

AUTOMOTIVE

## Lexus announces winner of design challenge for “better tomorrow”

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*BellTower's OpenSource Communities won the 2020 Lexus Design Award. Image credit: Lexus*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus has revealed the winner of its annual design challenge which seeks emerging talent who envision how they can make a positive difference in the future.

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First awarded in 2013, the Lexus Design Award gives winners the chance to exhibit at Milan Design Week. This year's winning project was a design for low-cost sustainable communities.

### Design finalists

This year's six finalists received funding and worked with four mentors to refine their designs before the final presentation. They were selected from more than 2,000 entries from 79 countries.

The finalists, which included team and individual submissions, met their mentors in New York this January. Due to the pandemic, mentorships continued online for the duration of the challenge.

Several of the designs were offered solutions for sustainability or accessibility issues.

### *Lexus embraced virtual mentorship for its 2020 design competition*

Biocraft, created by Sutherlin Santo in the U.S, is a collection of plant-based materials that can be customized to replace synthetic plastics.

Inspired by the designer's experiences growing up, Flash Pak makes life jackets easily accessible on light poles in high-risk flooding areas. The project uses life jackets' natural buoyancy to ensure they remain reach no matter how high water rises.

The Pursewit project simplified the traditional sewing machine for better use for the visually impaired, expanding opportunities and accessibility.

For the first time, the Lexus Design Award winner hailed from Africa.

Kenya's BellTower design team proposed Open Source Communities. Using freely available open-source designs

allows them to be adapted and refined to create water resource centers.

Submissions are now open for the 2021 Lexus Design Award for those who are interested in "design for a better tomorrow."

#### Celebrating craftsmanship

The partnership between Lexus and Milan Design Week is one of many ways the automaker celebrates design and craftsmanship.

In 2018, Lexus explored the stories of the paths tastemaking chefs and food purveyors take to mirror its own creative and artisan process.

Produced for Lexus by Cond Nast Creative Studio, "Journeys of Taste" unfolded in four parts across titles including *Vogue*, *Cond Nast Traveller* and *GQ*. Through this first creative partnership between Lexus and Cond Nast International, the automaker was able to reach a global audience of readers in almost a dozen markets ([see story](#)).

More recently, Lexus launched a new content series called Lexus Creates as a global socially driven program that encourages viewer participation.

The effort seeks to encourage participants in activities that inform and delight, focusing on design and craftsmanship. U.K. origami artist Coco Sato is the first partner in the series ([see story](#)).

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