

# POLIMODA

## 昇華 (SHO-KA): BEST COLLECTION 2024

Jimena Guzman is the winner of the 2024 Graduation Show

Florence, 26 June 2024 - Polimoda announces the winner of 昇華 (SHO-KA): the Graduation Show 2024, held on June 12th at Villa Palmieri during Pitti Uomo 106.

A jury of international fashion experts awarded the Best Collection 2024 prize to promising designer Jimena Guzman, a graduate of the Undergraduate course in Fashion Design.

The show represented the catwalk debut of a new generation of creatives showcasing the collections of 18 students. With more than one hundred looks on display, the designers had the opportunity to express their creative identity with firmness and autonomy. Absolute freedom of expression at the culmination of their studies at Polimoda.

“This year, we worked with our Fashion Design students on a profound development of the individual's identity rather than the traditional idea of a collection, encouraging them to create a personal and unique language that is released through fashion design”, explains Director, Massimiliano Giornetti. “Each collection is a hymn to individuality as well as being a personal reflection and point of view on political, sociological, climatic and anthropological themes. We do not see fashion as an ephemeral form of art, but rather as a powerful communication tool capable of connecting and giving strength to the individual.”

A jury composed of Stefano Pilati (Creative Director and Founder of Random Identities), Gaia Repossi (Creative Director of Repossi), Giuseppe Angiolini (Founder of Sugar), David Koma (Creative Director of the eponymous brand) and Marc Goehring (Stylist and Art Director) was invited to evaluate the collections to choose the best, based on criteria of originality, technical execution and design consistency.

The six looks that won over the judges were those of the designer from Santiago in the Dominican Republic. Jimena Guzman's 'Bajo Mundo' collection is a vibrant homage to the cultural roots of the Dominican Republic. Inspired by Dembow music and the subculture of the country's marginal communities, Guzman has fused traditional craftsmanship with a contemporary touch. The choice of materials was characterised by the inclusion of everyday objects found on the streets of the

Dominican Republic and the Caribbean, giving them a second life. Raffia made from palm leaves, known as 'cana' in the Dominican Republic, is at the heart of the collection, worked in collaboration with local artisans to create a wealth of patterns and textures resulting from different artisanal drying techniques. The designer overcame the challenge of working with this delicate material by integrating elements of leather and metal, which provide a contrast between urban strength and delicate craftsmanship.

“Jimena’s collection is a very personal presentation. It is a hyperbolic eye on the obsessions and excesses of Dominican women. The exquisite manufacturing is magnified by the use of very simple and common materials such as raffia and wild grasses. Her silhouettes are precise and sexy, in total antithesis of the quiet luxury trend prevailing today.”

The colors and shapes of the collection reflect the vibrancy and resilience of Dominican culture, using neutral tones with accents of green and yellow to evoke tropical energy. Structured silhouettes and intricate details, such as bags with horn handles, tell stories of tradition and innovation. The collection benefits from the collaboration of local artisans and companies such as Envases Antillanos, who have provided recycled materials, transformed into unique elements, such as tin can tabs modified into crocheted flowers. Guzman has elegantly blended contrasting elements, creating a balance between the solidity of leather and the delicacy of raffia, between the constriction of laces in criss-cross closures and the freedom of women's bodies.

Each piece in the collection is an ode to limitless creativity. Inspired by the daily life and environment of the 'Bajo Mundo', the collection offers an authentic and profound vision of the Dominican Republic filtered through the language of fashion.

"An important message behind the choice of materials used, much can be achieved with little if there is a will and a strong vision. A fundamental element at the heart of Dominican creativity," explained Jimena Guzman. "Receiving this award fills me with immense gratitude, enthusiasm confirming the hard work and dedication I have put into this collection. This recognition gives me confidence to continue to pursue my dreams, push boundaries and aspire for excellence as I begin my journey as a designer."