Valentino gives virtual support to young designers with Italian Fashion Chamber

By Dominique Muret • 13 December 2021

Following the example of many other luxury labels, Valentino has launched a project to promote young designers. The Roman label has decided to offer its support in virtual fashion. In partnership with the Italian Fashion Chamber (CNMI), Valentino will invite one emerging designer to its Instagram account (@maisonvalentino) every season, in order to promote their creations.
Valentino’s idea is to “open the doors of its digital spaces and to offer young [designers] the chance to showcase their work and their message,” said the label in a press release. The initiative will kick off during the next Milan fashion week in February, with Marco Rambaldi. Bologna-born Rambaldi, 30, has been showing his collections in Milan since 2019.

A knitwear specialist, he advocates freedom and inclusivity in fashion, inspired by the protest movements of the 1970s, like feminism. A year after graduating in fashion design from IUAV University in Venice, in 2014, Rambaldi launched his women's ready-to-wear label, and immediately won the Next Generation competition organised by CNMI. However, before going all-in with his solo career, he decided to apprentice for two years at Dolce & Gabbana, definitively relaunching his label in 2016. Rambaldi’s collections are produced by small ateliers located in the Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy regions of Italy.

Valentino’s Creative Director Pierpaolo Piccioli chose Rambaldi to inaugurate the luxury house's virtual support initiative due to “his work in representing all men and women by means of inclusive castings, symbolising an increasingly engaged generation,” while praising “his daring, authentic effort to cancel stereotypes” and his “radically romantic, emotional and transversal aesthetic.”

Top labels have always been keen to support emerging stylists. They often team up with leading design competitions, like Chanel and Chloé with the Hyères Festival, OTB with International Talent Support (ITS) in Trieste, and LVMH, which has launched its own competition.

In the last few years however, especially with the pandemic, top labels have become even more committed. Last year, N°21’s designer Alessandro Dell’Acqua joined forces with the Tomorrow agency to back two emerging designers each season, giving them all-round support ranging from creativity to business consultancy.

In early 2021, Californian luxury denim label Amiri instituted the Amiri Prize, “an annual competition and fashion incubator for the unrecognised talents in American fashion.” More recently, French label AMI created the AMI Entrepreneurship Prize with the French Fashion Institute (IFM).

US group Capri Holdings (owner of Versace, Michael Kors and Jimmy Choo), via the Capri Holdings Foundation for the Advancement of Diversity in Fashion, recently announced the funding of scholarships for minority students in association with various academies, among them the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) and Central Saint Martins. A fresh wave of solidarity, as well as a way for these labels to rejuvenate and enhance their brand image.

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