

## **ITS Contest 2025: the most interesting up-and-coming international fashion design talents arrive in Italy. Two new ITS Arcademy - Museum of Art in Fashion exhibitions to open.**

- **An immersion in borderless creativity begins in the year of GO! 2025 Borderless. For the designers, a creative residency, a scholarship, tailor-made experiences and participation in a special exhibition in Italy's first contemporary fashion museum**
- **From 27 March at ITS Arcademy - Museum of Art in Fashion the exhibition 'Borderless' will tell the story of the new generation of designers through their works, now part of the museum's permanent collection. Also opening will be "Fashionlands - Clothes Beyond Borders", curated by Olivier Saillard and Emanuele Coccia**
- **The international jury was announced and includes industry representatives and figures from art and culture**
- **The final event scheduled in Trieste on 20-21 March 2025**

Trieste, 10 March 2025 - The 10 young talents of the 2025 edition of **ITS Contest**, the platform founded by **Barbara Franchin**, which since 2002 has been discovering and promoting the most promising new fashion and accessories designers from all over the world, have finally arrived in Trieste.

Here are their names:

**Cindy Zhaohan Li** - China

**Gabrielle Szwarcenberg** - Belgium

**Macy Grimshaw** - France

**Maximilian Raynor** - United Kingdom

**Mijoda Dajomi** - Germany

**Naya El Ahdab** - France

**Patrick Taylor** - United Kingdom

**Qianhan Liu** - China

**Yifan Yu** - China

**Zhuen Cai** - China

The competition this year has turned into a **group celebration of talent without borders**. The ten designers are in fact already all winners, having won the **ITS Creative Excellence Award 10x10x10**, which offers them the opportunity to take part in a **ten-day** creative residency, a scholarship worth **ten thousand** euros and the presentation of their creations in the **Borderless** exhibition at **ITS Academy - Museum of Art in Fashion** (the first contemporary fashion museum in Italy), open to the public for **ten months**, starting 27 March 2025. Added to this are tailor-made experiences offered by partners that include **OTB, Luxottica** and **Swatch**.

The decision to award prizes to all those selected is a significant change that reflects the needs of a new generation of creatives, looking for common ground in an increasingly fragmented world.

*"Those who choose this path today face an obstacle race, between global instability and the challenges of a production system that needs a complete overhaul. We felt that the most responsible choice was to help them all succeed together, underlining the concept of collaboration rather than competition".* This is how **Barbara Franchin**, President of **ITS Foundation** and founder of **ITS Contest**, commented on the 2025 edition.

The ITS Contest 2025 adventure for young designers will culminate in the presentation of their collections to the international jury and the press, followed by a special event and inauguration of the new exhibitions at ITS Academy - Museum of Art in Fashion.

## **ITS Contest Residency GO! 2025, the creative residency**

This is the first experience of Italy for many of the young talents and it promises to be an unforgettable one.

[ITS Contest 2025 Residency Programme](#)

**Key element in the ITS Contest experience**, the creative residency offers up-and-coming designers a unique opportunity to **develop new skills and build lasting relationships**. During their stay in Trieste, in the spaces of ITS Arcademy and in other iconic locations in Friuli Venezia Giulia such as the Villa Manin museum, they will take part in experimental workshops and discover local craft techniques, such as those, hundreds of years old, related to the production of the traditional *Scarpetti* shoes, in a workshop organised jointly with the Michele Gortani Carnic Museum of Folk Arts in Tolmezzo. In addition to practical learning, meetings with leaders and experts in the field, internationally renowned scientists and philosophers are also planned. The residency **is developed in cooperation with the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region**, in the year of **GO! 2025 Nova Gorica and Gorizia European Capital of Cross-border Culture**. A strong signal of synergy of the territory in an important year for the whole region.

