

Prada e Dorchester Industries lanciano un corso triennale per artisti di colore

L'Experimental Design Lab avrà sede a Chicago e servirà a creare opportunità a talenti eterogenei per cultura e provenienza - L'iniziativa è parte del piano di diversità e inclusione del gruppo della moda

di Giulia Crivelli



I punti chiave

4' di lettura

L'anticipazione risale al maggio scorso, quando il gruppo Prada delineò una rinnovata strategia e un impegno ancora maggiore rispetto al recente passato in termini di diversità, equità e inclusioni, con importanti investimenti in programmi di formazione e promozione dei talenti. Nei mesi scorsi sono state annunciate molte iniziative e oggi è la volta dell'**ennesimo passaggio dalle parole ai fatti**.

L'articolo del 13 maggio: [Il gruppo Prada lancia quattro nuove iniziative per promuovere diversità, equità e inclusività](#)

La creatività sull'asse Milano-Chicago

Si chiama Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab ed è un programma triennale per artisti di colore, nonché una piattaforma pensata per creare opportunità di sviluppo e connessione con organizzazioni interessate a collaborare con talenti eterogenei: nasce dalla collaborazione tra **Dorchester Industries**, il dipartimento design e produzione del Theaster Gates Studio, Rebuild Foundation e il gruppo Prada (*nella foto in alto, Theaster Gates e un'immagine di una sua recente mostra alla Fondazione Prada di Milano*). L'Experimental Design Lab avrà **sede nel South Side di Chicago**, «avrà portata e rilevanza internazionale e rappresenterà uno spazio di scambio, formazione, confronto e visibilità per i futuri designer», si legge nella nota ufficiale.

Non solo moda

L'Experimental Design Lab è un'iniziativa unica nel suo genere che mira a valorizzare designer di colore sia emergenti, sia affermati. Grazie al conferimento di premi e una programmazione pubblica, fungerà da **think tank per amplificare il lavoro di promettenti giovani designer di colore nei settori della moda, dell'arredamento, del design industriale, del graphic design e delle arti**, costituendo al contempo una piattaforma per mostre, performance e dialogo pubblico. «Sono entusiasta di collaborare con il gruppo Prada per dare vita a un nuovo polo di energia creativa dedicato al design nel South Side, riunendo intorno al nostro primo gruppo di premiati e ai loro progetti una rete di designer affermati, di artisti e intellettuali», spiega Theaster Gates, fondatore di Dorchester Industries e Rebuild Foundation e Co-Chair del Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council del gruppo Prada, nato nel 2019.

Obiettivo: dare visibilità

Ogni premiato dell'Experimental Design Lab sarà selezionato da personalità influenti nel campo della moda, dell'arte e del design. Gli Experimental Design Awards premieranno i designer emergenti che avranno saputo dimostrare uno straordinario potenziale creativo. «Per troppo tempo le nostre comunità creative i talenti non hanno potuto disporre di visibilità e di opportunità adeguate – aggiunge Theaster Gates –. Ora più che mai, **i leader creativi devono supportare il lavoro dei designer emergenti di colore e metterli in contatto con grandi aziende interessate a talenti diversi**». I destinatari del premio riceveranno supporto finanziario e avranno l'opportunità entrare in contatto con aziende internazionali e con il loro network grazie a programmi annuali dedicati e a workshop a New York, Chicago e Los Angeles.

Il sole 24ore

Prada and Dorchester Industries launch a three-year course for artists of colour

The Experimental Design Lab will be based in Chicago and will be used to create opportunities for talents of heterogeneous culture and origin - The initiative is part of the fashion group's diversity and inclusion plan

by Giulia Crivelli

Key points

4' reading

Anticipation of this dates back to May, when the Prada Group outlined a renewed strategy and an even greater commitment compared to the recent past in terms of diversity, fairness and inclusion, with significant investment in training programmes and the promotion of talent. A number of initiatives have been announced in recent months and today is the turn of the **umpteenth move from words to facts**.

The article of 13 May: [Il gruppo Prada lancia quattro nuove iniziative per promuovere diversità, equità e inclusività](#)

[The Prada Group launches four new initiatives to promote diversity, fairness and inclusivity]

Creativity on the Milan-Chicago axis

It is called Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab and is a three-year programme for artists of colour, as well as a platform designed to create opportunities for development and connection with organisations interested in collaborating with heterogeneous talents: it came about from the collaboration between **Dorchester Industries**, the design and production department of the Theaster Gates Studio, Rebuild Foundation and the Prada Group (*in the photo above, Theaster Gates and an image of a recent exhibition by him at the Fondazione Prada in Milan*).

