

**AFFA**

AFRO  
FASHION  
ASSOCIATION

AND



**PRESENT**

**VOICES OF  
DENIM**

**A LIVING CULTURAL LANGUAGE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ENGLISH**

# **AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION and LEVI'S® unveil the 30 creatives selected for VOICES OF DENIM, an Italy-based platform exploring denim as a language of contemporary culture.**

The year-long initiative brings together emerging BIPOC creatives working across fashion design, visual culture, photography, art, film, styling, sound and design, culminating in an exhibition during Milan Fashion Week this September 2026.

**Milano, 26 Maggio 2026 - AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION and LEVI'S® announce the 30 creatives selected for VOICES OF DENIM, a year-long cultural platform exploring denim as a medium for creative expression, collective memory and contemporary storytelling. The initiative will culminate in an immersive exhibition, that will open on 23 september h20 at Casa degli Artisti during Milan Fashion Week.**

**Presented at Palazzo Marino in Milan, the initiative brings together a new generation of Italy-based BIPOC creatives working across fashion, photography, visual arts, filmmaking, styling, curation and sound. Through an interdisciplinary approach, participants are invited to reinterpret LEVI'S® heritage through new cultural perspectives, collaborative practices and experimental image-making.**

“A project that brings together mentorship, craftsmanship, research, and creativity can only find the support of the Municipality of Milan. Like the other initiatives already carried out by AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION, this project also highlights emerging talents by connecting them within a network where they can exchange best practices and develop ideas and new approaches.”

**Alessia Cappello,**

**Councillor for Economic Development and Labour Policies**

**More than a fashion initiative, VOICES OF DENIM positions denim as a living cultural material, one capable of carrying stories of movement, labor, identity, resistance and transformation across generations and communities.**

**Structured across six project phases, the program combines mentorship, craftsmanship, research and creative production, culminating in a final exhibition curated by Jordan Anderson during Milan Fashion Week with the support of Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana.**

“VOICES OF DENIM is a project that concretely interprets the role of fashion as a cultural and educational platform for new generations. As the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana, we are pleased to support it, as it represents an initiative capable of bringing together creativity, diverse skills, and international visions within a structured growth pathway. The enhancement of young talent and the strengthening of an increasingly open, interdisciplinary, and inclusive creative system are central elements for the future of fashion. I would like to thank Michelle Francine Ngonmo for the work she is carrying out with vision and determination, contributing significantly to the building of meaningful connections for the future of fashion.”

**Carlo Capasa, Chairman Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana**

The ten will each create one statement look using LEVI'S® deadstock materials, while creatives from other disciplines will contribute to the project's broader visual and narrative universe through photography, styling, creative direction, sound design, editorial production and exhibition-making.

Mentorship plays a central role throughout the initiative. International figures from the worlds of culture, fashion, publishing and creative industries will accompany participants during the program, fostering intergenerational dialogue, knowledge exchange and access to global creative networks.

Mentors involved in the project include members of LEVI'S® design team, including Cara Fenu and Paul Dillinger, alongside Edward Buchanan, Tamu McPherson, Michelle Francine Ngonmo, Francesca Ragazzi, Walter D'Aprile, Cristina Baruzzi and Idris Balogun.

“At its core, this exhibition is a celebration of cultural authorship. Working with 30 BIPOC creatives through LEVI'S is an opportunity to document the people shaping contemporary culture through art, image, movement, and storytelling, while creating space for dialogue, visibility, and connection.”

**Jordan Anderson,**  
curator of the VOICES OF DENIM exhibition

For LEVI'S®, VOICES OF DENIM reflects the brand's long-standing commitment to craftsmanship, individuality and cultural relevance. Developed in collaboration with AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION, the project aims to support emerging creative voices while contributing to a broader conversation around access, representation and the future of cultural production.

In this context, denim becomes more than an iconic fabric: it operates as a universal visual language, democratic, cross-generational and constantly evolving, capable of connecting communities, personal histories and new imaginaries.

