



Sustainability Through Talent Development

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European Fashion Accelerator

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UNIQUE CHANCE FOR FASHION DESIGNERS

Prague (1st December 2021) – The 9th European Fashion Accelerator (EFA) started on November 15th in Prague, the Czech Republic, with a professional photoshoot and video making of collections of eight young talented designers from the V4 countries selected by the international fashion experts and mentors from EFA's partner universities. A series of educational programmes and mentoring sessions followed as well as a number of round tables that are now available on the EFA webpage and youtube channel where the EFA's professionals provide insights on current fashion topics. The focus of this year's EFA was sustainable luxury, creating a sustainability platform, supporting the rise of small businesses and wellbeing in the challenging online world.

Over the course of the EFA's existence, over sixty talented young designers who have either already gained or are gaining international recognition have come out of Talent Search. Young designers below the age of 28 could apply for the programme presenting their collection to the jury. This year there were over 50 applications from the Central European countries and the jury did not have an easy task as the submitted collections are gaining in quality year on year. The EFA partners have decided that the programme will open a new category for emerging designers without age limit for next year's Talent Search.

The international jury of fashion experts and mentors consisted of representatives from the partner universities: Jerzy Gawel – Head of Cracow School of Art and Fashion Design, Poland, Jan C. Löbl – Studio of Fashion and Textile Design UJEP Czech Republic (University of J.E. Purkyně – UJEP), Barbora Peuch – studio of Fashion Design AFAD Bratislava – Slovakia and the founder of EFA Karolína Bosáková. Eight young talents, two from each of the V4 countries, were selected for the Young Talent Search this year. The decisive factors in the search were the quality of the collection submitted and the international potential of each candidate.

I can say that this year we have had an incredible amount of interest from designers and we were also approached by some young talents outside of the V4 countries. We see the rise and emphasis on sustainability, creative use of recycled materials and we have agreed with the other members of the jury that each year the collections are getting more innovative. The EFA project creates effective support to many creative talents from Central Europe and connects the relevant experts with a professional community of individuals who are open to cooperation, said the EFA's founder Karolína Bosáková.

The selected talents were invited to Prague to participate in the official programme of EFA where they had the opportunity to gain insight in preparing their collection for launch. This included a professional photoshoot of the products itself and with models with a professional fashion photographer. The second part of turning their fashion pieces into a unique brand was an exclusive video of their fashion collection.

In addition, the talents gained access to EFA's educational programme and participated in round table discussions and benefited from one to one mentoring and coaching with the distinguished international guest among them Martyn Roberts – Director and Founder of Fashion scout (UK), Maria Camila Blanco – Wholesale showroom founder – La Superclásica (Argentina), Marcela Danielová – Fashion consultant Middle East, Jana Hrušovská, Marketing & PR Lindex, Pavlína Louženská, business and marketing consultant, Central Europe, Wiktoria Skiba – founder of The Spoiled Queen magazine (Poland), Roxanne Chen Gadsby – director at Dyelog PR (UK).



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This year these young talents – two from each V4 country – were selected:

CZECH REPUBLIC

LÁKA – This year we selected a brand represented by Kristina Hončarivová and Laura-Andrea Žižková who both presented at EFA in 2019 and are both graduates of UJEP Faculty of Art and Design. Together they founded LÁKA – a streetwear and sustainability brand. Their collection is called LAMÉ+STAN? and consists of their two diploma collections. LAMÉ uses old Lurex fabric from the theatre and STAN fabric from unused tents.

Anežka Macková studied at Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem. She tends to combine graphic design and textiles and likes to cover current topics from her point of view. Her presented collection is called CZECH STREET STYLE.

HUNGARY

Yaxian Feng is a young fashion designer who completed a masters degree program at Metropolitan University Budapest. Her diploma collection is called YEHENARA and combines Eastern and Western cultures, creating a harmony that is always present in her designs. Her collection was also presented at BCEFW Young Talents show in 2021.

Anna Sibitka graduated as a fashion designer at Mod'Art International Hungary (2020). In her collections, she always uses unique prints and combines them with additional hand embellishments. Her collection is called Feel the pattern. Since 2019 she has been working with the Ziggurat project, she made the costumes into one international piece of art as part of her residency program.

POLAND

This year, **Łukasz Kubiński** completed a master's degree program at the Krakow School of Art and Fashion Design. His collection is called FURNITURE clothes COLLECTION using mostly upholstery materials, partly obtained in accordance with the "no waste" principle. He created the "Furniture clothes collection" in order to draw attention to the problem of racism in Poland.

Kamila Majka-Dziedzic completed a master's degree program of fashion design at Lodz University of Technology. Her work is balancing between avant-garde fashion and ready to wear projects and her newest collection is called UNTOUCHED. During her studies, Kamila worked for fashion brands as an intern. After graduation she found a job as a Fashion Designer, working for an international company, designing Menswear collections and taking care of an Accessory line.

SLOVAKIA

Natalis Repkovská studies at Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Prague. She aims at creating for people who are not afraid to stand out from the crowd to be authentic. Natalis concentrates on the connection between oil painting and clothes, textile structures, reliefs and vibrant colours. Creating structures without textile waste plays a vital role in her approach. Her latest collection is called The ARTIST's salon.

Juliána Brnáková is a student of fashion design at Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. Her collection is called The chance and is based on her new method of processing textile waste. In 2021 she won the New Fashion Face award at the Bratislava Fashion Days by Mercedes Benz.

The young talents appreciated the opportunity to share their visions with others, be it their colleagues or fashion professionals.

