

Pitti Uomo 106

**IED PRESENTS *IDENTITY***

**The installation by IED Group fashion designers blends art and fashion.  
Ten interacting projects within the spaces of the former Oriuolo Theatre present the search for  
a conscious identity through the hybridisation of different languages.  
The curatorship is by multidisciplinary artist Michel Comte.**

Digital and Visual Arts IED Hub - Former Teatro dell'Oriuolo | Via dell'Oriuolo 31, Florence  
The installation will be open to the public from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Florence, 12 June 2024 - The **Istituto Europeo di Design** unveils to the international public at Pitti ***IDENTITY***, the first installation set up in the spaces of the **new IED digital and visual arts training hub, formerly the Teatro dell'Oriuolo**. Ten projects emerged from the work of a team of twelve students selected from all the **Group's centres in Italy, Spain and Brazil**. The project was curated by **Michel Comte**, a multidisciplinary artist, capable of expressing art through the different languages he has used throughout his professional career, as a photographer, film maker, photo-journalist, with a focus on cultural and social issues, the use of innovative materials and upcycling processes.

The artist directed the project development by inviting the young designers to reflect on the theme of identity. *At a time when electronic devices have surpassed fashion in terms of desirability, how can we represent who we are through what we wear? And how can we convey the messages contained in our identity to the outside world?* Fashion remains one of the main means of representing who we are, our identity.

*"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 ten equally sized spaces serve as platforms for a collective artwork, merging diverse personalities into pure magic"*, said **Michel Comte**.

*"The Identity project encourages us to reflect on the relationship between individual and collective identity, which is only consolidated through processes of identity awareness in terms of values and culture. It is through the convergence of individuals towards an idea of the common good - Commoning - in which they recognise themselves, that one can build a community that looks towards the future with optimism. The relationship between the common good and individual differences is fundamental. The common good is not the sum of different identities but its synthesis. It was only natural for IED that the evolution of the Master of Arts segment with the Design For Commons cycle should follow precisely this line of thinking, where Design becomes a tool in the hands of young people who observe the planet through the eyes of the Commons"*, says **Riccardo Balbo, Chief Academic Officer IED Group**.

*"Fashion has always been the main form of expressing who we are and what kind of world we want. But today's fashion has lost this symbolic power and its role is often taken over by technology, which can be worn and has surpassed fashion in terms of desirability"* reflects **Danilo Venturi, Director at IED Firenze**. *"So how do we represent who we are through what we wear? We must relinquish speed, finiteness and insignificance. The clothes sculptures created by our students, strategically placed in a former 18th century theatre in the shadow of the cathedral, are a contemporary form of expression that establishes a temporal dialogue with the space that surrounds them. This is a way to think about our identity, to develop greater awareness, and perhaps also to give life to the fashion of the future"*, concludes Venturi.

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The design team brought together **skills from the areas of fashion design and styling** with those of **interior design** to develop a project that could narrate the process of discovering and redefining one's identity. *Identity* encapsulates this journey. It's a shared space where each student has contributed **the result of a personal search for their own expression of identity** first, and then for an **artistic and thus conscious signature**. The result is an **installation composed of conceptual garments alternated with contemporary sculptures, in dialogue with the iconic structure of the former Teatro dell'Oriuolo** and Florence's historic city centre. The installation also extends the terrain of fashion by including performance elements, drawings, photographic images and videos. The projects become the means through which to express their respective points of view on pressing contemporary issues.

*Identity's* visual concept brings to the stage the unique qualities and identity of the former Teatro dell'Oriuolo, drawing strength from the brutalism and errors of a space left unfinished but for this very reason unique in its decadent charm. In order to better accentuate some of the material elements of the location, a multi-subject photographic visual was developed that enhances the period details and authenticity of the place.

#### **Identity projects are:**

- **A Passo d'Uomo** sensory installation by **Eleonora Gentile** - IED Torino
- **Etere capsule collection** of versatile one-piece clothing by **Giovanni Toniolo** - IED Firenze
- **IO** video and outfits by **Sabrina Salem** - IED Milano
- **Venus of Things** multi-material sculpture by **Leonardo Fizialetti** - IED Roma
- **Piccole Cose** installation by **Alessia Basilico** - Accademia Aldo Galli of Como
- **Olympia** dress and sculpture by **Gaizka Albizu** - IED Kunsthall Bilbao
- **Masculinity in Bloom** installation and *capsule collection* menswear by **Ana Montesa Lopez** - IED Madrid
- **Doing evil isn't that bad capsule collection** by **Daniel Barris Sanjaime** – IED Barcelona
- **Metagnize capsule collection** no-gender and *live performance* by **Anastasia Pandelli** - IED Cagliari
- **Tramóia capsule collection** of denim dresses inspired by *upcycling* by **Diana Arbex** – IED Rio de Janeiro

