



BRITISH
FASHION
COUNCIL



International designers from 25 countries to celebrate local fashion on London's global stage

International Fashion Showcase 2017 presented by Mercedes-Benz at Somerset House

17 – 21 February 2017

The British Council, British Fashion Council (BFC) and Mercedes-Benz are pleased to announce that collectively they will present work by emerging fashion designers from 25 countries for the International Fashion Showcase (IFS) 2017 when it returns to Somerset House for a second year in February. The exhibition will be the sixth edition of the annual showcase and forms a key part of London Fashion Week Festival, giving the public the opportunity to celebrate fashion and its universal relevance. This is the first time the IFS will be supported and presented by Mercedes-Benz that for the past 21 years has established itself globally as a key player and partner at key international fashion shows and events.

The IFS is a series of specially-commissioned and curated fashion installations featuring work by emerging designers from all over the world. Since 2012, 550 of the most exciting international designers from 70 countries have exhibited as part of the initiative. IFS responds to London's reputation for promoting and supporting new talent in the creative industries – a number of whom are working within Somerset House – by providing opportunities for designers from overseas to engage with the UK fashion community and build international connections.

The theme of this year's exhibition is Local/Global. Countries have been invited to explore the influence of place on fashion and to examine how emerging designers can transform their local culture into a global language. Fashion is shaped by its surroundings: the rhythms of nature, climate, cultural memory, social change and historical shifts are reflected in silhouettes, techniques and materials. The peculiarities of place give rise to different ways of designing, making and wearing fashion. By considering fashion within their own landscape the countries taking part in IFS will highlight the similarities and differences of our complex and connected world.

To reflect how fashion is influenced by its surroundings, the West Wing Galleries at Somerset House will be transformed by Studio Toogood using panels of stretched agricultural tarpaulin, neat stacks of bricks and fabric panels dyed with London clay. Here an emerging generation of international designers and curators will invite visitors to share their country's vision of Local/Global.

The exhibition will be arranged over 15 rooms, 14 of which will represent a country. There will be one group installation, 'Next in Line', curated by Shonagh Marshall which will feature designers from 10 further nations. In a dedicated space, Mercedes-Benz will showcase six emerging designers the brand has previously supported through its International Designer Exchange Programme (IDEP). As part of its ongoing global fashion commitment, Mercedes-Benz continues to support, nurture and mentor young and emerging design talent through the IDEP, which offers up-and-coming designers a unique opportunity to present their collections outside of their local markets to an international audience.

A series of business support seminars, organised by London College of Fashion, will help designers prepare for the showcase. The Designer Support Programme will bring together a network of LCF affiliated academics and researchers, to offer mentoring opportunities and business development during IFS. A collaboration with Fashion Scout will offer designers involved in IFS the opportunity to show their work on the catwalk.

A prize-giving ceremony scheduled for London Fashion Week February 2017, chaired by a panel of industry experts will announce a winning Country, Designer, and Curator. The panel is headed by Sarah Mower MBE, BFC Ambassador for Emerging Talent and Chief Critic at Voguerunway.com. For the first time, Mercedes-Benz will additionally present the winning Designer with the unique opportunity to showcase his or her collection at one of the currently more than 50 Mercedes-Benz Fashion platforms.

Caroline Rush CBE, BFC Chief Executive said: *"We are delighted to welcome Mercedes-Benz to the International Fashion Showcase initiative. Mercedes-Benz has been a long term partner of the British Fashion Council over different projects and their commitment to supporting emerging talent from all around the world is a great fit with the spirit of IFS. Each year London is proud to host the IFS designers who from all over the world bring their local stories and culture told through the lens of fashion."*

Sarah Mann, Director of Architecture, Design, Fashion, British Council, said: *"Now in its sixth year, the International Fashion Showcase continues to go from strength to strength, providing a unique opportunity for emerging fashion designers from all over the world to demonstrate the strength and diversity of global fashion during London Fashion Week. This year's theme; Local/Global, takes fashion's connection to its local context as its starting point, looking at and how young designers are exploring identity in an*

increasingly globalised world. The standard of work presented at IFS never fails to impress; and I look forward to seeing the diversity and innovation of the designers taking part in this year's exhibition."

