



Best Graduates on the runway. Photo: Maria Dred.

Press Release Neo.Fashion. presented by Potsdamer Platz during Berlin Fashion Week:

## Best Graduate Show & Neo.Fashion. Award 2025

### An evening of emerging talent, bold stories & powerful emotions on the runway

*Berlin, July 3, 2025* – After a day dedicated entirely to emerging fashion talent — full of visionary runway shows, inspiring encounters, and forward-thinking design — Neo.Fashion. 2025, presented by Potsdamer Platz, reached its emotional peak with the much-anticipated Neo.Fashion. Award Show. A full house gathered at the Atrium Tower at Potsdamer Platz to celebrate the next generation of German fashion designers and their creative vision.

There was excitement in the air long before the show began. Backstage, models were being dressed, last-minute fittings were underway. As the lights dimmed, host Hadnet Tesfai opened the evening with elegance and warmth — guiding the audience through a night of talent, creativity, and connection. Among the guests were national and international industry leaders, media, university representatives, friends, families, supporters, and association members — all eager to witness the very best.

16 outstanding graduates from 12 fashion schools across Germany presented their final collections to an international audience.



Presenter Hadnet Tesfai. Photo: Robert Schlesinger.

## A Multi-Stage Selection Process and Five Forward-Thinking Award Categories

To qualify as a Best Graduate for the Neo.Fashion. Award Show, students must prove themselves at multiple stages. First, graduates apply internally at their respective universities, which in many cases form dedicated selection juries or committees. These institutions then nominate their most promising fashion talents to participate in the university shows at Neo.Fashion., and also propose a smaller shortlist of candidates for the next round toward the Award Show.

From these recommendations, a high-profile jury of Neo.Fashion. experts selects one nominee per university to advance. These selected graduates then present their collections and ideas in personal elevator pitches — offering insights into their inspiration, process, and concept.



Jury meeting with elevator pitches to select the Best Graduates, 19th floor Potsdamer Platz. Photo: Ansgar Werrelmann.

This is far from a one-person decision. Neo.Fashion. deliberately brings together diverse perspectives to ensure a fair and multifaceted evaluation. Those who succeed in standing out across so many layers of expert scrutiny truly represent the best of Germany's emerging fashion talent. This year, 16 finalists were selected from a nationwide pool of several hundred graduates to present their work on the runway — and to compete for top honors in five categories.

As part of the Best Graduate Award Show, the Neo.Fashion. Awards were presented in the following categories: Best Design, Best Craftsmanship, Best Sustainability Concept, Best Global Design, and for the first time, Best Digital Fashion Design. With the introduction of this fifth category — complemented by a curated Digital Fashion Exhibition — Neo.Fashion. reflects the ongoing transformation of the industry and the growing relevance of digital fashion.

Such excellence requires expertise. The evaluation process relies on two independently appointed expert juries — one for physical collections, and one for digital fashion. This dual-structured approach ensures maximum visibility and recognition across both disciplines.

### **Digital Jury:**

Anja Demuth (CLO), Kerry Murphy (The Fabricant | CEO & Gründer), Verena Brune (Zalando Juxtamode), Laura Buechner (Promptlab | stoodio.ai), Keke Opata (3D Akademie Stuttgart), Franziska Englberger (Neo.Fashion. Head of Digital Fashion)

### **Physical Jury:**

Claudine Duvivier (Founder and CEO, Tandem), Mauro Grimaldi (Strategic Advisor to the CEO, Richemont F&A Dept.), Anastasios Voulgaris (Creative Director, Burda), Sebastian Warschow (Chief Communications Officer, haebmau AG), Stéphane Moun (CMO & Brand Strategist, Juxtamode)

## **A defining moment: the nominees take the runway**

After each nominee's work was showcased during the Best Graduate Show on screens and the runway, all 16 graduates gathered center stage — full of anticipation. The talent was palpable, the tension high.

### **Digital Nominees:**

Sara Makalic (HTW Berlin) | Pia Ulrich (HTW Berlin) | Flora Schwöppe (AMD Hamburg)

### **Physical Nominees:**

Antonia Dannenberg (Hochschule Niederrhein) | Melanie Parzenczewski (HTW Berlin) | Alwine Yu (FH Bielefeld) | Lisa Bassot (HS Reutlingen) | Lea Wallkötter (HAW Hamburg) | Azura Barber (Macromedia) | Jilian Stein (Macromedia) | Lennart Bohle (HS Pforzheim) | Jon Liesenfeld (AMD) | Gongxu Sun (HFK Bremen) | Laurin Schuler (KH Weißensee) | Wiebke Lendewig (KH Giebichenstein Halle) | Sanam Neda Khesraw (Hochschule Hannover)

