

ITS Contest 2026: This Year's Winners Announced. On show from 26 March at ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion.

- Special prizes have been awarded to ten designers aged between 22 and 33, selected by an international jury comprising leading figures from fashion and design, as well as representatives of the international press and digital creators.
- The Jury's Special Mention has been awarded to Belgian designer **Chloë Reners**
- Each designer selected receives the **ITS Excellence Award 10×10×10**: a €10,000 grant, a ten-day creative residency and the opportunity to exhibit their work for ten months in a special exhibition, **Rise and Shine**, opening on 26 March at ITS Arcademy – the first museum in Italy dedicated to contemporary fashion.

Trieste, 20 March 2026 – The winners of ITS Contest 2026 have been announced in Trieste. The ten emerging designers, aged between 22 and 33 and representing three continents, were chosen by an international jury drawn from the worlds of fashion, design, culture and communication.

Each designer has previously been awarded the **ITS Excellence Award 10×10×10**, which includes a €10,000 prize, a ten-day creative residency and a ten-month exhibition of their work in the **Rise and Shine** showcase, opening from 26 March at ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion, Italy's first contemporary fashion museum.

Founded in 2002 by **Barbara Franchin**, ITS Contest is one of the leading international platforms dedicated to emerging talent in fashion design. Each year, it selects young creatives from around the world and guides them through a programme combining residency, mentoring and critical interaction with an international jury. Their work is also acquired into the ITS Arcademy museum collection.

The 2026 winners join a lineage that has seen designers debuting at ITS Contest go on to lead some of the most influential international fashion houses, reaffirming the Contest's role as a privileged observatory on the future of fashion.

The Awards

I:C JURY SPECIAL MENTION

The I:C Jury Special Mention is a special award presented to a designer from ITS Contest 2026, intended to offer tailored support in line with their creative needs and aspirations. More than a celebration, it represents a concrete and enduring commitment by Fondazione ITS, which translates into mentorship, professional networking and access to industry opportunities. Thanks to attentive listening and a deep understanding of emerging talent, this award becomes a springboard for the future, accompanying the designer through the next steps of their creative journey. Moreover, the designer will return the following year as a jury member, joining the prestigious ITS network, which brings together some of the most influential figures in international fashion, and offering their support and guidance to the next generation of emerging talents.

Awarded to: **Chloë Reners (Belgium)**

"Chloë commands a likeable authority, balancing her well-researched expertise with a confident vision for the future. Offering a much needed female perspective in a still male dominated industry, Chloë has the potential to steer the helm of a fashion house. Composure, patience, and obsession combined, she possesses an array of attributes that justify her receipt of this year's Jury Special Mention."

I:C 10 x 10 x 10 AWARD

The ten selected designers receive the I:C 10 x 10 x 10 Award, which includes:

- participation in a ten-day creative residency in Trieste, supported by mentors and industry professionals;
- the opportunity to exhibit their work for ten months in the “*Rise and Shine*” exhibition hosted by ITS Academy – Museum of Art in Fashion;
- €10,000

Previously awarded to Darius Betschart (France), Steven Chevallier (France), Yi Ding (China), Jamie O’Grady (United Kingdom), William Palmer (United Kingdom), Stan Peeters (Belgium), Chloë Reners (Belgium), Tidjane Tall (France), Anna Maria Vescovi (United States), Wenji Wu (China).

I:C OTB AWARD

The OTB Group offered a one-day training visit to the OTB headquarters, where the young designers were able to see first-hand the stages involved in creating the Group's brands' garments and accessories, as well as a mentoring and coaching session on best practices in sustainability with the OTB Group experts.

Awarded to Darius Betschart (France), Steven Chevallier (France), Yi Ding (China), Jamie O’Grady (United Kingdom), William Palmer (United Kingdom), Stan Peeters (Belgium), Chloë Reners (Belgium), Tidjane Tall (France), Anna Maria Vescovi (United States), Wenji Wu (China).