Michael Bock, Director Sport- & Lifestyle Marketing, Mercedes-Benz said: *"For more than 20 years we have been committed to the world of fashion through promoting creative and talented people who represent both quality and variety in the fashion sector. We are excited to be partnering with the British Council and the British Fashion Council who are committed to support, nurture and mentor emerging design talent on the International Fashion Showcase. The IFS is a fantastic platform which much like the objective of the Mercedes-Benz International Designer Exchange Programme, cross-pollinates between nations and creates a valuable commercial and critical platform for upcoming and established designers."*

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-- Ends --

design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2017
#IFS2017 #LocalGlobal #mercedesbenzfashion

Notes to Editors:

Listings Information

Dates: 17 – 21 February 2017

Opening Hours: 10.00 – 18.00 Daily

Address: West Wing Galleries, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

www.somersethouse.org.uk

Free admission, pre-registration advised via Biletto <https://biletto.co.uk/international-fashion-showcase-2017>

Transport: Temple, Embankment, Charing Cross, Waterloo

For press and media enquiries about the International Fashion Showcase and information about the British Council contact:

Rebecca Ward

T: +44 (0) 7977 071450

E: rebecca@rebeccaward.co.uk

Or Mary Doherty, Senior Press Officer

T: +44 (0) 207 389 3144

E: mary.doherty@britishcouncil.org

For media enquiries about the British Fashion Council contact:

Michalis Zodiatis, Senior PR Executive
T: +44 (0) 20 7759 1989
E: michalis.zodiatis@britishfashioncouncil.com

For press enquiries about Mercedes-Benz Fashion contact:

Davina Wedderburn, Senior Account Director
T : +44 (0) 207 287 9890
E : davina.wedderburn@karlaotto.com

For media enquiries about Somerset House contact:

Stephanie Lilley, Acting Head of Press
T: +44 (0)20 7845 4638
E: stephanie.lilley@somersethouse.org.uk

International Fashion Showcase 2017 images: <http://bit.ly/1MQaY3e>

For more information visit: design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2017

The International Fashion Showcase 2012 was founded in the year of the Olympics to celebrate its values of respect, excellence, equality and friendship. Finalists included a group show by Botswana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, as well as Belgium, China, Estonia, Italy, Japan, Korea and USA. Korea was the winning country with their exhibition *A New Space Around the Body*, which showcased eight emerging designers from the region, and was presented with a trophy designed by Jordan Askill.

In 2013 Estonia was awarded with a sculpture designed by former BFC NEWGEN recipient Dominic Jones for their exhibition *The Estonian Ministry of Creative Affairs*. The shortlisted countries were Argentina, Austria, Estonia, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden), Switzerland and Tanzania.

In 2014 sixteen countries exhibited at a central venue at 180 Strand. The overall Showcase winner was again Estonia with their exhibition *Fashion Now: Estonia*; and the recipients of two new awards, for Designer and Curator, were Hyein Seo of Korea and Yoshikazu Yamagata of Japan respectively. Each winner was presented with a sculpture created by previous NEWGEN and BFC Emerging Accessory Designer 2010 recipient, jewellery designer Husam el Odeh.

New initiatives for 2015 included a partnership with On|Off, curators of Next in Line, and a designer support programme organised with London College of Fashion. Colombia were the winners of the International Fashion Showcase Country Award; while the Designer Award was presented to Julia Männistö from Colombia and the Curation Award went to Yegwa Ukpo of Stranger Lagos in Nigeria. Winners received a trophy designed by emerging Brazilian jeweller Fernando Jorge, a BFC Rock Vault graduate.

2016 saw the countries exploring the theme of Utopia and the Czech Republic were the winners of the International Fashion Showcase Country Award for their exhibition *Last Fata Morgana*; the Designer Award was presented to Hala Kaiksow of Bahrain for her impressive designs showcased in the Next in Line room, and the Curation Award went to Tala Hajjar of the Lebanon. Winners received a trophy designed by jewelers Yunus and Eliza, participants in the BFC Rock Vault initiative.

The International Fashion Showcase is directed by Anna Orsini, Strategic Consultant British Fashion Council and Niamh Tuft, Programme Manager British Council.

The Advisory Panel for the International Fashion Showcase 2017 is:

Chair: Sarah Mower MBE, BFC Ambassador for Emerging Talent and Chief Critic at Voguerunway.com

Alistair O'Neill, Central Saint Martins and Independent curator
Anders Christian Madsen, i-D
Anna Orsini, British Fashion Council
Ashish Gupta, Designer

Barbara Grispini, British Fashion Council
Claire Catterall, Somerset House
Fabio Piras, Central Saint Martins
Karla Otto, Karla Otto on behalf of Mercedes-Benz
Mandi Lennard, Mandi's Basement
Martyn Roberts, Fashion Scout & Graduate Fashion Week
Miriam Bouteba, Time Out
Natalie Kingham, Matches
Nick Vinson, Wallpaper*
Paul Yuille, London College of Fashion
Robb Young, Business of Fashion
Sarah Mann, British Council
Stavros Karelis, Machine A
Zowie Broach, Royal College of Art

About the British Council

The British Council global arts team works with the best of British creative talent to develop innovative, high-quality events and collaborations that link thousands of artists and cultural institutions around the world, drawing them into a closer relationship with the UK. The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We are a Royal Charter charity, established as the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our 7000 staff in over 100 countries work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year through English, arts, education and society programmes. We earn over 75% of our annual turnover of nearly £700 million from services which customers pay for, education and development contracts we bid for and from partnerships. A UK Government grant provides the remaining 25%. We match every £1 of core public funding with over £3 earned in pursuit of our charitable purpose.

