FISH SCALES AND BAMBOO TAKE TOP HONOURS AS ONLY NATURAL NAMES 2026 OVERALL WINNERS

Fish scales and bamboo take top honours as Only Natural names its 2026 winners after 380+ entries, with a shortlist spanning 27 universities and 15 countries.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- FISH SCALES AND BAMBOO TAKE TOP HONOURS AS ONLY NATURAL NAMES 2026 OVERALL WINNERS

- Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues and Tanmay Bhavsar take the top Fashion and Home honours

- 380 entries, with a shortlist representing 27 universities and 15 countries in biggest competition to date

- Six U.S. natural material sectors with more than $6 billion pa in exports unite to support the next generation of designers

(London, UK) - Jewellery combining naturally dyed fish scales and golden grass and a modular lighting system made from bamboo have taken the top honours in the Only Natural Student Design Competition 2026.



Only Natural Student Design Competition 2026 Accessories Category and Overall Fashion Winner Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues with Grant Gibson, co-founder of Material Matters, and Amanda Symm of the Leather & Hide Council of America & Only Natural. Image credit: Philip Vile

Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues was named Overall Fashion Winner for Shimmer Jewellery, while Tanmay Bhavsar took the Overall Home title with VALAY - Bamboo Lighting. The two designers were selected from seven Category and People's Choice winners. The winners were announced on 15 September during an awards presentation at Material Matters London, attended by more than 200 designers, educators, journalists, material experts and industry figures.

Why It Matters:

Only Natural brings together six U.S. natural material industries representing more than $6 billion a year in exports, united around a shared ambition: to encourage the designers shaping tomorrow's products to think natural first.

The 2026 competition attracted more than 380 entries, with shortlisted designers representing 27 universities across 15 countries. Winning materials ranged from cowhide and vegetable-tanned leather to wool, bamboo, wood, cotton, golden grass and fish scales.

By connecting emerging designers with the knowledge, materials and established supply chains behind major U.S. natural material sectors, Only Natural aims to encourage more sustainable material choices at the point where future design practices are being formed.



Only Natural Student Design Competition 2026 Interiors Category and Overall Home Winner Tanmay Bhavsar with Grant Gibson, co-founder of Material Matters, and Amanda Symm of the Leather & Hide Council of America & Only Natural. Image credit: Philip Vile

The Overall Winners:

i). Fashion - Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues, Shimmer Jewellery: crafted from Capim Dourado - known as "golden grass" - naturally dyed Camurupim fish scales, sterling silver and crystal, Ana Luisa's collection explores Brazilian identity through traditional craft and contemporary jewellery design. Judges praised its originality, craftsmanship and thoughtful exploration of natural materials.

ii). Home - Tanmay Bhavsar, VALAY - Bamboo Lighting: Tanmay's modular lighting system turns bamboo's natural irregularity into a design feature rather than a manufacturing challenge. The judges highlighted its innovative approach, refined execution and outstanding use of bamboo.

Seven emerging designers leading the way:

The full Only Natural 2026 winner line-up;