#### **IED FASHION SHOWS 2024**

There are more than 800 graduates from the **IED Group's School of Fashion** nearing the moment when they will be discussing their thesis projects and taking centre stage with their collections at the **Fashion Shows** scheduled for June and July. Installations, performances and fashion shows become a platform poised to **tell the public about the influences, interpretations and language of tomorrow's designers**. The calendar of events opened on 10 June in the iconic **La Paloma** ballroom with the 20th edition of the IED Barcelona **Fashioners of the World** and the presentation of the **IEDxCommons Impact Award** for the first time. The installation **Identity** - curated by multidisciplinary artist Michel Comte - presents the entire IED Group in Florence on the occasion of **Pitti Uomo**. On 26 June, IED Madrid celebrates 30 years at the former **Jorge Juan** carpentry building with a Fashion Show inspired by the concept **celebrate the future**. On 26 and 27 June, the Milan seat presents its graduate event - **IED Avant Défilé** - at **Palazzo Giureconsulti**, sharing the vision of its best graduates with the city, with 10 collections that form a narrative that is both personal and collective. Finally, on 10 July, the garden of the IED Rome seat will host the end-of-year fashion show with contributions from the Schools of Design, Visual Arts and Communication, while IED Cagliari will close the calendar on 11 July with a fashion show in the spaces of Villa Satta on the occasion of its Open Day.

With the patronage of: **Comune di Firenze** and **ADI – Delegazione Toscana**

## IDENTITY PROJECTS

- **A Passo d'Uomo** sensory installation by **Eleonora Gentile** - IED Torino

The installation emphasises the importance of touch in our modern, increasingly technology-driven society. Engaging with the physical world through our senses is increasingly vital, as digital interactions often distance us from our surroundings and ourselves. The act of feeling the texture of natural materials creates a connection with the earth and our own physical presence. *A Passo d'Uomo* reflects on this theme through the use of second-hand yarns, crochet and a slow, artisanal technique that emulates the rhythm of the human rhythm. The installation transforms typical mountain textures into knitted fabrics, creating a rich, tactile landscape.

- **Etere capsule collection** of versatile one-piece clothing by **Giovanni Toniolo** - IED Firenze

ETERE represents the end of geography, where distances no longer count and the idea of a geographical boundary is difficult to sustain. State borders and cultural barriers are gradually disappearing and appear as mere side effects of the speed as well as mobility of the postmodern world. The subject of the project is therefore a white suit which is versatile, functional, unisex and fast. It is designed for the citizens of the First World, who live in a constant state of present awareness and a life that engages them fully, almost ready to suffocate them. The idea is to give the possibility of using this white suit as a canvas to be customised because it is possible to change the colours, parts, fabrics, but also add lettering and prints.

- **IO** video and outfits by **Sabrina Salem** - IED Milano

In a deep analysis of human identity, it is inevitable that we conclude that our personality is partly determined by how other people make us feel, as relationships strongly influence our lives: some people are like figures in the background of our lives, whereas others leave deep wounds that contribute to our personal development.

- **Venus of Things** multi-material sculpture by **Leonardo Fizialetti** - IED Roma

*Venus of Things* is a modern sculpture that explores the complex relationship between people and objects. It features a central human figure immersed in a giant coat, with workmanship that lends familiarity and complexity to the work. At the base of the central figure is a carefully arranged pile of familiar objects, which supports the structure. In *Venus of Things*, the objects represent the various facets of modern life and play an important role in contemporary existence, in a relationship of mutual dependence. The installation invites deep reflection on how objects shape our lives, influence our identities and connect us to each other in unexpected ways.

- **Piccole Cose** installation by **Alessia Basilico** - Accademia Aldo Galli of Como

In the chaotic, unstable and hectic world we live in, we must learn to pay attention to small things, in order to reconnect with our essence, our true selves. In a world overrun by consumer culture that often blinds us, we should step out of our *basic setting*, come out of our 'autopilot' mode, and get to the essence of things, looking at them with wonder and a sense of novelty. In fact, we often wear something different so as not to get bored and just to satisfy a frivolous aesthetic need, induced by the market trends. Instead, we must return to considering clothing for its truest function, that of protecting and caring for our bodies, and return to appreciating this *simple thing*. Having clothing that takes care of our body can influence our being in the world. This is why it is necessary to start designing with more kindness.

- **Olympia** dress and sculpture by **Gaizka Albizu** - IED Kunsthal Bilbao

At the heart of this project lies the representation of the exact moment when we are forced to contemplate the distance between our archetypes, our conception, and the reality of others. In fact, *Olympia* depicts the destruction and distortion of an object of desire, an artificial body - like a doll - dressed in a corset-like dress, slowly falling apart, revealing its hollow interior and illusion's fragility. The work consists of a dress from Gaizka Albizu's collection created for the thesis project and a vaguely human-like sculpture wearing it.

