

CITEM launches Milan fashion program for new generation PH designers

The unveiling of the 12 Filipino designers selected for the FASHIONPhilippines Milan mentorship program.

PASAY, METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES, August 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Department of Trade and Industry, through its Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), announced the 12 Filipino designers selected for the FASHIONPhilippines Milan mentorship program. The initiative, in collaboration with the Philippine [Fashion](#) Coalition (PFC), aims to elevate the Philippines as a global hub for sustainable design and talent, culminating in an exhibition during Milan Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2026. A cohort of 12 Filipino designers has been selected to take part in a comprehensive mentorship program that will culminate in Milan, Italy, considered as one of the world's fashion capitals.



The FASHIONPhilippines Milan media launch was attended by key officials from the government, select delegation of Filipino designers, and movers of Philippine fashion.

FASHIONPhilippines Milan, an initiative by CITEM in collaboration with the Philippine Fashion Coalition (PFC), shared the names of the chosen designers who will take part in the program last August 11 at Hotel Benilde Maison De La Salle in Manila.

They are Adam Pereyra, Joseph Agustin Bagasao III for Bagasao, Theresa Nepomuceno for Calli, Carl Jan Cruz, Christian Edward Dalogaog for Ched Studio, Steffi Cua for Idyllic Summers, Jerome Lorico for Lorico, Renz Reyes, Joaquin Gabriel Almazan for Tagpi, Jo Ann Bitagcol for Bitagcol, Vania Romoff, and Thian Rodriguez.

In conjunction with the announcement, FASHIONPhilippines set up an exhibit to showcase a hero piece from each designer. The 12 featured designs are grounded in the rich Filipino culture, flaunting weaves, patterns, and designs that tell the story of the Philippine heritage, as well as the inspired process of their creation.

Trade and Industry Secretary Cristina A. Roque highlighted that this initiative is in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to showcase Filipino creativity and expand economic opportunities for local brands in the highly competitive international market.

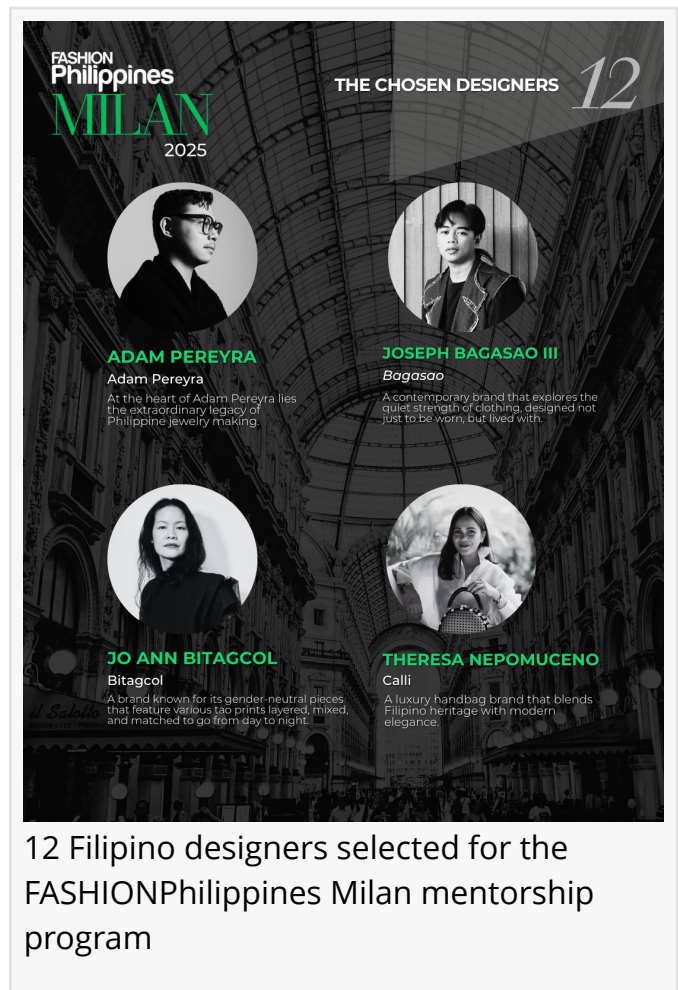
"By bringing our designers to one of the world's fashion capitals and exposing them to mentorship from world-renowned industry leaders, we are also showcasing the Philippines' design excellence and opening opportunities for our talents to connect with international buyers and broaden their market reach," Secretary Roque added. CITEM Executive Director Leah Pulido Ocampo agreed, stating, "This initiative is more than just an exhibition. It's a strategic platform designed to help Filipino fashion designers and brands build relationships with international buyers and global industry gatekeepers."

In her opening remarks during the event, Carissa Cruz-Evangelista, PFC Chairman, remarked, "By engaging with top-tier industry professionals and participating in major fashion events, our designers gain exposure, credibility, and access to opportunities that can define their careers."

