

D&AD New Blood Shift New York holds first all-digital showcase

D&AD New Blood Shift New York held its first all digital showcase last week. The culmination of the four-month night school programme for 2020 saw 18 aspiring creatives present their portfolios to leading professionals and had the opportunity to build industry connections through unique virtual networking sessions.

The Shift New York class of 2020 are Albania Salas, Alysa Browne, Ama Adams, Amelia McDonald, Andrew Barley, Caleb Church, Christopher Martin, Dane Phillip, D'Angelo Heyward, Dougal Cormie, Juan Gonzalez-Gruber, Kendra Payne, Ngu Asongwed, Roxanne Castro, Sofie Betelman, Terra Supp, William Hannon, Yewa Aloba.



Roxanne Castro, Shifter Class of 2020, commented: "I was at a crossroads of where I wanted to be in my career, and right now I'm in a different space, I feel more confident in what I want to do, and I actually have an idea of where in the industry I want to be as well. I'm so happy this programme came at this time despite the challenges we are facing today."

Since 1980, D&AD New Blood has stimulated creative excellence by nurturing emerging talent. Against the backdrop of the Coronavirus pandemic, Shift has delivered a vital opportunity for a rich mix of creatives without college degree-level education to come together to hone their skills, build a network and develop their portfolios. Consisting of industry set briefs, talks and mentorship, Shift continues to provide a supportive and educational space for creative talent who face barriers to education and employment.

Now in its fifth year, the programme offers industry professionals access to an exceptional pool of diverse talent. At a time when the industry must prioritise and respond to diversity and inclusivity in the workforce, Shift enables creative organisations to tap into fresh talent, outside of the college system, and strives to build an industry which is reflective and relevant to society at large. In 2019, over half the graduates from the Shift programme went on to secure placements in leading creative companies such as Droga5, The Mill and McCann.

The 2020 programme comes to a close with a showcase, with all 18 participants having the opportunity to present their portfolios as well as their responses to the two industry set briefs. The first, set by adidas, tasked them with developing a campaign that raised awareness for a new brand concept called UNITEFIT, aimed to be more inclusive in the patterning of its clothing, removing gender from its approach. The second, set by Spotify, focused on getting 14-24 year olds to use the app as their go-to platform for podcasts. Both mirror professional briefs that reflect the latest trends and topics of the industry giving the work the relevancy it needs to stand out to employers.

The showcase held using the Hopin platform, was attended by leading industry professionals that, alongside getting the chance to view the work of fresh, diverse talent, participated in an informal networking session.

Paul Drake, foundation director at D&AD, commented: "Shift has always been about delivering inspiring learning opportunities for talented individuals who are outside the formal creative education system. Now more than ever, the creative industry needs diversity of ideas to ensure it remains relevant - this isn't just about social justice, it makes business sense.

With the programme moving into a digital format for the first time in 2020, we wanted to ensure this year's cohort had every chance to put themselves out there, and get their work in front of the right eyes by enabling them to gain access to and build key relationships with industry leaders."

Ayesha Martin, director, Global Purpose at Adidas, commented: "Unlocking access to education in impactful, innovative ways is key to creating lasting change for our industry and beyond. Shift is more than a platform or program - it's a community."

Alex Bodman, VP, global executive creative director at Spotify, commented: "This isn't our first time supporting this vital program, but every year we are inspired by the new talent it unearths and nurtures. The body of work these talented creatives have produced during the program speaks for itself - reminding the industry at large how much we benefit from fresh perspectives and an inclusive culture."

To find out more about this year's participants and see their work, visit the [D&AD website](#). Further details of the 2021 D&AD Shift London programme will be announced shortly.

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