

POLIMODA

Polimoda Appoints An Vandevorst Head of Fashion Design

The Belgian designer, one half of the A.F. Vandevorst duo and a deeply experienced and passionate fashion leader, is eager to share her knowledge with a new generation of designers.

Florence, September 30th, 2021 – It was the late eighties when Belgian designer An Vandevorst met Filip Arickx, her partner in life and art, on her very first day of school at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. That faithful day brought the pair together for better and for worse, taking the duo on a smashing 22-year ride as the creative team behind fashion house **A.F. Vandevorst**.

Success happened early for An. She launched her independent label with Filip in 1997 and was only two collections in when receiving Paris Fashion Week's Venus de la Mode Award, a prestigious prize for newcomers. From dressing celebrities like Ciara and Larsen Thompson to partnering with hundreds of boutiques all over the world, A.F. Vandevorst followed in the footsteps of the Antwerp Six for over two decades, creating a total of 40 seasons before saying goodbye to focus on new artistic projects. A.F. Vandevorst worked on many collaborations, unique installations and artistic pursuits throughout the years. Their love for visual art, music, literature and interest in cultural archetypes and uniforms has always inspired their brand.

Today, after waving farewell to the Belgium fashion house, An and Filip are moving on to bright new horizons. **Polimoda is thrilled to name An Vandevorst as the new Head of Fashion Design Department.**

"At a time where most of us have access to all of the answers, it has become important to ask the right questions, to trigger curiosity," explains An. *"What is your passion? What do you want to achieve or abandon in life? We can help students discover what is inside of them and learn how to explore and develop their thoughts and personality."*

"In a world of highly advanced technology and (virtual) reality, it is important, now more than ever, to define and distinguish yourself in being creative," continues Vandevorst. *"By attracting the right people to the school, we can offer knowledge, experience and skills. These tools are key to a successful career, not only in being a designer but also in translating visions and ideas at the service of a team, a brand or a community, to become one of the key elements of a successful story."*

An Vandevorst will accompany Director Massimiliano Giornetti, helping with the guidance of the fashion design department. *"Tolerance and respect are key values in life and there is no better place than a school to bring those values to young people because of the immediate proximity of a big group with various backgrounds,"* shares Vandevorst. *"It's about bringing emotions and humanity to fashion, getting rid of the dogma that people need to work until they drop, really caring about the wastage and embracing every type of body, to escape from the fastness of it all. The biggest differences between the past and the present and hopefully the near future of fashion is the shift from analogue to digital, from 2D to 3D, from reality to fantasy and from exclusivity to inclusivity."*

"Students need to learn how to persist and believe in their own ideas. They must know how to express and defend themselves. It will be interesting for me to witness the interaction with them, passing down my skills and getting to know their fresh vision with one main focus: beauty."

This significant new addition to the institute—offering programs that are greatly enhanced by their close connection to the industry with partners from some of the most well-known brands and professionals in fashion and luxury like Gucci, LVMH, Tod's, Salvatore Ferragamo, Richemont, Marco De Vincenzo, Bruce Pask, Serge Girardi and many others—guarantees education and training that is always in sync with industry needs.

An Vandevorst is a deeply experienced fashion leader and we are excited to welcome her to the Polimoda family.

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