This year the involvement of the ITS Contest partners is felt more than ever:

*“Borderless, limitless... Creativity must dare, it must be really innovative and special, as it is through this creativity that talent manages to get noticed. Over the years, ITS has discovered many designers who went on to become the creative directors of the world's most important brands, I also wish this year's finalists to find their way to success.”* **Renzo Rosso** Chairman and Founder of OTB Group

*“Being open, being welcoming, being curious and experimenting, this is how Swatch has been crossing borders in the world of timepieces, and not only. “Borderless” is how we all should like to feel: when it comes to create, when it comes to love, when it comes to dare, when it comes to dream. Because being Borderless is a strong choice: it goes against barriers and status quo, it implies courage and vision, generosity and transparency, taking positions and embracing diversity – until the day diversity will not be an issue anymore. Can we see borders as an opportunity, create a culture around them, celebrate their potential role as a breathing, permeable membrane? Is this a possible answer?”* **Carlo Giordanetti** CEO, Swatch Art Peace Hotel

*“ITS Contest 2025 - Borderless is a shift in creativity and consciousness. True innovation comes from understanding limits; only then can we break them and forge limitless possibilities, opening new horizons. Being Borderless is about seeing the world differently, embracing diversity, and expressing what makes us human.*

*Fashion and accessories are more than aesthetics: they are powerful narratives of identity, culture, and emotion. This journey is not about erasing borders but expanding them, creating a future where creativity becomes a force that unites, inspires, and deepens our connection to humanity.”* **Matteo Battiston** Chief Design Officer, EssilorLuxottica

## The ITS Contest 2025 jury

A panel of **personalities from the worlds of fashion, art and culture** guided the designer selection process, carrying forward the vision that has made ITS Contest one of the **world's most prestigious scouting platforms**.

In the final stages of the competition, **new standout figures** joined the jury, ready to assess the talent of this edition's young creatives.

It is made up of:

**Andrea Rosso** OTB Sustainability Ambassador and Creative Consultant of Diesel Living

**Barbara Franchin** President, Fondazione ITS

**Carlo Giordanetti** CEO, Swatch Art Peace Hotel

**Deanna Ferretti** Founder Miss Deanna and Co Founder Modateca Deanna and **Sonia Veroni** CEO Modateca Deanna and Director, Master in Creative Knitwear Design - Accademia Costume & Moda

**Emanuele Coccia** Philosopher

**Luca Rizzi** Director, Pitti Immagine Tutoring & Consulting / Leader, e-P Summit Project

**Marco Sammiceli** Curator of the Design, Fashion and Crafts sector at Triennale Milano / Director of Museo del Design Italiano

**Maria Sole Ferragamo** Designer

**Mark C. O'Flaherty** Interiors & Portrait Photographer and Author

**Massimo Nicosia** Creative Director, Ready-To-Wear Sport Performance Hub, EssilorLuxottica

**Matteo Ward** CEO, IO Fashion Textiles & Home

**Olya Kuryshchuk** Founder and Editor in Chief, 1 Granary

**Orsola de Castro** Co Founder, Fashion Revolution and Estethica

**Sara Sozzani Maino** Creative Director, Fondazione Sozzani

**Serge Carreira** Director of Emerging Brands Initiative, Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode

**Stefania Ricci** Director, Museo Salvatore Ferragamo and Fondazione Ferragamo

**Stefano Gallici** Creative Director, Ann Demeulemeester

**Tom Eerebout** Stylist & Fashion Consultant

**Valentina Maggi** Director of Creative Practice, Floriane de St. Pierre & Associés

**Dame Zandra Rhodes** Designer and founder, Fashion and Textile Museum

## ITS Contest 2025 Awards and experiences

The **ITS Jury's Rewarding Honours** is a special recognition awarded to an ITS Contest 2025 designer, offering support that aligns with their unique needs and creative aspirations. It is a commitment by Fondazione ITS that goes beyond celebration, becoming a concrete, long-term investment in the designer's growth through mentorship, professional networking, and access to key industry opportunities. Rooted in genuine listening and deep understanding, this honour serves as a springboard for the future, empowering emerging talent and helping to shape the next steps of their creative journey.

