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22 May 2024

Richemont's Creative Academy & Accademia Costume & Moda introduce “AZ Academy: BUSINESS FOR DESIGNERS”

Founded within Richemont by the late Alber Elbaz in 2021, AZ Factory has evolved into a collective of creatives driven to create “*Smart Fashion That Cares*”.

Through this collective, AZ Factory has had the pleasure to collaborate with numerous talented emerging designers, Thebe Magugu, Ester Manas, Lutz Huelle, Colville by Lucinda Chambers and Molly Molloy, Jenny Hytönen to name a few, inviting them to experiment and accompanying them directly in the competitive arena that is the fashion industry.

Richemont's first project to support independent designers, AZ Factory has become an innovative fashion entity, a privileged place to encourage dialogues between different generations of talents.

This year, coming as another chapter in the company's development, AZ Factory will evolve from the current trading activity to launch, through Richemont's Creative Academy and in partnership with Accademia Costume & Moda (ACM): ***AZ Academy: BUSINESS FOR DESIGNERS***.

As emerging creative talents and new designers aspire to launch their own brands after graduating from global fashion schools, ***AZ Academy: BUSINESS FOR DESIGNERS*** comes to fill a gap: offering a never-before-seen programme tailored to equip designers with the necessary skills and knowledge to transform their creative ideas into successful, investable businesses.

Starting in May 2024, graduates and alumni from all international fashion schools will be invited to apply to this new programme. Emerging creatives with proven talent (Fashion, Leather goods, Accessories), recent graduate designers and professional designers already in the industry at a turning point of their career are all invited to apply.

In September 2024, ***AZ Academy: BUSINESS FOR DESIGNERS***'s top-tier Jury – *composed of key professionals shaping the fashion industry* – will select designers to obtain the prestigious scholarship, endorsed by Richemont, and invite them to embark on the 12-month programme based in Milan from January 2025.

Creativity, innovation, sustainability, production, finance, legal, marketing, inclusivity as well as an immersive experience with suppliers and tutorships are just a few of the topics that will be explored during the ***AZ Academy: BUSINESS FOR DESIGNERS*** programme. The last stage of the programme will be a final presentation of a fully reviewed and ready-to-pitch business case proposal, collection and industrial plan for potential investors interested in supporting new fashion businesses.

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Philippe Fortunato, CEO of Fashion & Accessories Maisons at Richemont, commented:

“AZ Academy introduces a unique offer to help independent fashion designers turn their creative visions into successful businesses. Through this programme, Richemont reaffirms its commitment to support independent creation, in direct continuation of the story started with AZ Factory together with Alber Elbaz.”

Nicolas Bos, CEO of Van Cleef & Arpels and Chairman of the Creative Academy, commented:

“For over 20 years now, the Creative Academy has provided a unique design programme adapted to the ever-changing requirements of the world of luxury. With AZ Academy, we are expanding this further to independent fashion designers. We are excited to partner with an institution such as Accademia Costume & Moda in this adventure.”

A. Lupo Lanzara, President Accademia Costume & Moda, and Furio Francini, CEO Accademia Costume & Moda, commented:

“We are deeply delighted to be part of the AZ Academy project and we wish to express our sincere gratitude to Richemont, Creative Academy and AZ Factory for the trust they have placed in us. Since its inception, ACM has been committed to nurturing and supporting young talents, providing them with solid support to pursue their passions and embark on a professional career.”

Mauro Grimaldi, Strategic Advisor to the CEO of Fashion & Accessories Maisons at Richemont, commented:

“At AZ Academy we will create a bridge between designers and investors, transforming creative visions into viable business plans to attract investors. What better way to pay tribute to Alber Elbaz?”

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About Richemont

At Richemont, we craft the future. Our unique portfolio includes prestigious Maisons distinguished by their craftsmanship and creativity. Richemont's ambition is to nurture its Maisons and businesses and enable them to grow and prosper in a responsible, sustainable manner over the long term.

