WWD

EXCLUSIVE

Martin Margiela to Join Jury For ANDAM's 30th Anniversary

- Italian entrepreneur Renzo Rosso, who bought Margiela's brand in 2002, will advise the winner of the association's main Fashion Award.

BY **JOELLE DIDERICH**

Nathalie Dufour

PARIS – French fashion prize ANDAM is celebrating its 30th anniversary by going back to its roots and tapping Martin Margiela, the winner of its inaugural award in 1989, to sit on the jury of this year's edition.

In a statement, Margiela recalled that Nathalie Dufour had decided to found the prize for young designers after seeing a waistcoat made of broken plates in his second collection, shown in March 1989. The prize money helped him to launch his Artisanal collection, made with recycled materials.

"I will never forget how the ANDAM prize contributed to my brand's development and I am very grateful for it. I am also glad to see the amazing increased outreach of ANDAM. Happy anniversary!" he said.

The reclusive Belgian designer, who will participate remotely in the jury selection and prize-giving ceremony scheduled for June 27, will be reconnected for the occasion with Renzo Rosso, the Italian entrepreneur who bought a majority stake in his label in 2002.

Rosso, whose OTB group also owns Diesel, Marni, Viktor & Rolf and Paula Cademartori, will reprise his role as mentor to this year's winner of the main Fashion Award, succeeding Pierre-Yves Roussel, former head of the Fashion Group at LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton.

Rosso had previously provided advice for Alexandre Mattiussi after the French designer won the ANDAM award in 2013 with his men's wear label Ami.

"Thirty years ago, the very first winner of ANDAM was someone very dear to me, someone who inspired me and taught me a lot: Martin Margiela. Thirty years after, his disruptive message lives on as a call to all brave, creative talents out there: creativity is your biggest power; cherish it, fuel it, don't compromise on it, make it your own distinctive voice. We will be here to help and support you," Rosso said.

Created by Dufour with the support of the French government and with the late Pierre Bergé as president, ANDAM – the French acronym for National Association of the Development of the Fashion Arts – has been a springboard for other designers who would go on to achieve international recognition, including Viktor & Rolf, Christophe Lemaire and Jeremy Scott.

It offers four prizes: the main award, which comes with 250,000 euros in cash; the Creative Label Prize, valued at 100,000 euros; the Accessories Award, with a grant of 50,000 euros, and the Fashion Innovation Prize, endowed with 30,000 euros. Applications close on April 15, and the finalists will be revealed in May.

In an exclusive interview with WWD, Dufour detailed the other changes in the pipeline, such as the arrival of French sportswear brand Lacoste as a sponsor of the prize, and plans for a series of anniversary events, including a capsule collection designed by past winners, to be held at Galeries Lafayette in the fall.

WWD: You've been doing this for 30 years. How does this milestone make you feel?
Nathalie Dufour: I almost felt a little nostalgic when I phoned Martin Margiela. We spoke at length and he was very happy that ANDAM has flourished and managed to garner so many important sponsors, including France's leading luxury groups. It takes me back to when I went to see Pierre Bergé to ask him to be president of the organization. Those were the days when people like Pierre Bergé and Margiela were really committed to causes.

Fashion had a political and social dimension, which made it very different from now. It was not ruled by marketing, business and luxury groups. People really did things just for beauty's sake.

Having said that, I'm extremely satisfied that I've managed, in the space of those 30 years, to gather all the major players in this sector behind this ongoing commitment to passing the baton to the next generation. It's very generous, both in terms of the cash prize and the mentoring that goes with it. Of course we want to foster success stories, but there is no profit, no ulterior motive behind supporting this new guard.

WWD: Was the prize always this generous?
N.D.: No, it was much more modest, because ANDAM started out as an institutional prize under the French Ministry of Culture and the DEFI (Committee for the Promotion and Development of the French Fashion Industry). The big luxury groups were nonexistent in 1989, so it was about gaining cultural recognition and building a bridge between culture and industry. That was a political act, and the rest is history.

First brands, then groups, joined in the initiative in order to have access to designers, and also because they realized this was where the future of their industry lay.

ANDAM's ecosystem is unique, because we have members of the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode, the Institut Français de la Mode, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, the DEFI and the Culture Ministry on our board. Meanwhile, sponsors are present throughout the organization, within the general assembly and also on the board via representatives. This is unique worldwide, because we are fortunate to have the biggest French luxury groups. You don't get this kind of ecosystem either in London, in emerging countries like China or even in the United States since it has no luxury groups – although it does have major brands that support the CFDA Fashion Awards, for instance.

WWD: Lacoste is joining the list of sponsors this year as it prepares to show the first collection by its new creative director Louise Trotter. Why is this important?
N.D.: We help our designers, both winners and nominees, to take advantage of the industrial framework in France, whether that's through Chanel's specialty ateliers or various manufacturers. There's been a big flight to offshore manufacturing, yet our unique knowhow is the envy of the world, so I think it's important to reconnect designers who choose to be based in France with this exceptional pool of talent that defines French luxury.

Lacoste has manufacturing plants in France, and it's a French brand that could very well open its doors and collaborate with our emerging brands. It's also an important heritage brand and it is connected to the prize through past winners Felipe Oliveira Baptista and Christophe Lemaire, both of whom were creative directors at Lacoste at different times.

In the spirit of this big family, it felt legitimate for Lacoste to join the board of ANDAM, and it's also in line with their positioning as a fashion brand.

WWD: After his major retrospective at the Palais Galliera last year, why was it important for Martin Margiela to support young designers via this prize?
N.D.: I reached out to Martin. He is working on a documentary about his career with Arte and I was asked to take part in it. Of course, you don't see him physically, but you see his hands, his work, the people who worked alongside him. He talks about the importance of being the first winner of the ANDAM prize. It was an incredible recognition for a young designer from Belgium who had only a couple of shows under his belt.

I think he's happy to see how it has grown, and to see that it remains a very virtuous initiative. By sitting on the jury, it's as if he is handing the baton to a new generation that wants to put its spin on all the innovations he introduced, and it's a way to pay it forward.

WWD: How will he participate in practical terms?
N.D.: The whole selection process is digital. We send a list of 80 pre-selected names for jury members to pick from. On the day the jury meets, I think I will connect with him via phone or text, and he will give me his votes.

Martin will follow the candidates from the beginning of the process, and he'll be able to meet the winners. He'll be closely involved, and I think we can count on his sensitivity and the generosity of his eye.

WWD: What else is new in terms of this year's edition?
N.D.: We are preparing with Galeries Lafayette and its director of image and patronage Guillaume Houzé, who is our new president, a series of events that will take place at Galeries Lafayette in September 2019 to celebrate ANDAM's 30th anniversary. There will be collaborations between mentors, i.e., luxury groups, and former winners of the prize; pop-up stores, and an exhibition at the Galerie des Galeries space inside the retailer's Boulevard Haussmann flagship.

It puts the spotlight on this incredible ecosystem that allows ANDAM winners to have access to the facilities of each of their mentors, which include the likes of Chanel, Swarovski, Longchamp, Chloé and Diesel.

Following the departure of Pierre-Yves Roussel, Sidney Toledano, chairman and chief executive officer of LVMH Fashion Group, will be representing LVMH on the ANDAM jury, and we will also welcome a representative from Lacoste. The full composition of the jury will be announced next month.

ANDAM's 30th anniversary visual.