

EVENTS/ CAUSES

## LVMH creates \$400K design prize to cultivate young talent

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By SARAH JONES

LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has introduced a new annual international design competition to uncover new talent and assist them in starting their fashion careers, proving the conglomerate's influential position in the fashion industry.

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The prize consists of a grant and a mentorship from an LVMH team for a year to develop the winner's company. By creating this contest, LVMH is able to show on a global scale that it is foremost in discovering and nurturing creative minds, as well as point to the creativity of its own designers.

"LVMH is one of the most respected fashion and luxury conglomerates and is a leader at identifying the real creative director superstars that have led many of their brand portfolios," said Rony Zeidan, president and creative director of [RO New York](#).

"It is great to see them make such a move in recognizing young talent and identifying what could be the future creative guards," he said.

"By doing so it shows that the group is constantly on the lookout for creativity, ingenuity and fresh talent."

Mr Zeidan is not affiliated with LVMH, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

LVMH was unable to respond by press deadline.

Enter to win

The contest, which runs through early February, will be judged by eight creative directors of LVMH brands, including recently appointed Nicolas Ghesquiere of Louis Vuitton, Karl Lagerfeld of Fendi and Raf Simons of Dior, as well as LVMH board member Delphine Arnault and other executives at LVMH.

Established men's or women's ready-to-wear designers ages 18-40 who have shown and sold at least two collections for their brand can enter to win the grand prize. The submission process includes attaching photos of models wearing pieces from the designer's last two collections, as well as any press.

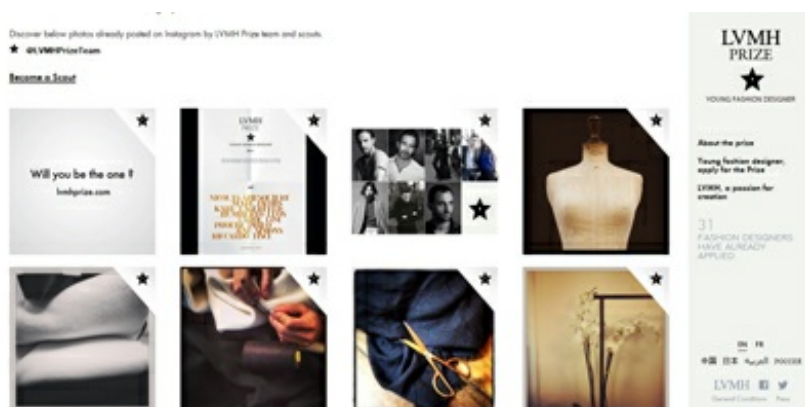
The winner will be given a grant of approximately \$403,800 to help further their business and receive the help of a group of LVMH employees for a year to give them advice on advancing their brand.

Green design school seniors can enter to win one of three one-year internships with an LVMH fashion house. In addition to the opportunity to work for an LVMH brand, the winners will receive an award of approximately \$13,500.

For the contest, LVMH has built a separate Web site through which entrants can send in their submissions and get involved in a community of other creatives.

In addition to the designers, other users can enter to become "talent scouts," who will post Instagram photos of their favorite undiscovered designers, helping LVMH find the next great artist.

Users can see the photos that other scouts post, giving fans motivation to revisit the Web site for new content.



*The talent scout portion of the LVMH prize Web site*

A tally at the side of the page shows users how many designers have submitted applications, giving visitors an idea of the scale of the contest.

LVMH began accepting applications Nov. 21, and will accept submissions until Feb. 4. The ten finalists will be chosen in March, and the winner announced in May.

Friendly competition

Other luxury brands have initiated design competitions to showcase their dedication to the craft.

For instance, family-owned Hermès gained exposure for young international designers through its annual Prix Émile Hermès awards that reflect the brand's Fondation d'entreprise Hermès's ongoing commitment to artisan skills and forward-thinking creativity.

Since 2008, the Prix Émile Hermès prize has been awarded to purposeful designers whose work embodies the notion that a higher-quality life can be achieved through design. By supporting the artisan skills of blossoming designers, Hermès simultaneously shines a light on its own craftsmanship ([see story](#)).

Also, brands can present themselves as an ideal company and target new talent through student competitions.

One example is Italian fashion house Versace, which touted the design process behind its watches by hosting a student competition called Versace Watch Talent.

The label's Swiss watches are produced through a licensing agreement with Timex Group that began in 2004. By asking students at Swiss horological university École d'Arts Appliqués de La Chaux-de-Fond to reinterpret its designs, Versace could generate awareness of its brand, watches and craftsmanship ([see story](#)).

LVMH's design competition is sure to see a lot of applicants, and set the company apart.

"I think the response will be amazing," Mr. Zeidan said. "Who doesn't want to land an internship at Givenchy, Celine, or Louis Vuitton?"

"In my opinion, LVMH is in a recruiting mode and [running] a bold PR campaign for the young generation," he said.

"It will raise even further awareness about their brands and set them as a continuous industry leader."

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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