Richemont operates in three business areas: **Jewellery Maisons** with Buccellati, Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpels; **Specialist Watchmakers** with A. Lange & Söhne, Baume & Mercier, IWC Schaffhausen, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Panerai, Piaget, Roger Dubuis and Vacheron Constantin; and **Other**, primarily Fashion & Accessories Maisons with Alaïa, AZ Factory, Chloé, Delvaux, dunhill, Gianvito Rossi, Montblanc, Peter Millar including G/FORE, Purdey, Serapien as well as Watchfinder & Co. In addition, Richemont operates NET-A-PORTER, MR PORTER, THE OUTNET, YOOX and the OFS division. Find out more at <https://www.richemont.com/>

Richemont 'A' shares are listed and traded on the SIX Swiss Exchange, Richemont's primary listing, and are included in the Swiss Market Index ('SMI') of leading stocks. The 'A' shares are also traded on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Richemont's secondary listing.

About Creative Academy

Founded in 2003, Creative Academy is Richemont's corporate school that selects, nurtures and prepares young creative talents for the design of luxury jewellery, watches and fashion accessories. Each year twenty of the world's most promising design students from the best schools around the world are selected to complete a Master of Arts in Design and Applied Arts.

Taught by leading experts in the world of luxury product design, the Academy is a creative laboratory uniquely enriched by a faculty of renowned professionals, Richemont CEOs and Creative Directors from Richemont Maisons. The Master lasts ten months, seven months at Creative Academy in Milan (January-July), followed by a three-month internship granted to the most deserving students in one of the Richemont Maisons design studios (September-November). Hands-on experience is at the heart of the programme, with students benefitting from working on real-life design projects coached by Richemont Maisons' Creative Directors.

Conceived as a bridge between theory and professional practice, the mission of Creative Academy is to offer our students the know-how they need to respond to the constantly evolving demands of the luxury sector. In 2023, the Creative Academy proudly celebrates its 20th Anniversary. During the last two decades, the School has been paving the way for successful careers, with many of the School's Alumni currently contributing to the future of the Richemont Maisons.

About Accademia Costume & Moda

Accademia Costume & Moda (ACM) was founded in Rome in 1964 by Rosana Pistolese, costume and fashion historian, as well as costume designer for theatre, television and cinema, as well as fashion and costume writer and publicist, under the auspices of the **Ente Moda, by delegation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security** (D.M. n. 26645/CF/1964) and with the Patronage of the **Municipality of Rome** and the **National Chamber of Italian Fashion**, and the **E.N.A.L.C.** (Ente Nazionale per l'Addestramento dei Lavoratori del Commercio). ACM subsequently became autonomous **in 1969 with the establishment of the Accademia di Costume e di Moda Ente Morale**, a non-profit association, formally recognized in 1970 by Decree of the President of the Italian Republic (D.P.R. n.620/1970). In 2023, in compliance with the Italian Third Sector Reform, the association modified its statute transforming into the

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Accademia di Costume e di Moda Ente Terzo Settore (ETS) and registering with the National Unique Register of the Third Sector (RUNTS).

ACM is considered among the best fashion schools in the world (BoF, Fashionista) and has approximately 500 students studying at its Rome and Milan campuses. Thanks to the work of the Careers & Placement office, employment rates are consistently above 85% across all courses with peaks of up to 100% in some Masters courses. ACM alumni include creative directors, senior designers, Oscar Academy Award and David di Donatello winners and other important professionals in the fashion and entertainment industries. ACM students have included Alessandro Michele, Frida Giannini, Isabella Rossellini, Francesca Sartori, Gianluca Falaschi, Marco Mastroianni, Maria Sabato, Albino D'Amato, Maurizio Galante, Stefano Canull and many others.

The Library “Fiamma Lanzara” and the Historical Archive of the Accademia Costume & Moda represent the largest center of fashion cultural documentation in Central and Southern Italy, with its 6000 monographic volumes and over 14000 issues of magazines covering more than 200 years of fashion journalism. Open to the public, it offers an excellent sector research service for all students and researchers of costume, fashion, art, communication and marketing.