



PRESS RELEASE

October 16, 2025

THE 4TH KERING GENERATION AWARD CHINA CEREMONY *PIONEERING WATER POSITIVE IMPACT*

On October 16th, Kering, together with the global innovation platform Plug and Play China, held the 4th Kering Generation Award China Ceremony during the Shanghai Fashion Week at the Museum of Art Pudong, Shanghai.

Launched in 2018 by Kering, with the support of Plug and Play China, the Kering Generation Award aims to identify promising, change-making startups and technologies that drive sustainable innovation in China's fashion and beauty sectors. In April 2025, Kering unveiled its Water-Positive Strategy, committing to achieve a Net Water Positive Impact by 2050. This strategy seeks to reduce water-related risks across the Group's value chain while actively restoring and regenerating water and surrounding ecosystems. In line with this new commitment, the 4th edition of the Award adopted the theme "Pioneering Water-Positive Impact," highlighting the crucial role of water stewardship and exploring innovations that promote positive water impact throughout the luxury industry value chain.

"Upholding Goodness Like Water, Driving Innovation for Co-development" — The theme of the award ceremony was derived from the traditional philosophical thought in the *Daodejing* — "The supreme good is like water; water nurtures all living things without competing with them." Starting from the fundamental narrative of water as the source of life, this concept extended into a vision more aligned with the core purpose of this award: promoting the humble, inclusive, and nurturing virtue of water, to guide the fashion industry toward continuous innovation and relentless progress. This year's award not only honored Chinese startups with outstanding potential in water stewardship but also advocated for sustainable values across society: taking water stewardship as a pathway and goodness as the direction, to unite forces across the industry's value chain and jointly explore innovative models that balance environmental sustainability with business viability, ultimately building a collaborative and harmonious industry ecosystem.

Partnering with Tsinghua x-lab, this year's award generated widespread social impact by identifying innovative projects through the integration of industry, academia, and research. Since its launch in January 2025, over 230 teams entered the startup application pool. In April, the award made its campus debut by hosting a roadshow in partnership with Tsinghua x-lab. In September, the Top 10 finalists took part in an Acceleration Camp and the final pitch, where they refined and presented a diverse range of innovative solutions.

The business plans were reviewed and ranked by the sustainability expert team from Kering and further evaluated by the China Advisory Council and the International Jury, focusing on the three following sub-themes: "Rejuvenate Earth Water Ecosystem," "Navigate Industry Water Risks," and "Enhance Consumers' Water Consciousness and Transform Lifestyles." After a rigorous selection process, the four winners of the 4th Kering Generation Award China were officially announced at the ceremony:



- The first-place winner **INTERPHASE**, leverages proprietary textile 3D evaporative crystallization, offering innovative solutions for wastewater treatment and high-value resource recovery.
- The second-place winner **DAOSHENG SYN BIOLOGY** aims to replace chemical dyes with synthetic biological alternatives, achieving industrial-scale production of indigo using proprietary bacterial strains.
- The third-place winner **PURVÉE TECH** delivers an integrated hardware-software solution for detection and analysis of microplastics and microfibers.
- The newly added Special Jury Mention, **OCEAN SHIELD** focuses on developing environmentally friendly macromolecular sunscreen ingredients for diverse applications in cosmetics, textiles, and cultural heritage preservation.



From Left: LV Xiaolei, Secretary-General of Shanghai Fashion Week Organizing Committee, and Executive Vice Chairman of Shanghai Fashion Designers Association; WEN Xu, Scientific Explorer and Doctor of Glacier Engineering; HUANG Bo, Chinese actor, artist and environmental activist; Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer, Kering; OCEAN SHIELD, Special Jury Mention; PURVÉE TECH, the third-place winner; INTERPHASE, the first-place winner; DAOSHENG SYN BIOLOGY, the second-place winner; CAI Jinqing, President of Kering Greater China; Susan Rockefeller, a well-known figure in the world of art, philanthropy, Board Member of Oceana; REN Wenwei, Head of WWF's Shanghai office and Director of Water Practice at WWF-China; HAO Xiuqing, Director of Tsinghua x-lab; Peter Xu, CEO, Managing Partner & Executive Director of Plug and Play China

The awards were presented to the winners by Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer, Kering, and Susan Rockefeller, a well-known figure in the world of art, philanthropy, Board Member of Oceana.

