



INTERNATIONAL
WOOLMARK PRIZE

MEDIA KIT

THE INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE

As the world's most prestigious award for rising fashion talents, The International Woolmark Prize crosses borders and cultures to celebrate global emerging designers who showcase the beauty and versatility of Merino wool.

Now in its seventh year, The Woolmark Company is reinforcing its commitment to supporting the very best emerging design talent by evolving the prize. An expert Advisory Council will be responsible for reviewing designer applications and selecting 40 semi-finalists for this year's International Woolmark Prize. These selected designers will then take part in one of three semi-final events in July, where 12 designers will be identified to take part in the International Woolmark Prize global final to be held at an international fashion week in early 2019.

The 12 finalists will each receive a financial contribution of AU\$70,000 to invest in the development of their capsule collection alongside mentoring, business training and showcasing opportunities. One menswear and one womenswear designer will each receive

AU\$200,000 at the global final along with guaranteed placement in some of the most important boutiques around the world that have committed to supporting the award. The Innovation Award will also be presented, for a second year, to one finalist with a financial contribution of AU\$100,000.

An important element of the prize is the commercialisation of Merino wool product within the world's leading retailers, which is why all 40 semi-finalists will be invited to attend a workshop hosted by The Woolmark Company to help prepare them for the development and manufacturing of their capsule collection. Workshops will also focus on the overall impact of collections on the environment and the wearer, ensuring the International Woolmark Prize continues to push the boundaries of global fashion.

By putting wool in the hands of the world's leading innovators, the International Woolmark Prize challenges them to achieve greatness and invites them to join a global community of the most promising international designers, supported and nurtured by The Woolmark Company.





ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Tim Blanks, Editor-at-large, Business of Fashion
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- Alison Veness, Editor of 10 and 10 Men Australia
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BACKGROUND & HISTORY

In 1936, Australian woolgrowers voted for a six pence levy to be imposed on each bale they produced, to promote their product around the world. This audacious, visionary decision resulted in the formation of a body first known as the International Wool Secretariat (IWS). One of the initiatives of the IWS was a fashion design award to highlight the versatility and modernity of wool.

It was at the 1954 awards that two young, unknown womenswear designers, Karl Lagerfeld and Yves Saint Laurent, stepped up onto a stage to accept their respective fashion design prizes. Lagerfeld, then 21, was the winner of the coat category. Saint Laurent, at a mere 18 years old, won the award for dress design, judged by a panel which included Hubert de Givenchy and Pierre Balmain.

By the 1960s, synthetic fibres discovered during the Second World War were posing a major challenge to wool's supremacy. To fight back, Chairman of the IWS, Sir William Vines, came up with the idea of a unique label that would be a guarantee of a product's composition. And so the Woolmark brand was born.

To announce the launch of the Woolmark brand, in 1964 IWS organised

an international competition to design a logo. The Italian graphic designer Francesco Saroglia was ultimately chosen from the dozens of entries – his proposition of five black bands criss-crossing to form a skein shape to perfectly represent the softness, elegance and modernity of wool.

Today, the Woolmark logo is one of the world's most well-known and respected apparel-related brands with strong relationships within the global apparel industry and with the world's leading designers and manufacturers. The Woolmark Company continues to highlight the benefits of Australian Merino wool throughout the international fashion industry.

A key element of this strategy is building relationships with designers and working with them to showcase the most innovative and beautiful Merino wool fabrics and yarns.

Some of the more recent design awards and programs supported by the Australian wool industry include the Protégé program in 2007, which aligned some of the world's most established designers such as Karl Lagerfeld and Donatella Versace with young protégés of their choice. In 2008, the Woolmark Prize held in Paris revived the original IWS awards.





ABOUT THE WOOLMARK COMPANY

The Woolmark Company is the global authority on wool. Through our extensive network of relationships spanning the international textile and fashion industries, we highlight Australian wool's positions as the ultimate natural fibre and premier ingredient in luxury apparel.

One of the world's most recognised and respected brands, the Woolmark logo provides assurance of the highest quality. Since 1964, the symbol has represented pioneering excellence and innovation at every level of the supply chain to increase consumer demand and enhance the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian wool industry.

Placing Merino wool firmly on the world stage, projects such as the International Woolmark Prize shine a spotlight on the boundless potential and extraordinary versatility of fashion's finest fibre. Strengthening our reputation for fostering emerging

design talent, the prestigious award connects the decision-makers of the future with today's leaders in retail and trade to ensure the inspiring and ongoing use of wool.

Endeavouring to showcase the unique properties of wool, we support ambitious initiatives such as the world-renowned Campaign for Wool, which helps to bridge the gap between farm and fashion by highlighting the natural, biodegradable and renewable qualities of a fleece grown by sheep reared on water, air, sunshine and grass. Working with luminaries such as campaign patron HRH The Prince of Wales is key to underlining the noble heritage of the fibre.

The Woolmark Company is a subsidiary of Australian Wool Innovation, a not-for-profit enterprise that conducts research, development and marketing along the worldwide supply chain for Australian wool on behalf of about 50,000 woolgrowers that help fund the company.

THE FUTURE OF WOOL

• **2013** Christian Wijnants was announced the winner of the prize, during the final award event held during London Fashion Week. Natalie Massenet, Chairman of the British Fashion Council opened the event while a stellar judging panel, which included Donatella Versace and Diane von Furstenberg, selected the winner.

• **2014** Rahul Mishra, an exciting new talent from India, was awarded the prize by another exceptional judging panel including Frida Giannini (Gucci) and Alexa Chung during Milan Fashion Week and has since gone on to achieve global success and is now a regular on the Paris Fashion Week schedule.

• **2015** The inaugural menswear award was handed to Public School during London Collections; Men, judged by industry experts including Paul Smith. The womenswear award for 2015 was won by fellow American, M.PATMOS. The women's finals were held in Beijing to celebrate China's Year of the Sheep, judged by a lineup of industry experts including Victoria Beckham.

• **2016** Dynamic UK design duo, Teatum Jones, took out the

womenswear prize during New York Fashion week, while SUKETDHIR, another new talent from India won the menswear award at a stunning presentation at Pitti Uomo Florence.

• **2017** For the first time, the menswear and womenswear finals were held together at a star-studded event at the iconic Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Representing the British Isles, COTTWEILER was announced as the menswear winner, praised for a collection that mixes sports, tailoring, streetwear and fashion. The USA's Gabriela Hearst took out the womenswear award with sleek silhouettes and crisp, tailored lines.

• **2018** The womenswear and menswear global finals were held in tandem during Pitti Uomo in Florence, where Indian designer Ruchika Sachdeva of Bodice won the womenswear award and was praised for her technique and thoughtful approach to manufacturing. Matthew Miller, who represented the British Isles, received the menswear award for his highly functional collection. The inaugural Innovation Award went to Christopher Bevans of DYNE, who created a technical snowboarding wardrobe.



Teatum Jones, 2016.



M.PATMOS, 2015.



Gabriela Hearst, 2017.



Matthew Miller, 2018.



Public School, 2015.



SUKETDHIR, 2016.



Bodice, 2018.



Christian Wijnants, 2013.



Rahul Mishra, 2014.



COTTWEILER, 2017.

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