The Experimental Design Lab will be **based on the South Side of Chicago**, «will have international scope and relevance and will be a space for exchange, training, comparison and exposure for future designers», as we is read in the official notice.

Not just fashion

The Experimental Design Lab is a unique initiative aiming to showcase designers of colour, both emerging and established. Thanks to the awarding of prizes and public programming, it will act as a **think tank to boost the work of promising young designers of colour in the sectors of fashion, furnishing, industrial design, graphic design and the arts**, at the same time acting as a platform for exhibitions, performances and public dialogue.

«I'm thrilled to collaborate with Prada Group to generate a new pole of creative energy devoted to design on the South Side by gathering a network of established designers, artists and intellectuals

together around our first group of prize-winners and their projects», explains Theaster Gates, founder of Dorchester Industries and Rebuild Foundation and Co-Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council of the Prada Group, formed in 2019.

Aim: to gain exposure

Each Experimental Design Lab award winner will be selected by influential personalities in the field of fashion, art and design. The Experimental Design Awards will reward emerging designers who have been able to demonstrate their extraordinary creative potential.

«For too long, our creative communities have possessed the talent but have lacked exposure and adequate opportunities – Theaster Gates adds –. Now more than ever, **today's leading creatives must support the work of emerging designers of colour and connect them to great companies interested in diverse talent**». The recipients of the award will receive financial support and will have the opportunity to connect with international companies and with their network thanks to dedicated annual programmes and workshops in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

VOGUE BUSINESS



Prada plans new Chicago platform to scout diverse talent

Chicago-based artist Theaster Gates, co-chair of the brand's Diversity and Inclusion Council, is leading an initiative to bring more diverse talent to the Italian firm.

BY ANNACHIARA BIONDI

1 SEPTEMBER 2021

Prada says it wants more diverse artists and designers at the fashion group. A new programme by artist Theaster Gates aims to get it there.

Gates, who is also co-chair of Prada's diversity and inclusion council, is leading a three-year programme for artists of colour, creating opportunities to amplify their work, invest in their development and expose them to organisations including Prada, who are interested in working with diverse talent. Based in Chicago's South Side, the Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab will offer training, critical feedback and exposure for designers including amateur or self-taught artists of any age. In particular, the programme welcomes those without formal design education to help them create the same networks and opportunities as people who do.

This is about creating an "easier way to find the talent that is on the street and not in the schools," says Gates in an interview.

Eight to 15 people each year will receive the workshops and network opportunities across Chicago, New York and Los Angeles, as well as financial support of \$10,000 to \$50,000. The time spent with the cohort could lead to future opportunities with Prada, though it's not guaranteed.

"[Participants] will be ripe for an executive internship at Prada, or at least they will be in the Prada community so as opportunities come up, there will be a bigger constellation of people of colour that can respond," says Gates. The project has the potential to open up to other cities and its employment prospects to other fashion houses. The first cohort will be announced in October 2021.

Prada's latest efforts in diversity and inclusion are part of a broader movement in the fashion industry that has seen brands hiring chief diversity officers and establishing diversity and inclusion councils as a response to mounting pressures to bring in more diverse perspectives and voices into the industry.

Chinyere Ezie, the senior staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, says she welcomes the initiative. In 2019, Ezie filed an official complaint against Prada with the New York City Commission on Human Rights after spotting the brand's Pradamalia figurines in the window of the brand's Soho store.



The Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab will provide new designers with education, critical feedback and exposure. CHRIS STRONG/COURTESY OF REBUILD FOUNDATION

“When I discovered [the] Prada blackface items, what was apparent to me was that there was a lack of people of colour who were being consulted in the company in order for such a detrimental incident to have occurred,” she says. “It felt like a critical intervention that more opportunities be made available for more people of colour to work in fashion. I'm very glad to see that Prada took up the suggestion that I made back then to make sustained investment in communities of colour to facilitate their participation in luxury fashion.”

Financial and employment outreach with minority communities was one of the requirements included in the agreement with the New York City Commission on Human Rights in 2020. The agreement also included sensitivity training, external monitoring of progress and the appointment of a diversity and inclusion officer, which Prada announced in October 2020 with the hire of Malika Savell. For Ezie, the settlement is a “shining precedent” for luxury companies and what they can do in the realm of diversity and inclusion. “The Prada settlement was the first of its kind and I hope it becomes an industry standard, something that all companies aspire to do,” she says.

