Christelle Kocher wins 30th Anniversary ANDAM Prize

By Godfrey Deeny - 28 June 2019

ANDAM, fashion’s richest independent prize, celebrated three decades on Thursday in Paris, awarding its 30th edition title to Christelle Kocher, the founder of cool French label Koché.

“Tremendously proud to win this prize, to be part of such an amazing group of winners. It’s the validation of a path taken by a young woman who felt passionate about fashion and artisans. A dream that allowed me to pass over so many obstacles and challenges,” said Kocher.

Kocher edged out an impressive series of finalists that included Coperni and Hed Mayner to nab the €250,000
Grand Prize of ANDAM, or the National Association for the Development of the Fashion Arts, to give it its full name.

Some 300 fashion insiders gathered in the gilded salons of the Ministry of Culture in the Palais Royal to fete the three decades of ANDAM. This unique award was dreamed up by Nathalie Dufour in tandem with Pierre Bergé, the late partner of Yves Saint Laurent.

“It was a pretty innovative project when we began. Martin Margiela won the opening award, and of course he never showed up,” laughed Dufour as she went through the metal detector with FashionNetwork.com into the ministry, located across the street from the Louvre.

ANDAM has always been noted for its distinguished jury, which this year boasted 27 members, including Kering Group CEO François-Henri Pinault, OTB President Renzo Rosso, Margiela, and a slew of high-powered French fashion honchos such as Pascal Morand, Guillaume Houzé, Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye, Jean Cassegrain and Guillaume de Seynes.

In a running joke throughout the evening, guests tried to guess which person was the famously camera shy Margiela, after the art functionary filling in for the missing culture minister Franck Riester welcomed the mysterious former designer to the event.

Houzé, however, said in his long speech, as guests fanned themselves furiously inside the salon, that Margiela was a no-show. While another jury member claimed Margiela had only participated in the jury process via Skype.

2019's ANDAM winners: Wei Hung Chen, Raiheth Rawla, Christelle Kocher, Nicolas Lecourt Mansion and Cyndi Rhoades
Some 13 finalists competed for the award's four prizes. The coveted Creative Label Prize went to Nicolas Lecourt Mansion; while the Accessories Prize was picked up by Khaore, composed of the duo Wei Hung Chen and Raiheth Rawla.

“It's an amazing feeling. We're overwhelmed. And it looks like we'll have to do something special in New York in September,” said the Taiwanese/Indian duo who, like all young millennials in New York, live in Brooklyn.

The Fashion Innovation Prize went to Worn Again Technologies' Dr Adam Walker and Cyndi Rhoades.

Every finalist had presented their projects earlier in the day to the jury, which went on to fete the award’s anniversary in concept club Jean Louis La Nuit.

“When we started out we were really embarking on a new path in fashion. And tonight what most pleases me is that ANDAM is really unique. It’s the one major prize for young talent supported by all the major luxury groups,” added Dufour, dressed for the event in a black and paisley trim Paco Rabanne dress.

ANDAM’s other claim to fame is its track record in picking truly influential designers – seeing as previous winners have included Viktor & Rolf, Jeremy Scott, Anthony Vaccarello, Alexandre Mattiussi and Iris Van Herpen.