

Berlin, May 2026

## **Neo.Fashion. Berlin Turns Ten — Germany's Most Inclusive Platform for Emerging Fashion Talent Charts a New Course**

**More than 620 talents, nine editions, one milestone: Neo.Fashion. celebrates its 10th edition this July and announces a new organizational structure — a clear statement of commitment to the long-term development of emerging talent in the German fashion industry.**

**Berlin, May 4, 2026 — Germany's most versatile platform for emerging fashion talent marks its 10th anniversary with a strategic repositioning and a new venue: For its 10th edition, Neo.Fashion. will take place during Berlin Fashion Week from July 2 to 4, 2026, in a former industrial hall at "Neues Ufer 13" in Berlin-Moabit. Since its launch in 2017, more than 620 graduates have presented their collections on the platform; this year, up to 80 participants are expected to showcase their work across more than ten shows. The program includes the Best Graduates Shows and Aspiring Designer Shows, alongside the presentation of the Neo.Fashion. Award and the Digital Fashion Award. To date, ten universities from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Ukraine have confirmed their participation. A strong emphasis on sustainability defines this year's collections. With the establishment of the non-profit Neo.Fashion. e.V. in 2025, the initiative has further professionalized its organizational structure, creating a more robust foundation for the long-term promotion of emerging design talent.**

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What started in 2017 as a vision has since become a defining fixture for young fashion designers across Germany: Neo.Fashion. is celebrating its 10th edition this year. Since the inaugural graduate show in the fall of 2017 at Motorwerk Weißensee in Berlin, more than 620 graduates from across the country have presented their final collections on the Neo.Fashion. stage. In 2019, the platform became an official part of Berlin Fashion

Week, cementing its place in the international fashion calendar. With the Best Graduates Shows, the Aspiring Designer Shows, the Neo.Fashion. Award, and the Digital Fashion Award — launched for the first time last year — Neo.Fashion. has grown into a unique ecosystem that goes far beyond a pure presentation platform.

The founding of the nonprofit **Neo.Fashion. e.V.** in 2025 marks a pivotal step toward sustained, structured talent development. A newly expanded organizational team now manages the full range of Neo.Fashion. activities — from university coordination and communications to technical production, industry partnerships, textile research, and startup outreach. Workshops, competitions, mentoring programs, and international collaborations will be part of the platform's expanded offering going forward.

Neo.Fashion. is also making a geographic move. From **July 2 through 4, 2026** — as always, in sync with Berlin Fashion Week — the event relocates to “**Neues Ufer 13**” (“New Shore 13”) in the Berlin district of Moabit: a former industrial hall whose raw, urban aesthetic provides an authentic backdrop for young, uncharted fashion voices. “We see ‘Neues Ufer’ as a metaphor — for us as a format that has reinvented itself time and again over ten years, and for the talents who show their collections here with a new shore as their destination,” says **Jens Zander**, CEO of brand experience agency S49, founder of Neo.Fashion., and director of the new Neo.Fashion. e.V., where he oversees production and strategic development.

More than ten professional runway shows are planned, featuring selected graduates from nearly all German fashion schools presenting their collections. Each show will spotlight six to eight emerging designers. In total, up to 80 participants will take the stage in July, presenting their work to a broad public audience—well beyond the industry itself. This open and inclusive approach sets Neo.Fashion apart from other formats.

Ten universities have already confirmed their participation: Hochschule Pforzheim (Pforzheim), Hochschule Niederrhein (Krefeld, Mönchengladbach), AMD Akademie Mode & Design (Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Wiesbaden, Munich), Hochschule Reutlingen (Reutlingen), Hochschule Hannover (Hannover), Hochschule Bielefeld

(Bielefeld), Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin – HTW Berlin (Berlin), Hochschule Macromedia (Berlin), Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle (Halle/Saale), and HAW Hamburg – University of Applied Sciences (Hamburg). On the international side: the University of Art and Design Linz (Linz, Austria), the Academy of Art and Design Basel – HGK FHNW (Basel, Switzerland), Fashion Art Toronto (Toronto, Canada), and the Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design – KNUTD (Kyiv, Ukraine).