“This collaboration with AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION marks a meaningful step in LEVI'S® ongoing commitment to amplifying underrepresented creative voices. Working with BIPOC designers and photographers allows us to celebrate new perspectives while reactivating our cultural and stylistic heritage through a contemporary lens. By reimagining LEVI'S® archives, the project bridges past and present, transforming our legacy into an immersive exhibition where fashion, culture and identity intersect. Presented during September 2026 Milano Fashion Week, this initiative creates an authentic space for dialogue, reinforcing our cultural credibility and our long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion.”

**Mathilde Vaucheret,**  
VP Europe Marketing & BX at LEVI'S®

With VOICES OF DENIM, AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION and LEVI'S® create a platform that moves beyond the traditional idea of brand collaboration, activating instead a creative ecosystem grounded in mentorship, cultural exchange and interdisciplinary experimentation.

“With VOICES OF DENIM, we wanted to build a cultural ecosystem where emerging creatives can access resources, exchange knowledge, experiment freely and develop sustainable creative practices over time. This initiative is

about recognizing creativity as a force that shapes culture, communities and collective imagination. By bringing together talents from different disciplines and backgrounds, we hope to contribute to a more open, collaborative and representative creative landscape, one that reflects the complexity and richness of contemporary society. Opening the final exhibition freely to the city of Milan is also an essential part of this vision: creating a shared cultural moment where dialogue, creativity and new perspectives can become accessible to everyone.”

**Michelle Francine Ngonmo,  
Project Lead & Founder of AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION**

**The final exhibition will transform these collective processes into an immersive environment where denim, sound, moving image, installation and storytelling converge to explore the role of creativity as a tool for cultural transformation. Conceived as an open cultural moment for the city of Milan, the exhibition will be freely accessible to the public for two weeks, inviting visitors to engage with a new generation of creative voices and contemporary cultural narratives.**

**AFFA**

AFRO  
FASHION  
ASSOCIATION

AND



PRESENT

**VOICES OF  
DENIM**

**A LIVING CULTURAL LANGUAGE**

**TALENTS AND CREATIVES**

**ENGLISH**

# FASHION DESIGNERS

## VICTOR HART

**GHANA-ITALY**

Contemporary menswear designer whose work merges classical tailoring with a refined modern sensibility. Through clean silhouettes and culturally rooted narratives, Victor Hart develops an elegant and deeply personal vision of menswear that balances sophistication, identity, and contemporary aesthetics.

## TOKYO JAMES

**NIGERIA-ITALY**

Designer recognized for his bold and cosmopolitan approach to menswear. His work combines European sartorial codes with contemporary African influences, creating collections defined by sharp tailoring, strong visual identity, and a sophisticated cultural narrative.

## NANA BRENU

**GHANA-ITALY**

Creative consultant working between Accra and Milan, and founder of NATIV LTD. His practice combines contemporary design with community-driven production and female empowerment, bridging cultural exchange, craftsmanship, and social impact.

## GAEUN KIM

**KOREA-ITALY**

Founder of the brand VILLAIN, Gaeun Kim explores emotional storytelling through experimental silhouettes inspired by Korean culture and Y2K aesthetics. Her work combines contemporary fashion language with themes of identity, vulnerability, and transformation.

## YAIMIRA GOMEZ FABRE

**CUBA-ITALY**

Designer whose work explores identity and innovation through entirely handmade, seamless garments. Combining artisanal techniques with contemporary silhouettes, her creations redefine the boundaries between craftsmanship, body, and modern fashion.

## PAUL ROGER TANONKOU

**CAMEROON-ITALY**

Founder of ZENAM, a menswear label rooted in artisanal heritage and contemporary minimalism. His work is characterized by essential lines, refined details, and a modern aesthetic deeply connected to cultural identity and craftsmanship.

## LUNA MANJETSU

**TAIWAN-ITALY**

Founder of Taste of Moon, a brand that explores introspection, emotion, and cultural identity through contemporary fashion. Her work is defined by fluid textures, sculptural volumes, and an essential elegance that transforms fashion into a personal narrative experience.

# FASHION DESIGNERS

## PAPA OYEYEMI

**NIGERIA-ITALY**

Designer known for his experimental approach to menswear and for challenging traditional codes of masculinity. Through his brand Maxivive, he develops collections that combine material research, individuality, and socially conscious narratives within a bold contemporary aesthetic.