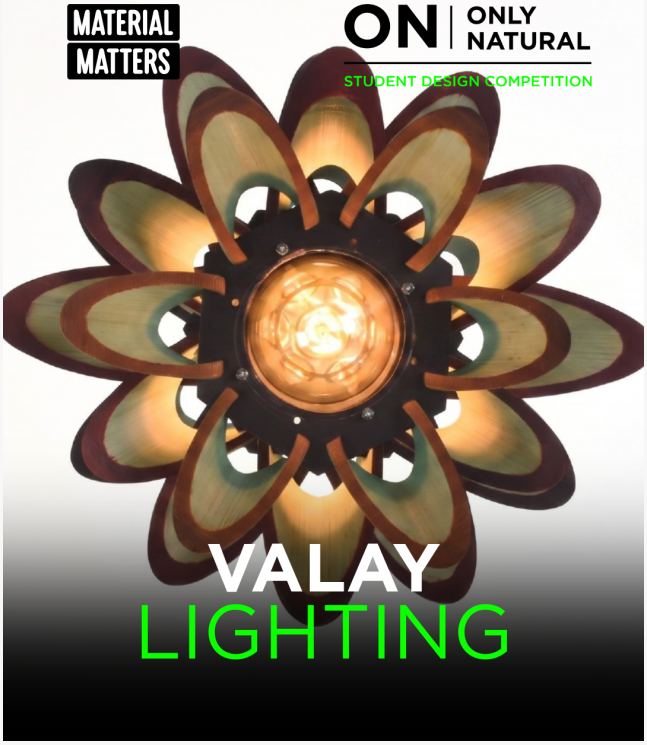
- Fashion (Apparel): Eden Cohen - LA FENAISON
- Fashion (Accessories): Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues - Shimmer Jewellery
- Fashion (Footwear): Islam Nashef - MACHO
- Home (Furniture): Sofia Hollier - Field to Form

- Home (Interiors:) Tanmay Bhavsar - VALAY - Bamboo Lighting
- People's Choice (Fashion): Ofir Vissel - A Thought That Remains Awake
- People's Choice (Home): Kavish Lineswala - Alankara

Ana Luisa and Tanmay received the highest overall scores from the judging panel to take the Fashion and Home titles respectively.

What They're Saying:

The awards were hosted by Grant Gibson, co-founder of Material Matters and a judge in this year's competition, alongside Amanda Symm of the Leather & Hide Council of America, representing Only Natural.



Only Natural Student Design Awards 2026 - Tanmay Bhavsar -"Valay - Bamboo Lighting"

Grant Gibson said: "The imagination, dedication and craftsmanship we saw in this year's entries show that natural materials aren't simply viable - they can inspire extraordinary design. These winners demonstrate what can happen when emerging designers really understand their materials and use their natural qualities as a starting point for innovation."

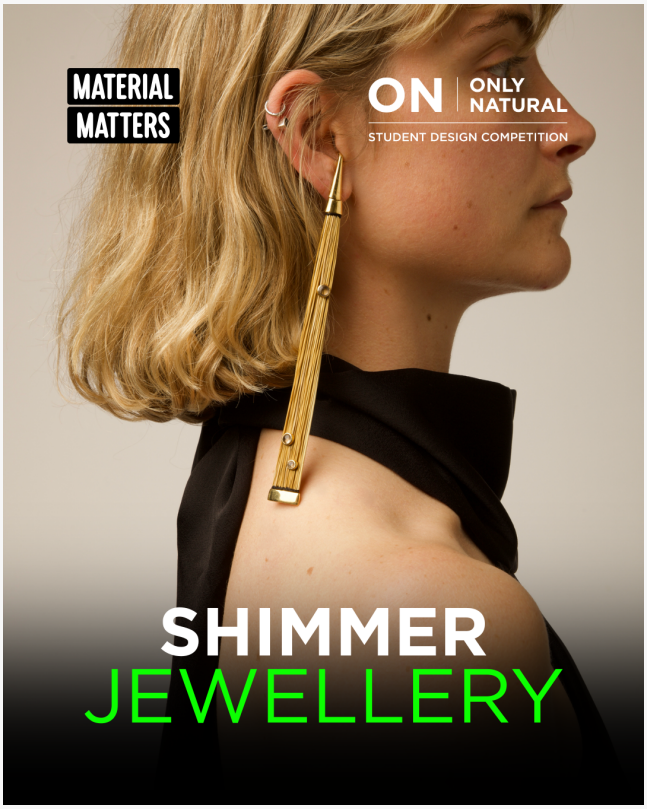
> Only Natural brings together six U.S. natural material industries because we share a belief that the designers beginning their careers today will help shape the materials used tomorrow."
>
> *Amanda Symm, Leather & Hide Council of America*

Amanda Symm said: "Only Natural brings together six U.S. natural material industries because we share a belief that the designers beginning their careers today will help shape the materials used tomorrow. These industries already have the expertise, networks and supply chains to deliver natural materials at scale. By putting those materials into the hands of brilliant young designers, we are supporting new talent while building greater understanding of what natural materials can offer design and commerce."

