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Students work with Great British Sewing Bee star on sustainable banners for the Design for Planet Festival



Patrick Grant's Community Clothing offcuts make thought-provoking installation

BBC *Great British Sewing Bee* judge Patrick Grant gave students' sustainable textile designs the seal of approval when he visited Manchester Met for the Design Council's Design for Planet Festival to open a display of banners crafted by students using offcuts from his ethical campaigning clothes brand, Community Clothing.

The students repurposed over 40 boxes of surplus-to-requirement fabric from the designer and TV star's Community Clothing brand, creating eight large-scale banners with eco design messages at their heart to hang as an installation to open the Design Council's, Design for Planet Festival.

Each 3 meters in size, the banners hang spectacularly in the newly named Lowry Building stairwell, the banners reflect the ethos of Grant's sustainable, locally crafted campaigning clothes brand which matches Manchester Met's commitment as one of the UK's leading universities for sustainability.

Working with the high-quality Community Clothing offcuts, students from the University's Manchester School of Art and Manchester Fashion Institute were tasked with designing and creating the banners to be showcased at the Design Council's Design for Planet Festival 2024, which this year took place at Manchester Met.

As the keynote speaker alongside a host of design industry leaders, Andy Burnham and Manchester Met researchers, Grant met the students from programmes including Textiles, Graphics and Fashion Art Direction, admiring their handiwork and zero waste messaging.

With a letter combination spelling 'radical thought space' and individual designs responding to the theme of 'planet positive', the banners were designed and individually pieced together from eclectic fabric offcuts, then pinned and hand stitched.

Third year Textiles in Practice student Martha Lawton said:

"My banner took inspiration from 'tumbling blocks', a geometric pattern that has been repeated throughout generations and, to us, symbolised longevity.

We created our own repeatable pattern made purely from the shapes of the fabric scraps. Our banner proves that what we consider to be waste can be repurposed into something as equally durable as the garments Community Clothing make.

It was great to recycle such high-quality fabrics to make a statement about sustainability, and such a treat to meet Patrick and the Design Council in person."

Other student banner designs included a nod to the font style of historical textile banners, an umbrella and child motif to represent safeguarding the future, and oversized footprints in reference to the fashion industry's global footprint.

Shelley McNulty, Head of Design at Manchester School of Art, added:

"We were thrilled to partner with Patrick and his Community Clothing brand who are just as passionate about sustainability and circular economies as we are here at Manchester Met.

Our students worked hard on these inspiring designs which look fantastic hanging in our Lowry Building, and which were admired by so many important delegates at the Design Council's Design for Planet conference.

This way of collaborative manual working echoes historical banner making and involves time, patience and skill – something that Manchester School of Art has long been a part of, with its historical roots going back to 1838.

It has been an inspiring and important project for students to be a part of, and great to work with Patrick, Community Clothing and the Design Council to help empower the next generation of designers with the skills they need to address the climate crisis."

Patrick Grant, added:

“If we don’t understand quality ourselves, then we cannot make good choices. We have to teach craft – textiles, pottery, metal work – projects like this, and students such as these at Manchester Met School of Art are key examples of this”.

The banners were displayed at Manchester Met as it hosted the Design Council’s Design for Planet 2024 conference, at which delegates heard from leading voices in sustainable design.

Opened by Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and Minnie Moll, Chief Executive of the Design Council - in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University - the festival highlights the city’s rich urban and industrial design history.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor

About Manchester Metropolitan University

Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University, is the second oldest art school in the UK (established in 1838), and one of the most comprehensive. It is housed in purpose built, state-of-the-art, award-winning buildings, and includes the [Department of Art and Performance](#) (including the [Manchester School of Theatre](#)), [Department of Design](#), [Manchester School of Architecture](#), [Manchester Fashion Institute](#) and the new [School of Digital Arts](#). In addition to Manchester School of Art, the university is also home to [Manchester Poetry Library](#) and the [Manchester Writing School](#), integral to Manchester’s status as a UNESCO world [city of literature](#).

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About Design Council

The Design Council is the UK’s national strategic advisor for design, championing design and its ability to make life better for all. It is an independent and not for profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter. The Design Council uniquely works across all design sectors and delivers programmes with business, government, public bodies and the third sector. Their work encompasses thought leadership, tools and resources, showcasing excellence, and research to evidence the value of design and influence policy. Their Design for Planet mission was introduced in 2021 to galvanise and support the 1.97 million people who work in the UK’s design economy to help achieve net zero and beyond. In September 2025 the Design Council will host the prestigious World Design Congress as a catalytic moment in driving the sector towards designing for planet.

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About Patrick Grant

Patrick Grant has a lot to say about clothes; how many we buy, how we value them, what they're made from, and importantly who made them and where. His campaigning clothes brand [Community Clothing](#) supports local clothing and textile manufacturers across the UK and Patrick is an outspoken advocate for radical change in the fashion industry. He is a regular on TV and Radio being best known for his role on the hit BBC series *The Great British Sewing Bee*. His new book *LESS* was published by Harper Collins in May 2024 and was an instant Sunday Times bestseller!

About Community Clothing

At Community Clothing we have a simple mission. Make clothes that do good. Good for people, local communities, customers, and the planet. We make every garment right here in the UK and by doing so we sustain and create thousands of skilled jobs and help to restore local economic prosperity and pride. And thanks to our unique business model our great quality everyday clothes are about a third the price of other premium brands.