

Third Annual CFDA/Genesis House AAPI Design + Innovation Grant Opens Submissions

The program recognizes innovation in design within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.



The program champions innovation in design within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Genesis and the Council of Fashion Designers of America have opened submissions for the third annual CFDA/Genesis House AAPI Design + Innovation Grant.

Now in its third year, the program continues to champion innovation in design within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Designed to empower emerging talent, three fashion designers will be selected to create collections that honor the fusion of their Asian heritage with modern design.

An advisory board will select the three designers to participate in the 2025-26 program, guiding them through the creative process as they develop original collections. This year's board of mentors and advisers include Steven Kolb, chief executive officer and president of the CFDA ; Wen Zhou, founder and CEO of 3.1 Phillip Lim; Robert Geller, head of menswear design, Rag & Bone; Dao-Yi Chow and Maxwell Osborne, creative directors and cofounders of Public School; Jodie Chan, fashion marketing executive; Eva Chen, vice president of fashion, Meta; Gena Smith, chief human resources officer, LVMH Inc., and Samantha Chen, vice president of merchandising, Altuzarra.

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Each designer selected for the CFDA /Genesis House AAPI Design + Innovation Grant will be awarded a \$40,000 grant from Genesis to support their research and design development throughout the program. As part of their creative journey, the three chosen designers will travel to Seoul for an experience to help shape and inspire their collections. The program will culminate in a presentation at Genesis House in February 2026, where a judging panel will evaluate the final designs, and one finalist will be awarded an additional \$60,000 to further expand their business, bringing the total potential grant funding to \$100,000.

"Genesis is a leader in innovation, delivering products with bold designs and advanced technologies," said Tedros Megiste, chief operating officer of Genesis Motor North America. "Our partnership with the CFDA champions emerging talent and celebrates the diverse voices pushing fashion forward. We are proud to provide this platform for AAPI designers to explore bold ideas and shape the future of design."

Kolb added, "Now in its third year, the CFDA/Genesis House AAPI Design + Innovation Grant continues to spotlight the groundbreaking work of emerging AAPI designers. This program is an important part of our efforts to support diverse talent and create more opportunities within the fashion industry."

Last February, Olivia Cheng of Dauphinette was the second winner of the CFDA/Genesis House AAPI Design + Innovation Grant. Her collection, entitled Clove, incorporated botanical elements like 24-karat gold electroplated ginkgo leaves, lotus flowers from her mother's garden and urban influences inspired by Seoul. The first winner was Grace Ling, whose looks were inspired by a femme fatale character. She incorporated references to figures from Asian folktales, and motifs such as hair which symbolizes respect in Asian culture.

Submissions will open on cfda.com starting at 10 a.m. Tuesday until Monday.

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