GLASS

After two decades, ITS (International Talent Support) continues gaining momentum

Chidozie Obasi March 27, 2025 Culture, News

TRIESTE, ITALY — Nestled within the quiet edges of northern Italy and poised to become a global cultural tapestry, ITS (International Talent Support) is a program in the relentless pursuit of innovation and talent globalisation.

The 2025 edition has chosen to focus on a collaborative model, giving awards to all the designers who, in turn, became winners: it's no longer just a competition, but it's an experience of shared growth. "Today, more than ever, fashion needs creative talent, but for many young people the path to take is strewn with almost insurmountable obstacles, especially when they cannot count on adequate resources".

"Offering all designers the opportunity to grow together is a new answer to the global and ethical challenges of our times. Focusing on collaboration instead of competition was the most responsible choice in order to enhance the potential of this new generation of designers," said Barbara Franchin, President of Fondazione ITS and founder of ITS Contest.

International Talent Support

ITS Contest is a pivotal part of a unique system, complemented by ITS Academy–Museum of Art in Fashion, the first contemporary fashion museum in Italy. The works of the finalists of the latest edition will be added to the archival collection of the museum, an exhibition space of international scope at the intersection of fashion, art and culture. A dynamic cultural hub, it alternates major exhibitions devised by internationally renowned curators with a calendar of courses and creative workshops dedicated to design students, schools of all levels, and the local, national and international public.

Through the vision of Barbara Franchin, who has created a unique archive of more than 15,000 objects, a symbol of the creativity of new designers and safeguarded thanks to the contribution by Generali, ITS is not just an industry event, but the start of a journey of fashion discovery for a public of all ages.

ITS Borderless Exhibition

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Moreover, the *Borderless* exhibition brings the works of the ten designers selected this year. A key element of this recognition is in fact the exhibition of their work for ten months starting in March, a unique opportunity to showcase themselves before an international audience, ready to appreciate the artistic value of their work, which transcends geographical, cultural and genre boundaries.

"For me, what I found really intriguing about this project is that these designers don't adhere to a seasonal path for crafting and creating their capsule collections," opined Stefano Gallici, Creative Director at Ann Demeulemeester and member of this year's jury.

"I'm also really intrigued by how some of these don't have a sort of vision of a brand, but they have such deep meanings and researches that always blow me away. I really miss times like that and the freedom, because when you work and have to respect deadlines and seasons, it's a time when you have to stop doing research and pass to the final sketches. And actually, what really blows my mind is the fact that there's so much internationality in this contest and that people come from in and around the world to Trieste, which is like such an unusual place as you'd expect such a buzz in a city like Milan."

Patrick Taylor

Mariela Guerre

Between sculpted offerings and nature-led underpinnings, ITS has a wealth of talents providing an equally eclectic range of products that are thoughtful and vibrant in equal measure. For Luca Rizzi, Tutoring and Consulting Director at PITTI Immagine, the pivotal element was to emphasize craft that emanated feel-good optimism—betting on British textile designer Patrick Taylor as the newcomer to watch ahead of the upcoming edition of Italy's most sought-after menswear fair.

"I chose Patrick for two main reasons; firstly because his products genuinely make me happy, as fashion no longer gives you the lightness it used to convey. He gave me simplicity, joy, and colour," says Rizzi.

"Since Pitti's Tutoring Award consists of six months worth of mentorship, we'll sit next to Taylor and work on two paths. The first, his professional career as a consultant designer for companies: which means that together with him, we will understand what is the best path for his career. One thing that happens a lot is that these guys leave school and take a little bit of everything that happens with little to no consciousness. The problem is that if you start a career, sometimes it's not that easy to avoid it [...] We will try to make him understand what it means to have a brand."

Zhuan Lei

Gabrielle Siswandiono

Freedom of expression, social responsibility and technical sensitivity are all part of the agenda: Sara Sozzani Maino, Creative Director of the Sozzani Foundation in Milan, very much concurs. "The things that one can now notice—which has been firmly in place for years—are the topics of social and ethical responsibility," says Sozzani Maino.

"These creatives have ingrained their values, and therefore I also believe that the discourse of creative freedom is to have a vision that is liberated from all constraints and that doesn't need to force themselves to sell; they express what they want to do, and here everyone has their own story to tell. I believe that this is a unique thing, and I see that it is continuing to grow."

by Chidozie Obasi

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