

NET-A-PORTER

NET-A-PORTER launches first annual Vanguard Education Fund and announces mentorship panel of industry figures

January 31, 2022 – As part of its globally renowned talent incubator program, today NET-A-PORTER launches The Vanguard Education Fund, a new mentorship scheme in partnership with the British Fashion Council (BFC) designed to help final-year BA students as they embark on their professional careers in the industry.

NET-A-PORTER reveals the influential mentors taking part in the fund: designers Cate Holstein, founder of Khaite, Conner Ives and Christopher John Rogers; renowned stylist Julia Sarr-Jamois; editorial and tech expert Eva Chen; business mogul, musician, and actor Jessica Jung; NET-A-PORTER's content director Alice Casely-Hayford, and senior market editor Libby Page.

The Vanguard Education Fund sees NET-A-PORTER engage with the BFC's network of universities to encourage more diverse talent and to help students as they embark on their professional journeys. The fund will be open to final-year students studying at UK universities within the BFC Colleges Council and selected international institutions (Parsons School of Design, Politecnico di Milano, TAFE Australia and FEDISA Fashion School Cape Town) across multidisciplinary courses, from fashion and design to ceramics, fine art, photography and jewelry. Four winners will be selected and awarded a £12,500 bursary fund and paired with two leaders within the industry, who will act as mentors for the academic year.

"At NET-A-PORTER we recognise our responsibility in the industry, to nurture young, creative individuals and we are laser-focused on launching the very best emerging designers. The Vanguard Education Fund will ensure we discover this talent early on and give more students the opportunity to establish themselves within the fashion industry by providing financial and strategic support at the early stages of their careers."
Libby Page, Senior Market Editor, NET-A-PORTER

"Breaking into the fashion industry is often financially challenging and can be overwhelming. Projects like the Vanguard Education Fund are so important as they pair much-needed bursary fund with essential industry advice. We are delighted to provide students with such a fantastic opportunity and group of mentors to help them navigate the ever-changing fashion landscape."
Caroline Rush, Chief Executive, British Fashion Council

Quotes from The Vanguard Education Fund Mentors:

Conner Ives, fashion designer, founder and creative director of his namesake label:

"Much of my education was shaped by mentors generous enough to take the time to help me become the designer I am today. So I feel like it's now my turn to pass on the torch. I am always thrilled to work with students and emerging talent, especially having been there myself not too long ago; I know what kids are capable of. With the world being so upside down right now, this support feels essential."

Julia Sarr-Jamois, fashion director at British Vogue:

"Fledgling designers need a lot of help financially – there are a lot of up-front costs – but I also think just having someone to talk to, feed off and have an open dialogue with is really important; having someone believe in you is invaluable. I know how hard it can be to break into the fashion industry and make a mark, which is why working with and supporting new talent has always been a focus for me."

Cate Holstein, fashion designer, founder and creative director of Khaite:

"Fashion is always about what's next, [so] nurturing upcoming talent ensures the sanctity of this new spirit. There are so many facets to this business that, as a designer and founder, one needs to be mindful of."

There's a myriad of factors that play into the ambition to scale a fashion company. Without efficient guidance, the rollercoaster of ups and downs is sure to be extreme."

Christopher John Rogers, fashion designer, founder and creative director of his namesake label:

"The industry is full of talented, creative minds that deserve the space to explore their voices. There are so many amazing designers from non-privileged backgrounds or without family funding that have limitless vision, and it would behoove the industry to support them to keep them moving forward. I understand both the exciting and challenging parts of being a young designer in this industry; I'd like to advocate for what these folks might need in terms of support for their businesses."

Eva Chen, director of fashion partnerships at Instagram:

"I've always believed strongly in mentorship and the concept of paying it forward. I hope to help designers connect with one another – and with other experts in the field – to build out their businesses and their platforms. Designers need community, whether they're insiders from the industry who will show up and support, or a digital community who will shop, cheer them on and amplify their talents."

Jessica Jung, musician, actor and businesswoman:

"I'm excited to be part of an initiative that will help a new generation of talent to grow and become future innovators. It's important for fashion to constantly evolve – I believe you can never have enough mentorship and guidance from peers and industry leaders who have traveled the same path."

Alice Casely-Hayford, content director at NET-A-PORTER:

"Over the past few years, the fashion industry has been shaken up by the pandemic, urgent demands for greater diversity and a bigger commitment to sustainability. Now is the time for us to support, nurture and mentor the next generation of design talent, who will continue to drive things forward and innovate."

Applications Open: January 31, 2022

Applications Close: March 3, 2022

Winner's Announcement: June 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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