

Paul Smith Foundation Announces 2025/26 Fashion Residency Cohort Empowering Emerging Designers

Published on 14 Oct 2025 | By IFI Correspondent



Paul Smith Foundation Announces 2025/26 Fashion Residency Cohort Empowering Emerging Designers

The **Paul Smith Foundation** has announced the **second cohort of emerging designers** joining its **Fashion Residency at Studio Smithfield in East London**, a pioneering programme that helps new designers transform creativity into a sustainable business model.

The **2025/26 residency** brings together an international mix of rising talents —

- **Masha Popova (Ukraine)**: celebrated for her subversive take on denim.
- **Harri (India)**: famed for his sculptural inflatable latex silhouettes, now expanding into ready-to-wear.
- **Petra Fagerström (Sweden)**: recognised for lenticular pleating and master craftsmanship.
- **Joyce Bao (China/USA)**: blending Eastern and Western aesthetics.
- **Renata Brenha (Brazil)**: reimagining crochet and colourful artisanal sportswear.
- **Eden Tan (UK)**: experimental menswear designer working with upcycled materials.

In a new partnership with the **Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)**, one additional American designer will soon join this diverse lineup.

? Nurturing Creativity with Business Strategy

“When we first embarked on the programme nearly two years ago, the response was overwhelming,” said **Sir Paul Smith**, founder of the Paul Smith Foundation. “The quality of this year’s cohort reflects the pressing need for such initiatives — a bridge between creative brilliance and business sustainability.”

Launched in 2024 in collaboration with the **Mayor of London, Projekt**, and supported by **British GQ** and the **City of London Corporation**, the four-and-a-half-year initiative provides:

- **Free central London studio space** for 18 months
- **60+ hours of tailored business mentoring** covering finance, legal, communications, and production
- **Exposure opportunities** via Paul Smith's Paris showroom and access to industry professionals

Mentors like **Matthew Mumford**, head of creative at Paul Smith, guide designers through hands-on learning, including e-commerce photography sessions at the brand's Nottingham HQ.

? Designers Reflect on the Opportunity

Ukrainian-born designer **Masha Popova** describes the programme as “a moment to breathe — and a chance to build structure around creativity while strengthening the foundation for the next chapter.”

For **Harri**, the residency represents “an opportunity to experiment, collaborate, and build sustainable frameworks for the future.”

? Tailored Mentorship for Real Growth

The **Paul Smith Fashion Residency** focuses on designers who have presented **two to six seasons**, ensuring participants are ready to apply practical business lessons. “We want designers who are genuinely interested in learning about tax, IP, marketing strategies — not just creative vision,” explains **Martha Mosse**, Director of the Paul Smith Foundation.

Each designer is paired with a mentor and gains access to a network of **40–50 industry professionals**, covering everything from **accounting and brand development to legal support** through **Osborne Clarke LLP**, which has even created a bespoke contracts checklist for the designers.

With this residency, the Paul Smith Foundation continues to redefine what “support” means in fashion — not just exposure, but education, structure, and the confidence to build long-term creative businesses.

? For more global fashion news, designer stories & trend updates, follow [IndiaFashionIcon.com](https://indiafashionicon.com)

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS/CONTENTS EXPRESSED/PRESENTED HEREIN, WITHIN THIS ADVERTORIAL AND PROMOTIONAL FEATURE ARE THE SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS/EXPERT/THEIR AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE/VISHAL KHAIRNAR, TO WHICH EFFECT, PUBLICATION HOUSE/ITS REPRESENTATIVES/AFFILIATES ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE/LIABLE WHATSOEVER.