## Rewarding Honours Powered by:

The **OTB Group** offers a training day visit of the headquarters of OTB and Staff International to the young designers who will be able to see first-hand the production stages of the garments and accessories of the Group's brands.

**Swatch** offers a unique experience in Venice. The programme for the selected designer will begin with an exclusive workshop at the historic Palazzo Mocenigo, home to the Museum of Textiles, Costume and Perfume, with privileged access to the palace's invaluable archives. Swatch will then take the designer on an exclusive journey through Venice's artistic heritage across the centuries—from the glass mosaics of the Orsoni Furnace to the luxury fabrics of the Rubelli Foundation, and the passion for modern art at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, with the rare opportunity to meet key figures from each institution. The experience will end with an immersive visit to the history and beauty of San Giorgio Maggiore. Accommodation costs will be fully covered.

Rewarding Honours powered by **Vogue Eyewear, part of EssilorLuxottica**, will include: a full day at the prestigious EssilorLuxottica Tortona Experience Center. The selected designer will present the project to an internal audience and engage with attendees during a dedicated networking session. Additionally, the selected designer will be immersed in the operational dynamics of the EssilorLuxottica Design Team, experiencing the creative and design process of the eyewear category.

**Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana** offers a scholarship worth €5,000 awarded based on the designer's creativity with particular attention to the theme of sustainability, in its broadest meanings of product sustainability, respect for the environment and social sustainability.

**Fondazione Ferragamo** is offering €7,000 to a designer to be invested on his/her activity. The choice will be made based on the knowledge of materials and innovation.

**Fondazione Sozzani** offers one designer the opportunity to present their work in its spaces during 2025. The designer will be hosted free of charge, and the Fondazione will provide support for the exhibition setup and communication activities. Accommodation expenses will be fully covered.

**Modateca Deanna** offers an exclusive one-week experience at Modateca Deanna, where the designer will have the opportunity to conduct research at the Modateca's archives and delve deeper into knitwear techniques. The designer will also have the chance to visit some of the leading yarn mills, knitting factories, and workshops in the area, exploring all the key stages involved in bringing a creative idea to life. Modateca Deanna will cover travel and accommodation and company visits costs.

**Pitti Tutoring & Consulting** Special Experience includes a 6-months mentorship program of Tutoring & Consulting activities, such as support in defining and establishing one's brand and/or identifying and analyzing the most suitable career path for the winning designer. Meetings (via video call or in-person) will

take place every two weeks to assess progress and equip the designer with valuable experience, enabling them to approach their career in the best possible way.

**WRÅD** will give a designer the chance to take part of a 2-day tour of innovative textile enterprises in Italy, the products and processes of which can provide further guidance and inspiration.

## Out of competition Awards

### ITS Public's Choice Award

€5,000 ITS Public's Choice Award awarded in January 2026 to the winner chosen by the public of the "Borderless" exhibition

### ITS Fashion Film Award

€3,000 assigned to the best Fashion Film chosen by **Lee Swillingham**, founder of London Creative Agency Suburbia.

## ITS Arcademy - Museum of Art in Fashion

The works of the young designers are to become part of the **ITS Arcademy - Museum of Art in Fashion collection**, which numbers more than **15,000 design objects** from editions of **ITS Contest**.

From **27 March**, ITS Arcademy, the first contemporary fashion museum in Italy, is opening **two new exhibitions**:

### *Borderless*

Dedicated to the creations of young **fashion and accessories design** talents selected by **ITS Contest 2025**, this exhibition presents **ten works** that explore new perspectives on contemporary design, overcoming **geographical, cultural and category boundaries**.

Each creation tells a story of **research, innovation and experimentation**, offering a privileged glimpse into the visions of the key players in the new generation of creatives.

