

**EMERGING DESIGNERS AT MICAM MILANO
REWRITE THE FASHION RULES**

Their lives are full of different experiences and their goal is to achieve conscious, ethical fashion:
because sustainability is not a luxury.

The 12 shoe designers taking part in the 2021 edition of **Emerging Designers** - MICAM Milano's project to promote young international talents - come from all over the world, from Italy to Pakistan, and from the Congo to the USA and are all exponents of innovative, sustainable and glocal fashion.

Many of the Designers, chosen by a panel of experts, have studied in Italy or have sourced the materials for their creations here, but several of them live and work abroad, drawing their inspiration from traditions that are distant from our own, such as those of Africa or India.

They come from different backgrounds and have different stories to tell, but all share a burning desire to emerge as designers and an ability to reach this result by roaming the world to research new ideas. They also have in common a new vision of fashion, one that is more attentive to the needs of man and the environment.

A real turning-point is represented by the materials used. Alongside real leather, often sourced from eco-sustainable supply chains in Italy and abroad, there are also a number of interesting novelties, such as banana skins or vegan leathers made from pineapples or cactus plants. Some of the processes, such as that using the bark of the banana tree, date back to a time before the invention of weaving and are now on UNESCO's intangible heritage list. Many have chosen to focus on the circular economy, by recycling cotton and polyester from old clothes and plastic bottles, making soles out of recycled tyres and heels from recycled wood.

In their search for more and more sustainable solutions, these designers were often inspired by the traditions of their country of origin, or experimented with alternative materials based on ancient work processes. But their research does not stop at materials and in many cases brings into play those who, with time, have become the custodians of old traditions: from Pakistani embroiderers to the leather workers of Italy's Brenta region, from China's all-female workshops to those in Burkina Faso, the idea is to give dignity to the working person and create shoes with a high ethical value.

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THE DESIGNERS

Alessandra Balbi: from a degree in Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano to the London College of Fashion. Her collection is a blend of these two different dimensions, skilfully woven together by the artisans of the Valle del Brenta, in Veneto.

Rafaela Zago: from Brazil, her entirely hand-crafted collection is named after her grand-mother; she chooses exotic eco-friendly skins for her creations. She studied in London.

Daniel Essa: born in Syria where he cultivated a passion for sewing as a small boy. He studied economy but also attended the prestigious French fashion school ESMOD in Damascus. As a refugee fleeing from the war in his country, he went first to Spain and then France where he launched his collection in 2018. His sneakers are also worn by Woopy Goldberg. In his collections, he uses cowhides from sustainably raised livestock.

Jerelyn Creado: born in India, he studied in London and Milan. He believes firmly in sustainability, as a lasting value and not just a passing fashion, and chooses to work with real leather because it is biodegradable.

Marcus Thomas: from Oakland, in California, he outsources production of his shoes to an all-female factory in China.

Meher Kakalia: born in Karachi, Pakistan, she studied finance in London before discovering her true calling and returning to her homeland to become a stylist. Meher's colourful collection owes much to the embroiderers and ancient traditions of her country.

Gabriela Machado: born in Spain, she worked in Luxembourg in the field of finance but after a few months spent at an organic farm in New Zealand she discovered the value of the circular economy. After becoming interested in circular fashion, she set up her own company and started to research alternative materials, such as those derived from pineapple and cactus fibres, creating a number of eco-friendly collections.

Arnaud Barboteau: the founder of a French brand, Arnaud produces sneakers with soles made out of recycled rubber tyres: 3 pairs of shoes can be made using one tyre. Alongside his recycled soles, Arnaud chooses leathers from Portugal and Italy in order to offer the highest quality.

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Naomi Hille and Anousjka Röben: they are both from Holland and have already taken part as newcomers in various European fashion weeks.

Thushini Fernando: born in Sri Lanka, she was brought up in Milan because her mother worked as a baby-sitter for a family with close connections to the fashion world. After her degree, she attended an important fashion school in Milan and launched her career.

Titi Adesanya: brought up in Lagos, in Nigeria, and London; she studied fashion in the British capital but it was in Milan, and Italy, that she found the quality materials and techniques she needed to create her collections.

Lancine Koulibaly and Dieuveil Ngoubou: from Guinea and the Congo, they do not use animal skins and artificial dyes, preferring natural materials: organic cotton, bark cloth, mineral fabrics and plant-based dyes. They use banana (musa) fibre and banana bark, from which they extract fibres using an ancient technique.

THE PROJECT

MICAM Milano, the international footwear trade fair, at the **Fiera Milano from 19-21 September 2021**, promotes the fourth edition of the EMERGING DESIGNERS project, the event area dedicated to 12 shoe designers from all over the world, selected through an innovative concept realized in collaboration with Honegger agency.

A panel of fashion and communication experts, presided over by designer Ernesto Esposito, was called on to judge the work of accredited international designers. The panel members for the 2020 contest were: Eva Geraldine Fontanelli (Former EAL Vanity Fair and Elle Magazine), Mauro Galligari (Founder and CEO StudioZeta Showroom), Angelo Lanza (Photographer and AF.MAG Art Director), Maximilian Linz (Fashion Talent Scout & PR) and Riccardo Slavik (Stylist, Fashion Editor, Writer).

The professionals on the panel were able to make a valid contribution to the selection of the 12 designers to be presented at the fair by giving an informed opinion, based on their own particular work experience of how the world of fashion and communication is changing.

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