www.britishcouncil.org

About the British Fashion Council

The British Fashion Council (BFC) was set up in 1983 to promote British fashion internationally and co-ordinate this promotion through fashion weeks, exhibitions and showcasing events. The BFC now supports designers beginning at college level and extending to talent identification, business support and showcasing schemes to help British designer businesses develop their profiles and business globally and promote British fashion and its influential role in Britain and London. The BFC Colleges Council offers support to students through its Foundation, BA and MA scholarships, links with industry through design competitions and Graduate Preview Day. Talent identification and business support schemes include the BFC Fashion Film sponsored by River Island; BFC Rock Vault; BFC Headonism; BFC/GQ Designer Menswear Fund supported by Vertu; BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund; NEWGEN and NEWGEN MEN. The British Fashion Council supports Boden's Future British initiative. Showcasing initiatives and events include London Fashion Week, London Collections Men, LONDON show ROOMS, the BFC Fashion Arts Foundation, International Fashion Showcase, London Fashion Weekend and the annual celebration of excellence in the fashion industry: The Fashion Awards.

www.britishfashioncouncil.com

About Mercedes-Benz

For the past 21 years, Mercedes-Benz has established itself globally as a partner and title sponsor at selected fashion weeks and events. The brand is currently involved in more than 50 fashion platforms globally, including Mercedes-Benz Fashion Weeks in Sydney, Beijing, Kiev, Tbilisi, Moscow and Berlin, as well as the acclaimed International Festival of Fashion and Photography in Hyères. Mercedes-Benz continues to support selected fashion events and platforms globally and over the course of two decades, has made a name for itself in particular for promoting talented new designers. As part of its global fashion commitment Mercedes-Benz continues to support young and talented fashion designers through the Mercedes-Benz International Designer Exchange Programme. The programme offers emerging designers a unique opportunity to present their collections outside of their local markets to an international audience. Launched in 2009, the Mercedes-Benz International Designer Exchange Programme is currently active across all of the Mercedes-Benz supported fashion platforms. The Mercedes-Benz International Designer Exchange Programme is often supported by an

award programme initiated by Mercedes-Benz and underpinned by a panel of experts. Mercedes-Benz is committed to nurturing and mentoring emerging design talent, and the International Designer Exchange Programme reinforces the brand's commitment to this.

www.mercedesbenz.com/fashion

About Somerset House

Somerset House is a unique part of the London cultural scene, a historic building within which surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th century origins, it has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Today, Somerset House is a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming to all and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries. Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture including photography, fashion, architecture and design, with an extensive integrated learning programme. We currently attract over 2.5 million visitors every year. It is one of the biggest communities of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses.

www.somersethouse.org.uk

About London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London

London College of Fashion's rich heritage and responsiveness to changes in design practice have positioned it as a leading global provider of fashion education, research and consultancy. The College's work is centred on the development of ideas: its staff and students use fashion alongside historical and cultural practice to challenge agendas and explore innovation. We redefine Fashion as a discipline as academic, ethical, sustainable, political, social and art and believe that it can be used to better lives; to drive change, to improve the way we live. Fashion is an industry; it does not live in isolation, and behind every designer is a supply chain, a business plan, a partnership. We nurture enterprise and support our students to gain skills in business and management so that they have an increased understanding of all the ingredients to create a sustainable design business in all senses of the word. Our focus is always the long term. London College of Fashion's history in craftsmanship, beginning in the early twentieth century with Shoreditch Technical Institute Girls School, Clapham Trade School and Barrett Trade School and the later additions of Cordwainers, gives us an unparalleled understanding of manufacture and quality, yet we are constantly refining and searching for cutting edge technique, with research centres such as the Centre for Sustainable Fashion. This, combined with a forward-thinking media and communications portfolio and a relationship with the global fashion and lifestyle industries, underpins our mission to "Fashion the Future".

www.fashion.arts.ac.uk

About Fashion Scout

Fashion Scout is the leading international platform spanning London and Paris Fashion Weeks. Scouting the most exciting new designers from across the globe Fashion Scout presents them to the top international press and buyers generating great media awareness and sales. From showcasing the UK's most promising graduates to hosting shows for IFS countries Fashion Scout is at the forefront of the international fashion scene, including recently pioneering the discovery of the incredible talent from Kiev.

The belief that fashion is truly international is the driving force behind Fashion Scout. Its founder, Martyn Roberts, is a regular guest at global fashion weeks scouting new talent and mentoring designers, preparing them for the international market and helping them build sustainable business.

www.fashion-scout.co.uk