By The Numbers:

- 380+ competition entries
- 27 universities represented on the shortlist
- 15 countries represented
- 7 Category and People's Choice winners

- 6 U.S. natural material industries supporting Only Natural
- $6bn+ in annual exports represented by those industries
- 200+ guests at the awards presentation
- 2 Overall Winners



Shimmer Jewellery by Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues, Accessories Category and Overall Fashion Winner of the Only Natural Student Design Competition 2026. The collection combines Capim Dourado - golden grass - with naturally dyed Camurupim fish scales, sterling

On Show In London:

All seven winning projects were showcased at Material Matters London at UNLOCKED Shoreditch, placing the work of emerging designers and the potential of natural materials in front of the international design community during London Design Festival.

The exhibition allowed visitors to experience the materials, craftsmanship and thinking behind the winning projects first-hand, while the awards presentation brought students together with designers, educators, natural material representatives and other industry leaders.

Only Natural is supported by the American Hardwood Export Council, American Softwoods, American Wool Council, Mohair Council of America, National Industrial Hemp Council and Leather & Hide Council of America.

What's Next?

The Only Natural Student Design Competition will return in 2027, continuing its work to support emerging designers, increase understanding of natural materials and encourage the next generation to put nature at the heart of design. Follow: linktr.ee/onlynatural_design
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Notes to Editors

i). About The 2026 Winners



Grant Gibson, co-founder of Material Matters, was one of a number of high profile judges supporting this year's Only Natural competition

• Eden Cohen - Fashion Apparel Winner, LA FENAISON (Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art, Israel): a cowhide leather collection inspired by Cohen's upbringing on a horse farm and traditional haymaking, combining rural storytelling with contemporary fashion and hand craftsmanship.

• Ana Luisa Braun Rodrigues - Fashion Accessories Winner and Overall Fashion Winner, Shimmer Jewellery (Central Saint Martins, UK): fine jewellery using golden grass and naturally dyed Camurupim fish scales to explore Brazilian identity, craftsmanship and the hidden value of natural materials.

• Islam Nashef - Fashion Footwear Winner, MACHO (Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem): a sculptural mule formed from layers of vegetable-tanned leather, exploring masculinity, identity and leather's structural potential.

• Sofia Hollier - Home Furniture Winner, Field to Form (University of the Arts London, UK): a sculptural chair made from raw British Romney wool and linen thread, designed around circularity and the relationship between landscape, material and making.

• Tanmay Bhavsar - Home Interiors Winner and Overall Home Winner, VALAY - Bamboo Lighting (National Institute of Design, India): a modular lighting system that celebrates rather than eliminates bamboo's natural variations, combining traditional material knowledge with contemporary design.

• Ofir Vissel - People's Choice Fashion Winner, A Thought That Remains Awake (Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art, Israel): a collection using cotton, wool and denim alongside drawing, embroidery and knitting to explore memory, vulnerability and emotional endurance.

• Kavish Lineswala - People's Choice Home Winner, Alankara (National Institute of Design, India): a sheesham wood jewellery box and showpiece combining traditional craftsmanship with a slower, more considered approach to everyday objects.

ii). About Only Natural

Only Natural is a global movement championing the use of natural materials in design. Its international student competition challenges emerging designers to explore natural fibres through Fashion - Apparel, Accessories and Footwear - and Home - Furniture and Interiors.

Through competition, education, industry partnerships and international showcases, Only Natural aims to increase understanding of natural materials and encourage designers to put nature at the heart of their work.

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