“We had the pleasure of welcoming the young ITS designers to the headquarters of OTB Group and Diesel. We shared with them our commitment to sustainability, and it was inspiring to see how much curiosity they showed towards these topics. At the same time, engaging with young designers from all over the world brought energy, freshness, and diverse perspectives, continuously enriching and nurturing our company’s DNA.

Moments like these represent a true exchange: on one hand, the opportunity to share what we do every day in our work; on the other, the chance to offer insights, suggestions, and a concrete vision of what it means to build one’s own path in the fashion industry.

During the visit, the designers had direct contact with the Diesel denim world, visiting the brand’s headquarters, its creative spaces, and the historical archive, which holds over 80,000 research and collection pieces from 1978 to today. Sharing our passion and the story of this brand with curious and passionate young talents is always an opportunity for mutual inspiration.”

I:C RAY-BAN PART OF ESSILORLUXOTTICA AWARD

This will consist of a day at the prestigious EssilorLuxottica Experience Centre (at Via Tortona 35 in Milan). The chosen finalist will present their project to an in-house audience and will also have the opportunity to interact with them during a networking session. The finalist will be able to immerse themselves in the day-to-day operations of the EssilorLuxottica Design Team, working closely with the Style Department and experiencing first-hand the creative and design process within the eyewear industry.

Awarded to: Steven Chevallier (France)

“Steven Chevallier’s project OUT RAGE captures today’s social climate through a bold mix of clashing graphic prints and tactile design. His work perfectly reflects the Ray-Ban spirit - expressive, inclusive, and forward-looking. Drawing inspiration from queer artist-activists of the 1980s, Steven pays tribute to those who fought for marginalised communities while channeling the resilience and creativity of a new generation.

His collection blends unisex silhouettes and strong accessories to create a contemporary, empowered look that transforms fashion into a statement of identity and emotion. Steven’s vision demonstrates how design can beco-

me a space for freedom, dialogue, and self-expression - values at the heart of Ray-Ban's commitment to the next generation of creators."

I:C CAMERA NAZIONALE DELLA MODA ITALIANA AWARD

CNMI offers a scholarship worth €5,000, awarded according to the designer's creativity with special focus on the theme of sustainability in its broadest sense: product sustainability, environmental awareness and social sustainability.

Awarded to: Wenji Wu (China)

"Wenji Wu's collection expresses duality in garments, boldly exploring the tension between monstrous shadows and structured defensive shapes. The importance of craft and responsibility for Wu is fundamental, and Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana shares the same values."

I:C FONDAZIONE FERRAGAMO AWARD

Fondazione Ferragamo offers a stay in Florence, with an immersive experience in the world of Ferragamo and the places that inspired the work of founder Salvatore Ferragamo, to the designer, selected on the basis of his knowledge of materials and innovation.

Awarded to: Jamie O'Grady (United Kingdom)

"The 2026 I:C Fondazione Ferragamo Award goes to Jamie O'Grady for his ability to combine functional and technological approach with aesthetics. SubTraction embodies the fundamental principles of ethical design: starting from a reflection on overproduction and on the importance of the product, the designer creates a collection of sneakers that forcefully refocuses concepts such as functionality, durability, and sustainability, highlighting the contradictions of our era on the one hand and proposing an innovative solution on the other. The importance of design and projectuality, the creative sensitivity, the modularity of fashion objects, the approach to materials and the attention to personal well-being are also elements that bring O'Grady's work closer to the legacy of Salvatore Ferragamo."

I:C FONDAZIONE SOZZANI AWARD

Fondazione Sozzani offers the designer a dedicated presentation of his collection in its Milan spaces during 2026. The designer will be supported through curatorial guidance, exhibition setup, and communication activities aimed at enhancing the project and amplifying its visibility among a qualified audience within the fashion and contemporary culture sectors.

Awarded to: Tidjane Tall (France)

"Tidjane Tall's collection is a profound reflection on identity, elegance and individuality. Rather than erasing the history of his grandfather's work, his garments amplify implicit details, transforming references into wearable outfits. This dialogue between heritage and culture weaves resonant narratives in fashion redefining effortless elegance with a fresh perspective."