"We are proud to stand behind the talented Filipino designers selected for the Milan Mentorship Program, as they carry with them not only their artistry but also the stories of Philippine innovation," Dr. Julius Leaño, Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI) Executive Director, added.

The mentorship program is divided into two phases. The first involves the Creative Planning sessions and local mentorship, which started this month and will conclude in September, led by PFC and LIT Fashion Consultancy. The second phase is an intensive mentorship and exhibition in Milan in September, spearheaded by Sara Sozzani Maino, Head of Special Projects at Vogue Italia, the founder of Vogue Talents, and the Creative Director of Fondazione Sozzani.

The Milan mentorship and exhibition, which will run from September 22 - 25, will be dedicated to the designers working closely with eight mentors. Aside from Maino, the other mentors will be: RG Showroom founder Riccardo Grassi; Silvia Bertocchi, Head of Cultural Programs for Fondazione Sozzani; stylist, fashion editor, and Condé Nast consultant Riccardo Terzo; fashion designer Niccolò Pasqualetti; fashion and digital creator Ryle Tuviera; fashion buyer for Gaudenzi Boutique, Giulia Demitri; and Le Bon Marché-Paris (LVMH) curator Helena



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Boissonnas.

The designers will each present a 15-piece collection at Fondazione Sozzani during Milan Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2026. They will also introduce three new garments that use Filipino Innovation textiles (FIT) that were developed from abaca, banana, pineapple, and bamboo fibers, under the expertise of PTRI. To showcase the breadth of Filipino creativity, works from Filipino visual artists will also be installed at Fondazione Sozzani to serve as a backdrop for the fashion presentation.

The designers' pieces will also be presented in a special setting at Manila FAME 2025, the Philippines' premier trade show for home, fashion, and lifestyle products, set on October 16 - 18 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila in Pasay City.

"Those four days will be intense," Maino promised in a video interview. "The mentors' guidance will be based on what we know about [the designers'] profiles and what we believe they need. The mentorship will give them an overview of how their businesses are doing and provide them with insights on how to elevate their brand and improve in areas where they struggle." She advised the designers not to be afraid to ask questions. "[They must] get the most out of the experience because it's a unique chance."

Programs like the Milan mentorship provide Filipino designers access to the tools they need to succeed, ultimately positioning the Philippines as a source for sustainable fashion pieces and creative talent. Sozzani agreed that it's high time for the country to be introduced to the rest of the world as a place worthy of being developed as a fashion hub. "This project shares the values we hold at Fondazione Sozzani: culture, heritage, education, the new generation, and responsibility. We want to show the global fashion industry that beyond the three or four places that are considered the 'capitals' of fashion, there are countries like the Philippines where craftsmanship and culture are also held in high regard."

FASHIONPhilippines is the country's banner in marketing local fashion enterprises internationally. With CITEM at the helm, the program has brought local brands to top international trade shows and exhibitions, including the Centrestage trade show in Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific Textile Expo (APT Expo) in Singapore.

FASHION Philippines MILAN 2025

THE CHOSEN DESIGNERS 12

CARL JAN CRUZ
Carl Jan Cruz
A brand that creates clothes that are a body of work reflecting contemporary Filipino fashion.

CHRISTIAN EDWARD DALOGAOG
Ched Studio
A design studio that preserves and celebrates traditional details and standards, combining textures and modern shapes.

STEFFI CUA
Idyllic Summers
A fashion studio working at the intersection of textile, concept, and cultural authorship.

JEROME ALLEN LORICO
Lorico
A contemporary brand that focuses on the development of native natural materials and certain crafts of the Philippines.

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FASHIONPhilippines in Milan is supported by LIT Fashion Consultancy and the Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI).

Learn more about FASHIONPhilippines Milan at https://fameplus.com/trade_fairs/fashionphilippines-milan.

CITEM also invites you to the upcoming Manila FAME at the World Trade Center Metro Manila in Pasay City, Philippines, on October 16-18, 2025. To learn more, go to https://fameplus.com/manila_fame.

Elmer Harold Grande
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FASHION Philippines MILAN 2025

THE CHOSEN DESIGNERS 12

RENZ EDWARD REYES
Renz Reyes
The brand is an intersection of tailored utility and artisanal craft, using embroidery and handwork but in a more contemporary way.

GABBY GARCIA
Tagpi
A brand that celebrates Philippine cultures coming together, deeply intertwined with a great love for sustainable fashion and local artistry.

CHRISTIAN RODRIGUEZ
Thian Rodriguez
A brand recognized for its streetwear, unconventional leatherswear, and intricate metal detailing.

VANIA KRIZIA ROMOFF
Vania Romoff
The brand creates pieces for the modern woman—unapologetic in their femininity, exact in their elegance.

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