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PRESS RELEASE

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Designs on the Future

## South Essex College students celebrate success in Royal Opera House Design Challenge

**Two students from South Essex Collage are celebrating success in the 2017 Royal Opera House Design Challenge. Lee Lawrence was announced as the winner of, and Velda Pond was highly commended in the Marketing Strategy and Design category**

The Design Challenge is aimed at the next generation of aspiring set and costume designers, makers and marketing specialists. They had to reimagine [Madama Butterfly](#) and test their design skills to show the judges their future vision for the production. The Royal Opera House created a series of online resources based on *Madama Butterfly* to help students understand the production and its history as well as offering them advice from professionals for each category.

**Lee Lawrence** looked at our contemporary society for the idea behind his poster: "I designed my poster to engage and create emotive responses from its audience. After choosing the director's vision to bring the play into a contemporary setting, I decided to voice society's marginalised and disenfranchised youth. In the opera, Butterfly is made an outcast by a society that should have supported her. The image for my poster was created using a scanography technique then digitally manipulated to create the desired effect."

**Velda Pond** took inspiration from the past and psychoanalysis for her design: "I used an ink blot original to create a butterfly silhouette without being too literal and to echo the mental state of the lead character with its subliminal links to psychoanalysis, which in turn seemed appropriate due to Puccini's interest in the subject and the part it played in his creative process."

The pallet inspiration came from vintage hand tinted photographs of Geisha from the 18th and 19th century. They also help to convey the complexity and mood of the story line and central character whilst hinting at the brutality within the piece through their colours and placement."

The judges were impressed by the attention to detail in the entries. Judge **Jeff Coventry, Head of Marketing at the Royal Opera House** said "It was great to see such a high standard of entries for the marketing design challenge this year. This work was extremely accomplished and I could easily imagine using the designs in forthcoming campaigns!"

**Vicky Burch, Graphics Tutor at South Essex College** said "We are absolutely thrilled for Lee and Velda. They worked extremely hard during the course of the *Madama Butterfly* project to achieve their final posters and are both deserved winners. Both students are a credit to South Essex College and we wish them every success as they pursue their degree courses in September."

The winning participants will attend a special day at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, where their work will be exhibited. They will visit the specific Royal Opera House department their work focused on and watch a Schools' Matinee performance of *Madama Butterfly*.

For more information about the Design Challenge and this year's other winners, please go to [www.roh.org.uk/news/design-challenge-winners-2017](http://www.roh.org.uk/news/design-challenge-winners-2017)

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## Notes for Editors

### Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway since 2006.

Since then, more than 60,000 people have participated in activities ranging from schools' projects to teacher training, from work-based learning to fully-staged community operas.

People in Thurrock have both been able to watch special performances at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and gain a very special insight into the behind-the-scenes process.

The Learning and Participation team runs the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus which currently has over 140 members of all ages and regularly performs across Thurrock and at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. For further information, please go to: [www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus](http://www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus). Details of future performances and taster session for the Community Chorus can be obtained by emailing [getinvolved@roh.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@roh.org.uk) or calling 01708 891200.

Regular public tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built, and the Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre, which opened in October 2015, are now available. Please go to [www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours](http://www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours) for further details.

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](#) organisation, working to connect children and young people to great art and culture across Essex, North Kent, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

The Learning and Participation team is based at the High House Production Park in Purfleet which is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: [www.hhpp.org.uk](http://www.hhpp.org.uk)