



The International Talent Support-ITS announced the 10 finalists for the 2025 edition. ITS Contest is one of the leading international platforms dedicated to discovering and preserving creativity. For more than two decades, it has showcased the brightest international talents in fashion, accessories, and jewellery.

Once again this year, the ITS Contest international jury gathered in Trieste to select the ten most compelling next-generation designers of the 2025 edition from nearly 900 entries spanning 75 countries. The final event is scheduled to take place in Trieste on March 20, 2025.

For the first time, all ten up-and-coming designers are already winners. They will each receive a 10,000 euro bursary and take part in a 10-day 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 theme of the 2025 ITS edition is "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. For more than twenty years, ITS Contest has acted as a seismograph for global creativity, capturing and interpreting the emerging directions of international talent. This year's concepts once again reflect the pulse of the times, offering a glimpse into the inspirations of up-and-coming creatives from across the globe.

"Collections that embody both suffering and strength, evoked by textures reminiscent of skin, almost suggesting an emotional second skin," said Barbara Franchin, president of the ITS Foundation, regarding the design projects examined by the jury.. "In a climate of global uncertainty, young people respond with protective designs, urban 'armours' that offer a sense of security, crafted from reclaimed materials and bespoke details born from everyday objects. Even paper, an ephemeral material, finds new life as a design element, highlighting the boundary between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional. 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."

The finalists include Cindy Zhaohan Li, Qianhan Liu, Yifan Yu, and Zhen 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.

The 10 chosen talents will take part in a 10-day creative residency in Trieste and other iconic locations in Friuli Venezia Giulia, including the historic Villa Manin. This creative experience is organised in collaboration with the Friuli Venezia Giulia regional authority and coincides with GO! 2025 - Nova Gorica Gorizia European Capital of Culture.

A cornerstone of the ITS Contest experience, the creative residency provides emerging designers with a unique opportunity to develop new skills and build meaningful connections. Over the course of their stay, they will participate in experimental workshops, explore local craft techniques, and engage in meetings with industry experts and internationally renowned creatives. This immersive experience blends practical learning and inspirational encounters, offering invaluable insights that will shape their craft and future careers.

Additionally the winners will further their understanding of the fashion industry through a series of immersive experiences, developed in collaboration with partners. Fondazione ITS will offer a tailor-made experience designed to foster creative development and support the selected designer in their professional journey. The OTB Group will offer the finalists a mentoring and coaching programme on best sustainability practices with the Group's experts. In addition, a training day visit of the headquarters of OTB and Staff International will be offered 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. 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; Wråd; Swatch, and Vogue Eyewear by EssilorLuxottica.

The-jury, led by Franchin, who selected finalists includes Diesel sustainability ambassador Andrea Rosso; Orsola de Castro, co-founder of Fashion Revolution and Estethica; Stefania Ricci, director Museo Ferragamo and Fondazione Ferragamo; Matteo Ward, chief executive officer and cofounder of sustainability-minded brand and platform Wråd, 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 works of the 2025 finalists will join the permanent collection of ITS Academy-Museum of Art in Fashion, Italy's first contemporary fashion museum 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.

