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E MONTFERRAT WAR COLLEGE  
ANTWERP FASHION DE DART  
KUNSTEN EN ARCHITECTUUR HOCHSCHULE  
IED MILANO  
INSTITUT DE LA MODA

THE BEST STUDENTS WORLDWIDE

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WOMENSWEAR  
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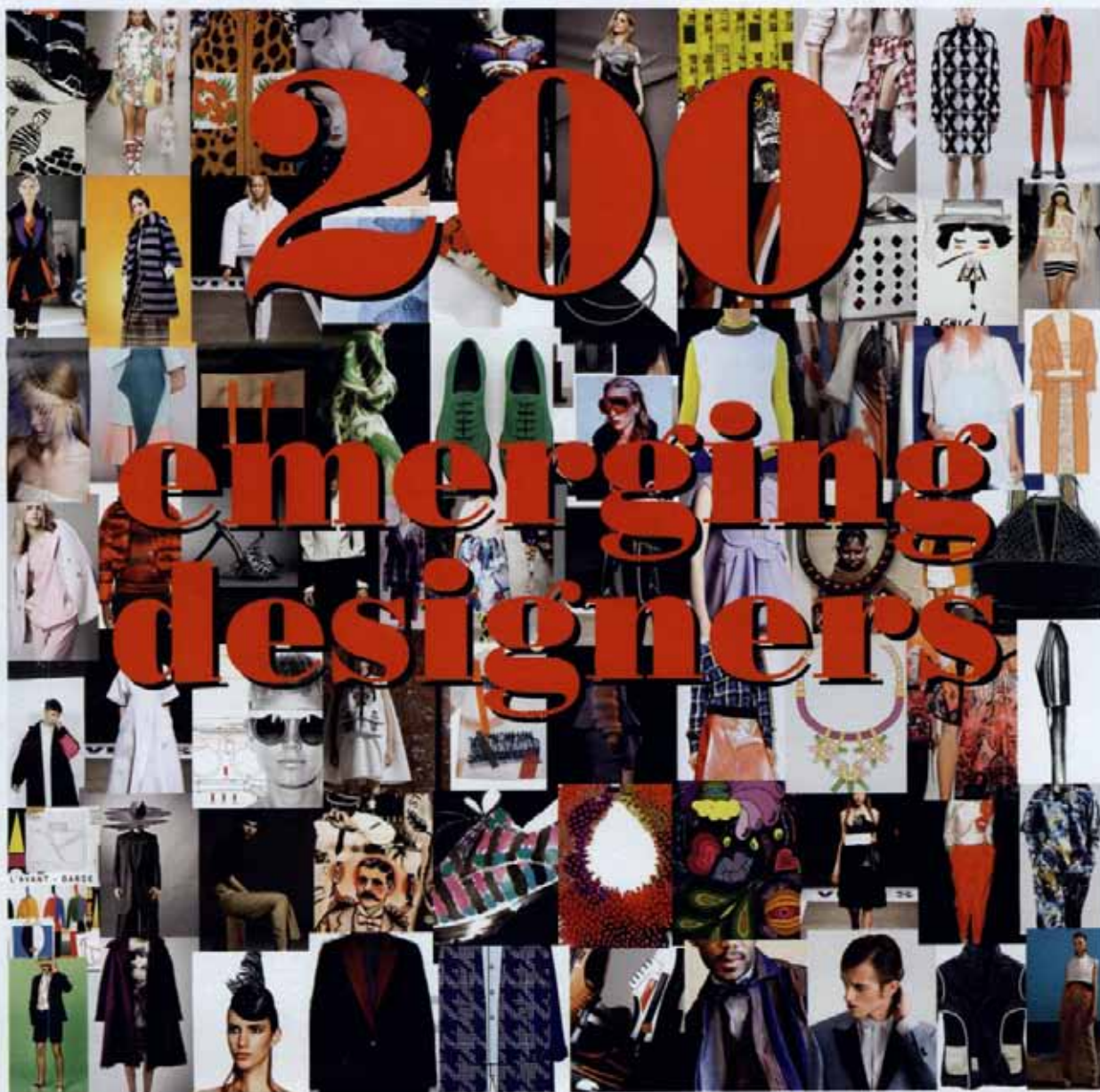
WHO IS ON NEXT?  
10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY,  
INSTAGRAM  
#SUPPORTNEWTALENTS,  
FASHION GOES GENDER-  
LESS, INTERNATIONAL  
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# VOGUE TALENTS