Gates describes the Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab as “a cherry on top” of the basic agreement. “We are not trying to meet a quota,” he says. “I’m trying to build a very big constituency of designers of colour and join pre-existing constituencies of designers and artists of colour and say how can I be more useful? How can this platform be useful?”

More corporate efforts at Prada Group include finding diverse talent beyond the Italian schools that it has historically leveraged, says Gates. “Schools and universities, those are the low hanging fruit,” he says. “You need people who are on the ground. We have other networks and we bring so many other people that will never be in the education box.”

Gates says there is also internal work, including sensitivity training. Conversations are ongoing on the role of security guards in the brand’s retail stores and how to train them not to profile Black and Asian customers. “There is a tremendous amount of reflection that is happening right now in the company and with the hire of [chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer] Malika Savell there are people that are trying to ensure that as Black people come into the company they have a network of support,” he says, while acknowledging the challenging but essential conversations that may run alongside.

“Not one person can solve the issue of race, racial bias and prejudice by themselves,” he says. “It requires that all the industries look very closely at themselves and ask themselves what else they can do to ensure that the diversity that is within our companies reflects the people who buy our products. Until we all take that on I think there is just a long way for us to go.”

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Pucci's Pick

Emilio Pucci confirmed that Camille Micheli, formerly at Louis Vuitton, will be the brand's new artistic director.

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Show Time

Fashion shows have started in New York and Tokyo, with Amiri, Trina Turk, White Mountaineering and more.

Pages 6 and 7



Art Aid

Prada has teamed with Theaster Gates on a three-year program to help amplify the work of artists of color.

Page 17

Haddish Aims High

Tiffany Haddish doesn't hold back from revealing her ambitions – and they're big. From taking on more dramatic film roles to writing a sequel to her memoir and producing her own projects, Haddish already has a lot on her plate, but wants more – including appearing on all the covers of a certain global fashion magazine that begins with a V. *It would just be another Victory for Haddish.* For more, see pages 23 and 24.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE CORDOBA



Amazon Luxury Stores Heads to Europe

A year after launching, Amazon is taking Luxury Stores into the ultra-competitive European market.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON – Amazon Luxury Stores is preparing to debut in Europe later this year, according to industry sources, although the competition for brands – and fashion customers' wallets – will be more ferocious than ever.

Amazon is said to be readying a rollout
CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Why Scale Matters in Luxury Goods

Analysts expect larger companies will continue to outperform small ones.

BY MILES SOCHA

In 2004, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton famously won \$38 million in a bias suit against Morgan Stanley – among the contentious claims at the time in the bank's equity research was that the Louis Vuitton brand was "reaching maturity."

As if.

The world's largest luxury brand by revenue continues to grow at a brisk clip, and is now five times the size it was in 2004, according to market sources.

Suffice to say that scale matters in the fashion and luxury sector now more than ever, say analysts and academics.

"We believe that larger companies will continue to outperform," said Erwan Rambourg, global head of consumer and retail research at HSBC. "I feel that all large powerful brands have become generalists, and do not have a ceiling to growth either."

Among them, "we see the meteoric rise of Dior continuing with stars being aligned," he said, also forecasting a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Theaster Gates



FASHION

Prada, Theaster Gates Launch Experimental Design Lab

- The three-year program will serve as a platform for artists of color, creating opportunities to amplify their work and exposing them to organizations.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

MILAN – The Prada Group is stepping up its efforts to provide opportunities to amplify the work of artists of color with the concrete help of Theaster Gates.

Dorchester Industries, the design and manufacturing arm of Theaster Gates Studio, in partnership with Rebuild Foundation and Prada, are launching the Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab. The three-year program will serve as a platform for Black or brown artists, investing in their development and exposing them to organizations interested in working with diverse talent, such as Prada.

“The premise is very, very simple,” Gates told WWD. “There are people formally trained or who have had a successful career but that are not connected to the fashion world or the creative industry.”

The Design Lab “is an attempt to help people refine their skills, create a couple of significant projects and then deliver those folks to a larger network that creates more opportunities, leveraging myself and working with Prada to try and celebrate the amazing talent that lives in Black and Brown communities but that is so often overlooked,” Gates explained.

Anchored on Chicago’s South Side, the Experimental Design Lab, which will

be international in reach and relevance, will act as a space of exchange, training, critical feedback and exposure for creative talents.

Gates underscored that the project is not limited to fashion, but extends to furniture, industrial and graphic design, and the arts while providing a platform for exhibitions, performances and public dialogue. Miuccia Prada, said Gates, was “interested in having a diverse group of creative people who may be able to be a part of the company in different areas, from event planning to filmography or ambassadors to the brand. It’s such a broad house.”