I:C MODATECA DEANNA AWARD

Modateca Deanna offers all-round knitwear mentorship, placing the creative in direct contact with companies, knitwear manufacturers, spinning mills and all workshops that may be useful for the development of their projects. Depending on needs and requests, visits and meetings may be organised to explore further the topics agreed on with key Italian manufacturing, industrial and artisanal organisations.

Awarded to: Wenji Wu (China)

"For the personal and creative journey around knitwear. Wenji has explored different techniques balancing tradition, yarns and colours translating his creative process into a convincing collection that is both pleasantly graphic and perfectly executed."

I:C PITTİ IMMAGINE AWARD

An exclusive invitation to attend Pitti Uomo, offering the winning designer a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in one of the most influential international fashion events. During the event, the winner will be guided by a dedicated member of the Pitti team, gaining firsthand insight into the dynamics of the fair, meeting key industry professionals across all sectors—including exhibitors, buyers, and press—and attending selected fashion shows. The experience will be further amplified through dedicated communication, including official mentions in Pitti's press releases.

Awarded to: William Palmer (United Kingdom)

"For his kind gaze on menswear, that is absolutely necessary today. William has mastery of the craft, he understands shapes and materials and he's ready to "bite into the market" with irony, bright lightness and a sharp sense of timing."

I:C WRÅD AWARD

WRÅD offers an exclusive three-day deep dive in the Italian fashion supply chain, starting from its HQ in Rome. A bespoke itinerary designed to meet the designer's needs and ambitions, with the opportunity to meet and present their work to leading Italian manufacturers and brands relevant to their career path, as well as access to the team and resources of WRÅD and Inside Out Fashion Textiles & Home for mentorship, advice and support. All travel expenses will be covered by WRÅD.

Awarded to: Jamie O'Grady (United Kingdom)

"In a world that produces and consumes approximately 23 billion pairs of shoes every year, Jamie O'Grady's research into modular sneakers stands out for its intelligence and relevance. We are proud to support his journey by providing access to culture, technologies, and partners that can help advance his work."

The ITS PUBLIC'S CHOICE AWARD worth €5,000, is to be presented in January 2027 to the winner chosen by the public of the *RISE AND SHINE - The Ten Designers of ITS Contest 2026* exhibition at ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion, Italy's first museum of contemporary fashion.

The showcase presenting the projects of the ITS Contest talents, selected from hundreds of entries from all over the world, is now a regular fixture in the ITS Arcademy calendar. Each edition rekindles the dialogue between young creatives and visitors thanks to the Public's Choice Award, which invites the public to vote for the most engaging project. A sign of participation that turns a visit into a shared experience, a genuine coming together between those who create and those who observe.

The ITS Arcademy exhibitions are held under the patronage of **the Italian Ministry of Culture and RAI FVG**. They are supported by the **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and PromoturismoFVG** and co-organised with **Comune di Trieste**.

The ITS Contest Partners

Io Sono FVG

ITS Contest 2026 is proud of its roots in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and of its role in helping to shape the territory's cultural future. Embracing the spirit of exchange that defines this border region, the contest acts as both a gathering point and a generator of new perspectives.

ITS Contest 2026 is supported by Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia and PromoTurismoFVG.

OTB Group is the international fashion group behind the iconic brands Diesel, Jil Sander, Maison Margiela, Marni and Viktor&Rolf. The group also controls Staff International and Brave Kid, and holds a stake in the American brand Amiri. An acronym for "Only The Brave", OTB is driven by the belief in pushing beyond the boundaries of fashion and style, supporting international creative talent and expressing the innovative spirit and uncompromising vision of its founder and chairman, Renzo Rosso. With more than 7,000 employees worldwide, the Group is built on a digitally led, consumer-focused approach, a long-term commitment to sustainable and technology-driven business practices, and strong social engagement through OTB Foundation.

