

London Fashion Week 09: FAD Design Competition

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Nottingham Trent fashion student, **Ana Belen Meroño** beat hopefuls from universities and colleagues across the UK to become this year's winner of the prestigious FAD Competition, which took place at **Vauxhall Fashion Scout** on Tuesday Feb 24th.

"I was so excited when my name was read out, I really didn't expect it to win first prize. The competition was extremely tough, and seems to get more so every year, so I'm absolutely delighted to have won." Said Ana Belen Meroño, Winner of the 2009 FAD Competition.

A bevy of fashion experts made up the judging panel, all who were impressed with the entire round of applicants, but it was Meroño who dazzled.

The young designer, originally from Madrid, impressed the jury with her sophisticated and highly polished designs. Her first garment was a structured jacket featuring a digital Op-Art print, while the second outfit paired a cosmic cloud print dress with 'armour' inspired layering. Ana's design received a unanimous vote from this year's jury panel, winning her £2,000 and a work placement with designer and FAD Frontline member, **Paul Costelloe**, who was there on the evening to present the winning prize.

"Ana's outfit wasn't alienating in its flamboyance, it was actually rather a beautiful thing to wear as well. You could see it translating into real life which I think is essential because when you are trying to reach people who aren't in fashion, you want them to be inspired and make them feel they want to wear those clothes. The other amazing thing for me was the quality of the finish. It had been really, really well put together and the print was absolutely gorgeous." – **Dolly Jones**, Editor of Vogue.com.

Paul Costelloe looked at the competition not only as a showcase for new talent, but as a gauge for the business side as well, knowing what it takes to not only create garments but cultivate an original style in the marketplace as well.

"We've been involved with FAD for a couple of years now and we've really enjoyed working with their students and winners. A lot of students go through our company but I think anyone who comes through FAD is a professional, as near as professional as can be without having the experience of working in the industry. I think they are number one very grateful and very enthusiastic, and you can't ask for more than that." – Paul Costelloe, Designer and FAD Frontline member

"I think it is the most amazing opportunity I have ever had. Because of this competition, I will probably have the opportunity to find a good job, to have contacts with the industry. It was such a good experience. I'm never ever going to forget this moment." gushed Meroño.