### *Fashionlands - Clothes Beyond Borders*

An exploration of the changing boundaries of fashion and its ability to tell stories in a universal language. The exhibition, sponsored by the **Italian Culture Ministry** and with the support of the **City of Trieste**, is curated by fashion historian **Olivier Saillard** and philosopher and author **Emanuele Coccia**, in their second collaboration with ITS Arcademy.

The exhibition compares two opposing yet complementary perspectives: the visionary creations of the designers of the 20-year-old ITS Arcademy collection, who redefine the boundaries of design, and everyday clothing, immortalised by the young photographer **Gabriele Rosati**, who explores the aesthetic and symbolic value of the essential items of our wardrobe.

Rai FVG is media partner for both exhibitions.

## An open-air museum in the heart of Trieste to celebrate GO! 2025

In 2025, **Via Cassa di Risparmio**, the headquarters of ITS Arcademy, is an **open-air museum** displaying 10 pictures celebrating the talent of the young designers awarded the **GO! 2025 Borderless Award**, a special recognition promoted by the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and awarded during the 2024 ITS Contest. The photos are by **Massimo Gardone**.

The exhibition, staged by **Fondazione ITS** with the **support of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region**, is part of the celebrations for **GO! 2025 Borderless - Nova Gorica and Gorizia European Capital of Culture** and is co-organised with the **City of Trieste**. The installation invites the public to **reflect in depth on the concept of border**, not as a **barrier**, but as a **point of meeting and exchange**.

## The Collection

A **unique design heritage**, the **ITS Arcademy Collection** consists of **15,000** objects including visionary creative projects, clothing, accessories, jewellery and photographs. A collection of extraordinary historical importance, narrating the evolution of creativity in its most radical, artistic and experimental expressions.

## Generali ensures the Future of the Collection

**Generali** is the first private partner of ITS Arcademy, to support and protect the innovative projects of young talents who, with their creativity, do business. At its heart, ITS Arcademy has the Collection: the precious custodian of the ideas and projects of young talents, accessible to the public, an element of growth and innovation for the community.

**ITS Arcademy** brings public and private sectors together, helping to restore Trieste to its historical vocation as the centre of Europe, a crucial intersection between East and West. **The Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region with PromoTurismo FVG**, the **City of Trieste** and **Fondazione CRTrieste** confirm their fundamental support in making Trieste a city of creativity and ITS Arcademy an international magnet for the entire regional area.

## ITS Contest Partners

Io Sono FVG: I am Friuli Venezia Giulia. ITS Contest 2025 is proud of its roots in the **Friuli Venezia Giulia** region and its role in shaping the cultural future of the territory. Embracing the spirit of cultural exchange that defines this region, ITS Contest serves as both a collector and creator of new perspectives. ITS Contest 2025 is supported by the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and **Promoturismo FVG**. **#iosonofvg**

**OTB** is an international fashion group comprising brands Diesel, Jil Sander, Maison Margiela, Marni and Viktor&Rolf. It also controls the Staff International and Brave Kid companies and holds a stake in Ameri-

can brand Amiri. OTB – short for "Only The Brave" – believes in the possibility of pushing beyond the frontiers of fashion and style, expressing the innovative spirit and uncompromising courage of its Founder and Chairman, Renzo Rosso. With around 7,000 employees worldwide, the Group is founded on a digital approach centered on the consumer, a concrete long-term commitment to the creation of a sustainable, technologically driven business, and close attention to social issues through the OTB Foundation.

Since the first edition, OTB and Renzo Rosso have chosen to support the international ITS Contest, confirming their mission to support emerging designers from all over the world, encouraging their creativity and talent and promoting their growth and training in direct contact with professionals of the sector.

