



Kering Announces Winners of Sustainability-Focused Award

The winners of the inaugural “Kering Generation Award x Jewelry” are student Lee Min Seo and China-based startup Ianyan.

Natalie Francisco



Las Vegas—Kering announced the winners of its first “Kering Generation Award x Jewelry” in a ceremony held Saturday at the JCK show in Las Vegas.

Kering and the World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) launched the award in November 2024, with scientific coordination by Poli.Design at Politecnico di Milano, a technical university based in Milan, Italy.

It is an extension of Kering’s “Generation Award,” which launched in 2018 for the fashion sector.

The theme of the award was “Second Chance, First Choice,” as it challenges participants to turn waste into jewelry by designing a piece or collection using discarded materials.

Kering said the contest included 22 startups and students from 10 universities and academies.

Lee Min Seo of Hongik University in South Korea was the winner in the student category.

She created her “Rhythm Reborn” collection for the award, designing pieces crafted with worn-out leather from the janggu, a traditional Korean percussion instrument, that normally would be discarded after extensive use.

Her project reimagines Korean music while promoting sustainability and cultural growth, said Kering, as it prevents environmental waste and symbolizes the enduring beauty and emotion of Korean musical heritage through a modern interpretation of cultural identity.

Ianyan, a Chinese jewelry brand, was the winner in the startup category.

The brand uses fractured opals and unusual stones in its collections, promoting a circular economy by choosing imperfect gems to revive traditional values. It gives new life to materials through craftsmanship, and by designing each piece to be repaired, transformed, or recomposed.





Each of Ianyan's pieces tells a story of nature's cycle—born from the earth, reshaped by human creativity, and meant to return to nature, said Kering.

“With the Kering Generation Award x Jewelry, we aim to empower a new wave of talents who are reshaping the jewelry industry through creativity and responsibility,” said Marie-Claire Daveu, chief sustainability and institutional affairs officer at Kering.

“The inspiring work of Lee Min Seo and Ianyan demonstrates that sustainable innovation is not only possible, but already taking shape. I would also like to warmly congratulate all the finalists, whose projects reflect the imagination and commitment needed to build a more sustainable future for our industry.”

The two winners of the award were honored in a ceremony during which their designs were unveiled, and they received trophies designed by Yi Design, the winner of the third “Kering Generation Award” in China.

Professor Alba Cappellieri, head of jewelry and fashion accessories programs at Politecnico di Milano; Daveu; and CIBJO President Gaetano Cavalieri presented the trophies.

The winners also will receive mentorship from experts at Politecnico di Milano, and Seo will have the opportunity to complete an internship at one of Kering's jewelry brands, which are Boucheron, Pomellato, DoDo, and Qeelin.

In addition to Daveu, Cavalieri, and Cappellieri, the judges for the Kering Generation Award X Jewelry were: François-Henri Pinault, chairman and CEO of Kering; Hélène Poulit-Duquesne, CEO of Boucheron; Sabina Belli, CEO of Pomellato; Christophe Artaux, CEO of Qeelin; Iris Van der Veken, executive director of the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030; Bernadette Pinet-Cuoq, president of UFBJOP; Sarin Bachmann, group vice president of JCK; and Elisa Niemtow, vice president of BSR.

