

Fondazione ITS: creativity takes the stage in 2026 with ITS Contest and ITS Arcademy

The international platform dedicated to emerging designers returns with a new edition, accompanied by three exhibitions from Italy's first museum of contemporary fashion.

- Now in its **24th edition**, **ITS Contest** remains a unique global platform for emerging designers. This year's call has attracted **over 700 applicants from 74 countries**, representing **89 of the world's leading art and design schools**. Its theme, **Rise and Shine**, is an invitation to give one's best — not for competition, but for contribution.
- Through the **10 × 10 × 10** format, **ten emerging designers** will be invited to **Trieste** for a **ten-day creative residency**. Each will receive **€10,000** and present their work in a **ten-month exhibition** at ITS Arcademy. Among the 2026 partners are **OTB, Swatch, and Ray-Ban**, part of **EssilorLuxottica**.
- Three exhibitions are set to open in March 2026 at **ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion**, including *Exposure – The Power of Being Seen*, curated by Tom Eerebout. The show will unveil the creative dialogue behind some of the most iconic looks worn by international pop stars and performers – **from Harry Styles to Lady Gaga**.

Trieste, November 10, 2025 – At a time marked by deep transformation and uncertainty, protecting creativity has become a shared priority. It means safeguarding one of humanity's most valuable resources — a driving force which, as leading international organisations acknowledge, fosters innovation, collective well-being, and social cohesion, paving the way for a more sustainable future.

For more than two decades, **Fondazione ITS** has been at the forefront of protecting and promoting creativity, pioneering an approach that has earned international recognition. Its 2026 programme renews that mission with the support of partners who share its values, **uniting to sustain young talent and cultivate a culture of creativity open to everyone**.

“Every ITS project is born from an act of trust and a shared vision. I believe in creativity as a force that unites, heals, and builds bridges between people and generations. Those who choose to walk alongside us are not simply supporting a contest or a museum — they are joining a movement that places beauty at the service of the future.
– **Barbara Franchin**, President of the ITS Foundation and founder of ITS Contest and ITS Arcademy - Museum of Art in Fashion

The spirit of sharing runs through every aspect of Fondazione ITS — from **ITS Contest**, the international platform dedicated to emerging designers, to **ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion**, Italy's first museum of contemporary fashion. Through exhibitions, learning experiences, and inclusive initiatives, ITS Arcademy invites audiences of every generation to

discover the **power of creativity**, with particular sensitivity towards those in vulnerable circumstances.

Together with the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and **PromoTurismoFVG**, Fondazione ITS is supported by a network of brands and companies that share its values and vision — a community of partners who view creativity as a catalyst for sustainability and innovation, and as a force that strengthens the bond between culture, territory, and enterprise.

“ITS Contest and ITS Arcademy are strategic assets for the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, which is why the regional administration’s support remains strong and unwavering. Thanks to participation by young talents from every continent, the event successfully promotes our region’s image worldwide, celebrating its international spirit. We take great pride in the creative heritage preserved within the ITS Arcademy collection - an invaluable treasure for our territory - and we will continue to invest in creative initiatives that foster wellbeing and strengthen the cohesion of our community.”

– **Massimiliano Fedriga**, President of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region

ITS Contest 2026 – *Rise and Shine*: creativity at the forefront

“I:C 2026 is an invitation to shine.

To transform talent into action, because every spark can ignite another.

To open up to different perspectives and all possibilities.

Moving forward together, without fear stopping us.

To challenge the present, rethink materials and forms, imagine new ways of living in a more sustainable future.”

Rise and Shine is the theme that shapes ITS Contest 2026 — an invitation for young creatives to take a stand and to face the challenges and uncertainties of our time with clarity, courage, and imagination.

Amid today’s environmental, social, and cultural crises, ***Rise and Shine*** emerges as a **collective call to action**, a reminder that creativity can become both a source of light and a catalyst for real change.

