February 27, 2024

**Finalist Announcement: VAN GRAAF Junior Talent 2024**

**The spring edition of Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week will welcome established names and provide a platform for a new wave of promising up-and-coming designers through the traditional VAN GRAAF Junior Talent competition.**

The VAN GRAAF Junior Talent 2024 competition jury has chosen four finalists based on their CVs and portfolios. The selected designers will present their work at Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week FW24.

The competition, already in its eighth year in cooperation with the fashion house VAN GRAAF, is intended for Czech and Slovak fashion designers aged up to 26 years. Applications are accepted through an open call, announced regularly at the beginning of the year.

The panel of experts includes **Verena Czaja***,* Managing Director of VAN GRAAF; **Lukáš Loskot**, Director of Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week; **Danica Kovářová**, Editor-in-Chief of Vogue CS; **Thea Prokop**, Editor-in-Chief of ELLE; **Nora Grundová**, Editor-in-Chief of Harper’s Bazaar; **Petr Matějček**, Editor-in-Chief of Esquire; **Adéla Mazánková**, Editor-in-Chief of Cosmopolitan; **Barbora Franeková**, Editor-in-Chief of Top Fashion magazine; **Gabriela Marešová**, head of Hospodářské noviny’s lifestyle magazine PročNe; **Lenka Šubrtová**, editor-in-chief of Dolce Vita; renowned Czech designer **Jan Černý**; and **Liběna Rochová**, expert guarantor, fashion designer, and professor.

*“VAN GRAAF strongly believes in supporting young talent. Therefore, we very much appreciate being part of the Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week again. We look forward to meeting this year’s finalists and wish them lots of success both for this competition as well as for their future career,”* says **Verena Czaja**, managing director of VAN GRAAF.

The 2024 finalists are:

1. **Hana Valtová - student at UMPRUM, Fashion and Footwear Design Studio**

In her work Hana likes to focus on historical craft techniques and their application to contemporary clothing. The collection that she will present is entitled Dandizette, a reference to dandyism and fashion of the 18th and 19th centuries.

**@hana\_valtova**

1. **Valerie Jurčíková - student at UMPRUM, Fashion and Footwear Design Studio**

Valerie is in her final year at the Fashion and Footwear Design Studio. She has taken inspiration for her collection from a funeral and the figure of a widow. Treating this theme with exaggeration, she interprets an event she herself experienced using her own artistic language.

**@valerie\_jurcikova**

1. **Vojtěch Lopour - Graduate of ArtEZ, University of the Arts, Netherlands**

Vojtěch’s work combines men’s tailoring and sportswear, drawing inspiration from aerodynamic shapes, architecture, furniture, and the functionality of everyday life. His collection will be a distinctive representation of the DNA of his work with an emphasis on functional elements, innovative processes, and unusual materials.

**@vojtechlapour**

1. **Šimon Žák – student at UMPRUM, Fashion and Footwear Design Studio**

Šimon’s Found Footage collection is inspired by the concept of the same name, where found materials and inspiration from various sources form the basic building blocks. He works with the deconstruction and remixing of various elements from the past and present to create unique and authentic styles that reflect the breadth and richness of human experience.

**@simon\_\_zak**

The finalists will present their fashion collections as part of a fashion show of MBPFW FW24, which will take place on April 20th at 14:00 at the Tyrš House - the headquarters of the Czech Sokol Association.

The overall winner of the competition will receive funding to create a new collection, which they will then present for free at the autumn edition of Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week alongside top industry professionals.They will also receive PR and organizational support from Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week and will be provided with materials that they can subsequently use to build their brand.

The full programme and details of each event will be available **from March 4th at www.mbpfw.com.**

**Official competition hashtags:**

**#VANGRAAFJuniorTalent2024**

**#vangraaf\_en**

More information:

#MBPFW

www.mbpfw.com

facebook.com/mbpfw

instagram.com/mbpfw

TikTok @mbpfw

**29 years of Mercedes-Benz supporting fashion**

Over the past 29 years, Mercedes-Benz has assumed a prominent global role as a key partner and primary sponsor of various fashion events. The brand actively engages in over 80 international fashion platforms across more than 40 countries, encompassing prestigious events such as Mercedes-Benz Fashion Weeks in Sydney, Mexico City, London, Madrid, Tbilisi, and Berlin, along with the esteemed International Festival of Fashion and Photography in Hyères. Mercedes-Benz consistently lends its support to select fashion events worldwide, cultivating emerging design talent and fostering an admirable reputation over the span of two decades. This steadfast backing has provided opportunities for over 90 aspiring designers to showcase their creations on 30 platforms globally, including cities like Milan, London, Prague, Istanbul, and Berlin.

**About the location**

This April, Mercedes-Benz Prague Fashion Week will grace the spaces of Tyrš House - the headquarters of the Czech Sokol Community. Nestled within Malá Strana, the complex includes Michna Palace, which has evolved from its charming Renaissance origins into one of Prague’s most magnificent Baroque palaces. Acquired by the Czechoslovak Sokol Community in 1921, the partially dilapidated building underwent a transformation under the visionary design of architect František Krásný. The result? The completion of the Tyrš House, boasting Prague’s first-ever indoor swimming pool and gymnasium building. Today, this site, with its unmistakable charm, hosts a myriad of sporting, cultural, and social gatherings. The most anticipated Sokol event of the year is the upcoming XVII All-Sokol Gathering, towhich will take place in the metropolisfrom 30th June to 5th July 2024.