

'The world may not need to produce more clothes or factories; but it does need individuals who can approach the business of fashion in creative, interesting and innovative ways. I hope that the International Young Fashion Entrepreneur award will demonstrate that there are those individuals who can make that worthwhile contribution to our world.'

Sir Paul Smith, Fashion Designer

INAUGURAL BRITISH COUNCIL 'INTERNATIONAL YOUNG FASHION ENTREPRENEUR' AWARD AT LONDON FASHION WEEK 08

Celebrating its inaugural year, the British Council's international award turned the spotlight on creative entrepreneurs in the fashion industry from emerging economies. The candidates were selected to represent the best of what Ghana, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Sri Lanka and UAE can offer in the world of fashion. The entrepreneurs were drawn from every part of the fashion industry, including design, production, marketing and communications.

As part of the programme, the ten finalists between the ages of 25 and 35 participated in a tour of the London and Nottingham fashion industries including an exclusive master class with Sir Paul Smith, and had the opportunity to build contacts and see the best of the UK fashion industry during London Fashion Week.

Sarah Beydoun was chosen to represent Lebanon and after giving a presentation to a UK panel of leading industry figures including Colin McDowell MBE, Suzanne Tide-Frater, Julie Pinches, Alberto Bartoli and Alison Moloney, the panel stated:

In a poignant, engaging presentation Sarah demonstrated extraordinary social consciousness through her business working to develop craft skills of Lebanese female prisoners. She is undoubtedly highly driven, and impressed the judges with the superior quality and appeal of the bags she produces.

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The International Entrepreneur Awards are part of the British Council's high profile Creative Economy programme designed to nurture the best and brightest talent from emerging economies in the field of music, publishing, film, design and fashion, and shows how the UK can be a centre for cultural, creative, and commercial exchange.

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For further information or to speak to any of the finalists, please contact press officer Paul Melhuish, on 020 7389 4872 or email paul.melhuish@britishcouncil.org

Notes to Editors:

- The British Council works in 110 countries and territories worldwide to build intercultural understanding between the UK and other countries through the arts, education and training, science and technology, sport, good governance and human rights. Our income in 2006/07 was £551m, of which grant-in-aid from the British government was £195m. For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org
- In the spirit of engagement, collaboration and partnership, the International Young Fashion Entrepreneur of the Year Award (IYFY) is targeted at transitional and developing economies and celebrates and champions the notion of creative leadership – specifically the need to identify and nurture future leaders of the fashion industry and markets around the world. For more information about IYFY and other British Council creative industry awards, please visit: www.creativeeconomy.org.uk/iyfe