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ITS Contest 2025: Talent Without Borders in Trieste

by Lorella Flego March 24, 2025 ♡ 65 356 in Fashion and Beauty

The **ITS Contest 2025**, one of the world's most prestigious talent scouting platforms for emerging fashion designers, has just concluded in **Trieste**, Italy. The event, founded and led by **Barbara Franchin**, continues to redefine the industry by offering young designers not just recognition but also **mentorship, scholarships, and career-enhancing opportunities**.

ITS 2025

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A New Vision for Fashion Competitions

Unlike traditional competitions where only a few receive awards, this year's ITS Contest embraced a **collaborative model**, recognizing all ten selected finalists as winners. These talented designers will now see their work become part of the collection at **ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion**, Italy's first contemporary fashion museum.

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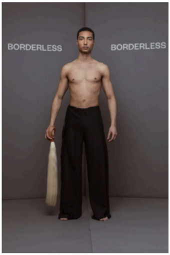
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MAXIMILIAN RAYNOR
MANOR FOR HEAVEN
UN MANIERO PER IL PARADISO
MACY GRIMSHAW
RUE DE MAURICETTE
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ITS 2025

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ITS CONTEST 2025
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ITS 2025

The ten new fashion talents are:

- **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)

A special honor, the **ITS Jury's Rewarding Honours**, was awarded to **Maximilian Raynor** from the UK. The jury praised Raynor for his deep connection to **historical influences, theatrical elements, and self-production techniques**, seeing in him a designer with a strong artistic voice and limitless potential.

Additionally, **Meret Olympia Salome Baer** from the Royal College of Art in London won the **ITS Fashion Film Award** for her film *Lactic Acid*, recognized for its artistic storytelling and visual strength.

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ITS 2025

A Jury of Icons and Visionaries

The international **ITS Jury** was composed of industry leaders, including:

- **Dame Zandra Rhodes**, legendary British designer
- **Tom Eerebout**, celebrity stylist
- **Andrea Rosso**, sustainability ambassador for OTB Group
- **Orsola de Castro**, co-founder of Fashion Revolution
- **Sara Sozzani Maino**, creative director of Fondazione Sozzani

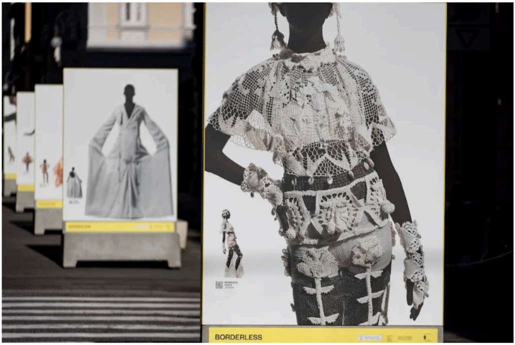
Their collective experience and insight ensured that the young designers were evaluated not only for their technical skills but also for their **creative vision, sustainability approach, and potential impact on the fashion industry**.

ITS 2025

Trieste: A City of Art, Culture, and Innovation

The **ITS Contest** finds its perfect home in **Trieste**, a city rich in **artistic heritage and international influence**. Overlooking the Adriatic Sea, this cultural crossroads has long been a melting pot of ideas and creativity. Hosting the **ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion**, Trieste is now **a global hub for contemporary fashion**.

The city's role in this event was further emphasized by the presence of **Lucia Borgonzoni**, Undersecretary of State to the Italian Ministry of Culture, and **Massimiliano Fedriga**, President of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. Their support underscores the importance of fashion as both **a cultural force and an economic driver** in Italy.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ITS 2025 – Photo: Massimo Gardone

Barbara Franchin: A Champion of Emerging Talent

At the heart of **ITS Contest** is **Barbara Franchin**, whose passion for discovering and nurturing new talent has made this event a **global phenomenon**. Since founding ITS in 2002, she has dedicated herself to building **a platform that goes beyond competition**, fostering a community where creativity and collaboration thrive.

“Today, more than ever, fashion needs creative talent, but for many young people, the path is filled with challenges,” Franchin stated. “By offering all designers the opportunity to grow together, we are creating a new, more ethical way forward for the industry.”

ITS 2025 – Barbara Franchin

The Future of ITS Contest and ITS Arcademy

With the conclusion of ITS Contest 2025, the **Borderless** exhibition at ITS Arcademy is set to open on **March 27**, further solidifying the museum’s role in preserving and showcasing **cutting-edge fashion design**.

This edition of **ITS Contest** has once again proven that talent knows no borders. In the inspiring setting of **Trieste**, young designers have found a stage where they can dream, create, and shape the future of fashion.

ITS Contest is not just an event—it’s a movement, a statement, and above all, a **promise to the next generation of designers**.

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