Colour for Tomorrow!

International Student Textile Design Competition
2025
Briefing Pack

Organised by Colour4CRAFTS & the Textile Institute Sustainability Special Interest Group
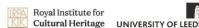
Colour4CRAFTS (www.colour4crafts.eu) is a research consortium funded by the European Union that focuses on promoting the wider utilisation and application of natural dyes in textile production.

In collaboration with the Textile Institute Sustainability Special Interest Group (UK) (www.textileinstitute.org), and supported by sponsorship from Dr Leather (www.drleather.com), Colour4CRAFTS announces the launch of the International Student Textile Design Competition centred on the theme **"Colour for Tomorrow!"**

Colour is a vital component in textile design and visual aesthetics; creating a mood, providing a personal statement, and delivering both commercial success and cultural significance. By coupling colour with innovative design, a garment product can be elevated from a simple apparel object to become a creative icon.

Natural dyes were used throughout history, and they continue to be a living craft practice. At the same time, there is growing interest in utilising natural dyes on an industrial scale. With this competition we are searching for innovative designs that showcase natural colorants in textile products. We will be looking for designs that praise sustainability, aesthetics, cultural heritage and values.

Things to consider:
- What could the future of the textile colouration look like if natural dyes are the mainstream?
- What kind of innovative designs could we create if we harness our cultural heritage with cutting edge innovations to foster colouration processes that use bio-based/natural colourants?

In this student competition, we ask the design student(s) to harness natural colourants and use them imaginatively and innovatively to create inspiring textile design(s).

All entries should either be organised as a collection or demonstrate the following:

- Colour as an integral component in the design process.
- Development of the design(s); from conception to the final product based on the theme.
- Analysis of alternative ideas and justification of choices made about the materials used in the design.
- Organised and coherent presentation of designs and clear expression of ideas and design process.

The designs will be judged through a two-stage submission and evaluation process:

- **First-round:** competitors will submit an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) that includes the design concept and 2D photos of the textile sample(s). Submissions will be evaluated, and 10 semi-finalists will be selected to advance to the next stage of the competition.

- **Second round (semi-finals):** the top 10 proposals will be required to submit the finished object or material (minimum 30 cm x 60 cm), along with a written statement to accompany the e-portfolio. One winner will be selected, which could be either one student or one team (up to three students).

Eligibility

The competition is open to individual students or a group (maximum 3 students) at universities and higher education institutions around the world.

- Entrants must show proof they are registered or enrolled as a student at a university or higher education institution at the time of submitting their entry.

- Entrants must be aged 18 or over.

- Only 2 designs/proposals may be submitted by either one student or a team. Each design proposal must be submitted as separate entries.

- Students should prepare a collection of designs, with colour palettes and colourways.

- The design must only use colourants derived from nature!

- Submitted designs must be original. Designs submitted to previous contests or shows are not allowed and will result in disqualification.

Submissions details

Submission and evaluation process for the first round:
- For the first round, competitors must submit an e-portfolio.
- The e-portfolio must include 2D photos of textile sample(s) and up to four A2 boards presented as a collection of designs, showing the design process from conception and development, to the finished design. The presentation must include colour palette/colour ways.
- E-portfolio should be submitted via email to studentdesigncompetition@colour4crafts.eu by the deadline: 30 November 2025) at 23.59 (CET+1). Late submissions will not be considered.
- First round entries will be evaluated, and 10 semi-finalists will advance to the second stage of the competition.

Submission and evaluation process for the second round (semi-finals):
- For the second stage, the semi-finalists will submit the finished object or material (minimum 30 cm x 60 cm) by 28 February 2025. The e-portfolio and the finished object/material will be judged together.
- The supporting *written statement* on A4 sheet (up to 1000 words) should include:
  - Design purpose and inspiration
  - Colour inspiration
  - Relevance to the brief
- A panel of textile designers will assess each design submission for: visual creativity, impact and innovation.
- The 10 semi-finalists will be interviewed (online) to identify a final winning student/team.

Winner selection:
- The works of the 10 semi-finalists will be displayed at the final exhibition.
- The winning student/team will attend the award ceremony and exhibition during the final consortium meeting for the Colour4CRAFTS project at the University of Leeds.
- The semi-finalists' work will be returned after the exhibition (*subject to supply of return address*)

Timeline

- **1 September 2025 :** Competition opens.

- **30 November 2025:** Deadline for the first-round submission of the e-portfolio, at 23.59 (CET+1).

- **12 January 2026:** Announcement of 10 semi-finalists.

- **28 February 2026:** Submission of finished objects and material samples by semi-finalists.

- **Mid-March 2026:** Online interviews of the 10 semi-finalists.

- **1 April 2026:** Announcement of the winning student/team.

- **18-20 May 2026:** Awards ceremony and the final exhibition in Leeds, UK

Prizes

- **All 10 semi-finalists (up to 10x3 students, if a team) will receive:**

    - Digital access to the journal, *Textiles*

    - A digital copy of the book, *BioColours: Sustainable Stories from Nature, Lab and Industry* (2023)

- **Winning student/team (up to 3 students if a team) will receive:**

    - Digital access to the journal, *Textiles*

    - A one-year complementary student membership to the Textile Institute

    - A hard-cover copy of the book, *BioColours: Sustainable Stories from Nature, Lab and Industry* (2023)

    - A bursary of £1000 for the winning student/team to attend the award ceremony and exhibition at the University of Leeds.

    - Overnight accommodation and consortium dinner.

For more information about the Colour4CRAFTS project, visit https://colour4crafts.eu. All queries should be directed to the competition organisers via email to studentdesigncompetition@colour4crafts.eu.