

Fresh Perspective

Petra Fagerstrom on taking home the L'Atelier des Matières Prize at the 38th annual International Festival of Fashion, Photography & Accessories in Hyères.

By Sydney Goldhawk

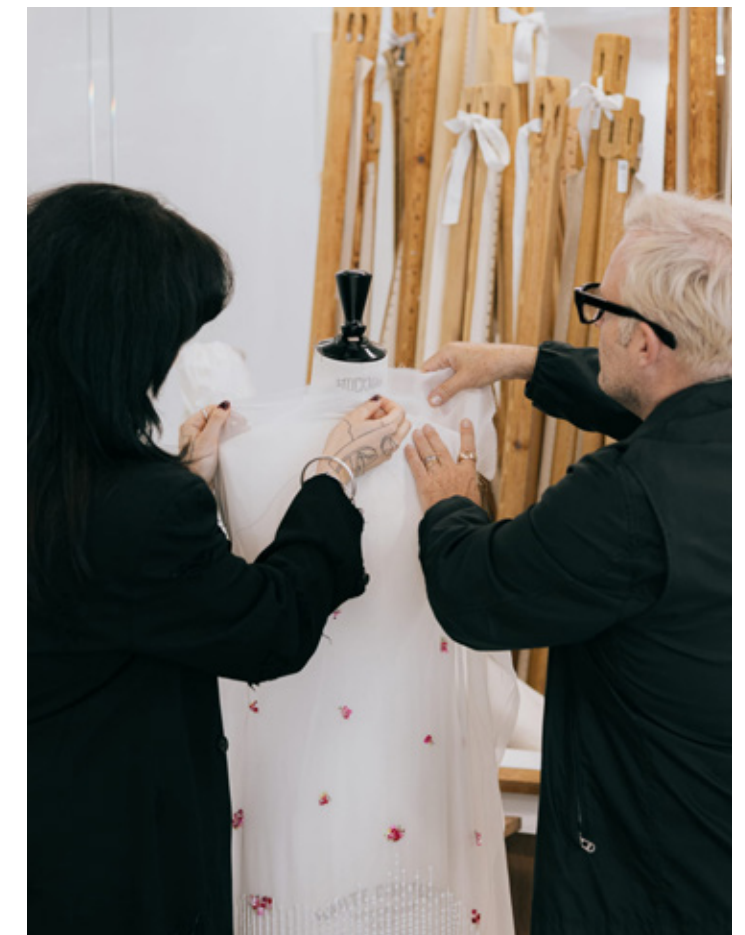
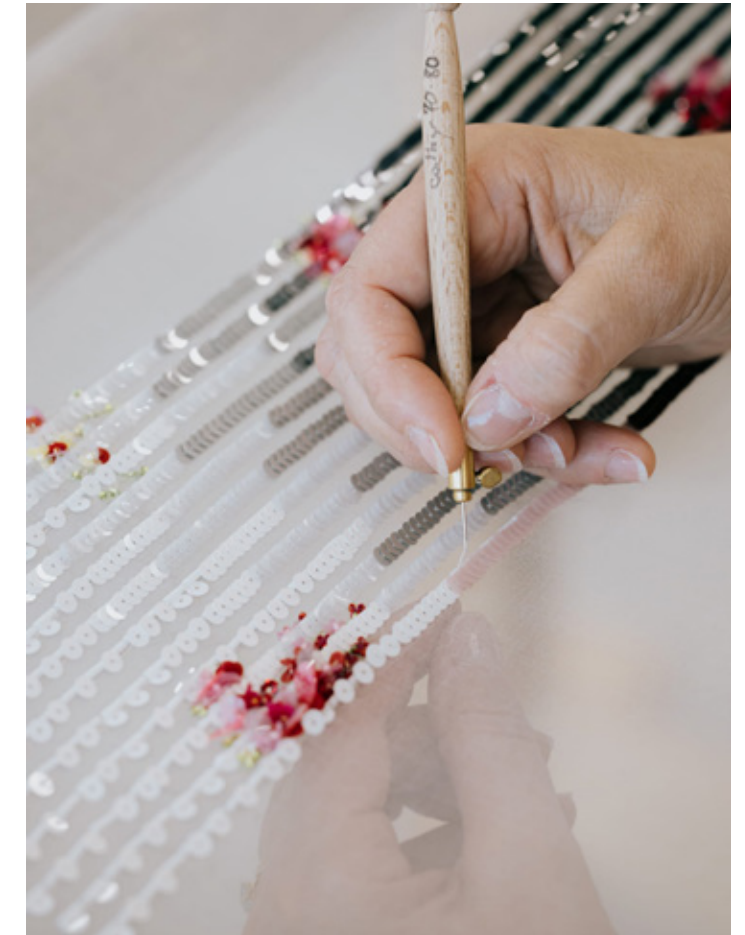
The 38th annual International Festival of Fashion, Photography & Accessories, hosted at the Villa Noailles in Hyères, France, celebrates international talent by giving emerging creatives a platform to showcase their work. The festival was first established in 1985, and is supported by respected partners in the industry and judged by a prestigious panel of respected names in fashion and design.

CHANEL has been a major partner in the festival since 2014, and le19M since 2020, with both partners committed to supporting young minds in the industry and providing grants and mentorship to guide the budding careers of the next generation of designers. Among the awards given out during the festival, the le19M L'Atelier des Matières Prize stands out. The prestigious achievement highlights the value of recycled materials from luxury products, and encourages circular design through transformation. Designer Petra Fagerstrom was awarded this honour, a collection of fabrics and leathers worth 10,000 euros, in addition to taking home the Mercedes Benz Sustainability Prize.

The young designer's collection included military garments and parachutes, inspired heavily by her grandmother—who served as a parachutist. Fagerstrom described the creation of her collection as “a tricky process, especially given my Russian-Ukrainian heritage and the political climate.” With this in mind, Fagerstrom made it a point to “navigate and adapt the collection to cope with the situation as it evolved.” Fagerstrom collaborated with Hubert Barrère, creative director of Lesage (Chanel's embroidery atelier), on one of the looks from her collection. Under his mentorship she was able to appreciate “the time and craftsmanship that go into embroidery,” as well as the “intricacies of the process.” Their pairing guided Fagerstrom to execute her vision for the collection, and the designer says that Barrère “understood my work from the start,” making their collaboration seamless.

Barrère sat on the fashion jury at the festival, seeing it as a “great opportunity to not only talk about fashion, but to support a new generation of designers.” He described the festival as “crucial for the new generation to know we exist and understand what's possible for them.” He emphasized that the participation of young designers is “essential for our future.” He first met Petra in February 2023, with a tight time frame for the project: “we had about a month in reality to create something amazing for her.” Their goal of exploring the illusion of pleating came to life through embroidery—Barrère described the process as “akin to a cinematic approach,” he was overjoyed with the outcome.

As a young voice in the industry, Fagerstrom described the recognition as overwhelming. “The fact that my work resonated with the jury is incredibly rewarding,” she says. “It's challenging to make your voice heard when starting out. This experience has been meaningful and has given me a platform to express myself.”



Photos courtesy of CHANEL.