Kamila Majka-Dziedzic said: *Being one of the finalists of EFA 2021 was a great adventure and an honour that I didn't expect. Starting from the perfect organization, an amazing team of photographers, make-up artists, hairdressers, ending with the lovely models and designers from different countries. It was such a dream to meet other creative minds that have a similar point of view about starting a career as a young fashion designer, that are facing similar problems living in V4 countries. These days were so intense, but full of creativity and constant support from each other. I made new friendships, had the opportunity to meet the professionals from the industry and introduce me and my work – that's the kind of experience that I will remember forever.*



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I'm very grateful to EFA for that chance – I got back my "spark" of passion to fashion and I'm ready to create a new sustainable collection. I got a huge lesson from that event and I feel more confident with going with my work into a wider audience." Thank you for everything! The EFA 2021 was perfect

Łukasz Kubiński agreed that it was *Amazing experience with a great and professional team. I couldn't dream about a better ending of this year than with EFA.*

Sustainability and the relationship between sustainability and luxury was one of the main themes sounding throughout the two days at EFA filled with action. Martyn Roberts – Director and Founder of Fashion scout (UK) says: *the relationship between luxury and sustainability is a challenging one. Luxury brands are brands that companies want to make money. All companies do. And so they want to sell things, and so they need people to buy them. But sustainability in itself and valuing crafts and sustainable fabrics caring about their environment isn't its own way of luxury. It's something that's essential to us all. But also you need to be in a position where you can afford to be caring about that.*

We asked the young designers to tell us about their relationship with sustainability:

Kristina Hončarivová (CZ)

In both of our collections, we focus on upcycling material. We gradually worked on the upcycling approach during our studies at FUD UJEP. The LAMÉ collection is sewn from surplus Lurex, which previously served as a backdrop. In the LAMÉ collection, we made comfortable puffer jackets and sweatshirts from it. Collection STAN? is made of tourist tents that have been discarded because of sewing defects. However, the material is still functional, so it is suitable for the raincoats that we produce. We want to use the principles of upcycling or recycling in our other collections as well.

Juliana Brnáková (SK)

A collection "The Chance", gives literally the chance to a textile waste, which wouldn't be used in any other way. This textile waste is collected directly from fabrics. It consists of different types of fabric cuts, thread trimmings, or even pieces of socks. Models are created from materials, which were made of this waste. It is considered to be a zero waste production, since this collection does not even use the actual waste but also doesn't create any new kind of waste. It shows how this useless fabric waste could be used in different fields of clothing and textile industry, and therefore be recycled. A great deal of handmade production and techniques are involved in models.

Yaxien Feng (HU)

In my latest collection I focus on sustainability more consciously. You can see zero waste designs, like the puffer jacket or the fish-net pieces where there was no fabric left to throw away. My knitwear piece was knitted in the shape of the sewing pattern, so I did not have to cut the shape out leaving leftover fabric. Whenever I can, I choose more natural and good quality fabrics that last longer, such as cotton and silk based materials. For some pieces I even use recycled materials like pull tabs from soda cans. I collected a lot of pull tabs and upcycled them to a top and a headdress.

Anna Sibitka (HU)

Feel the pattern collection. When I am designing clothes I always try to use natural textiles, made in an environmentally friendly way. Besides the natural textiles I also use textile waste from a sewing shop. I know the owner of the sewing shop and she would like to reduce their waste of textiles. For these reasons she gave me the opportunity to use their unused textiles. I also have a screenprinting studio because I want to make textiles with my patterns using natural paints. In my studio it is really important to me to reduce waste so I use reusable props. Furthermore, I purchased all the tools second hand for my screenprinting studio. I would like to continue producing clothes as eco-friendly as possible.

Lukasz Kubinski (PL)

"FURNITURE clothes COLLECTION" is made mostly of upholstery materials, partly obtained in accordance with the "no waste" principle – I used leftovers from furniture production. I also wanted to remind, that not only fast fashion is problem nowadays, but also – as I called the term – fast furniture, where people are throwing away the old furniture and buying new one, but not many of them know how much chemicals are released to the environment during production, instead there are many ways to reuse the old furniture, there is no need to take it into the trash.



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Kamila Majka-Dziedzic (PL)

I started my collection during the pandemic times, so when it came to the design choices I reevaluated my goals and questioned myself: what do I already have to create the collection? What is truly important for fashion these days, do people even need fashion at all? So instead of ordering the expensive fabrics from Italy or Spain, I decided to start the collection with the fabrics that I collected through the years of fashion education – to reduce my impact on the environment with another collection that nobody needs in such hard times. Collection UNTOUCHED contains fabrics collected for 5 years, fabric pieces from the school's tasks, fabrics that I got for free from the closed sewing room, and also the deadstock fabrics bought locally in Łódź, Poland. All of these actions allowed me to perceive my collection in a more sustainable way, proving that it's needed to create responsibly these days

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The European Fashion Accelerator (EFA) is an intensive programme created to support talented students in creative industries in the V4 region and functions as an effective bridge between the creative and business world. EFA was founded in 2012 by Unique One Events led by Karolína Bosáková (producer of Unique Fashion Week in the Czech Republic and Kosice Fashion Week in the Slovak Republic) to successfully help Central European designers and share best practices between Universities.

Karolína Bosáková is an accomplished model, businesswoman and philanthropist with extensive knowledge and experience in the fashion industry and the business environment. She has worked and lived in Paris and New York for over a decade. During her modelling career, she has cooperated with world-renowned brands and fashion designers such as Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent, Dior, Fendi, Alexander McQueen, Oscar de la Renta, and many others. She is the founder of Unique One models & events, a company that brought the concepts of Fashion Week and European Fashion Accelerator to the Czech and Slovak republics. She is also recognized for her admirable role as a philanthropist. Since 2017 she has led the Happy Hearts Foundation, building safe schools in the countries affected by natural disasters.

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