“ITS is an extraordinary creative laboratory that, for over twenty years, has discovered some of the most influential fashion talents of our time in the luxury industry. The new generations have a fresh vision of fashion — for them, sustainability is innate and essential, and the bravery to explore new shapes, materials, and perspectives comes naturally. I look forward to discovering this year’s finalists and wish each of them to

shine brightly and to always be guided by instinct.”

– **Renzo Rosso**, President and founder of the OTB Group

Now in its **24th** edition, **ITS Contest** reaffirms its status as one of the world's leading platforms for discovering and promoting new talent in fashion design. Not only future creative directors destined to follow in the footsteps of those now leading houses such as Chanel and Gucci, but also a new generation of artisans and entrepreneurs redefining fashion through innovation and sustainability — alongside pattern makers, product developers, coordinators, and many others who, behind the scenes, form a vital part of the global fashion ecosystem.

“The creative thinking of the new generations lights the future as a space of possibilities. With EssilorLuxottica and ITS Contest, we aim to nurture this energy, where curiosity, experimentation and vision become tools for positive change. This is where the future of design begins: with those who dare to imagine it differently.”

– **Matteo Battiston**, Chief Design Officer at EssilorLuxottica

The **ITS Contest 2026** builds on the successful format introduced in the previous edition. Ten designers, selected from hundreds of applications from around the world, will receive the **I:C 10 × 10 × 10 Award**, which includes:

- participation in a **ten-day creative residency** in Trieste, guided by tutors and industry professionals
- the opportunity to showcase their work for **ten months in the exhibition *Rise and Shine***, hosted by **ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion**
- **€10,000**

The ITS Contest partners will accompany the selected designers through experiences and activities designed to broaden their understanding of the industry and strengthen the skills essential to their professional growth.

“It is indeed a great joy and an inexhaustible inspiration to be once again supporting ITS and Arcademy! Every year, the thrill of discovering new talents, the emotion of sharing the young creatives’ dream, the curiosity to explore unprecedented languages through their eyes give us energy, push us to look forward and beyond, give us the gift of hope and make our hearts beat faster! Swatch & ITS – a love story that ticks.”

– **Carlo Giordanetti**, CEO Swatch Art Peace Hotel

The selecting of new talents is currently underway, led by an **international Jury** that will conclude its work during the final event on **19–20 March 2026**. On those days, Trieste will once again become the capital of emerging creativity — a meeting point for the global fashion community and a stage for the designers shaping the future of fashion.

ITS Contest 2026 is held with the support and collaboration of the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and **PromoTurismoFVG**, in partnership with the **OTB Group**, **Swatch**, and **Ray-Ban** part of **EssilorLuxottica**, and under the patronage of the **National Chamber of Italian Fashion**, **Fondazione Ferragamo**, **Fondazione Sozzani**, **Modateca Deanna**, **Pitti Tutoring & Consulting**, and **Inside Out Fashion, Textiles & Home**.

ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion: three exhibitions exploring the language of creativity and image

We live in a world of images — they define us, connect us, and, at times, overwhelm us. In 2026, Italy's first museum dedicated to contemporary fashion will present a three-part exhibition project that explores the power of creativity and visual language in shaping the ideas and emotions of our time — to learn how to read it, understand it, make it our own, and above all, to be inspired.

The ITS Arcademy exhibitions are held under the patronage of the **Italian Ministry of Culture** and **RAI**, supported by the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and **PromoTurismoFVG**, and co-organised with the **Municipality of Trieste**.

“ITS Arcademy represents the culmination of a project that began over twenty years ago and has now opened its doors to the entire city, offering a unique opportunity to engage with creativity, whatever your background. ITS hasn't just created something unique in our city, something the world admires, it gives us a chance to create ourselves. The heritage of ITS Arcademy, through internationally acclaimed exhibitions, perfectly embodies the spirit of Trieste: a border city, open and dynamic, where cultures meet and new ideas are born. A source of pride for all of us.”