During the interview, a focused and motivated Gates, who is the founder of Dorchester Industries and Rebuild Foundation and is the co-chair of Prada’s Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council, said that “if I am a director of an Italian design firm in Italy, how am I going to know what’s happening in Senegal, Detroit or Chicago? What I love of the Experimental Design Lab is that it’s a way of convening all of these people together, then with friendship and relationship-building saying look at these amazing people who are doing great stuff all over the world. Is there a match? I think that in some ways I am playing the role of matchmaker and maybe that of a mentor.”

Gates said he is often asked about his career trajectory in the art world, or about his clothes, and about his relationship with Prada. “I know that I have a tremendous amount of privilege, almost too much privilege, and the best thing I can do is to try and share this privilege with as many people as I can, and share the rich relationships that I have with others,” he said.

The artist noted that the Experimental Design Lab revolves not merely around wealth or the lack of it, but that “there is no one to encourage the relationships between people who are different. So there will be people who need opportunity in my cohort, yes, but that there are people in Milan who are privileged and who need the same opportunity. This is about exposing the people who have great design abilities and ambition to a great design house. That’s what I’m investing in.”

The first cohort of awardees will be selected and announced in October and Gates believes the number could range between eight to 15 talents. “The reason for the disparity in the number is that there are so many talented people around the country. We are first looking at people from Chicago, New York and L.A. but we want to acknowledge more people than less in this first cohort,” he said.

Each Experimental Design Lab awardee will be nominated by leaders across the fashion, art and design industries. The Experimental Design Awards will honor rising designers who have shown extraordinary creative potential. Award recipients will receive financial support as well as creative opportunities to foster relationships with leading global companies and their networks through annual activations and workshops in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Each year, Prada will award a grant to an artist or designer to encourage their development and allow them to launch a capsule of their choosing in the space.

“The Dorchester Industries Experimental Design Lab is a critical step in the right direction to ensure that leading design companies have a

“What can we do to help as many people as possible to be as connected and employed as possible?”

THEASTER GATES

pipeline of talented creatives who bring with them their diverse experiences and backgrounds,” said Lorenzo Bertelli, Prada Group marketing director and head of corporate social responsibility.

Gates noted that his relationship with Prada is almost 10 years old and said that Fondazione Prada’s invitation to stage his exhibition “True Value” in 2016, “created an opportunity for me, it was such an important platform for me to be given the big room at the foundation.” Gates cherishes the conversations he’s had with the designer and her team over the years, saying he felt he had “become part of a family and already part of the inclusion that Prada had naturally.

“It’s been Mrs. Prada opening my brain, making my art practice bigger. Prada and her foundation have been one of the most important allies to artists in the world. I am really thankful that I can be a part of the council and create this Experimental Design Lab to introduce more of my friends in Chicago to more of my friends in Milan,” Gates said.

As reported, Prada received online criticism in December 2018 that animal-like figurines and charms in its stores and windows evoked blackface, and Gates said, at the time, he called the designer offering to “help people understand that Prada is actually an inclusive organization but in all corporations bad things happen, things get overlooked and slip out. Without intending to, bad design can make racist characters. But this is a reminder that there’s work to do; it’s no reason to close shop but to look closer. It’s reason to work harder to ensure that we are looking at all the different parts and that we use that as an occasion to be as diverse as we possibly can.”

He emphasized that adding diversity makes “the work of the house so much more sexy. The agenda is much more important than responding to the figurines. The agenda is how do we build a great fashion house into the future. In order to do so, you have to grow the number of voices that are designing, touching the fabric, that are marketing, that are the videographers, cinematographers, the front door people, the guards. We need all those people working to demonstrate that the fashion house is a world house, not an Italian house.”

In collaboration with Gates’ Rebuild Foundation, awardees and guests will have the opportunity to engage in public programming at Retreat – Rebuild Foundation’s latest activation providing space for artists to collaborate and create – strengthening the ties between designers and surrounding communities as part of the organization’s mission to empower artists on the South Side.

Gates gave a shoutout to Ava DuVernay, who has long been “identifying talent in the film world, and I am borrowing from her playbook. What can we do to help as many people as possible to be as connected and employed as possible?”

Prada tapped award-winning writer, director and producer DuVernay in 2019 as co-chair of the group’s Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council, with Gates.

Last year, the Italian luxury company appointed Malika Savell chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer for Prada North America.