## CRISTEL ABBOUD

**LEBANON-ITALY**

Designer whose work combines contemporary minimalism with refined Middle Eastern influences. Her collections are characterized by clean lines, sculptural volumes, and a sophisticated material research that balances elegance, innovation, and cultural identity.

## SABINA D'ANGELO

**NEPAL-ITALY**

Fashion designer raised in Italy whose couture creations merge tailoring, embroidery, and cultural memory. Through a deeply artisanal approach, her work transforms emotion, craftsmanship, and identity into refined contemporary narratives.

# PHOTOGRAPHERS

## MARZIO VILLA

**BRAZIL-ITALY**

Photographer and visual researcher whose practice investigates social inequalities, colonial legacies, and urban structures. Through a sociological and deeply human approach, his work explores identity, memory, and collective narratives within contemporary society.

## KENDALL HILL

**CHICAGO-ITALY**

Photographer, writer, and curator whose visual language explores youth, memory, and identity through vibrant colors and intimate storytelling. His multidisciplinary practice moves between fashion, portraiture, and cultural research.

## DONALD NGAMENE

**CAMEROON-ITALY**

Portrait and fashion photographer recognized for his authentic visual approach and sensitivity toward spontaneous emotion. His work combines elegance, intimacy, and strong attention to human expression through contemporary image-making.

## BEN DRAME

**IVORY COAST-ITALY**

Photographer whose work moves between editorial imagery and documentary storytelling. Through both collaborative and personal projects, his practice explores intimacy, community, and belonging with a sensitive and authentic visual approach.

# STYLISTS

## **KAMAL IJALE**

**NIGERIA-ITALY**

Stylist and creative professional with experience across the Nigerian fashion industry. His work combines creative direction, personal styling, and contemporary fashion communication, currently further developed through his studies in Milan.

## **MARIA CASSIA F. DOS SANTOS**

**BRAZIL-ITALY**

Stylist whose visual language merges South American vibrancy with contemporary editorial aesthetics. Her practice spans fashion styling, art direction, and image research, creating narratives that balance emotion, sophistication, and modernity.

## **THAIS MONTESSORI BRANDAO**

**BRAZIL-ITALY**

Creative whose research explores identity, memory, and transformation through a conceptual and narrative-driven approach. Her work combines cultural sensitivity with contemporary visual storytelling and personal artistic expression.

## **SORELLE TOLEDO**

**BRAZIL-ITALY**

Luciana and Adriana Toledo are stylists, art directors, and storytellers working between fashion, culture, and community engagement. Their multidisciplinary practice blends visual narratives, performance influences, and social impact through contemporary image-making.

# SOUND

## **ROVER & ROGER RODRIGUEZ**

The duo curates the sound identity of the project, developing immersive sonic landscapes that contribute to the emotional and experiential dimension of the exhibition.

## **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-ITALY**

## **PAMY & POLLY**

DJs, music producers, and performers known for blending fashion, music, and contemporary culture through their distinctive sound. Their sets create immersive experiences that seamlessly connect the energy of nightlife with the creative language of fashion.

## **GHANA-ITALY**

# ARTISTS

## FRANCIS NATHAN ABIAM

CAMEROON-ITALY

Known artistically as AFARN, he transforms denim into a conceptual and expressive artistic medium. Through deconstruction, reuse, and experimentation, his work explores memory, transformation, and identity beyond the boundaries of fashion.

## RED LONGO

ETHIOPIA-ITALY

Multidisciplinary artist whose work intersects street art, pop culture, and personal memory. Through visual experimentation and collaborations with international brands, he develops projects that connect urban culture, contemporary art, and identity.

## CHRISTOPHER VEGGETTI

CONGO-ITALY

Painter whose artistic research explores multicultural identity and the contemporary body through vibrant and material-based painting. His practice combines emotional intensity, experimentation, and layered cultural narratives.

# VISUAL POETS

## **ANNA OSEI**

**GHANA-ITALY**

Writer and author whose work explores identity, belonging, and the representation of new generations through contemporary storytelling. Her practice focuses on cultural dialogue, inclusion, and social narratives within modern Europe.