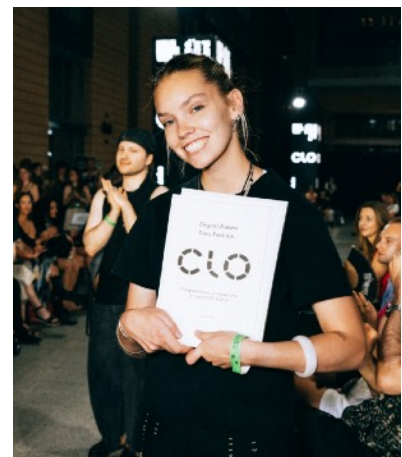
## **And the winners are...**

The ceremony opened with the announcement of Best Digital Fashion Design, made possible through a partnership with CLO, also resulting in a digital exhibition. The award included a one-year license for CLO3D and The Fabricant's AI Tool.

### **Best Digital Fashion Design: Flora Schwöppe (AMD Hamburg) with „Munter“**

Praised by the jury for her technically refined and conceptually purposeful use of digital tools, Schwöppe's collection "Munter" explores the contrast between the lightness of childhood and the weight of adult responsibility, seamlessly combining digital fashion through Clo3D and Blender in a poetic virtual classroom setting.

But Flora wasn't the only one to impress. As the remaining four categories were announced, each award was accompanied by personal words from members of the jury.



Winner of Best Digital Fashion Design Flora Schwöppe. Photo: Robert Schlesinger.

Mauro Grimaldi, for instance, underlined the outstanding commitment and craftsmanship of Melanie Parzenczewski (HTW Berlin), who invested eight months of meticulous handwork into a single dress — a remarkable example of artisanal dedication.



Winners of the named four categories (f.l.t.r.). Photo: Gerome Defrance.

Each winner in the main physical categories received a professional PFAFF sewing machine, as well as tailored mentoring and coaching packages through the Neo.Fashion. network, designed to help them launch the next chapter of their creative journey.

**Best Design:** *Wiebke Lendewig (Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle)*

**Best Sustainability Concept:** *Azura Barber (Hochschule Macromedia)*

**Best Global Concept:** *Jon Liesenfeld (AMD Akademie Mode & Design)*

**Best Craftsmanship:** *Melanie Parzenczewski (HTW Berlin)*

This last category — Best Global Concept — was not originally planned. It was spontaneously introduced by the jury on the evening of the awards to acknowledge the remarkable depth, holistic approach, and international relevance found in Liesenfeld's work.

## Special awards that delighted and surprised

But the surprises didn't stop there!

The Potsdamer Platz Special Award recognized a designer with an extensive support package including mentoring, production resources, branding collaborations, access to locations — and a €500 cash prize.

***Potsdamer Platz Special Award: Laurin Schuler (Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee)***

The final surprise of the night came through a video message from abroad — Lennart Bohle won an exclusive trip to Australia to showcase his collection at German Week Brisbane — a prestigious opportunity to present his work to an international audience. Another milestone for an international network for the benefit of graduates that continues to expand, thereby increasing its reach and stages.

***Brisbane German Week Showcase Special Award: Lennart Bohle (Hochschule Pforzheim)***

## A powerful finale — and a night to remember

Tears, applause, and tight embraces marked the end of the ceremony. Nominees, jury members, family and guests remained gathered on the runway — celebrating shoulder-to-shoulder. It was a moment of pure connection and joy that captured the essence of Neo.Fashion.: building community through creativity. We would have loved to share this moment of joy and recognition with Berlin's key supporters of culture and fashion — whose visibility would have sent a strong signal for the next generation of fashion design.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the nominated graduates, our expert juries, the wonderfully empathetic Hadnet Tesfai, and to all the guests and partners who share Neo.Fashion.'s mission: to give young talent a platform and shape the future of fashion.

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*//Further information, image material, can be found online ([LINK PRESSEOUNGE](#)). For interview requests or networking opportunities, please feel free to contact us. You may also send published Media extracts for press clipping to [presse@neofashion.de](mailto:presse@neofashion.de)*

*//About Neo.Fashion.:*

*Neo.Fashion. is a unique platform that promotes emerging fashion talent and offers them the opportunity to present their work to a wider audience. Through events such as the Neo.Fashion. Award Show, outstanding graduates are placed in the spotlight of the fashion industry. The event also serves as a platform for exchange and collaboration between all stakeholders in the fashion sector.*

*For more information, please visit: [www.neofashion.de](http://www.neofashion.de)*

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Neo.Fashion. would like to take this opportunity to thank our partner **POTSDAMER PLATZ** for their support and financial contribution!



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