INTRODUCTION

The 27th IFFTI Annual Conference at London College of Fashion, UAL marked a significant chapter in the LCF's history. The College welcomed educators, researcher and practitioners from across the world – leaders and experts in fashion – to the campus at East Bank on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. It was an honour to be the first institution to host the IFFTI Annual Conference three times, demonstrating the strength in our partnership with IFFTI. From its origins in 1998, the conference is now considered one of the most important in advancing research and pedagogy in the field of fashion.

Founded in 1906, London College of Fashion has been nurturing creative talent for over a century. Our ethos has remained a constant ever since: to work closely with the fashion industry to teach current and relevant skills. We now offer courses from business to design and curation, with over 60 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and 165 short courses. With our return to East London – the home of the *rag trade* of the UK fashion industry – LCF has an eye to the future, rigorously identifying new ways of working and adapting its curriculum to meet the needs of an ever-changing creative landscape.

In March 2025, the campus was filled with the excitement of hundreds of delegates experiencing the new campus and the biggest conference in IFFTI's history. The success of the conference is owed to the authors, presenters and participants contributing new knowledge and sharing innovative skills.

The 27th IFFTI Annual Conference theme was thoroughly forward-facing with the theme Forming Futures. We knew, for our fashion eco-system to continue to grow and flourish, we needed to:

- Consider how our communities are helping us to unlearn fashion as we know it and to reassess our position and perspectives
- Learn why technology is driving democratic change to established fashion systems
- Realise fashion narratives are shifting, creating space for new, authentic stories that resonate with diverse and global audiences
- Embrace educational practices that create change, inspiring an impactful future for the entire fashion industry
- Comprehend the advances in digital fashion that are challenging our ideas of reality, ethics and sustainability

Forming Futures was a call for educators, researchers and practitioners to share their ethical enquiries in design, technology, digital objects, communities, business systems and pedagogy. The submissions demonstrated new ways of thinking,

seeing, working and practising that contribute to fashion's forming futures, and our authors responded to the subthemes:

Pedagogies
- What teaching methods are we implementing to inspire critical change within the fashion system?
- Teaching beyond the classroom: how does fashion affect pedagogy and vice versa?
- Inside out: enacting industry and cultural change from our workshops and studios

Communities
- Unlearning fashion to re-assess, re-analyse and re-evaluate fashion perspectives
- Learning with local communities and centring their voices to change fashion ideals
- Telling authentic stories and evaluating how identities and communities are understood through fashion's cultural narratives

Technologies
- Creative technologies for change: sustainable technologies infrastructure and platforms that are shifting the fashion eco-system
- How do we advocate ethical uses of machine learning for a sustainable future in fashion?
- The ethical balance between digital and physical objects in the fashion eco-system

Ethics
- Balancing digital objects and physical artefact
- Shifting dominant geographies and confronting fashion's international inequalities
- Fashion systems that prioritise planetary life and wellbeing for all
- Ethical business practices at the interface of culture and sustainability

We received over 370 submissions to join the 27th Annual IFFTI Conference and after a rigorous selection process, 96 text-based papers, 15 workshops and 8 posters were selected and now shared with you, the proceedings exceeding over 1500 pages. The contributors shared their knowledge and expertise on the widest range of subjects from building new fashion worlds and environments with AI to working with communities to preserve ancient crafts. For the first time, pedagogy took centre stage with over 30 text-based papers and workshops disseminating new and advanced practice in fashion education.

The keynote address ignited our passion for the subject. Gus Casely-Hayford OBE, Beatrix Ong MBE, Fredrik Timour and Lisa Lang debated, disagreed and negotiated the definition and how we should be forming the future of fashion. The panel shared experiences and agreed that narratives from all perspectives will always give the story depth and life. We are here to challenge the status quo, and this motivates us to continually improve to the benefit of fashion.

London College of Fashion dedicated Organising Committee worked tirelessly with IFFTI to host the biggest conference in its history. Every year, IFFTI provides the platform for research and scholarly activity to showcase the best work where different perspectives meet and continue to conversations that shape the industry. It has been an honour to host this conference and adding another stone to the foundation where we all stand together, united in our commitment for forming futures in fashion.

John Lau
Chair – London College of Fashion IFFTI Organising Committee

Dean of Academic Strategy
London College of Fashion, UAL