

NET-A-PORTER

**NET-A-PORTER presents its class of '21 Vanguard designers
and announces The Vanguard Education Fund, an expansion of its mentorship program
to encourage more diverse talent into the fashion industry**

September 20, 2021 – NET-A-PORTER expands its Vanguard mentorship program and announces The Vanguard Education Fund, an initiative to help shape the future of the fashion industry. In partnership with the British Fashion Council (BFC), The Vanguard Education Fund will see NET-A-PORTER engage with a network of universities to encourage more diverse talent and to help these students as they embark on their professional journeys in the industry. NET-A-PORTER also celebrates The Vanguard's Class of '21 designers, highlighting their stories and the diverse creative communities around them, through a campaign co-produced with emerging local talent.

As a champion and incubator of new talent, through the Vanguard program, NET-A-PORTER brings nascent brands to a global audience and supports them on their journey to becoming successful businesses. Providing bespoke mentorship and exposure to help emerging designers to further their growth in the industry, it has to date supported 25 brands, 56% of which are BIPOC owned. Within the program, each designer receives comprehensive mentorship, encompassing training and guidance from NET-A-PORTER's unparalleled global team of specialists within each department of the business, providing a 360-degree approach to building a successful business. Furthermore, the Class of '21 designers will be featured within a stand-alone campaign, providing visibility across NET-A-PORTER's channels, reaching an audience of over 9 million, helping to build their profile.

The Vanguard Education Fund sees NET-A-PORTER engage with UK universities within the BFC Colleges Council, alongside select international universities. The aim of the fund is to foster greater diversity in the fashion industry by supporting talented applicants from a broad range of backgrounds. It will be open to final-year students across multidisciplinary courses, from design, marketing, comms and content creation to photography and jewelry. To ensure their future success, each of the four winners will receive financial support to help them as they begin their careers. They will also be paired with a mentor who complements their individual ambitions.

NET-A-PORTER's Class of '21 celebrates the designers who have launched as part of the Vanguard this year, alongside those from alumnae brands, highlighting their success stories and the communities, muses and teams who have helped them on their journey. Khiry Fine, Renaissance Renaissance, Sindiso Khumalo, Connor Ives, Interior and Lukhanyo Mdingi, are joined by alumnae brands including Christopher John Rogers, Peter Do and Minjukim, each having received dedicated mentorship through the Vanguard program. Their stories will be brought to audiences across NET-A-PORTER's channels, including TikTok, IG Reels, IGTV and YouTube, as well as the brands' own platforms.

"We are thrilled to be extending The Vanguard program by partnering with the British Fashion Council to launch The Vanguard Education Fund. Our goal is to ensure that the next generation of creative talent is given early support to enable their success before they embark on their professional journey – we see this as especially important given the challenges the pandemic has brought to the creative industry and, most notably, at a grass-roots level. We are passionate about nurturing a diverse and representative mix of talent and are excited to see who emerges through the scheme."

Lea Cranfield, chief buying and merchandising officer, NET-A-PORTER, MR PORTER and THE OUTNET

Editor's Notes

- The Vanguard Education Fund will be accessible to final-year students through a competition run by the BFC that is open to all BFC Colleges Council members, as well as Parsons School of Design, Politecnico di Milano, TAFE Australia and FEDISA Fashion School Cape Town
- Four BA final-year university students will be chosen as the winners of the fund by a group of judges from NET-A-PORTER and the BFC
- Each winner will receive a monetary prize and access to two mentors for the academic year
- Mentors will consist of NET-A-PORTER spokespeople, industry experts, brand founders, designers (including The Vanguard program alumni) and entrepreneurs

Applications Open: October 2021

Applications Close: December 2021

Winner's Announcement: February 2022

About NET-A-PORTER

NET-A-PORTER delivers incredible fashion for incredible women. As the world's leading luxury retailer with the most authoritative product edit globally, the site offers the ultimate curation of fashion from the most coveted designer brands, the most exceptional assortment of fine watches and precious jewelry, and more than 200 specialist beauty brands. Its discerning edit places special emphasis on highlighting the creativity and promise of the next generation of fashion talent via The Vanguard – a program for emerging brands. Consideration for environmental and social impact increasingly shapes the product offering, and the launch of the NET SUSTAIN platform was created to showcase brands that place sustainability at the core of their product. Uniting content and commerce to deliver an immersive and inspiring customer experience, NET-A-PORTER speaks to a global community and features a dedicated editorial vertical with PORTER, which is renowned for its award-winning content featuring a diverse range of incredible women.

NET-A-PORTER champions unparalleled customer service, offering express worldwide shipping to more than 170 countries including same-day or next-day delivery to the UK, US, Hong Kong, Germany, France, Australia and Singapore; a seamless shopping experience across all devices; luxurious packaging; easy returns, and a multi-lingual Customer Care and Personal Shopping team that is available 24/7, 365 days a year. A pioneer of personal shopping and client relations services for the digital era in 2000, NET-A-PORTER continues to innovate and strengthen its offering, with virtual styling, invitation-only digital exclusives, and a world-class suite of specialized offers for EIPs (Extremely Important People) – the brand's most loyal and valuable customers. NET-A-PORTER is part of YOOX NET-A-PORTER GROUP.

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