

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Kering nurtures young talent through renewed Parsons competition

May 12, 2016



*Design by Lucy Jones, one of the winners of the 2015 Empowering Imagination contest*

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By STAFF REPORTS

Conglomerate Kering is spotlighting budding design talent through a partnership with The New School's Parsons School of Design.

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The fifth annual "Empowering Imagination" contest will give the 12 student finalists from Parsons placement on Vogue.com, and the winning two designers' looks will be featured in Saks' flagship store windows. Additionally, the pair chosen at the end of the competition will fly to Italy to tour Kering's production facilities, giving them a firsthand look at the inner workings of its fashion companies.

Graduate school

Twelve graduates from the class of 2016 were picked for their vision, established design identities and their mastery at technical elements of fashion. These designers will be showcased on Vogue's Web site from May 11-22, and the Vogue.com editors will host a mentoring session with them.

These finalists will present their physical thesis collection and portfolio on May 17. Their work, spanning women's wear, menswear and accessories, will be judged by a panel of fashion insiders including CFDA president Steven Kolb, Saks Fifth Avenue senior vice president fashion director Roopal Patel and designer Joseph Altuzarra.

The two winning designers will be announced at the 68th Parson Benefit on May 23. These graduates' thesis collections will then be on display exclusively in Saks' store windows from May 27 to June 10.

Additionally, the pair will take a two-week trip to Italy, visiting Kering's facilities, including its Kering Materials Innovation Lab, as well as brand locations in Milan, Vicenza and Florence.



*The Materials Innovation Lab focuses on sustainability*

"Since its creation, the Empowering Imagination' competition has rewarded eight talented young designers," said Laurent Claquin, head of Kering Americas, in a brand statement. "Each one has progressed along their own path.

"Our five-year collaboration with Parsons School of Fashion reflects Kering's core values and priority towards young talent. I am happy to offer once again to the winners the opportunity to learn about and connect with our brands in Europe."

Other brands have given students the opportunity to engage and collaborate.

Italian furniture maker Poltrona Frau encouraged material mindfulness with a program in partnership with New York's Parsons School of Design.

Students were tasked with developing ideas for new leather goods that could be constructed out of scraps while minimizing waste in the process, and the three winners spent a week with the brand's team to bring their prototypes to life. Creating this outreach program may help to get the next generation of designers invested in more sustainable production practices ([see story](#)).

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