

Stepping-stones to success

New Design Britain at **interiors 2010** in Birmingham (24 - 27 January 2010) can be a launch pad for tomorrow's leading designers.

When it comes to training the designers of tomorrow, Britain is a world-leader. Former students from the UK's design colleges can be found in many of the 'designer companies' both here and abroad.

However this rich stream of talent brings with it a problem - how does today's new designer stand out from the crowd and attract the attention of their future employer?

It was in order to address this industry-wide problem that Interiors took the decision to put its **New Design Britain** competition, open to graduates and postgraduates, right at the heart of the event as part of its **Thinking Space** feature area in Hall 2.

There are two main categories in the competition: **Made in Britain** and **Designed in Britain**. Each of these has four subsections: **Furniture, Fabrics, Accessories and Surface Coverings**.

"We are some weeks away from the start of Interiors but the buzz Thinking Space has created is almost tangible," said UBM's event director Andrew Vaughan. "New Design Britain will be there, alongside Designersblock, the seminar theatre, a collaboration between Birmingham City University and Global Color Research amongst other brand new, must-see initiatives."

New Design Britain is destined to be one of the most important competitions in a new designer's diary. Not only will the finalists be eligible for one of several valuable prizes, they will be able to display the entries they submitted to our prestigious judging panel including **M&S, House of Fraser, Barbara Chandler, Michael Sodeau and others**, to industry leaders throughout the four days of the show.

interiors is the UK's largest interiors trade event which attracted 25,000 interiors professionals in January 2009. In the past the event has been very successful at presenting a platform to bring the work of new designers to the attention of key people within the industry.

James Harrison of James Design displayed The Rocker in 2006. He won the Best New Designer Award and his Rocker design was picked up by Habitat who put it into production and offered James a job on its design team. James stayed with Habitat for about two years and worked for the likes of Case and SCP on other projects until setting up James Design UK with business partner, James Kinmond.

The owner of Harvey Jones Kitchens saw Naomi Dean's wardrobe design at the show four years ago. Naomi was invited for an interview and promptly offered the role of product designer for the company, which produces in-frame kitchens within the UK. She is still there and her latest range, Linear, won the *Grand Designs* Award for Best Kitchen System early this year. She has also designed,

project managed and opened five new showrooms for the company and is currently working on her 6th and 7th.

Rob Scarlett won the Young designer Award in 2003. One of judges, Steve Armitage of Volume Furniture took Rob on where he designed cabinet furniture for independents and multiples until October 2005 when the company sadly went into administration. A few months later Rob gained a position at Nathan Furniture, heading up the design team. He worked at Nathan until March this year when he joined the team at Willis and Gambier under the expert eye of design manager Lucy Watson.

Jason Heap has continued to build his business, since winning the New Designers Award in 2008. He has had further success, being named *Homes & Gardens* Young Designer of the Year in 2009 at their Classic Design Awards that are held in collaboration with the V&A Museum and then the Judges Award that is contested between the winners of the various categories. James' intention is to grow his product range substantially over the next year. He has several commissions lined up for the coming months from boardroom tables to kitchens to speculative projects in addition to running a show of his own for bespoke furniture manufacturers.

"The success of these designers demonstrates the importance of Interiors as a launchpad for new talent," said Andrew Vaughan, " and I am confident that the format of the New Design Britain competition will help British new designers take that all-important first step on the road to success.

ENDS

Editors Notes

interiors 2010 will take place from 24-27 January 2010 at the NEC, Birmingham

The winner of the Made in Britain category will win free stand space at Interiors 2011.

The winner of the Designed in Britain category will win a placement with a leading manufacturer.