Creativity KNOWS NO BOUNDS

A peek behind the curtain of the Goldwell Creative Awards (GCA) Art Team UK mentorship programme

We caught up with GCA Art Team UK mentors and Goldwell Ambassadors Mark Leeson and Mark Leeson co-Director Richard Darby.

Why did you want to lead the GCA Art Team UK Powered by Mark Leeson?

We've been running similar initiatives since 2015 and developed the first ever Goldwell Art Squad back then. When we returned to Goldwell in 2024 it was a natural progression for us to resume this and offer Goldwell teams something new with a fresh approach.

What does it mean to you?

We love education and sharing our knowledge and expertise. Nurturing talent and widening their mindset is so fulfilling. We've had huge success with previous members going on to do great things and win awards so being able to help people along their journey is amazing.

What are your visions and ambitions for the team?

This project is only going to go from strength to strength, and we have already discussed and planned what next year will look like. This year's team has been amazing and hopefully with our guidance feel ready and confident to continue their creative journey.

What does it mean for the GCA Art Team UK members' careers?

Any art team is about being cohesive and working together, sharing ideas and developing them, which is what salon life is all about. But this project pushes members mindsets' and thought processes too. We encourage them to really think out of the box and expose them to different scenarios and experiences which gives them the tools to go onto the next stage of their careers. As massive advocates for the British Hairdressing Awards, we guide them if they have the passion for it to look at entering or shooting their own collections outside of what they already do – and look at what they want to achieve and help them with their goals.

Why should you apply for the GCA Art Team UK Powered by Mark Leeson?

It's an opportunity that when we were younger, we would have jumped at. It really is something different and exciting and if platform, photographic and creativity excites you then this is definitely for you. We cover so much from advanced cutting and colouring techniques to catwalk inspired trends, session workshops, social media and presentation and then it culminates in an epic photoshoot like "Gothic Ballerina". It really is an amazing experience and ground-breaking in its concept.

Why partner with Goldwell?

Goldwell has always had the stylist at the forefront of what it does and offers amazing support from business development all the way through to extensive education for all members of the team, so it really has a portfolio that is for everyone. Goldwell Color is incredible and with continued innovation only continues to deliver exceptional results. KAO Salon's retail portfolio of Oribe, KMS and Kerasilk really gives a unique and varied selection to retail, with different philosophies and energy which is great for the team and our clients. So, to answer your question in a nutshell... who wouldn't want to partner with Goldwell!?

What does it take to be part of the GCA Art Team UK?

Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and experience new ideas and be able to challenge the norm. Members need to be able to embrace creativity, be passionate about learning and have the ambition to progress as well as being able to see things from a different perspective and be able to collaborate with a team to produce something new and inspirational.

What can members of the art team expect to achieve?

The opportunities to a degree are limitless. It's an up close and personal mentorship to widen their skills and techniques and visionary mind. This year not only have the team produced an epic photoshoot but they will be on stage at the Goldwell Celebration of Colour event. The team will be showcasing models on the catwalk and talking about their inspiration and time as an art team member. There will also be lots of further opportunities for them to get involved with.

MARK LEESON

What are your top tips for success during the application process?

Read the criteria, rules and objectives. Make sure you realise the commitment level of what you're embarking on and that you're available for the dates throughout the year.

What are your tips to succeed as an art team member?

Embrace this once in a lifetime opportunity and absorb as much of it as they can. We only want them to grow and succeed so having that open mind and being immersive in the content will allow them to get the most out of it. When the year is done and they've successfully finished the experience it's not the end... it's just the beginning of their next chapter and we stay committed to their development. Past members are still in our lives today and we are so very proud to see them go on and do amazing things.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PART OF THE GCA ART TEAM UK?

We asked the Goldwell Creative Awards Art Team UK what the experience meant to them...

"AFTER 24 YEARS WITH GOLDWELL, IT'S AN HONOUR TO BE ON THE ART TEAM. SHOWCASING THE BEAUTIFUL COLOURS IN THE PORTFOLIO AND PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES."