– **Roberto Dipiazza**, Mayor of Trieste

EXPOSURE – The Power of Being Seen, from Harry Styles to Lady Gaga 26.3.2026 - 3.1.2027

Celebrities have become the faces and bodies through which today's desires, values, and contradictions are expressed. Behind every public appearance lies an unseen process of interpretation and storytelling, led by the stylist — a powerful yet discreet figure who works collaboratively to turn identity, emotion, and intention into image.

Every outfit, every red-carpet pose captures a silent dialogue — not without risk — between

those who master the art of being seen and those who make it possible, between the body on display and the gaze that frames it.

In *EXPOSURE*, Belgian stylist **Tom Eerebout** — known internationally for his collaborations with artists such as **Lady Gaga** (for whom he curated the now iconic appearance at the Paris Olympics), **Kylie Minogue**, **Rita Ora**, and **Austin Butler** — reveals his world through a selection of creations worn by some of pop culture's most celebrated figures, including pieces by designers who began their journey in Trieste through **ITS Contest**.

The exhibition catalogue, edited by **Tom Eerebout** and **Emanuele Coccia**, gathers a series of dialogues intertwining philosophy, fashion, and curatorial thought — conversations between the philosopher, the exhibition's curator, and fashion historian **Olivier Saillard**: three creative minds brought together by their collaboration with ITS Arcademy.

The urban installation ***EXPOSURE - The Power of Being Seen*** accompanies the museum exhibition with ten large-scale images displayed along **Via Cassa di Risparmio**, transforming the heart of **Trieste** into an open-air museum. The photographs, which explore the relationship between body, dress, and gaze, invite viewers to reflect on the art of being seen and on the narrative power of the image — extending beyond the walls of ITS Arcademy the same energy and theatrical intensity that animate its exhibition spaces.

RISE AND SHINE – Design Talent Now **The ten designers of ITS Contest 2026** **26.3.2026 - 3.1.2027**

The showcase presenting the projects of the ten designers selected for **ITS Contest**, chosen from hundreds of applications from around the world, has become a fixture in the **ITS Arcademy** calendar. Each edition renews the dialogue between young creatives and visitors through the **Public's Choice Award**, which invites audiences to vote for the most inspiring project — a simple act of participation that transforms the visit into a shared experience, an authentic encounter between creator and observer.

“Like a seismograph tracing waves of creativity, our in-depth analysis of the submitted projects allows us to capture the minds of young designers and take a snapshot of their generation. This year, fashion becomes a laboratory of identity, where transformation replaces definition and the body becomes a political arena. A plurality of cultures intertwines local traditions and global sensibilities in a critical approach that asserts the freedom to express oneself while rejecting all forms of restriction and narrow-mindedness. The past remains a lesson we have yet to learn. Chaos becomes a method: craftsmanship, awareness, and multiplicity shape the language of a new generation.”

– **Barbara Franchin**, President of Fondazione ITS and Founder of ITS Contest and ITS Arcademy

Ten voices, ten visions of the future expressed through fashion — in a dialogue with the public for ten months before becoming part of the **ITS Arcademy Collection**, a remarkable archive of over **15,000 pieces** preserved for future generations thanks to the support of **Generali**.

SUPPORTING ITS CONTEST 2026:

THE FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA REGION

Io Sono FVG - I am Friuli Venezia Giulia: ITS Contest 2026 is proud of its roots in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and its role in helping shape the cultural future of the area. Embracing the spirit of cultural exchange that defines this region, ITS Contest aims to be a collector and creator of new perspectives. ITS Contest 2026 is supported by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and Promoturismo FVG.

#iosonofvg

OTB

OTB is the international fashion group that owns the iconic brands Diesel, Jil Sander, Maison Margiela, Marni and Viktor&Rolf. The Group also controls the companies Staff International and Brave Kid and holds a stake in the American brand Amiri. An acronym for “Only The Brave”, OTB believes in pushing the boundaries of fashion and style, supporting the creativity of international talent and expressing the full innovative spirit and uncompromising courage of its founder and chairman, Renzo Rosso. With over 7,000 employees worldwide, the Group is built on a digital-first approach that places the consumer at its centre, a concrete and long-term commitment to creating a sustainable, technology-driven business, and a strong focus on social responsibility through the OTB Foundation.