For further information: OTB Corporate Communication
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SWATCH

Conceived from the outset as a democratic and universal object, Swatch is rooted in diversity, multiplicity, dynamism, inclusion and the exchange of positive energies that intersect and reinforce one another. Since 2011, this philosophy has taken tangible form in the Swatch Art Peace Hotel in Shanghai. Located in the heart of one of China's most dynamic and fast-evolving metropolises, the Art Peace Hotel is a unique artist residency in scale and scope. It welcomes creatives from every country, discipline and generation, offering them a temporary home for several months to develop their work, connect with fellow artists and engage with the local cultural community. To date, the residency has hosted more than 600 artists from 60 countries. Among them, 10 were recipients of the ITS/Swatch Art Peace Hotel Award in previous editions of ITS Contest.

RAY-BAN PART OF ESSILORLUXOTTICA

Ray-Ban is a global icon in eyewear, synonymous with timeless style, authentic craftsmanship and a pioneering spirit. Founded in 1937 and now part of the EssilorLuxottica portfolio, the brand has inspired generations with its legendary Aviator and Wayfarer frames, while continuing to evolve through innovative collections such as Ray-Ban Meta — where signature design meets advanced artificial intelligence technology. From music and cinema to fashion and art, Ray-Ban has long stood for individuality and cultural expression. Its frames move beyond seasonal trends, encouraging wearers to express themselves through style and personal perspective. Built on a legacy of authenticity and innovation, Ray-Ban remains a leading force in contemporary 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/@Ray-BanFilms> - TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@rayban>

Patronage

ITS Contest 2026 is organised by Fondazione ITS under the patronage of **Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana, Fondazione Ferragamo, Fondazione Sozzani, Miss Deanna, Pitti Immagine and Inside Out Fashion Textiles & Home.**

Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana is the non-profit association that regulates, coordinates and promotes the development of Italian fashion. It represents the highest cultural values of the sector and works to safeguard, strengthen and enhance its image, both in Italy and internationally.

Fondazione Ferragamo was established in 2013 to share with new generations the values of craftsmanship and Made in Italy that defined the work of Salvatore Ferragamo. Its primary aim is to inspire young talents to pursue their creative ambitions.

Fondazione Sozzani is a cultural institution established in Milan by Carla Sozzani in 2016 to promote photography, culture, fashion and the arts. The Foundation oversees the Galleria Carla Sozzani, continuing the important public role the gallery has played since 1990. Sara Sozzani Maino curates and coordinates projects dedicated to education, responsibility and new-generation creatives.

Modateca Deanna, the International Fashion Documentation Centre, preserves and promotes the identity of the knitwear company Miss Deanna, founded by Deanna Ferretti in the late 1950s. Today, as a research and creative hub led by Sonia Veroni, Modateca Deanna plays a significant role in promoting Italian knitwear.

Pitti Immagine, a future-forward concept curating the top products and stylistic evolutions through international fairs, events and cultural initiatives.

Inside Out Fashion, Textiles & Home (IO FTH) is one of six divisions within Inside Out, a holding founded by Suzy Amis Cameron with the mission of developing innovative and responsible solutions to address urgent global challenges. Inside Out operates through a systemic approach across six areas — Science Research & Technology, Fashion Textiles & Home, Food, Education, Media and Wellness — bringing together creativity, research and technology to generate economic, environmental and social value. The activities and ventures within IO FTH form a structured ecosystem for sustainability, articulated across four complementary areas: **Education, Media, Brands and Consultancy**. All departments are supported by the wider Inside Out divisions and by investment in scientific research and innovation, in collaboration with institutions including the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Texas Tech and Georgia Tech**.

TECH SUPPORTER

Domnia is the technology partner for the integrated management of bookings, ticketing and access passes. It provides advanced digital solutions for the cultural, tourism and trade fair sectors, streamlining entry processes and optimising operational flows for organisers and visitors alike.

PHARMA SUPPORTER

Eurospital, founded in Trieste in 1948, is an international scientific company operating across three business areas in the healthcare sector. It develops and markets pharmaceutical products, diagnostic devices and specialist nutritional foods, including protein-free and gluten-free products.

