

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Documenting progress, Dior presents young talent with Visual Arts Award

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French student Iris Millot has won the prize for the 6th edition of the Dior Art of Color Photography and Visual Arts Award for Young Talents. Image credit: Dior

By ZACH JAMES

French fashion house Dior's fragrance arm is acknowledging the work of burgeoning artists with an annual competition in its sixth year.

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Announced July 27, French student Iris Millot has won the prize for the Dior Art of Color Photography and Visual Arts Award for Young Talents. Organized by the maison and several partners, the contest honors the accomplishments of the craftspeople and creatives of tomorrow.

"Dior's fragrance division engages the sense of sight, through their photography competition," said Rebecca Miller, founder and CEO of [ARTful Communication](#), New York.

"They understand, like a camera's lens, our iris blends light, depth and focus," she said. "This type of competition expands consumers' view of a brand, what [they] find interesting, relevant and important."

"By supporting this initiative and sharing their vision through a different medium, it allows a broader audience to engage with their brand."

Farming and feminism

Selected out of a pool of 12 finalists, Ms. Milot's work comes out on top due to her depictions of tight-knit relationships and women's liberation.

The 22-year-old's photo series, "Mont Lion," centers imagery of her great aunt Hlne, who for the past four decades has been tending to her family's land in the French Alps. Connecting the history of farming to feminism, her work has earned her a 10,000 euro grant from Parfums Christian Dior, or just over \$11,000 at current exchange.

Judges enjoyed her "discreet illustrations of life choices and the traces they leave," finding deep meaning in the showcase that put Ms. Milot's female family member at its heart.

Christian Dior Parfums, the cole Nationale Suprieure de la Photographie and Luma Arles are delighted to announce the winner of the 6th edition of the "Dior Photography and Visual Arts Award for young talents": Iris Millot from the cole Nationale Suprieure de la Photographie pic.twitter.com/jGkAKPR2Oc

Dior (@Dior) July 26, 2023

"I thought it would be interesting to look at the story of a woman who has lived for more than 40 years in the middle of a forest in an old farmhouse, who farmed the land and who took part in the women's liberation movement," says Ms. Millot, in a video interview.

"You can see parts of her back and her hands, which for me is another form of portraiture."

While the photographer reports not expecting a win, she plans to use the prize money to further develop the project for other exhibitions, exploring new contexts and setting for her subject.

The judges that recognized the value of Ms. Millot's work are photographers themselves.

Among the lineup is frequent Dior collaborator and jury president Rafael Pavarotti. Peter Phillips, a make-up creative and image director at the maison, is also a part of the endeavor.

The brand also partnered with a range of French organizations, including the academic institution, cole Nationale Suprieure de la Photographie d'Arles and LUMA Arles, of which one of the jury members, Maja Hoffmann, is the founder.

The event showcasing the finalists' work is exhibited in a video recorded by Dior

While the sponsors, awarding label and winner are all distinctly Parisian, the contest is not exclusive to the city or its host country.

Entrants and finalists hail from around the globe. Photographers and visual artists from Mexico, the Netherlands, China and among other places, England offered up their own work for consideration.

All of the top 12 finalists' pieces are exhibited at the LUMA Arles Grande Halle through Sept. 24, 2023.

Entry is free to the public and is open between 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Industry overture

Throughout luxury, especially among fashion houses, competitions rewarding young creatives are commonplace, with several recent examples of note.

Last month, French jewelry maison Cartier announced the winner of its second Young Leader award. Dr. Bea Bakshi, a British physician, won \$55,000 in grant funding ([see story](#)).

RED CLUB x Cartier has announced Dr Bea Bakshi, founder of C the Signs, as the winner of the 2023 edition of the Young Leader Award at the annual ceremony held in New York.

<https://t.co/G9fwXutrnJ> pic.twitter.com/g3XaKKr2bG

Cartier (@Cartier) June 16, 2023

Earlier in July, Italian cashmere label Loro Piana showcased the winner of its seventh annual Knit Design Award, which seeks to foster the future of sustainable apparel ([see story](#)), and Italian fashion house Gucci joined in with its own effort. The latter brand gave 24 people based in North America \$1 million as part of its Changemakers initiative ([see story](#)).

While these brands are all giving back and paving a future for their respective industries, it is clear that they choose to go about it rather differently.

"To be perceived as a luxury brand certain marketing actions can help create the desired image and brand positioning," said Ms. Miller.

"Their business objective is to continue to differentiate themselves from other luxury brands by storytelling, emphasizing quality and superior craftsmanship, cultivating an aura of exclusivity, developing visually appealing content, creating memorable experiences [and by] providing a seamless and immersive digital presence," she said. "This is a natural extension of their visual marketing acumen."

"Dior is providing another way to view a critical detail of luxury, rarity, through another lens, that of a young artist."

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