LUKE GOLSON

"I FEEL LUCKY TO HAVE WORKED WITH SUCH A TALENTED AND SUPPORTIVE TEAM. THIS JOURNEY HAS BEEN SO VALUABLE TO MY CREATIVITY. IT'S GREAT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING TRULY SPECIAL."

EMMA JONES

"MARK'S MENTORSHIP HAS PUSHED ME TO NEW CREATIVE LEVELS. IT'S ALSO INCREDIBLE TO COLLABORATE WITH TALENTED STYLISTS FROM OTHER SALONS, SHARING IDEAS AND LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER."

SOPHIE FEDORIW

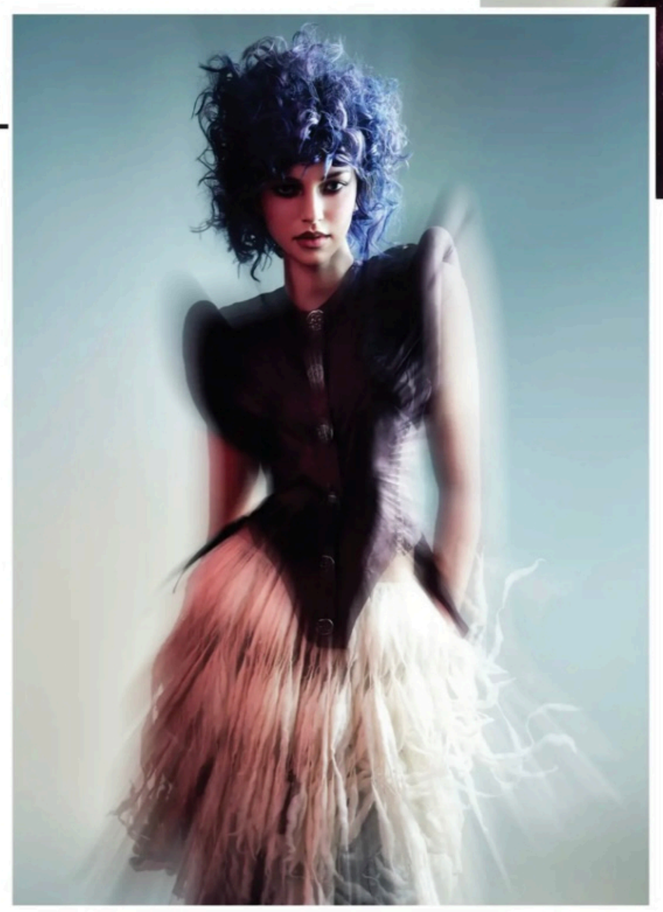
"I'VE ALWAYS LOOKED UP TO MARK. I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS IN THE BRITISH JUNIOR TEAM AND HE WAS COMPETING ALONGSIDE MY DAD, WHO WAS MY MENTOR."

