

CRACKING DESIGN WINS BRADFORD WOOL AWARD

Textile student Xingchen Lu of the Royal College of Art has won this year's The Woolmark Company Award as part of the renowned Bradford Textile Society Awards.

Entrants had to create an innovative wool-rich fabric which can be used for fashion/accessories or for interior furnishings. The fabric had to contain a minimum of 60% Merino wool and highlight the versatility and natural benefits of the luxury fibre.

As part of the prize, Xingchen has the opportunity to complete one week's work experience with the House of Holland brand.

Xingchen said her winning design was inspired by the landscape in Iceland.

"I hiked on the glacier and felt the power from the nature, so I drew this beautiful view into a geometric pattern and used a SHIMA machine to knit double-sided tubular jacquard with inlay yarns to keep the fabric soft, warm and it can be worn on both sides," said Xingchen.

"Merino wool is very soft and fine. The fabric with Merino wool has high quality and is comfortable next to the skin. I was so excited and surprised to get this honour from The Woolmark Company and get this fantastic intern opportunity. I met so many creative designers in Bradford; it is an unforgettable experience."

The Woolmark Company sponsors the award to promote Merino wool amongst the next generation of designers. The awards offer an excellent opportunity for future textile designers to have their work recognised by the most important people within the industry.

"The winning entry displayed sophistication both in its design aesthetic and consideration of technique. The student interpreted the brief that was set, and was able to clearly demonstrate an appreciation of Merino wool's properties and benefits," added The Woolmark Company's Product and Education Extension Manager for the UK, Louise Campbell. **B**

Through sponsorship of the prestigious Bradford Textile Society Awards, AWI continues to promote Merino wool to tertiary textile students in the UK.



Textile student Xingchen Lu and her certificate and award-winning entry.

Paddock Pen Pals

Young Farming Champions (YFC) are being beamed directly into the classrooms of city kids so they can learn about the sheep and the wool industry, thanks to the 'Paddock Pen Pals' initiative from Picture You in Agriculture in association with AWI.

Paddock Pen Pals is a new school-based program that utilises Google Hangout sessions so city school students can see and talk live with real farmers about their daily life and jobs. The program was launched recently at Sydney's Carlingford West Public School, a large inner-west primary school with a high percentage of English-second-language students.

"Many of my students have little time outside and have never visited a farm," teacher Zoe Stephens said. "In order to make their learning relevant, I wanted to connect them to real farmers to see what real farms are actually doing in Australia."

The first YFC to talk to the students via the big screen was CSIRO Sheep Researcher Dr Danila Marini who discussed animal wellbeing, virtual fencing and technology. The following day the students were introduced to Riverina Local Land Services District Veterinarian Dione Howard.

"I think Dione may have inspired some students

to become future vets," Zoe said. "The medical equipment she showed the students was amazing, especially as they could identify that we use the same equipment for humans."

Wool Technical Coordinator at Elders National Wool Selling Centre in Melbourne Sam Wan was the third YFC to Google Hangout with the students and she had an immediate connection, being herself originally a city kid.

"The students were amazed that someone like them, a city kid from with a similar background, could become involved in the wool trade," Zoe said.

The final AWI-supported YFC was Sheep musterer Chloe Dutschke who beamed into the school direct from the vast plains of Hay, and the students were fascinated by the huge open spaces.

"Every farmer brought a unique perspective to our students and opened windows into the world of agriculture that they had never experienced," Zoe said. "When I asked the

students to raise their hand if they enjoyed meeting a farmer, every hand when up! That just doesn't happen with Year 6." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
Hear more from Zoe in an upcoming episode of AWI's The Yarn podcast at www.wool.com/podcast.



300 Year 6 students from Sydney's Carlingford West Public School learnt about the wool industry live from AWI-supported Young Farming Champions, including Dione Howard (pictured) located in the Riverina.