One theme runs through nearly every collection shown at Neo.Fashion.: sustainability. What was a niche concern a decade ago is now a core driver of young designers' creative work. From material sourcing and production processes to circular design principles, Neo.Fashion. graduates are rethinking fashion from the ground up — and setting new standards for a responsible future in the industry. Neo.Fashion. actively supports this shift, providing space for innovative, sustainable approaches.

### **From a Personal Mission to an Industry Institution**

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Neo.Fashion. was founded by **Jens Zander**. In the summer of 2016, he and his team — together with a student from the Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin (HTW) — developed the idea of building a professional platform for fashion graduates. “As someone who turns ideas into events, I didn’t hesitate for long. With Neo.Fashion., I wanted to create a stage for fashion talent that simply didn’t exist before,” Zander recalls. The art-direction of the early editions was led by **Anke Schlöder of HTW**, who co-developed and co-founded the format alongside Zander and Prof. Horst Fetzter. The very first event in 2017 drew more than 1,000 guests and over 40 members of the press.

### **Nurturing Talent as an Investment in the Future**

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Germany’s fashion economy — including retail, startups, and FashionTech — contributes approximately **€70 billion** to the country’s GDP and supports around **one million jobs**, according to research by Oxford Economics commissioned by the Fashion Council Germany (FCG) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and

Climate Action (BMWK). The German textile and apparel industry generates around €32 billion in annual revenue and employs more than 120,000 people across approximately 1,400 companies. The German apparel market as a whole recorded revenues of around €67.7 billion in 2025.

Maintaining and growing that position demands a consistent pipeline of new talent. Platforms like Neo.Fashion. play a central role in bridging the gap between education and professional entry — giving emerging designers the visibility and industry connections they need to launch their careers.

### **Success Stories and International Partnerships**

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The impact of Neo.Fashion. as a launchpad for young designers is evident in the careers that have followed: many alumni who showed their first collections on the Neo.Fashion. runway have since returned with their own labels — and are now fixtures in the Berlin Fashion Week calendar.

Particularly noteworthy is the partnership with **Ukrainian Fashion Week**, established in 2022, which gives Ukrainian design talent an international platform despite the difficult situation in their home country. Strategic partners including the **Fashion Council Germany (FCG)** and the **German Textile and Fashion Federation (Gesamtverband textil+mode)** support Neo.Fashion. in broadening its reach and opening doors into the industry for emerging designers.

### **Neo.Fashion. — The Ecosystem**

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**Best Graduates Show:** The flagship show of Neo.Fashion. during Berlin Fashion Week, in which the best final collections from fashion design students across Germany are presented in professional runway shows.

**Neo.Fashion. Award:** An award recognizing outstanding emerging talent distinguished by exceptional creativity, innovation, or sustainability in their collections — designers who are setting the agenda for the future of the industry.

**Aspiring Designer Shows:** A platform for young designers who have already taken their first steps toward independence and are building their own labels — giving them the opportunity to present their current collections to a broad professional audience.

**Digital Fashion Award:** Launched in 2025, this award signals a shift in how fashion engages with the digital world — treating it not just as a tool, but as a creative space in its own right. For Neo.Fashion., it marks a key step in the evolution of the format and opens a new chapter in supporting digital emerging talent.

## **Neo.Fashion. — The New Organizational Team**

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**Elke Degenkolb** — Art Direction of Neo.Fashion. since 2021. The managing director of Studio 5 Berlin brings more than 20 years of experience in luxury fashion, including work with Jil Sander, Prada, Strenesse, Bogner, and Wolford.

**Petra Diroll** — Head of Policy and Communications at the German Textile and Fashion Federation. A former ARD broadcast journalist and press officer at both the Federal Presidential Office and a federal ministry, she has been with the federation since 2018.

