

Wales brand shortlisted for The Design Museum London Exhibition

London's Design Museum has recently announced the nominees for the 10th anniversary edition of the Beazley Designs of the Year award. The annual award and accompanying exhibition, which takes place at the Design Museum's site in Kensington, West London, looks to celebrate more than 60 of the best design projects from all over the world during the last 12 months. The overall winner from last year was Ikea's flat-packed refugee shelter Better Shelter.

Alongside Smörgåsbord's work on the Wales Nation brand thirteen projects have been nominated in the Graphics category, ranging from the creation of a Refugee Nation Flag designed for the first ever Olympic refugee team to a new logo and identity for the Reykjavik Art Museum.

The refreshed Wales nation brand was first introduced in January 2016 through the Year of Adventure tourism campaign. The work was conducted in response to Welsh Government's ambitions to develop a more integrated approach to promoting Wales to the world as a place to visit, trade, invest and live.

At the heart of the new approach is a confident new strategy and compelling narrative that provides a platform for promoting Wales internationally. Another key aspect of the brand is the visual identity, including a core marque featuring a contemporary rendering of the familiar dragon icon from Wales' national flag. There is also a distinctive new photography style and a bespoke typeface, Cymru Wales Sans inspired by the Welsh typographical heritage including digraphs unique to the Welsh language.

The award nomination for the Beazley Designs of the Year exhibition focuses in particular on the new typeface. This follows a previous accolade from the European Design Awards 2017 where the typeface won the prestigious Best of Show Gold for overall design across all categories. Recognition for the new approach has also come from the travel sector with awards won at the 2017 Travel Marketing Awards.

Dylan Griffith from Smörgåsbord, explains:

"Wales has its own language and Welsh is one of the oldest languages in Europe. Bearing few similarities to English, we felt it was necessary to create a bespoke typeface that brings the country's rich history and the provenance of the Welsh language to the forefront. The Cymru Wales Sans typeface is the cornerstone of the new Wales brand and has quickly become the golden thread that unifies the graphic language across all sectors."

Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, said:

“Our aim was to create a compelling and visually consistent identity to help reveal new, engaging stories about Wales to complement our country’s rich history, beauty and culture. Being shortlisted for this prestigious award shows that our innovative approach is standing out in the global marketplace.

“This approach has received a fantastic response through the Year of Adventure and Year of Legends campaigns. It has also been used to strengthen how we present Wales as a location for businesses to trade and invest, the quality of our food and drink, and has even been used as a foundation for a successful campaign to recruit more GPs into Wales. I am delighted by the level of support and enthusiasm the new approach has already attracted – particularly from the tourism and business community in Wales, and also from quality private sector brands who have shown an interest in working more closely with us to promote Wales to the world.

“Although these awards are important, we’ve also seen evidence that the new Wales brand approach and associated campaigns are already making a difference to the economy. For example, Visit Wales’ 2016 campaign generated an additional £370 million for the Welsh economy – which is an 18% increase on 2015.”