

# U.S. Embassy goes green to celebrate Only Natural Design Awards Winners

*From algae lamps to bamboo chairs: young designers shine with sustainable creations using only natural materials. LCF, RCA & Central St Martins all honoured.*

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, October 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- U.S. Embassy goes green to celebrate Only Natural Awards

- From algae lamps to bamboo chairs: young designers shine with sustainable creations

- International student competition challenged entrants to design bespoke pieces using only natural materials, inspired by nature's beauty

- Students from London College of Fashion, Central Saint Martins, The Royal College of Arts, Nottingham Trent University, National Institute of Design, India and BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology (Bangladesh) all honoured.



Molly Wade won the Apparel category and the Overall Fashion Winner. Her project 'Shenn Vyrneen Aym' (An old love of mine) uses wool, sheepskin and regenerative leather. Molly, an MFA Fashion Design graduate from London College of Fashion, now works for Vivienne Westwood

The U.S. Embassy in London was transformed into a stunning natural setting with a backdrop of lush greenery as creative talent and industry experts gathered to celebrate the winners of the inaugural [Only Natural Student Design Competition](#) which attracted more than 400 entrants from 68 countries in its first year.

In the Fashion section, Molly Wade, won the Apparel category and the title of Overall Fashion Winner with her project titled [Shenn Vyrneen Aym](#)' (An old love of mine). Molly, an MFA Fashion Design graduate from the London College of Fashion, UK, now works for Vivienne Westwood creating bespoke commissions. Her design incorporated wool, shearling sheepskin and regenerative leather.

In the Home section, Sam Bird Smith was awarded the Interiors category and Overall Home Winner title for his project [Phyto](#). Sam studies at Nottingham Trent University, UK, and his work, a hanging pendant light made from 3D printed algae-based bioplastic.

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This competition highlights the endless possibilities that natural materials offer. We hope it will inspire more young designers to think sustainable and drive these practices in the wider industry.”

*Kerry Brozyna, President,  
Leather & Hide Council of  
America,*

Other category winners included Zachary Berry (Footwear), Anjala Shamlia Shajan (Accessories), and Mingyu Xu (Furniture), along with People’s Choice Award winners Ashraful Alam (Fashion) and Arunima Sachan (Home).

The competition was judged by a panel of industry experts comprising of Alex Brownless (CEO, Arts Thread), Grant Gibson, Edwin Ryder, Ana Del Rio, Jens Laugesen (London-based award-winning Danish fashion designer) and Nikita Jayasuriya (recognised leader in sustainability initiatives for top fashion brands).

Kerry Brozyna, President of the Leather & Hide Council of America, praised the initiative:

“We are proud to support the Only Natural competition, which showcases the creativity and innovation of the next generation of designers who are committed to sustainability. This competition highlights the endless possibilities that natural materials offer. We hope it will inspire more young designers to think sustainable and drive these practices in the wider industry.”

Alex Brownless, CEO of Arts Thread, expressed his excitement:

“The Only Natural competition has set a new standard for sustainable design. The ingenuity and craftsmanship displayed by all the entrants show the extraordinary potential of natural materials to drive a more sustainable future in fashion and home design. I am thrilled to see so many young designers embracing the challenge and delivering truly beautiful and thoughtful designs.”

An industry first, the event enjoyed the backing of the U.S. government who offered the embassy as a venue. Key players in the global market for natural materials, including trade bodies representing wool, mohair, hemp, leather, hardwoods and softwoods, put their weight behind the natural world – and all that it can offer to makers. The event brought together young designers and their works, industry influencers from interior designers to fashion gurus and livery companies to educators to explore the key themes of sustainability and the best approaches to slowing consumption cycles, refocusing on durable beautiful materials and increasing the supply.

Central to the event was a panel session hosted by renowned design writer and Material Matters

podcaster, Grant Gibson. He was joined by fellow judges Ana Del Rio, award-winning leathercraft fashion designer and Edwin Ryder, founder of EASTJR Ltd. They were accompanied by sustainability expert Joanna Knight, a writer and speaker in the furniture and furnishings sector.

Only Natural is a global initiative aimed at promoting the use of natural, sustainable materials in design. It is funded by the Leather & Hide Council of America in partnership with leading trade organisations, including the American Wool Council, American Softwoods, American Hardwood Export Council, National Industrial Hemp Council and the Mohair Council of America. The initiative encourages students and the public to think sustainably and celebrate the beauty and versatility of nature. It represents the first partnership of key natural fibres trade bodies, to champion sustainability and ethical sourcing in both fashion and home design. Students and recent graduates were challenged to create bespoke pieces inspired by nature, using materials such as wool, wood, cotton, hemp and more.

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Notes to editor:

About the Winners

(<https://onlynatural.internationaldesigncomp.com/>)

1. Apparel category & overall fashion winner



Sam Bird Smith was awarded the Interiors category and Overall Home Winner title for his project Phyto. Sam studies at Nottingham Trent University, UK, and his work, a hanging pendant light made from 3D printed algae-based bioplastic.



The Only Natural event honoured students from London College of Fashion, Central Saint Martins, The Royal College of Arts, Nottingham Trent University, National Institute of Design, India and BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology (Bangladesh).

Molly Wade (London College of Fashion, UK)  
Project: Shenn Vyrneen Aym' (An old love of mine)  
Materials: wool, shearing sheepskin, regenerative leather

2. Footwear category:  
Zachary Berry (The Royal College of Art, UK)  
Project: This Side Up  
Materials: cardboard, glutinous rice flour, isopropanol alcohol, shellac flakes, grey board

3. Accessories category:  
Anjala Shamla Shajan (National Institute of Design Ahmedabad, India)  
Project: Bloom  
Materials: bamboo, parchment leather

4. Furniture category  
Mingyu Xu (Central Saint Martins, UK)  
Project: Parallel Forest  
Materials: woven bamboo

5. Interiors category & overall home winner  
Sam Bird Smith (Nottingham Trent University, UK)  
Project: Phyto  
Materials: algae-based bioplastic

6. People's Choice Home category  
Arunima Sachan (National Institute of Design, India)  
Project: Bamboo Radiance  
Materials: Bamboo

7. People's Choice Fashion category  
Ashraful Alam (BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology)  
Project: Love and Nature  
Materials: jute fabric, natural dye

#### About ONLY NATURAL

Only Natural has been launched to inspire people around the globe to preserve the world we all live in by switching to natural materials and minimising waste. It challenges fast fashion, as well as the material choices we make in the spaces where we live - and their effects, such as water pollution, air contamination, depletion of natural resources and never-ending textile landfills.

Only Natural celebrates and showcases a new way forward. The way that puts sustainability at the heart of all we do - from the clothes we wear to the furniture and interiors we choose. It is a movement that balances the shouts for the new and the synthetic with a quiet call for the

respectful consideration of that which is offered by nature.

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