N. 7 - September 2014

THE EYE ON TOMORROW'S FASHION



# The lucid DREAMER

By Federico Chiara

For a fashion student, meeting her is like landing in a safe haven. Because Barbara Franchin, Director and Project Supervisor of ITS – the contest that sees Trieste filled every year with the designers of tomorrow – is a lucid dreamer who lives “with an open heart, in a vibrant state of hospitality”. This state of mind certainly facilitates her global search for new designers. Partly because, after 13 editions, the reputation of her launch pad (which consists of a permanent staff of 11, swelling to 100 during the contest) has grown out of all proportions to become an obligatory stopover on the international grand tour of creativity, with a prestigious jury that included Raf Simons, Viktor & Rolf, Renzo Rosso, Nicola Formichetti, Isabella Blow, Marina Abramovic. And partly because her radar features a foolproof mechanism: emotion. “I still get a shiver when confronted by the amazement of an idea and an original way of making it happen,” she says. From her privileged observatory, Barbara Franchin can trace a geographic and temporal map plotting the evolution of fashion’s talents. “Since the first editions, the Italians, French and Dutch have dropped off a bit. England has developed and improved, especially in accessories, thanks to the excellent London College of Fashion. Japan has founded new schools, too, and is also getting stronger. In fact this year we’ve got eight Japanese finalists. They speak another language, use different codes, and their fashion is instinctive. South Korea is still at a really high level as well. Russians and Ukrainians are always present with their very theatrical creations, but like the Japanese and Koreans, they have difficulty breaking into European brands for bureaucratic reasons.



Renzo Rosso and Barbara Franchin

Chou Har Lee now designs accessories for Saint Laurent.” On the subject of accessories and jewellery, these are categories currently experiencing a great evolution. But with the dearth of specialised schools around, a more thorough scouting exercise means seeking pointers from past finalists. And the Internet. “Compared to 13 years ago, today’s candidates are less interested in telling a story and more focused on working with materials and shapes. They’re more like artisans,” explains Franchin. She stresses the importance for a contest to have strong commercial partners, as is the case with OTB, Diesel, Swarovski, YKK, Swatch and Samsung. “In real terms, these companies represent a key work opportunity for the finalists. And the prizes amount to nearly 100,000 euros. So it’s not just an agreement between communication and sponsorship.”

