

ITS Contest 2025 announces its 10 international finalists



Mijoda Dajomi, (Germany). Credits: Courtesy of Its Foundation

By Isabella Naef

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Cindy Zhaohan Li, Qianhan Liu, Yifan Yu and Zuen Cai from China, Gabrielle Szwarcenberg from Belgium, Macy Grimshaw from France, Maximilian Raynor and Patrick Taylor from the UK, Mijoda Dajomi from Germany, and Naya El Ahdab from France, are the ten designers that have been shortlisted for the 2025 edition of the ITS international design contest, an initiative of the International Talent Support (ITS) foundation.

A new format for the 2025 edition sees all ten finalists already declared 'winners': they will benefit from a ten-day creative residency, a 10,000-euro bursary, and their work will be exhibited for ten months at Its Arcademy, Museum of Art in Fashion, the first contemporary fashion museum in Italy.

The ten selected talents will further develop their knowledge of the fashion industry through a series of experiences developed in collaboration with industry partners, including Otb, Swatch, and EssilorLuxottica. The final event is scheduled for March 20 in Trieste.

This week, the international jury convened in Trieste and selected the ten most compelling emerging designers from nearly 900 applicants representing 75 countries.

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The ten selected talents. Credits: Courtesy of Its Foundation

The jury evaluating the projects included Andrea Rosso, sustainability ambassador at Diesel and founder of Myar, Barbara Franchin, president of the ITS Foundation; Carlo Giordanetti, CEO of Swatch Art Peace Hotel, designer Maria Sole Ferragamo, Matteo Battiston, chief design officer at EssilorLuxottica, Orsola de Castro, co-founder of Fashion Revolution and Estethica, and stylist and fashion consultant Tom Eerebout.

Each of the 10 selected designers will receive a 10,000-euro bursary

"The collections embody suffering and strength, evoked by textures reminiscent of the epidermis, almost suggesting a second emotional skin," Barbara Franchin, President of the ITS Foundation, said in a statement on behalf of the jury.

She continued: "In a climate of global uncertainty, young designers respond with protective designs, a sort of urban armour that conveys a sense of security, using upcycled materials from everyday objects and incorporating sartorial details. Even paper, an ephemeral material, finds new expression as a design element, emphasising the boundary between two-dimensional and three-dimensional."

"It's a journey where design responds to emotion and the need for authenticity, ranging between past and future, tangible and digital, inviting us to rediscover the power of fashion as a means of profound and conscious expression," Franchin concluded.

Each of the 10 selected designers will receive the Its Creative Excellence Award, which includes a bursary of 10,000 euros, a ten-day creative residency between Trieste and iconic locations in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, and visibility within the Borderless exhibition at Its Arcademy, Museum of Art in Fashion, for a period of 10 months.

The National Chamber of Italian Fashion (Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana) will offer a 5,000 euro scholarship awarded based on the designer's creativity with a particular focus on the theme of sustainability, in its broadest sense, encompassing product sustainability, environmental respect, and social sustainability.

The Ferragamo Foundation will offer a scholarship worth 7,000 euros to a designer of its choice, selected based on their knowledge of materials and innovation. The Sozzani Foundation will offer a presentation at its premises during 2025.



Macy Grimshaw (France). Credits: Courtesy of Its Foundation

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