For more information: OTB Corporate Communication
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SWATCH

Since its creation, conceived as a universal, democratic object, Swatch has been thriving on diversity, multiplicity, dynamism, inclusion and positive energies that intertwine, feed on each other and multiply. In this vein, in 2011 the Swatch Art Peace Hotel opened in Shanghai: a remarkable position, in the heart of the most dynamic and vibrant of Chinese metropolis, a unique space in terms of dimensions, style and capacity, expressly conceived for artists of all generations, from all countries and all disciplines, that will make here their ‘home’ for a few months and have the chance to carry out their work and express their talent, meet other artists and interact with the local art community. Since its opening, the Swatch Art Peace Hotel has been hosting more than **600** artists from **60** countries. Ten of them were recipients of the ITS/Swatch Art Peace Hotel award in previous editions of the contest.

RAY-BAN PART OF ESSILORLUXOTTICA

Ray-Ban is a global icon in eyewear design, renowned for its timeless style, authentic craftsmanship, and pioneering spirit. Founded in 1937 and part of the EssilorLuxottica portfolio, the brand has shaped generations through its legendary Aviator and Wayfarer silhouettes and

continues to evolve with innovation-driven collections such as Ray-Ban Meta — merging heritage design with cutting-edge AI technology.

From music and film to fashion and art, Ray-Ban has long stood as a symbol of individuality and cultural expression. Its designs transcend trends, empowering people to express their true selves through style and vision. With a legacy built on authenticity and innovation, Ray-Ban remains at the forefront of modern eyewear — where heritage meets the future.

More about Ray-Ban:

Website: [ray-ban.com](https://www.ray-ban.com)

Instagram: @rayban

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@RayBanFilms>

TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@rayban>

CAMERA NAZIONALE DELLA MODA ITALIANA

The Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana is the non-profit association that disciplines, coordinates and promotes the development of Italian fashion. It represents the highest cultural values of Italian fashion and aims to protect, coordinate and enhance its image, both in Italy and abroad.

FONDAZIONE FERRAGAMO

Fondazione Ferragamo was established in 2013 with the aim of making the new generations aware of the values of craftsmanship and Made in Italy according to Salvatore Ferragamo's work. The main purpose is to inspire young talents to pursue their creative dream.

FONDAZIONE SOZZANI

Fondazione Sozzani was established in 2016 by Carla Sozzani and is dedicated to the promotion of culture through photography, fashion, the fine arts, and applied arts. The Foundation has assumed the patronage of Galleria Carla Sozzani and continues all relevant public functions that the Gallery has supported since 1990. Sara Sozzani Maino has curated and coordinated projects dedicated to education, responsibility and the next generation of creatives.

MODATECA DEANNA

Modateca Deanna, International Centre for Fashion Documentation, gathers and promotes the identity of the knitwear factory Miss Deanna, founded by Deanna Ferretti back in 1950. Modateca, research and creativity hub, under the leadership of Sonia Veroni, promotes the Italian Knitwear.

PITTI TUTORING AND CONSULTING

The Tutoring & Consulting Direction of Pitti Immagine supports designers and brands in their professional and creative development with orientation and consultancy activities.

INSIDE OUT FASHION, TEXTILES & HOME

Inside Out Fashion, Textiles & Home (IO FTH) is one of the six verticals of Inside Out (IO), holding company founded by renowned environmental advocate Suzy Amis Cameron, dedicated to creating bold, revolutionary solutions for the world's most pressing challenges. IO designs ecologically responsible and ethical innovations across six key areas: IO Science Research Technology, IO Fashion Textiles Home, IO Food, IO Education, IO Media, and IO Wellness – balancing commercial success with meaningful environmental and social impact. The companies and projects that fall under IO FTH's umbrella have been organized in four key areas: Education, Media, Brands, and Consulting, each supported by the Inside Out's other verticals and investment in scientific research and innovation collaboratively with institutions like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Texas Tech, and Georgia Tech.

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