Industry leaders in fashion, beauty, business, academia, and sustainable innovation sectors gathered at the ceremony, sharing profound industry insights and forward-thinking perspectives. CAI Jinqing, President of Kering Greater China, and HUANG Bo, Chinese actor, artist and environmental activist, engaged in a conversation. They discussed their experiences and reflections on water stewardship from their respective fields including fashion and art, calling on society to work together in advocating for sustainable lifestyles. The following panel discussion was moderated by Peter Xu, CEO, Managing Partner & Executive Director of Plug and Play China. Speakers included REN Wenwei, Head of WWF's Shanghai office and Director of Water Practice at WWF-China, adjunct professor in the College of Environmental Science and Engineering at Tongji University; JeeSeon Park, Chief Sustainability Officer of L'Oréal China & North Asia; HAO Xiuqing, Director of Tsinghua x-lab and ZHANG Zhijun, Chairman of Jintang Textile. They shared their insights on the three sub-themes of the award, urging all sectors to join forces in addressing this critical and long-term challenge.



The creative space at the event showcased the innovative achievements of the first-place winners from the first three editions of the Kering Generation Award China, including Melephant's plant-based dyes, Peelsphere's bio-based alternative leather, and Yi Design's recycled ceramics.

"At Kering, we believe that true innovation is not only about creating new solutions, but about restoring balance between nature and business. The 4th Kering Generation Award Ceremony in Shanghai once again demonstrated how powerful this vision can be in action - empowering a new generation of entrepreneurs whose ideas help make water, and life itself, flow positively again," said Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability and Institutional Affairs Officer, Kering.

CAI Jinqing, President of Kering Greater China, said, *"We are proud to partner for the first time with Tsinghua x-lab through this year's award to fuel the growth of the youth entrepreneurship community. The startups competing for this award have shown technological strength, business acumen and a strong commitment to sustainability. With water as the spiritual origin and innovation for positive impact as the driving force, Kering Generation Award China advocates for collective action across the entire industry and society, helping to promote harmony between humans and nature."*

As a global pioneer in the field of sustainable development, Kering will leverage its industry influence to help the winners build domestic and international resource networks, empowering the long-term development of innovative solutions.

The first-place winner will receive a EUR 100,000 prize, while all three winners will join Kering and Plug and Play's industry network, gaining access to leading experts, investors, and key industry players. They will also be invited to visit Kering's headquarters in Paris, where they will benefit from personalized guidance from the Group's sustainability experts.

About Kering

Kering is a global, family-led luxury group, home to people whose passion and expertise nurture creative Houses across couture and ready-to-wear, leather goods, jewelry, eyewear and beauty: Gucci, Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga, McQueen, Brioni, Boucheron, Pomellato, Dodo, Qeelin, Ginori 1735, as well as Kering Eyewear and Kering Beauté. Inspired by their creative heritage, Kering's Houses design and craft exceptional products and experiences that reflect the Group's commitment to excellence, sustainability and culture. This vision is expressed in our signature: Creativity is our Legacy. In 2024, Kering employed 47,000 people and generated revenue of €17.2 billion.

About Kering Generation Award

Aligned with Kering vision of "Crafting Tomorrow's Luxury", with the support of global innovation platform Plug and Play China, the "Kering Generation Award" was founded by Kering in China in December 2018, aiming to recognize and support Chinese startups that can bring about



positive environmental and social impact and address challenges in alternative raw materials, green supply chain, retail & use and the circular economy.

In 2021, the 2nd Kering Generation Award focused on biodiversity and beyond, seeking startups working in the areas of ensuring clean water, building healthy soil, supporting wildlife and animal welfare as well as empowering people with knowledge of the relationship between fashion and nature.