GEMMA MILES

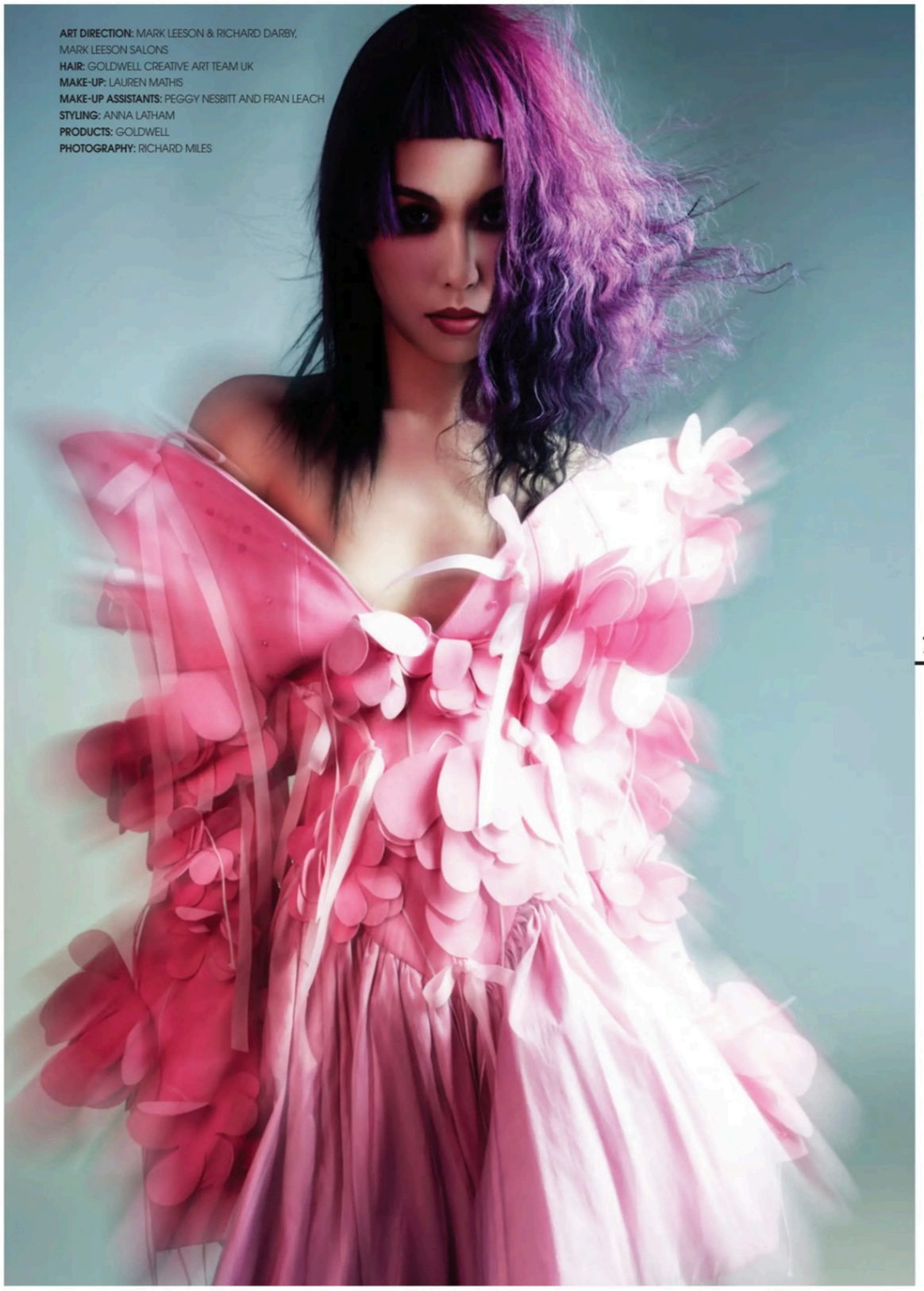
"WORKING WITH MARK HAS TAUGHT ME SO MUCH ABOUT CREATIVE WORK AND PHOTOGRAPHY WORK. SINCE WORKING ON THE TEAM I'VE BEEN THINKING IN A NEW CREATIVE WAY."

JACOB SCULLY

To find out more visit www.goldwell.com, @goldwelluki or @markleesonsalons



"Our collection is inspired by autumn/winter catwalk trends, fusing colour palettes and runway fashion silhouettes. Hard, forward-thinking styles, mixed with soft femininity and ballerina-esque vibes. Shapes and silhouettes from the runway inspired the way the team cut and coloured the looks for this shoot. The fabric, texture and tones have been used in the colouring techniques to give a couture feel to the collection. For the photography we wanted to emulate this fusion of soft and hard with distortion and abstraction creating a soft perimeter with hair clarity and strength within."

Mark Leeson & Richard Darby, Mark Leeson Salons

ART DIRECTION: MARK LEESON & RICHARD DARBY, MARK LEESON SALONS
HAIR: GOLDWELL CREATIVE ART TEAM UK
MAKE-UP: LAUREN MATHIS
MAKE-UP ASSISTANTS: PEGGY NESBITT AND FRAN LEACH
STYLING: ANNA LATHAM
PRODUCTS: GOLDWELL
PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD MILES