies, the students also won the opportunity for an internship at LALABOBO. During their time in China, Bethan and Jodie also achieved the HSK (Chinese proficiency language test) level 1 with high scores. This was a unique opportunity for them to understand the potential of the Chinese market, and we look forward to seeing how Bethan and Jodie build on this in their future careers."*

Bethan Smith said: *"The company visits have been an amazing insight into the fashion industry in an unfamiliar location. The Chinese fashion brands I visited were so welcoming and showed me how two very different types of companies can work. This prize has really given me a platform to develop myself as a designer, making contacts and gaining valuable experience. "*

Editor's Notes

For more information & images contact: Emma Morris, PR & Communications Officer, 0113 202 8044 or emma.morris@leeds-art.ac.uk.

Link to the BCI Flickr page for all images [here](#)

See the students' winning designs in detail [here](#)

Leeds College of Art, BA (Hons) Fashion, website [link](#)

[Business Confucius Institute at the University of Leeds](#)

Chinese fashion companies:

MENG LUOCHUAN <http://www.mengluochuan.com/>

LALABOBO <http://www.lalabobo.com/about.asp?sortid=13>