TRAVEL SUPPORTER

Trieste Airport offers flights to domestic and European destinations. Thanks to its strategic location, it serves as a gateway to Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto, as well as to Slovenia, Croatia and Austria. Connectivity is further enhanced by the airport's intermodal hub, which integrates a railway station, bus terminal and passenger terminal within a single infrastructure.

Fondazione ITS also works with **Urban Scents** on the creation of unique and engaging olfactory experiences and processes which create a discourse between the arts of fashion and perfumery. Born in Versailles and based in Trieste, Marie Urban Le Febvre is one of few hundred of noses in the world and a member of the International Association of Perfumer-Creators in Paris. Her experience includes collaborations with prestigious cultural institutions such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, the Museum of Palazzo Poggi in Bologna or the Burgtheater in Vienna.

ITS Academy – Museum of Art in Fashion and upcoming exhibitions

The works of the ten designers are to become part of the **ITS Arcademy – Museum of Art in Fashion** collection, which comprises over 15,000 design objects gathered from previous editions of **ITS Contest**, including visionary creative projects, clothing, accessories, jewellery and photographs. A collection of extraordinary historical significance, which traces the evolution of creativity in its most radical, artistic and experimental forms. **Generali** is the first private partner of ITS Arcademy, supporting and safeguarding the innovative projects of young talents.

From **26 March 2026 to 3 January 2027**, ITS Arcademy is opening up a new chapter in its exhibition programme with the launch of the following new exhibitions:

RISE AND SHINE - The Ten Designers of ITS Contest 2026

The showcase presenting the projects of the ITS Contest talents, selected from hundreds of entries from all over the world, is now a fixture in the ITS Arcademy calendar. Each edition rekindles the dialogue between young creatives and visitors thanks to the Public's Choice Award, which invites the public to vote for the most engaging project. A sign of participation that transforms the visit into a shared experience, a true coming together of those who create and those who observe.

EXPOSURE – The Power of Being Seen, From Harry Styles to Lady Gaga explores how the public image of contemporary icons is created and how fashion becomes a powerful tool in the construction of identity, symbolic power and pop culture narrative. Curated by stylist Tom Eerebout, the exhibition is a journey through the process of image-making: from styling to staging, from backstage to the time a look becomes part of the collective imagination.

Through clothes and accessories worn by **Lady Gaga, Harry Styles, Beyoncé, Madonna, Björk, Gwyneth Paltrow, Damiano David, Kylie Jenner**, right through **Jenna Ortega** and **Chappell Roan**, EXPOSURE showcases diverse styles and languages, as well as the work of the many designers and fashion houses that have shaped the aesthetics of our time, including participants and finalists of ITS Contest, whose debut works are now part of the museum's collection.

Tom Eerebout, a Belgian stylist and fashion consultant, has established himself as one of the most recognisable voices in contemporary celebrity style. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with leading figures in music, film and entertainment, including Lady Gaga, Kylie Minogue, BANKS, Austin Butler, Rebecca Ferguson and Sylvie Kreusch. In more than ten years in the industry, Eerebout has worked on international tours, music videos, red carpet events, editorial projects and fashion campaigns. He has served as Fashion Director for Lady Gaga's Las Vegas residencies Enigma and Jazz and Piano, as well as for The Chromatica Ball, in collaboration with Sandra Amador. Characterised by precision, versatility and a strong visual intelligence, his work explores fashion as a tool for constructing narrative and identity. Through his images and projects, Eerebout continues to question the role of clothing in defining visibility and appearance.

Outside the museum, a series of striking images brings the exhibition into the fabric of the city. The dialogue between show business icons and designer garments invites reflection on the culture of the image and the role of creativity in its construction.

ITS Arcademy exhibitions are held under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Culture and RAI FVG. They are supported by FVG Region and PromoturismoFVG and co-organised with Trieste City Council.

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For further information: pressoffice@itsweb.org