

AUTOMOTIVE

# Mercedes-Benz fuels resourceful fashion design at Hyres Festival

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German visual artist Michael Sailstorfer created a series of works meant to inspire the next generation of sustainable apparel. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

By ZACH JAMES

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is forwarding its ESG efforts with its latest string of activations and grants.

Designer Petra Fagerstrom was awarded the brand's third-ever Sustainability Prize at the 38th annual Hyres Festival in France, coming out on top among a group of finalists and being awarded a "monetary grant." Celebrating sustainable fashion, the event and Mercedes-Benz's participation in it are brought together through an artistic campaign.

"At Mercedes-Benz, we have been engaging in fashion on a global scale for almost 30 years," said Julia Hofmann, head of branded entertainment & brand partnerships at Mercedes-Benz AG, in a statement.

"Our heartfelt congratulations to Petra Fagerstrom," Ms. Hofmann said. "We look forward to continue seeing her apply the skills acquired through our mentorship and wish her lots of success in his/her/their future career path."

## Driving change

Mercedes-Benz, in collaboration with multinational fashion agency Estethica and Hungarian fashion house Nanushka, offers a Sustainability Mentorship in which ESG experts from the partnered companies offered group and one-on-one guidance to contest finalists ahead of the Hyres Festival.

Ms. Fagerstrom was among the attendees of the digital event.

*The sculpture is shown off in a video released by Mercedes-Benz*

In discussion with those in the running for this year's Sustainability Prize, Mercedes-Benz encouraged competitors to use repurposed airbags, seat covers and belts, sun blinds, convertible roof fabric and floor mats from the automaker's vehicles within their respective collections.

Nanushka's founder and creative director, Sandra Sndor alongside the cofounders of Estethica, Orsola de Castro and Tamsin Blanchard were mentors to the finalists, giving them tips and insights into how to run an environmentally and economically sustainable business in the hopes of garnering continued adoption of the practices and ideals of the Hyres Festival even long after its ending.

Each of the ten finalists' work was put on display at The Shortlisted Showroom at Villa Noailles, headlining the multiple activations the German brand held within the event.

The C 111 artwork was created by Michael Sailstorfer to satisfy the longing of owning his dream car. This creative spirit is shared by the next generation of international fashion talents at the Festival d'Hyères [#VillaNoailles](https://twitter.com/VillaNoailles) [#MercedesBenz](https://twitter.com/MercedesBenz) [#MercedesBenzFashion](https://twitter.com/MercedesBenzFashion) [#Hyeres38](https://twitter.com/Hyeres38) [pic.twitter.com/JVGdwefGjz](https://pic.twitter.com/JVGdwefGjz)

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"It has proven to be so inspiring to work alongside the Hyères fashion finalists on their sustainability journey," said Ms. de Castro, Ms. Blanchard and Ms. Sndor, in a joint statement.

"Seeing their approaches to working around sustainable solutions, aesthetically as well as practically, these young talents show us that we must continue to be creatively inquisitive," the group said. "We appreciate the support (and, for the 2023 cohort also the beautiful materials) that Mercedes-Benz continues to provide for their formation."

Also included in the festivities were electric and plug-in hybrid shuttles, providing transportation for the Hyères Festival's guests while also having Mercedes-Benz EQ models available for test drives.

### Representing more

German visual artist Michael Sailstorfer created a piece said to inspire the next generation of sustainable apparel.

Called "C111," the artwork reinvents the Mercedes-Benz C111 model through a sculpture forged from upcycled materials, in line with the festival's "creative ethos," according to the automaker. Acquired by the brand in 2011, the work has been in the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection for over a decade, now being brought out for its ties to the respective futures of the automotive and fashion industries, as well as the approaches of the award's finalists.



*Models pose with the "C111" piece throughout the campaign. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

The reinvented C111 is photographed and recorded in its original state, the reused sheet metal rusting around the pins mounting it to the frame a Mercedes-Benz 190 E with welding marks pocking the surface.

Surrounding the vehicle are multiple models, each adorned in sustainable apparel styled by British brand consultant and stylist Louise Ford, a frequent tap among luxury, having worked for Dior, Burberry, Stella McCartney and Este Lauder, among others.

Visually striking images created by the presence of the car and the pieces lend the campaign an otherworldly nature. Other automotive brands, such as Bugatti ([see story](#)), BMW ([see story](#)) and McLaren ([see story](#)) have taken similar artistic approaches toward presenting their new releases and philanthropic efforts to their respective audiences.