In 2022, Kering announced the 3rd Kering Generation Award around the theme “Coming Full Circle”, promoting the complete development of the circular economy at every link of the fashion industry.

In 2024, Kering Generation Award was expanded to Japan and Saudi Arabia.

In January 2025, Kering announced the 4th Kering Generation Award China with the theme “Pioneering Water Positive Impact”, exploring innovation around water stewardship across the value chain of China’s luxury sector. The Award ceremony was held in October 2025, during Shanghai Fashion Week.

About Plug and Play

Plug and Play is one of the world's oldest technology incubators with the widest coverage of regions and industries, and is also a globally recognized technology innovation ecological platform. Plug and Play originated in Silicon Valley, has more than 60 innovation centers around the world, has more than 20 years of experience in technology investment, industrial technology services, technology incubation. The company has successfully incubated Google, invested in PayPal, Dropbox and other technology giants, and invested in more than 200 science and technology companies around the world every year. Plug and Play is committed to finding, incubating, accelerating, investing in, and promoting hard technology startups, as well as carrying out open innovation cooperation based on their innovation needs and cultural ecology with more than 500 industry leader companies. In 2016, with the expansion of its global business, Plug and Play China was established, and innovation centers were set up in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Wuhan, Hefei, Changzhou. At present, Plug and Play China has built a leading one-stop platform for technology investment, innovation services and incubation, and carries out three types of innovative businesses: early-stage technology investment, innovation services (enterprise innovation, city innovation, international cooperation), and incubation of innovation space.

About Tsinghua x-lab

Tsinghua x-lab (x-lab) is a non-profit, university-based innovation platform aimed at nurturing creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Established in April 2013, x-lab supports startups across diverse sectors, serving the Tsinghua community, including students, alumni, and faculty. Anchored in the Tsinghua School of Economics and Management (Tsinghua SEM), it collaborates with 17 departments and schools together with 7 colleges, fostering an integrated system of education, training, and networking. x-lab is dedicated to advancing the commercialization of Tsinghua University's scientific and technological breakthroughs, cultivating entrepreneurial talent nationwide, and contributing to China's nation's development strategy.



x-lab provides a 3,000-square-meter innovation hub within the Jianhua Building at Tsinghua SEM, along with a 700-square-meter pre-incubation office space at the Tsinghua Science Park. Designed for openness, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cross-cultural exchange, these spaces cater to the diverse needs of faculty and students alike. In addition, x-lab has enlisted nearly 100 industry experts to mentor startups, while also assisting students with the registration of industrial and commercial projects. This fosters a vibrant, supportive ecosystem for the growth and success of their ventures.

Over the past eleven years, x-lab has achieved significant milestones. It has welcomed over 95,000 participants through a range of activities, including courses, signature events, lectures, forums, and exchange programs. More than 2,600 projects at various stages have been launched through x-lab, with over 950 teams officially registered. Impressively, more than 280 x-lab startups have secured funding, collectively raising over 19 billion RMB, showcasing the platform's impact on fostering entrepreneurial success.

About Shanghai Fashion Week

As a reputed City Name Card, Shanghai Fashion Week, relying on the urban heritage and cultural confidence of Shanghai, a century-old fashion capital, adheres to the positioning philosophy of "integration of local and international visions" and "balance between creative design and commercial implementation". In the past 20 years, it has evolved from a merely fashion showcase platform to a fashion eco landscape, which runs through the entire fashion industry, and is commented as "the world's most dynamic fashion week".

Contact us:

Yun JIANG	+ 86 (21) 6185 3683	yun.jiang@kering.com
Louise LIN	+ 86 (21) 6185 3683	louise.lin@kering.com
Gisele CHEN	+ 86 (21) 6466 6161	gisele.chen@karlaotto.com
K.C Li	+ 86 (21) 6466 6161	kecan.li@karlaotto.com

WeChat account of Kering :