- **Masculinity in Bloom** installation and *capsule collection* of menswear by **Ana Montesa Lopez** - IED Madrid

In the realm of expression, fashion also emerges as the quintessence of our identity: a medium through which we paint our desires, aspirations and very selves. Within this panorama of transformation *Masculinity in Bloom* expresses a new vision of menswear, a space where masculinity flourishes, boundaries blur and identity blossoms in a riot of colours, shapes and scents. Male identity, once confined by rigid norms and stereotypes, now unfolds in a myriad of forms, creating a lush identity from the timeless emblem of men's fashion: the shirt.

- **Doing evil isn't that bad** *capsule collection* by **Daniel Barris Sanjaime** – IED Barcelona

Currently, many forms of creation strive to be polished and pleasing to the public: if they are to be well received and accepted, they should not cause pain or suffering. Although this is the case, the wound remains a source of change. It provokes us to examine ourselves, making us vulnerable, but it also prompts us to think. As a result, we can express our inner self through clothing, not just as garments that we wear every day with no significance, but by giving them significance through individuality, thus opening up new opportunities. *Jugar a ser dolent no està tan malament – doing evil isn't that bad* – therefore explores the idea of the “good guy” as a subject who acts on the transformation of his reality.

- **Metagnize** *capsule collection* of no-gender clothing and *live performance* by **Anastasia Pandelli** - IED Cagliari

*Metagnize* represents the immersive exploration of identity and self-expression through the transformative power of stylistic interventions. All this aims at resolving inner conflict and achieving personal balance, a powerful symbol of integration and wholeness, whether represented as the union of mind, body and spirit or as the convergence of past, present and future.

- **Tramóia** *capsule collection* of denim dresses inspired by *upcycling* created by **Diana Arbex** – IED Rio de Janeiro

At a time when clothing is becoming highly obsolete, *Tramóia* - a Brazilian word referring to deception, illusion, artifice, and trickery - is a fashion collection that recycles old denim items that would otherwise end up in landfills. The collection gives the impression that the fabrics have never been discarded; in fact, they look new. Hand-made crochet with beads is used to give denim garments - rescued from thrift shops, fairs, family and friends' wardrobes, and donated by jeans manufacturers - a new identity.



## MICHEL COMTE

Michel Comte was born in Zurich, Switzerland. He studied in France and England and started his career in art restoration, specializing in contemporary art. His restoration works include Andy Warhol, Yves Klein and Miro. In 1979, he met Karl Lagerfeld who gave him his first commercial assignment for Chloe and later Chanel. Since his beginnings, he collaborated with Vogue Italia, Vanity Fair and Interview, and connected with brands such as Dolce & Gabbana, Gianfranco Ferré, Calvin Klein, BMW, Ferrari, LVMH and many others. Comte divided his time traveling into conflict zones to raise funds for humanitarian projects such as People and Places with No Name. In 2008, Comte met Ayako Yoshida. He dedicated more time into art and personal projects. Together they produced their first 3D feature film "The Girl From Nagasaki". Comte opened Neoclassic exhibition at the National Gallery in Parma in Fall 2016. Neoclassic is Comte's take on rise and fall of neoclassicism. He completed several exhibitions from Light series. First at Museum Maxxi in Rome and La Triennale in Milan, Galerie Urs Meile in Beijing, Dirimart in Istanbul and Grieder Contemporary in Zurich. Comte explores the impact of environmental decline on the glaciers and glacial landscapes of the world. Light is a study of natural landscapes through large-scale sculptures, photography, video installations and projections.

## ISTITUTO EUROPEO DI DESIGN-IED

IED is an international Group, the largest Higher Education Network in the creative field to have maintained a global outlook and a deeply Italian cultural matrix, since 1966. IED is a network that spanning with **11 campuses** over **3 countries**: in **Italy**, in Milan, Cagliari, Florence, Rome, Turin and in Como with Accademia di Belle Arti Aldo Galli; in **Spain** in Barcelona, Madrid and Bilbao and in **Brazil** in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. In Italy IED works through the parent company. In 2022 it was transformed into a **Benefit Company**, in order to formalize a **positive impact on society and on the planet**. IED is an **inclusive, transdisciplinary school** that uses design as a universal language for change.

Every year, IED launches innovative educational projects in the fields of study of **Design, Fashion, Communication and Management, Arts and Restoration and Visual Arts**, developing forms of learning and new models for interpreting the future. The IED Group's educational offer includes Undergraduate courses (First Level Academic Diplomas, Título Superior en Diseño, Diploma de Bacharelado, BAH and IED Diplomas), Postgraduate courses (First Level Master and IED Master) and Continuing Education Courses. IED relies on a network of more than 3.000 lecturers, active in their respective fields of reference, with whom it collaborates continuously to ensure the perfect performance of the training activities of its locations.

## THE FORMER ORIUOLO 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 Oriuolo 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.