

FASHION

## ITS Names 2025 Finalists

● International Talent Support will hold the award ceremony on March 20 in Trieste, Italy.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** – The International Talent Support contest, also known as ITS, has named the 10 finalists for the 2025 edition, with some news in tow.

Shaking up its consolidated format, the talent search competition is bestowing an initial reward on the finalists ahead of the award ceremony taking place IRL on March 20 in Trieste, Italy, the city off of fashion's radar that has been home to ITS for the past 22 years.

The ITS competition, which marked its 20th anniversary in 2022, has been a launchpad for marquee contemporary designers in the past including Bottega Veneta's Matthieu Blazy and Balenciaga's Demna, as well as London darling Richard Quinn and Iceberg's James Long, among others.

For the first time, the 10 finalists are receiving the ITS Creative Excellence Award 10x10x10, which includes a scholarship valued at 10,000 euros, 10 days of creative residency to be held in Trieste and other landmarks in Italy's Friuli Venezia Giulia region, as well as the exhibition of their works at the ITS Academy Museum of Art in Fashion for 10 months. The latter was opened by ITS in 2022.

Selected among 900 talents hailing from 75 countries, the finalists best



The finalists of the 2025 edition of the International Talent Support design competition.

interpreted the 2025 ITS concept called “Borderless,” as in the overcoming of physical and cultural barriers. The theme was selected in celebration of Gorizia, a city in the region named the European Capital of Culture for 2025.

“In a climate of global uncertainty, young people responded with protective designs, urban ‘armors’ that offer a sense of security,” said Barbara Franchin, president of the ITS Foundation, about the creative process of this year’s applicants. “This journey shows design as a response to emotion and the quest for authenticity, bridging past and future, tangible and digital, inviting us to rediscover the power of fashion as a profound and conscious form of expression,” she said.

The finalists include Cindy Zhaoan

Li, Qianhan Liu, Yifan Yu, and Zhuen Cai from China; Gabrielle Szwarcenberg from Belgium; Macy Grimshaw and Naya El Ahdab from France; Maximilian Raynor and Patrick Taylor from the U.K., and Mijoda Dajomi from Germany.

Ahead of the award ceremony in March, they will be joining the ITS team in Trieste for the residency, which will offer them a chance to attend experimental workshops, explore local craft techniques, and meet industry experts and internationally renowned creatives.

The Franchin-led jury who selected finalists and is poised to name winners in March includes Diesel sustainability ambassador Andrea Rosso; Orsola de Castro, cofounder of Fashion Revolution and Esthetica; Stefania Ricci, director Museo Ferragamo and Fondazione

Ferragamo; Matteo Ward, chief executive officer and cofounder of sustainability-minded brand and platform Wräd, and Carlo Giordanetti, CEO of the Swatch Art Peace Hotel, among others. More guest jurors will be added for the award ceremony next year.

The 10 finalists will compete for a range of prizes including the Fondazione ITS award and the OTB Group award coming with a mentorship on sustainability practices. Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana will bestow a 5,000 euro prize and

Fondazione Ferragamo will reward the most innovative project with a 7,000 euro prize. Other prizes will be bestowed by Fondazione Sozzani; Modateca Deanna; Pitti Immagine; Wräd; Swatch, and Vogue Eyewear by EssilorLuxottica.

The works of the 2025 finalists will join the permanent collection of the ITS Academy Museum of Art in Fashion and be displayed as part of the “Borderless” exhibition for 10 months following the awards. A public choice award will reward the designer receiving the most votes from visitors of the exhibit throughout the 10 months. The winner will receive a 5,000 euro prize in January 2026.

An addition ITS Fashion Film Award consisting of 3,000 euros will be assigned to the best fashion film selected by Lee Swillingham, the founder of the London-based Suburbia creative agency.