

29 SEPTEMBER 2026

A BUNCH OF DESIGNERS LAUNCHES THREE-WEEK POP-UP IN LE MARAIS ALONGSIDE PARIS FASHION WEEK

AZ Academy by Richemont today announces that *A Bunch of Designers*, a collective initiative supporting emerging fashion designers, will open a three-week public pop-up at Heureux les Curieux in Le Marais, Paris, from 30 September to 17 October, where six designers will present and sell their debut commercial collections.

Launching during Paris Fashion Week - a moment when the international fashion community converges on the city - the pop-up will bring together the six distinct creative universes of Brais Albor, Merle Breuker, Sandra Jao, Liwen Liang, Manon Marcelot and Caterina Moro.

Marking the culmination of the inaugural edition of *A Bunch of Designers*, the experience will bring their work directly to the public, potential clients and the wider fashion industry. Over the three weeks, visitors will have the opportunity to meet the designers, discover the craftsmanship behind their work through live atelier demonstrations, and purchase pieces from the six debut collections.

Each designer will bring their creative process to life through a dedicated programme of on-site activations, spotlighting the savoir-faire, skills and techniques behind their collections. Visitors will be able to watch Brais Albor cut and design patterns live, experience Merle Breuker's live embroidery on interchangeable patches central to her collection, see Sandra Jao demonstrate AiryString® application, take part in Liwen Liang's ceramic kintsugi workshop, discover Manon Marcelot's small leather goods making, and witness Caterina Moro scan natural forms for textile prints.

Across womenswear, menswear and leather goods, the designers' debut collections showcase distinct approaches to craftsmanship, materials and construction:

- **Brais Albor** designs menswear spanning tailoring, sportswear and underwear, paying attention to bodies conventional menswear often overlooks. Drawing on his background in pattern cutting and costume, he reconsiders proportion and volume through construction and humour, guided by his "Love Revolution" - a belief in making room for the body rather than asking it to conform.
- **Merle Breuker** features a modular wardrobe designed to evolve with the wearer in her current experimental project entitled "The Lasting". Made from leftover European stock, her garments can be adjusted, extended, detached and recombined, placing adaptability, versatility and longevity at the heart of the project while exploring how clothing can change with the body.
- **Sandra Jao** creates experimental womenswear that bridges Japanese technical innovation with Italian craftsmanship. Drawing on technical and utilitarian materials, she transforms ropes, umbrellas and outdoor structures into sculptural silhouettes, pushing materials beyond their intended function through precise construction, modular systems and an exploratory approach to form.
- **Liwen Liang** brings together the ceramic heritage of Jingdezhen and contemporary fashion through years of material research. He has developed ceramic into a lightweight, flexible and wearable material, creating pieces that explore the tension between fragility and strength, while drawing on broken porcelain, deconstructed forms and the beauty of imperfection.
- **Manon Marcelot** develops highly crafted leather goods rooted in the rural world she grew up in. Guided by the idea of reconnecting leather to its roots, she draws on agricultural tools and landscapes to shape distinctive forms for her bags, combining strong leather craftsmanship with a contemporary vision of what she calls "agricultural sophistication."

- **Caterina Moro** approaches nature as her inspiration, translating it into fashion through textile research, artistic collaborations and refined Made in Italy craftsmanship. Her work explores prints, embroideries and embossings, using high-quality materials to give physical form to her E ART H - Earth as Art philosophy.

Philippe Fortunato, CEO of Fashion & Accessories Maisons at Richemont, commented:

“When we first met these six designers in December during their final pitch, they were presenting ideas, collections and business plans. Since then, sketches have become prototypes, prototypes have been refined, materials sourced, production launched and prices set. The Paris pop-up is where all of that work comes together and meets the market for the first time. Nurturing creative talent has long been part of Richemont’s commitment, and we are proud to have supported them through this journey.”

The six designers were selected in December 2025 from the inaugural cohort of AZ Academy: Business for Designers, a twelve-month programme developed by Richemont and Creative Academy in partnership with Accademia Costume & Moda to equip independent designers with the practical knowledge needed to build a brand. Born from the legacy of Alber Elbaz and the evolution of AZ Factory, *A Bunch of Designers* extends that journey beyond the programme, supporting the designers as they develop, produce and bring their collections to market while remaining at the centre of their own creative and business decisions.

Further supporting the designers as an ambassador to the initiative is Lutz Huelle, celebrated designer and former AZ Factory “Amigo” and AZ Academy admission jury member. Also serving as the Head of Fashion, Jewellery & Accessory Design at Geneva University of Art and Design, he brings a particularly meaningful contribution to mentoring the six emerging designers and imparting the spirit of transmission.

Grazia Valtorta, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Creative Academy, said:

“AZ Academy: Business for Designers exists to help designers turn creative ambition into a viable business, with *A Bunch of Designers* taking this one step further. We are very pleased with how the new initiative has taken our students' learning and entrepreneurial journey to a higher level and are equally proud of the six designers who have further showcased their talent and creative spirit.”

Practical information

Pop-up address: Heureux les Curieux, 23 rue du Pont aux Choux, 75003 Paris

Dates: 30 September - 17 October 2026

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday from 10:30 - 19:00, and Sunday from 11:00 - 19:00

About AZ Academy: Business for Designers

AZ Academy: Business for Designers is a unique 12-month executive programme based in Milan for independent designers in luxury and fashion, developed by Richemont and Creative Academy in partnership with Accademia Costume & Moda. Born from the legacy of Alber Elbaz and the evolution of AZ Factory, the programme offers a 360-degree understanding of what it takes to build and scale a brand today. Students are trained across key disciplines including finance, merchandising, pricing, distribution, production, communication and brand definition.