

# From Visibility to Viability: Serge Carreira on What Makes Emerging Talent Last

Before the ITS winners were announced in Trieste, MODEM asked Serge Carreira, juror at the competition, Director of Emerging Brands Initiative at the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode, and affiliate professor at Sciences Po in Paris, about the new expectations placed on emerging brands, the fragile path from visibility to viability, and the qualities that make a designer endure. Through the FHCM's SPHERE initiative, Carreira works closely with young houses at the intersection of visibility, development and market reality.

MODEM: Beyond aesthetics, what makes a young designer stand out today in the eyes of industry professionals?

SERGE CARREIRA: *What is needed more than ever is to have something to say, somehow, and to create real consistency between concept and execution. Very often, particularly with young designers, but not only with young designers, by the way, there is a gap between what is expressed in terms of message and concept, and what finally comes through in the execution. When an artist, and particularly an emerging one, is really able to translate and convey that vision into the garment and the look in a very consistent way, it becomes quite impactful.*

MODEM: The transition from critical recognition to economic viability remains fragile. At what point does a young brand become truly "credible" on the market?

SERGE CARREIRA: *It is not just about the concept or what they stand for. It is also about setting up a whole scheme, including the supply chain, that is aligned with what they want to say and the way they want to say it, and about being able to deliver products. At the end, fashion is a business, but we sell creativity. It is not just about selling a product; it is a creative product. What makes the difference is when a designer has been able to build a supply chain that allows him or her to have a true proposition that is both creative and efficient in terms of production and quality.*

MODEM: Buyers seem more cautious today. What do they concretely expect from emerging brands before committing?

SERGE CARREIRA: *They need to be convinced by the product and by the accuracy of the message, but not just by one piece, rather by a silhouette somehow, by a wardrobe that conveys that message. And the message has to be accurate. That is what can definitely make the difference for a buyer. It is not just about having someone hyped. Particularly in a very harsh economic landscape, hype is not enough to be there. Maybe it was five years ago; now it is really about how you are able to deliver.*

MODEM: Sphere acts as a visibility accelerator. But can it still directly influence the commercial success of brands?

SERGE CARREIRA: *Yes, definitely, because we offer the possibility to sell, so it can. The showroom is, in itself, a place where a brand can present and sell the collection, so it is definitely something that can boost sales. Then, if a brand is not ready, or does not yet have everything in place, Sphere will not replace the effort the brand has to make in order to have a collection that is consistent, bold, able to deliver the message, creative, and also product-driven. We support them, of course, but the idea is not to step in as agents, and we are not an incubator either. We are*

*really a platform. We offer this space, this connection and this exposure to allow them to present themselves to the press and to the ecosystem, and also to develop business. For this reason, if they're successful within Sphere, they don't have to start all over again once they leave.*

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MODEM: Finally, what makes you think, when you see a designer: "this one can last"?

SERGE CARREIRA: *It is a combination of being obviously talented, of having something very accurate to express, and, more than ever, of being grounded while still being a dreamer. It is more necessary than ever to be grounded, but you cannot just be down to earth, you also need to remain a kind of dreamer.*

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By Florian Müller & Anna Rita Russo for MODEM.



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