Since its creation, conceived as a universal, democratic object, **Swatch** has been thriving on diversity, multiplicity, dynamism, inclusion and positive energies that intertwine, feed on each other and multiply. In this vein, in 2011 the **Swatch Art Peace Hotel** opened in Shanghai: a remarkable position, in the heart of the most dynamic and vibrant of Chinese metropolis, a unique space in terms of dimensions, style and capacity, expressly conceived for artists of all generations, from all countries and all disciplines, that will make here their 'home' for a few months and have the chance to carry out their work and express their talent, meet other artists and interact with the local art community. Since its opening, the Swatch Art Peace Hotel has been hosting more than 540 artists from 58 countries. Ten of them were recipients of the ITS/Swatch Art Peace Hotel award in previous editions of the contest.

## **Vogue Eyewear by Essilor Luxottica**

**Vogue Eyewear** - [www.vogue-eyewear.com](http://www.vogue-eyewear.com)

**EssilorLuxottica** is a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of ophthalmic lenses, frames and sunglasses. With over 190,000 employees across 150 countries, 650 operations facilities and 18,000 stores, its mission is to help people around the world to see more and be more by addressing their evolving vision needs and personal style aspirations. EssilorLuxottica is home to the most advanced lens technologies including Varilux, Stellest and Transitions, the most iconic eyewear brands including Ray-Ban and Oakley, the most desired luxury licensed brands and world-class retailers including LensCrafters and Sunglass Hut. The company's OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation has given access to sustainable vision care to more than 760 million people in underserved communities.

**ITS Contest 2025** is organised by **Fondazione ITS** with the patronage of **Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana, Fondazione Ferragamo, Fondazione Sozzani, Miss Deanna, Pitti Immagine** and **WRÅD**.

The **Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana** is the non-profit association that disciplines, coordinates and promotes the development of Italian fashion. It represents the highest cultural values of Italian fashion and aims to protect, coordinate and enhance its image, both in Italy and abroad.

**Fondazione Ferragamo** was established in 2013 with the aim of making the new generations aware of the values of craftsmanship and Made in Italy according to Salvatore Ferragamo's work. The main purpose is to inspire young talents to pursue their creative dream.



**Fondazione Sozzani** is dedicated to the promotion of culture through photography, fashion, the fine arts, and applied arts. Since 2021, under the creative direction of Sara Sozzani Maino, the Fondazione curates projects dedicated to education, responsibility and awareness and supports the next generation of creatives.

**Modateca Deanna**, International Centre for Fashion Documentation, gathers and promotes the identity of the knitwear factory Miss Deanna, founded by Deanna Ferretti back in 1950. Modateca, research and creativity hub, under the leadership of Sonia Veroni, promotes the Italian Knitwear.

**The Tutoring & Consulting Direction of Pitti Immagine** supports designers and brands in their professional and creative development with orientation and consultancy activities.

**WRÅD** is a design studio for the sustainable evolution of the fashion industry. The collaboration with ITS supports the creativity of those who act for the realization of better systems - ethical and responsible.

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**Tech supporter:** The **Develon Group**, digital partner of ITS 2025 Borderless, provides the platform for managing the international selection of ITS Contest. For over twenty years, Develon has supported companies in their digital innovation journey, developing tailor-made solutions for different sectors, including hospitality with Hbenchmark.com and the ticketing and booking experience with Mydomnia.com.

**Pharma supporter:** Founded in Trieste in 1948, **Eurospital** is an international healthcare company operating across 3 Business Areas that develops and markets pharmaceutical products, diagnostic devices and special diet food - gluten free and low-protein.

**Travel supporter: Trieste Airport Friuli Venezia Giulia** offers air services to domestic and European destinations. Thanks to its strategic location, this airport is the ideal gateway to the Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions as well as to Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. Trieste Airport is an integrated multi-modal hub, for air-rail-road interchange, enhancing accessibility and connectivity.

**Urban Scents** works with Fondazione ITS on the creation of unique and engaging olfactory experiences and processes which create a discourse between the arts of fashion and perfumery. Born in Versailles and based in Trieste, Marie Urban Le Febvre is one of few hundred noses in the world and a member of the International Association of Perfumer-Creators in Paris. Her experience includes collaborations with prestigious cultural institutions such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

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