## **NADEESHA UYANGODA**

**SRI LANKA-ITALY**

Writer, author, and journalist whose research explores identity, language, and cultural transformation within contemporary Italian society. Through essays, journalism, and public discourse, she contributes to conversations around representation and belonging.

## **SHANNICE ALOGAGA**

**NIGERIA-ITALY**

Comic book artist, illustrator, and educator whose work explores Afrocentric storytelling through vibrant, joyful, and fairytale-inspired narratives. As part of Black History Month Florence, she curates a platform dedicated to Black comics across Italy and Europe, celebrating contemporary Black identities beyond stereotypical representations.

# VIDEOGRAPHERS

## EMMANUEL BLAY

Director and filmmaker whose work explores authentic human experiences through emotional and cinematic storytelling. His visual narratives combine documentary sensitivity with contemporary cultural perspectives.

## GHANA-ITALY

## SARA LEMLEM

Video journalist and multimedia storyteller developing cross-media projects focused on contemporary social and cultural dynamics. Her work combines journalism, visual narratives, and documentary approaches to investigate identity and society.

## ETHIOPIA & ERITREA-ITALY

# HAIR & MAKE-UP

## **CELIA SEARS**

Founder and CEO of Show Division, Celia Sears is a leading advocate for inclusivity within the fashion backstage industry. Through education, professional development, and specialized creative teams, she promotes inclusive beauty practices across all hair textures and skin tones.

## **JAMAICA-ITALY**

## **DINALVA BARROS**

International fashion editor and stylist with extensive experience across editorial publishing, styling, and fashion education. Working between Milan, Paris, and Brazil, her practice combines sophisticated image-making with mentorship and creative direction.

## **BRAZIL-ITALY**

### **ABOUT AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION**

AFRO FASHION ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization founded in 2015, active between Italy and sub-Saharan Africa. Led by volunteers, it promotes fashion, art and culture as tools for intercultural exchange, empowerment and sustainable economic development. Its mission is to nurture emerging African and BIPOC creatives through an international platform, create market opportunities for Black and ethnic minority entrepreneurs, and promote an African identity based on creativity, innovation and cultural richness. The association works to strengthen local capacities in the arts and culture sector, supporting women's empowerment and offering training and professional opportunities to students and emerging talents. In addition, it engages in advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, using art as a driver of social and economic growth.

### **ABOUT THE LEVI'S® BRAND**

The LEVI'S® brand epitomizes classic American style and effortless cool. Since their invention by Levi Strauss & Co. in 1873, LEVI'S® jeans have become one of the most recognizable garments of clothing in the world—capturing the imagination and loyalty of people for generations. Today, the LEVI'S® brand portfolio continues to evolve through a relentless pioneering and innovative spirit that is unparalleled in the apparel industry. Our range of leading denim and accessories are available in more than 110 countries, allowing individuals around the world to express their personal style. For more information about the LEVI'S® brand, its products and stores, please visit [levi.com](http://levi.com).

### **ABOUT LEVI STRAUSS & CO.**

Levi Strauss & Co. (LS&Co.) is one of the world's largest brand-name apparel companies and a global leader in jeanswear. The company designs and markets jeans, casual wear and related accessories for men, women and children under the LEVI'S®, Levi Strauss Signature™, and Beyond Yoga® brands. Its products are sold in approximately 120 countries worldwide through a combination of chain retailers, department stores, online sites, and a global footprint of approximately 3,300 retail stores and shop-in-shops. Levi Strauss & Co.'s reported 2025 net revenues were \$6.3 billion. For more information, go to <http://levistrauss.com>, and for financial news and announcements go to <http://investors.levistrauss.com>

**For more information, please contact NEGRI FIRMAN PR & COMMUNICATION**  
[afrofashionassociation@negrifirman.com](mailto:afrofashionassociation@negrifirman.com)

Federica Burzio  
Communications Director  
[f.burzio@negrifirman.com](mailto:f.burzio@negrifirman.com)

Agnese Battolla  
Communications Specialist  
[a.battolla@negrifirman.com](mailto:a.battolla@negrifirman.com)



AND



PRESENT

**VOICES OF DENIM**

A LIVING CULTURAL LANGUAGE