



BRITISH  
FASHION  
COUNCIL



PRESENTED BY

Mercedes-Benz

## **International designers from 26\* countries bring local fashion to London's global stage**

**International Fashion Showcase 2017 presented by Mercedes-Benz  
At Somerset House 17 – 21 February 2017**

[design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2017](http://design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2017)  
[www.britishfashioncouncil.com/IFS](http://www.britishfashioncouncil.com/IFS)  
#IFS2017 #LocalGlobal #mercedesbenzfashion

The British Council, British Fashion Council (BFC) and Mercedes-Benz will collectively present work by emerging fashion designers from 26 countries for the sixth annual edition of the International Fashion Showcase (IFS) 2017 at Somerset House in February. The IFS is a series of specially-commissioned and curated fashion installations featuring work by emerging designers from all over the world and this year will include designs from Chile, India, Russia as well as designers from Eastern Europe, Central and South America. The collections presented will offer a balanced mix of womenswear and menswear.

This free and public exhibition forms a key part of London Fashion Week Festival, giving the public, press and buyers the opportunity to discover fashion from all over the world and to celebrate its universal relevance.

For the first time, the IFS will be supported and presented by Mercedes-Benz that for the past 22 years, has established itself globally as a key player and partner at over 50 fashion

platforms, shows and events. As part of the award ceremony, where prizes will be announced on 19 February for the winning Country, Designer, and Curator, Mercedes-Benz will present the winning Designer with the unique opportunity to showcase his or her collection at one of Mercedes-Benz' global fashion platforms. [*Further information about the awards is attached separately.*]

The exhibition will be arranged over 14 rooms, 13 of which will represent a country. There will be one group installation, *Next in Line*, curated by Shonagh Marshall which will feature designers from nine further nations. A key highlight and new to IFS 2017, in a dedicated area, Mercedes-Benz will showcase five emerging designers from Canada, China, Germany, Portugal and Ukraine who the brand supports through its International Designer Exchange Programme (IDEP). [*Further details about the designers being profiled are attached separately.*]

The countries showcases: Austria, Chile, Czech Republic, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Korea, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Taiwan and Ukraine.

The *Next in Line* participants: Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Panama, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

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.

Highlights will include:

- This year is the UK-India Year of Culture, and a new generation of Indian fashion designers will look to the Indian nomadic, pastoral lifestyle and create garments that respond to the global fashion industry's ever-growing focus on sustainability.

- The Polish designers' exhibition will respond to the fact that €100 million of second-hand clothing is imported to Poland from overseas each year with the UK as one of the main exporters. Their designers will reuse and reinvent second-hand clothing, transforming it into new pieces.
- Ukraine's will focus on a collective image of the fantastical bus stops found across rural Ukraine, which serve as both ad-hoc meeting places and liminal sanctums, 'Wish You Were Here' reminds us that even the most familiar, everyday symbols can be sculpted and graffitied into something distinctly local.
- Next in Line - Dutch designer Liselore Frowijn's collection will be an homage to an old canal house in Amsterdam with beautiful C17th 'Delft Blue' tiles. Research on these tiles' topography led Frowijn to visit the Japanese island of Kyushu, where Dutch-Japanese maritime trade of technological instruments for indigo and ceramics started some 400 years ago. Frowijn worked with local artists in the indigo workshops to develop her textiles.
- Next in Line - South African designer Eleni Labrou of AKEDO will draw upon the cultural, linguistic and religious pluralism of South Africa and her own Greek and South African heritage in her ready-to-wear collection. Contrasting clean silhouettes with handcrafted prints and textures, AKEDO will challenge the narrow ethnocentric expectations of African design.

Since 2012, 550 of the most exciting international designers from 70 countries have exhibited as part of the IFS 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.

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.

The IFS judging panel is headed by Sarah Mower MBE, BFC Ambassador for Emerging Talent and Chief Critic at Voguerunway.com.

**Sarah Mower** commented: *"In times of anxiety and increasing division, the International Fashion Showcase goes completely in the other direction, celebrating creativity, diversity and young ideas from all over the world. Since we founded this project in 2012, the social importance of the response has only escalated. This year's theme, which asks designers to look at what the local and the global means to them, has brought out uniquely inspired work which, as always, the public is welcomed to see. I'm proud that the six-year tradition of the IFS is a live example of London's vibrant culture of openness, and our thrill in discovering, promoting and exchanging new ideas."*

**Sarah Mann**, Director Architecture Design Fashion, British Council commented: *"Since the inception of International Fashion Showcase we've seen how this platform has enabled young, emerging designers to launch their careers in London. We are really proud that being shown as part of London Fashion Week has resulted in many of the designers going on to show here and be nominated for some of the world's most prestigious fashion prizes. This year's exhibition is an exploration of identity and place which we hope will inspire a new generation of young designers to take local and global influences into their own work."*

\* The 26 countries participating to the International Fashion Showcase are: Austria, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Korea, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Peru, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

*The British Council and the British Fashion Council would like to thank Bonaveri, sponsor of Next in Line and official mannequin supplier to the International Fashion Showcase; our partners London College of Fashion and Fashion Scout for the mentoring and showcasing opportunities offered to the International Fashion Showcase designers; exhibition suppliers Michelmersh Brick Holdings PLC and Retrouvius; and event supporters Warnsteiner.*

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-- Ends --

**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](http://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

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

**For more information visit:** [design.britishcouncil.org/ifs2017](http://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 Ltd. 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 is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. Using the UK's cultural resources we make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. The majority of our income is raised delivering a range of projects and contracts in English teaching and examinations, education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. Eighteen per cent of our funding is received from the UK government.

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://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, designer showrooms 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 BFC Fashion Film sponsored by River Island; BFC Rock Vault; BFC Headonism; BFC/GQ Designer Menswear Fund; BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund and NEWGEN. The BFC supports Boden's Future British initiative. The BFC also runs and owns charities including the BFC Fashion Arts Foundation, the BFC Fashion Trust and the BFC Education Foundation. Showcasing initiatives and events include London Fashion Week, London Fashion Week Men's, LONDON show ROOMS, International Fashion Showcase, London Fashion Week Festival and the annual celebration of excellence in the fashion industry: The Fashion Awards.

[www.britishfashioncouncil.com](http://www.britishfashioncouncil.com)

### **About Mercedes-Benz**

For the past 22 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](http://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.somerset.org.uk](http://www.somerset.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](http://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](http://www.fashion-scout.co.uk)