## ATELIER 2.0

By Antonio Privitera

Perhaps to offer a quick response to the chains of fast-fashion, nowadays many young talents who produce in Italy are rediscovering the art of slowness. What is emerging is a kind of Atelier 2.0, which updates the glories of Renaissance artists and sets them in the best artisan workshops, albeit with different ways and means. Some draw on the conceptual, or introduce technological elements, while others faithfully adopt the time-honoured techniques of the handmade. However, the fact remains that designers are always present in the production process. They want to experiment and innovate. And if this trend is destined to last, over the years there will be an ever-increasing need for a specialised, craft-oriented workforce capable of satisfying the designers’ new demands. The Prada Group is convinced of this. In 2015 the brand will inaugurate the Prada Academy, a factory that will teach the artisan skills of fashion. “The idea originates from a need strictly related to our production, but also from a social analysis,” explains Patrizio Bertelli, CEO of the brand. “The academy will help to preserve a know-how characteristic of Italy and its manufacturing capacity. We want to offer young people a chance to acquire professional skills that will be increasingly sought after.” Does this promise redemption for artisans? “Young people are looking more and more for manual skills and creativity, and the new generations have greatly re-evaluated the work of artisans.” Thinking to the future, Bertelli continues: “Today there’s a lot of competition. But the market is the only true judge, and it rewards quality. It’s able to distinguish the real contents of a work from the aspects highlighted by marketing.” Among the younger designers, Benedetta Bruzichese decided to found her brand on a modus operandi that capitalises on the experience of old artisans in Italy. Hence the weaving on her bags is carried out by the women of Tuscany, in central Italy, who still use wooden looms. The Vitrus brand has the same approach. The clutch is produced by artisans in Palermo, Sicily, and it evolves as a conceptual work of art. The bags feature barbed wire coated with resin and set in plextex, as a metaphor for the hard work in the atelier. The main material is obtained from the woody fibre extracted from prickly pear leaves, which is left transparent or coloured. Then there’s untreated brass, which is bent, cut to size and soldered, polished and galvanised. Returning to the atelier also means focusing on the details of each garment as a “homage” to the individuality of the end customer. It involves overseeing the product step by step, modifying it during the execution with the fundamental support of highly skilled experts. For this reason many talents fall back on Italy’s age-old manufacturing firms. Examples include Ludovica Arrati, who works in Brandizzo, in what was once the manufacturer for Romeo Gigli; ANEA, which relies on Lanificio Bevacchi; and Valentina Brugnattoli, who works with Il Gioiello di Firenze, a historical Tuscan company specialised



Mario Carusano



Ennio Gatti



SuperDuper Hats



Luca

in luxury. Then Umbria Cashmere District Award also points towards this choice. The prize conceived by the Umbria Trade Agency encourages the future class of designers to engage in a creative rediscovery of cashmere. How? By calling on students at Central Saint Martins in London, at Universität der Künste and Weihenstephan Kunsthochschule in Berlin, and at Parsons The New School for Design in New York, and inviting them to propose a contemporary interpretation of this yarn. The fresh take on cashmere also aims to promote the Umbrian area – and its 500 firms specialised in top-level craftsmanship – as a potential manufacturing base for future fashion productions. Emanuele Bionchi is one designer who has centralised operations within the company. Each accessory is conceived and developed in-house at the small family factory in Levanella, Tuscany. Here, the early-20th-century machinery – such as welders and draw-plates – is flanked by high technology. It is a perfect example of Atelier 2.0, because the three-dimensional CNC machines start a piece that is always finished by a human hand. Davide Gatto also monitors every stage of his brand, from the tanning of the hides to the assembly of the parts by hand, ensuring every bag is unique. “There’s a market demand for artisan products with a strong sense of aesthetics, especially when it comes to men’s fashion,” affirms Antonio Cristoforo, Pitti Immagine’s marketing and development manager. Young designers who venture into high-end menswear supplement the artisan approach with a graphic-chromatic flair, always in line with traditional techniques. Luca Lorenzini, for instance, produces in small workshops in Campagna and Piedmont. Everything is stitched together by manual machines, allowing him to alter garments in the course of manufacture. Mario Carusano also uses manual looms, and for his small capsule collection he works with inlaid fabrics on stockinette stitching without any industrial washing or pressing. The pieces are decreased in their entirety and then assembled by hand. SuperDuper Hats, meanwhile, uses lightweight double felt, tying overlapped bands with raw-cut edges to emphasise or distort the shape of the classic hat. Cruna, the brand of Tommaso Pirotti and Andrea Ghetti, inserts and extracts its garments from the industrial process, with jackets and trousers subjected to constant handcrafted personalisations. The pocket linings are printed with cartoon motifs, the interior waistband has a fire design, and the selvage is sewn with a thread that contrasts with the surrounding material. W-D Man, instead, finds technical innovation in the double effect of the jackets. A digital print in slight relief is impressed on the reverse side of the materials using a transfer system, with no need for linings even in the steves. The result is a garment with interlining at a competitive price, made possible due to a reduction in labour.

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