

FASHION / FASHION FEATURES

Maddie Williams Takes Top Prize at Redress Design Awards 2019

As the winner, Williams will create a sustainable collection to be sold at JNBY.

By [Bennett Marcus](#) on September 6, 2019



📷 The Redress 2019 competition finalists and judges. Courtesy

HONG KONG — Sustainable fashion charity Redress held its annual design awards runway show on Thursday with 10 finalists presenting five-piece collections created with upcycled materials.

Billed as the world’s largest sustainable fashion competition, the grand finale capped a week in which the finalists, emerging designers from around the world, spent a week in Hong Kong participating in a series of educational workshops and challenges.

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 A red rectangular graphic with white text and three color swatches (red, yellow, and blue) arranged horizontally. The text 'ESSENTIALIST' is at the top, followed by '— TODAY'S MUST READ —'. Below the swatches is a link to 'See Pantone's Top Spring-Summer 2020 Colors'.

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 A fashion gallery image showing a model on a runway. The model is wearing a very eye-catching, multi-colored (rainbow) jacket with large, ruffled, layered details. She is also wearing tall, black, shiny boots. The background is a simple runway setting. The text 'COLLECTIONS' is in a box at the top, and 'Jeremy Scott RTW Spring 2020' is at the bottom.

They also visited a TAL factory in Vietnam, and filmed “Frontline Fashion,” Redress’ docuseries, at historic Hong Kong locations including [The Mills](#), PMQ and Tai Kwun.

Maddie Williams from the U.K. took first prize with her collection that she based on “eco-grief,” or anxiety about the ecological breakdown of the planet.

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“I was imagining a group of futuristic mourners who are grieving the loss of our biodiverse planet and society, and so they made their clothes out of the rubbish that was left behind after the catastrophe,” said Williams, who holds a bachelor’s degree in fashion design from the Edinburgh College of Art and interned at Vivienne Westwood.

She imbued the pieces with references to Memento mori and funeral dress of various cultures.

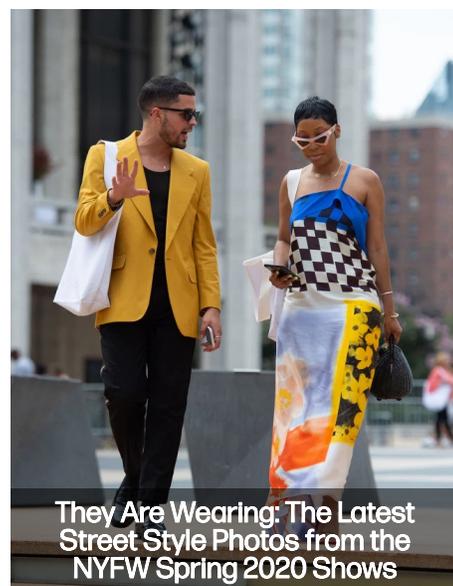
Roger Lee, chief executive officer of TAL Group and one of the judges, noted that Williams’ pieces made for a cohesive collection, and that she knew her sustainability.

“We were looking for people who balance creativity, understand that [sustainability], and could maybe scale it if they want to,” Lee said.

“When we talked to her about how she would grow a business, it was quite expansive, with a lot of breadth and depth in how she thinks about sustainability,” added fellow judge Ruth Farrell,



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global marketing director of textiles for Eastman.

As first-prize winner, Williams will work with a design team at JNBY Group in Hangzhou, China, to create a sustainable collection that will retail in JNBY Group stores worldwide and online.

The runner-up prize, a six-month tailored mentorship with sustainable designer Orsola de Castro, went to Spaniard Carina Roca Portella, who is studying for her second master's degree at ESDI in Barcelona.

Among the materials utilized in her collection were upcycled tablecloths and napkins from Michelin-star Spanish restaurant El Celler de Can Roca.

The Hong Kong Best prize for homegrown talent went to Keith Chan, who evoked the city's neon lights in his work. Chan won a customized mentoring program from fashion and lifestyle incubator Zzalvo.

Now in its ninth year, Redress founder Christina Dean noted that the competition was open to men's wear for the first time, due to the creative brief issued by partner JNBY.

Its sustainable brand Reverb has men's and women's clothing, so the winning collection could feature either or both.



Williams and her winning collection.

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Paris-based sustainable designer Kevin Germanier, whose work has been worn by Lady Gaga and K-pop star Sunni and who [collaborated with Christian Louboutin](#) on a shoe collection, is an alumna of the Redress competition.

He won first prize in 2015 while still a student at Central Saint Martins and spent six months in Hong Kong designing a capsule collection for Shanghai Tang, an experience that he called a game-changer.

“When I won, I was 23 years old, and I didn’t know anything, so it was nice to have those people around you to kind of help you find your way in the great world of the fashion industry.”

Germanier also appreciated the resources available in Hong Kong.

“It’s been four years, and every bead that you see, every sequin, is still sourced from Sham Shui Po,” he said, referring to the city’s traditional fabric center.

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