

PRESS RELEASE – Friday 5 November 2004

RUSSIAN STYLE HIGHLIGHTS UK'S FUTURE STARS

**Urban Neo-nationalism, A Tale of II Cities:
From St. Petersburg to Moscow**

A leading fashion charity is showcasing the UK's rising stars in its 5th Annual Graduate Fashion Competition.

With leading names such as Zandra Rhodes and Elspeth Gibson offering their support year on year, the competition is widely recognised as an opportunity for the fashion industry to spot up-and-coming UK talent.

This year's competition is tipped to be one of the most imaginative to date. Fashion and arts students across the country are invited to explore the culture, fashion and art of Russia – from the Tsarist grandeur of St. Petersburg to the stylised classicism of Moscow's Red Square, as illustrated by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and Stravinsky's music.

Winners receive placements at leading fashions houses including Missoni, Armand Basi and Belinda Robertson - launching careers and developing UK talent.

The competition is organised and run by Fashion Awareness Direct. FAD's Director, Maria Alvarez de Toledo, said, "The annual competition provides students with platform to showcase their work and express their own style within a conceptual framework – something greatly appreciated by students, teachers and the industry alike".

The competition is supported by Edge, a new charity that aims to change attitudes towards practical learning.

Andy Powell, Chief Executive of Edge said, "Edge exists to shine a light on achievement through practical learning. FAD's show is a classic example of this - a unique showcase of the outstanding contribution of practical learners to the world of fashion. It bridges the gap between education and employment and gives aspiring designers a change to be recognised for their talent".

Sarah Woodcock, curator at the Theatre Museum, will facilitate the student's research on the theme. Sarah said: "There's no doubt that this is a challenging and inspiring brief. I look forward to the student's interpretations and to seeing how they use their talents to bring this theme to life".

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Notes

FAD, an independent educational association, runs fashion projects for young people that foster their creativity and give them a platform to showcase their talents to the industry. National competitions and workshops in local areas are held to promote fashion as a potential career pathway and to create links between education and industry.

Students throughout the UK - from the Royal College of Art and Central St. Martin's, to Northumbria and Salisbury University, have already signed up for the competition.

Judging of the competition by panel of experts will take place in March 2005.

15 finalists will present their final collections in March 2005 at a star-studded event at the prestigious Delfina Studios. Previous competitions have taken place at the V&A and the French Institute.

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For more information on FAD, visit www.fad.org.uk.

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