

## MICHEL COMTE MENTOR FOR IED

**At Pitti Uomo, the Istituto Europeo di Design presents the installation titled *Identity* curated by renowned fashion photographer and contemporary artist, Michel Comte. In the projects to be presented, fashion meets art, thus redefining identity through the hybridisation of different languages.**

Press preview: 12 June 2024 at 11.30 am | ex Oriuolo Theatre, Florence

**Florence, 13 May 2024 – Michel Comte**, a contemporary artist and one of the most renowned fashion photographers of all time, has accepted the invitation of the **Istituto Europeo di Design** to **mentor** the team of IED students selected, from all of the Group's eleven locations throughout Italy, Spain, and Brazil, to design ***Identity*, an installation that will be presented on 12 June at ex Oriuolo Theatre**, during the **Pitti Uomo** fashion fair. The multidisciplinary team combined the skills of the fashion design and styling areas with those of interior design, video, sound and photography, to develop a project where the research of art meets the reflection of fashion. In its new look as a training centre for IED Digital and Visual Arts, the ex Oriuolo Theatre welcomes the first installation open to the city of Florence during the week of the international Pitti Uomo fashion fair.

IED asked Michel Comte to serve as mentor due to his ability to express art through the different media he has used throughout his professional career as a photographer, film-maker, and photo-journalist, as well as for his awareness of cultural and social issues, his use of innovative materials, and his attention to upcycling processes.

*"In a world consumed by fast fashion, I opt for Japanese denim as a symbol of sustainable style. This philosophy guides my curation of the IED installation in Florence, where eleven equally sized spaces serve as platforms for a collective artwork, merging diverse personalities into pure magic"*, said **Michel Comte**.

The artist directed the students in their development of the project starting with a reflection on the topic of identity: *in times when electronic devices have overtaken fashion in terms of desirability, how can we represent who we are through what we wear?* Fashion remains one of our main means for representing who we are, and expressing our identity.

*"Internet and globalisation have given rise to a multitude of new virtual affiliations, flattening people's sense of identity. The individual has become dividual: no longer having one identity or having too many. Fashion has also fallen victim to this phenomenon. It should help us to identify who we are and what we stand for, but in most cases, it's just clothing and decoration"*, suggests Danilo Venturi, Director of IED Firenze.

*"Regardless of the individual content choices made by 11 students from all over the world, exhibiting the concept of cultural identity filtered through their own eyes – in the new IED Digital and Visual Arts Hub – allows us to re-evaluate fashion as one of the most important forms of social and personal expression. It allows us to look to the future once again!"*, adds Danilo Venturi.

The installation will be spread throughout the interior and the garden area of the ex Oriuolo Theatre, on a pathway that will alternate conceptual garments with contemporary sculptures.

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## THE FORMER ORIULO THEATRE – THE NEW IED FIRENZE DIGITAL AND VISUAL ARTS CENTRE

The Istituto Europeo di Design won the City of Florence's tender for the former Oriulo Theatre, which had been closed for nearly 30 years, and, following a complex restoration project by the City of Florence, which greatly increased the amount of greenery and open spaces on the property thanks to the demolition of 2200 m<sup>3</sup> (mainly in the area of the former auditorium), now includes several large rooms with a total area of 500 m<sup>2</sup> on the ground floor of Palazzo Bastogi. Having demolished the dilapidated structures, the redeveloped spaces currently house a new "Zen" garden-square, in anticipation of the new Digital Arts Theatre's inauguration.

Thanks to its consolidated training experience in the fields of contemporary arts and design, as well as fashion and communication, and the numerous international professionals and mentors who work there, IED is creating a centre for sharing and learning about the Digital and Visual Arts, just 300 metres from the Duomo. A place of interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange where theory meets practical experimentation, which takes shape in the exhibition areas, thus preserving the venue's original vocation as a public place.

Divided into two large functional areas, dedicated to training and exhibition, as well as the garden area, the new Centre will include digital laboratories, project rooms, and teaching areas, along with two large spaces reserved for exhibitions, events, and workshops. The programme of activities will be linked to the multimedia courses (Graphic Design, Illustration, Communication Design, Content Creation, and Publishing), and those associated with the art system (Museum Education, Curatorial Practice, and Arts Management), with labs, contemporary art exhibitions, and workshops held by emerging artists. In collaboration with the City, which already has an ongoing educational and professional relationship with IED, the space will also be involved in other events that reflect a strong context of internationalisation, and experiences rooted in the local territory.

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