**Prof. Horst Fetzer** — Professor of Fashion Design at HTW Berlin, specializing in fashion and function, collection strategy, and innovative product development. Fetzer is Associate Dean of the School of Culture and Design and has been a key partner and supporter of Neo.Fashion. from the very beginning.

**Sophie Fuhlbrügge** — Fashion technologist and fashion designer (BA/MA, HTW Berlin), where she also teaches. A former Neo.Fashion. Graduate Show participant herself, she is closely connected to Neo.Fashion and handles press, guest management, and internal communications for the team.

**Klaus-Peter Rieser** — communications expert with many years of experience in the chemical industry. He supports Neo.Fashion in professional communications and public relations.

**Daniel Triebke** — Independent entrepreneur and managing director of the agency Markburg for more than 20 years. He oversees brand strategy development for startups,

mid-size companies, and DAX-listed corporations. He also serves as a startup mentor at Europa-Universität Viadrina and is a founder and co-developer of Neo.Fashion.

**Ansgar Werrelmann** — has worked as a fashion photographer both in Germany and internationally for three decades, and attends the Fashion Weeks in the world's major fashion capitals in his capacity as an editor. He also teaches at university level and contributes to Neo.Fashion. in the areas of communications and strategic development.

**Jens Zander** — Founder and director of Neo.Fashion. e.V. Zander is CEO of brand experience agency S49 and launched Neo.Fashion. in 2016.

### **Neo.Fashion. — Team Voices**

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“It’s about making the exceptional visible”, says **Elke Degenkolb**, Art Director of Neo.Fashion. and member of the Neo.Fashion. e.V. organizing team. Drawing on her deep background in luxury fashion, she brings a refined eye for aesthetics and staging. “Every collection tells a story — our job is to tell those stories powerfully, contributing to the visibility and appreciation of fashion designers.”

“The future of fashion is built at the intersection of professional education, hands-on practice, and genuine collaboration,” says **Prof. Horst Fetzner** of HTW Berlin, who has championed Neo.Fashion. from its inception and is now part of the Neo.Fashion. e.V. organizing team. “Neo.Fashion. creates exactly that connection — between universities, talent, and industry. It has become an indispensable part of the German fashion education landscape.”

“Supporting young talent is a shared responsibility — one that belongs to universities, business, and society alike. That conviction has been at the heart of Neo.Fashion. since day one, and it will continue to guide everything we do,” says **Ansgar Werrelmann**, fashion and advertising photographer with more than 30 years of experience and member of the Neo.Fashion. e.V. organizing team.

“Emerging talent needs visibility, political support, and strong networks,” says **Petra Diroll**, Head of Policy and Communications at the German Textile and Fashion Federation and member of the Neo.Fashion. e.V. organizing team. “Neo.Fashion.

delivers exactly that — it makes talent visible, connects designers with industry, and bridges the gap between education and professional life. For the entire sector.”

“Young talent needs more than craft: they need clear communication, reliable structures, and strong networks”, adds **Klaus-Peter Rieser**, who contributes his extensive background in corporate communications to the Neo.Fashion. team. “With the founding of the association, we’re building exactly that professional foundation — so that creative ideas can generate lasting impact.”

### **Neo.Fashion. — At a Glance**

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Neo.Fashion. is Germany’s largest platform and network for emerging fashion designers. Since 2017, it has offered graduates of fashion and design schools, as well as up-and-coming independent labels, a professional stage to present their collections. As an established fixture of Berlin Fashion Week, Neo.Fashion. showcases the best graduates from across Germany in runway shows, showrooms, and digital formats. With the founding of the nonprofit Neo.Fashion. e.V. in 2025, the initiative has been institutionalized as a permanent association, now supporting talent year-round through competitions, workshops, mentoring programs, and international collaborations. Neo.Fashion. stands for diversity, innovation, and sustainability in fashion, fostering an environment in which interdisciplinary exchange and the connection between creativity and commerce take center stage. Strategic partners include the Fashion Council Germany and the German Textile and Fashion Federation (Gesamtverband textil+mode). More information at [www.neofashion.de](http://www.neofashion.de)

### **Media Contact**

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