POLIMODA

FIT State University of New York

PRESS RELEASE

POLIMODA AND FIT, FORTY YEARS TOGETHER: A RENEWED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FLORENCE AND NEW YORK

The presidents of both institutions met for the first time and renewed the agreement that has linked Florence and New York since 1986

Florence / New York, July 9, 2026 – Polimoda in Florence, Italy and the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City are marking forty years of collaboration and announcing the renewal of the agreement that has united the two institutions since 1986.

The agreement, effective for three years, was signed during the Polimoda Graduate Show 2026 in Florence, where FIT President Jason S. Schupbach attended as a special guest. The event marked the first meeting between Schupbach, a nationally recognized leader in creative sector development, and Polimoda President Niccolò Ricci, CEO of the international luxury group Stefano Ricci S.p.A. Both having taken office in 2026 at their respective institutions, the two presidents chose the partnership's fortieth anniversary to set a shared course: building on a historic relationship and carrying it forward into new territory.

"*This milestone carries deep meaning, not only for the institution, but on a personal level as well. I was born, raised, and built my entire personal and professional life in Florence. Being called today to represent Polimoda, an institution that for forty years has carried the prestige and name of our city onto the international stage, is a source of profound pride and responsibility. In 1986, the Fashion Institute of Technology played a decisive role in bringing an ambitious vision to life: establishing in Florence a school that could bridge Italian craftsmanship and manufacturing expertise with a global perspective. That vision has grown stronger over time, giving rise to one of the most respected academic institutions in fashion worldwide, and cementing a strategic bond between Florence and New York*," says **Niccolò Ricci**, President of Polimoda.

"FIT joins Polimoda in celebrating forty years of shaping fashion education globally." said FIT President **Jason S. Schupbach**. *"FIT's partnership with Polimoda is one of our most significant and longstanding. The programs we have developed throughout our collaboration have contributed to the excellence of both institutions. Our joint history has led to the enhancement of the creative industries in Florence and in New York City. With this renewed agreement, I am looking forward to building so much more together. "*

Forty Years in the Making

In 1986, as Italy's fashion industry recognized the need for a training system equal to its own manufacturing excellence, FIT stepped in to help build it. The "Politecnico Internazionale della Moda", today known as Polimoda, was founded through a collaboration between the city of Florence and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, on the initiative of the Municipalities of Florence and Prato and the Province of Florence, together with Fondazione CR Firenze, Centro di Firenze per la Moda Italiana, the Florence Chamber of Commerce, Confindustria Firenze, and local business associations.

FIT contributed faculty and expertise to build the new school's curriculum, sending Professor Alan Fishman, a twenty-year FIT administrator and educator, to Florence to launch the program. Fishman served as Polimoda's first director from 1986 to 1992, under the presidency of Alberto Amorosi, then councilor of the City of Florence. The school opened in October 1986 at Villa Strozzi, a property made available by the City of Florence, welcoming 52 students from six countries, chosen from more than 300 applicants.

The goal, as Fishman had described it at that time, was a "modern apprenticeship system" — professional training that prepared graduates to enter the industry immediately upon completion. That model has shaped generations of fashion professionals over forty years and today finds expression in an institution enrolling 2,000 students from 107 countries, recognized among the leading fashion schools in the world.

Polimoda Press Office

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FIT in Florence

The renewed agreement ensures the continuity of FIT in Florence, FIT's Florence-based division, a program that brings American students studying Fashion Design and Fashion Business Management to Polimoda's campuses each year. Studying abroad in Florence gives students the chance to immerse themselves in the heart of Italian fashion culture, developing the creative flexibility and adaptability that today's global industry demands.

At the Manifattura Campus and Villa Campus, a combined educational hub of more than 15,000 square meters in the heart of Florence, FIT students have access to apparel design and garment-making workshops, leather goods and textile research facilities, photography studios, and a richly multicultural environment with direct exposure to Made in Italy production.

"*Today, the FIT in Florence program stands as one of the finest examples of how education can build bridges across cultures. Every year, our city welcomes American students who have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the value of Italian manufacturing and creativity. At the same time, Polimoda reaffirms its role as an international platform for the exchange of ideas, talent, and cutting-edge knowledge. Looking ahead, the renewal of this historic partnership is not simply a celebration of a shared success story. It marks the opening of a new strategic chapter. Under the leadership of both institutions, our goal is to expand opportunities for collaboration among students, faculty, and industry. We intend to advance new initiatives that further strengthen the dialogue between Florence and New York, two cities that continue to embody, on a global scale, the values of creativity, innovation, and culture*," adds Ricci.

ABOUT POLIMODA

Polimoda is recognized worldwide as one of the leading fashion schools, combining design expertise, the craftsmanship of Made in Italy production, and a cosmopolitan outlook. Founded in Florence in 1986, the school brings forty years of experience in fashion and luxury education. Its catalog spans more than 70 programs designed to train the industry's key professional profiles, from creative roles to managerial and strategic ones. Polimoda is known for a strongly hands-on approach, supported by a network of over 2,000 companies in fashion, luxury, publishing, and art direction that actively collaborate with the school. A faculty of more than 200 industry professionals, two campuses with over 12,000 square meters of workshops, and Europe's largest fashion library deliver a grounded, experiential education that translates into a 90% placement rate within six months of graduation. With approximately 2,000 students, 80% of whom come from 107 countries, Polimoda is an international cultural platform at the heart of Florence.
www.polimoda.com

ABOUT THE FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A part of the State University of New York (SUNY), FIT has been a leader in career education in art, design, business, and technology throughout its history. Providing more than 8,000 students annually with an uncommon blend of hands-on, practical experience, theory, and a firm grounding in the liberal arts, the college offers a wide range of affordable programs that foster innovation and collaboration. Its distinctive curriculum is geared to today's rapidly growing creative economy, in fields such as computer animation, toy design, production management, film and media, and cosmetics and fragrance marketing. Internationally renowned, FIT draws on its New York City location to provide a vibrant, creative community in which to learn. The college offers nearly 50 majors and grants AAS, BFA, BS, MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, preparing students for professional success and leadership in the creative economy. Among notable alumni in fashion are Calvin Klein, Michael Kors, Norma Kamali, Daniel Roseberry, Peter Do, Reem Acra, Stephen Burrows, Dennis Basso, Francisco Costa, Victor Glemaud, Bibhu Mohapatra, Nanette Lepore, Ralph Rucci, and John Bartlett. Other prominent graduates include Leslie Blodgett, creator of bareMinerals; international restaurant designer Tony Chi; and Nina Garcia, editor-in-chief of Elle. For more information, visit fitnyc.edu. **www.fitnyc.edu**

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