



ual: london college of fashion

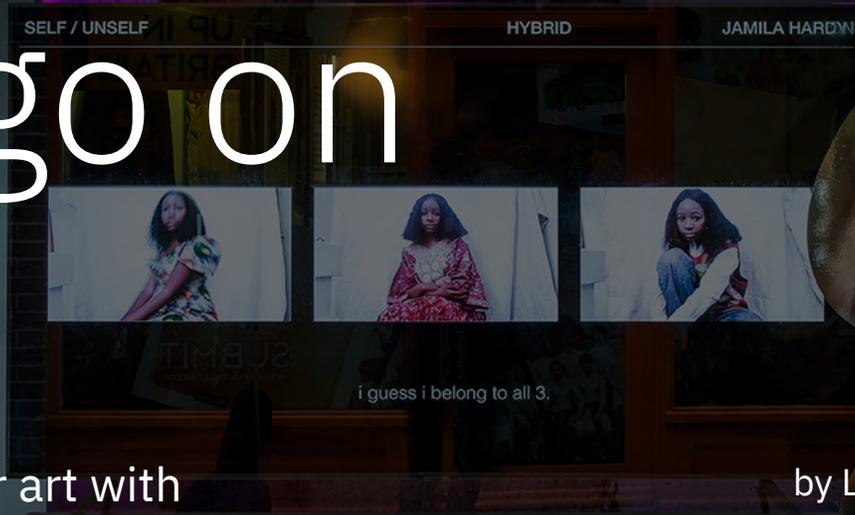
Shaftesbury



SISTER london

Made possible with support from IBM

The show must go on



Students showcase their art with Red Hat® OpenShift® on IBM Cloud®

by Leah Valentine
5-minute read

SMC REAL:TIME

CTRL+ALT+DEL

As our modes of living shift ever more rapidly online, we increasingly question if the spaces we occupy should be fairer, kinder and more empathetic. This collection of concepts advocates for developing a more positive and equitable relationship with technology.

SELF / UNSELF

This selection of short films delivers an intimate look at how we present ourselves on screen, from a visceral focus on the body and introspective portrayals of gender, sexuality, culture, and race to a spotlight on the personas we perform in front of the camera.

GROWTH FROM CHAOS

Throughout 2020, our students collectively explored the philosophy of 'anti-fragility', investigating the potential of using chaos as a catalyst for transformation and growth. This collection features selected interpretations of this theme through digital fashion media.

The collections are hosted on SMC REAL:TIME, a digital platform dedicated to presenting student work from the School of Media and Communication, London College of Fashion, UAL.

Scan here to explore the platform.



As they began their final semester, the pending graduates of one of the world's most prestigious art colleges expected to showcase their work just like the legions of graduates before them.

Halfway through the term, however, COVID-19 made traditional, in-person showcases impossible. Leaders at University of the Arts London (UAL) didn't want the graduates to miss out on this important rite of passage, so they turned to IBM for help.

Sir Nigel Carrington, Vice-Chancellor at UAL, explains: "We partnered with IBM



as a rapid response to the coronavirus pandemic to create a platform to host the final collections of our graduating students. Now more than ever, we need

the talent, entrepreneurship, resilience and vision of our creative graduates to reshape our economy and keep our society and culture thriving."

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University of the Arts London

During the pandemic, UAL digitally showcased the work of

7,000

graduating students

The showcase features work from

290

distinct courses of study

A complex endeavor

Creating the showcase was no simple matter. It would need to give 7,000 graduates the freedom to express themselves in 290 wildly diverse courses of study, including fashion, interior design, fine art, 3D art and more. Furthermore, the showcase would have to be easy to use, easy to navigate and highly stable. But the IBM team was up to the task.

Fortunately, one of UAL's six colleges, the London College of Fashion, was already working with IBM to showcase student work. "We've been working with IBM for a few years now, first with our Fashion Business School, then our Centre for Sustainable Fashion, so we knew they understood how our audiences want



to connect with a digital experience,” says Professor Roni Brown, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Head of London College of Fashion.

To extend the showcase to all six colleges in the UAL system, IBM assembled a team of cloud and DevSecOps experts from the IBM Global Consumer Industries Center of Competence, the IBM Engine Room, and [IBM iX](#)®, the business design arm of [IBM Services](#)®. With just three months to pull the project together, the IBM team made a point of listening to UAL’s students, academics and industry partners. In all, IBM and UAL participated in one online IBM

Innovation Jam, five Enterprise Design Thinking® workshops and 20 user interviews. There were more than 100 stakeholders involved in designing and developing the showcase.

“One of the things that was apparent early on in the project was just how much support IBM was giving to the thinking and development process,” says Brown.

The result: The [UAL Graduate Showcase](#) (external link), a curated and richly layered digital platform built on [Red Hat OpenShift on IBM Cloud](#). It provides UAL with a flexible, resilient and affordable way to showcase

students’ work digitally in a broadly compelling manner. Users can search the site by student or keyword, or they can browse different colleges and disciplines to learn about and observe students’ work.

During development and testing, the IBM team hosted the solution on an OpenShift 4.x cluster on [IBM Cloud](#). For production, the team provisioned a separate IBM Cloud instance for the platform, adding cluster node auto-scaling and horizontal pod auto-scaling in OpenShift to help manage fluctuating workloads.

A living catalog

The site went live before graduation, and it continues to be available today. Unlike the in-person showcases of the past, this one will live on for many years to come.

“Our objectives were to create something that had a longer life and was more sustainable than a physical show—something that gave us exciting ways to curate and show student work, to showcase themes and topics our student and staff body are particularly interested in, and to give us greater opportunities to support students in meeting future employers,” says Brown.

UAL plans to continue using the new solution for graduate showcases after the COVID-19 pandemic has passed. “We feel that this has excelled at creating a permanent living catalog of the very best of our student work,” Brown concludes.





About University of the Arts London

Established in 2003, [UAL](#) (external link) comprises six colleges and institutes, including Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Arts. With approximately 13,000 undergraduate and 3,500 graduate students per year, the university is among the most prestigious art colleges in the world.

Solution components

- IBM Cloud®
- IBM iX®
- Red Hat® OpenShift® on IBM Cloud

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