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Release

19.05.2014

## Parsons and Kering announce third annual “Empowering Imagination” design competition

**In Collaboration with Style.com, Top Parsons BFA Fashion Design Students will be Selected for Prestigious Internships with Kering Brands**

NEW YORK, May 19, 2014 – Parsons The New School for Design and Kering have announced the third annual “Empowering Imagination” competition, which provides graduating Parsons BFA Fashion Design students the opportunity to earn an internship within one of Kering’s 22 luxury and sport & lifestyle brands. The continued partnership with Style.com will offer the 14 student finalists unparalleled exposure on Style.com’s homepage from May 20th through June 3rd. A panel of fashion insiders, which includes designer **Tomas Maier**, **Sofia Sanchez Barrenechea**, Style.com’s **Dirk Standen**, Kering’s **Laurent Claquin**, Paper Magazine’s **Mickey Boardman**, Saks Fifth Avenue’s **Colleen Sherin**, and Parsons’ **Simon Collins**, will meet on June 2nd to judge the work of these 14 finalists and choose two winners.

*“Kering is extremely proud to continue this partnership with Parsons for the third year in a row. At Kering, we believe in fostering young talent by providing resources and a framework within which they can thrive. The media exposure these students receive via our collaboration with Style.com and the professional mentoring they obtain throughout the “Empowering Imagination” competition prepares them for future challenges and sets them up for success in their career.”* said Laurent Claquin, head of Kering Americas.

Based on Kering’s defining theme of “Empowering Imagination,” the competition engages top 2014 graduates of the Parsons BFA Fashion Design program. Parsons has selected 14 finalists for consideration, two of which will be awarded internships. These students display excellence in vision, aesthetic identity, and professional practice with specific focus to Luxury and Sport/Lifestyle markets.

Last year’s winners were Harim Jung and Yunxiang Zhou. Jung’s womenswear collection earned her an internship with Bottega Veneta; Zhou’s focus on menswear design landed her an internship at Brioni. Previous years’ winners were Jin Kay, who interned with Gucci, and Melanie Seligman, whose accessory collection brought her to McQ by Alexander McQueen.

*“Parsons is honored to yet again be a part of this prestigious competition,”* said Simon Collins, *Dean of the School of Fashion at Parsons. “It’s a fantastic opportunity for our students to show the world what they’re capable of, and to get to work at a very high level alongside some of the world’s most accomplished design professionals.”*

Parsons students are chosen to participate in this competition based on the quality and conceptual vision of their thesis collections, as well as their ability to communicate the point of view of their thesis collection. Within the School of Fashion, Parsons BFA Senior Thesis work is

the capstone experience underpinned by acute awareness of design identity, ethos, and vision, combined with a demonstrated mastery of technical competencies. Students can specialize in women's wear, menswear, children's wear and accessories, as well as pursue a focus on sustainability or a specific market such as eveningwear, sport or luxury.

In addition to featuring their work on Style.com from May 20th – June 3rd, Style.com will also host a professional mentorship session for the students.

**Parsons The New School for Design** is a global leader in design education, with programs that span the disciplines of design and the fine arts. With the launch of its fashion design program in 1906, Parsons is credited with the rise of Seventh Avenue, the epicenter of American fashion. Parsons offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Fashion Design, Associate degrees in Fashion Design and Fashion Marketing, and a Master of Fine Arts Program in Fashion Design and Society initiated through the support of Parsons alumna Donna Karan. Parsons has educated generations of leading American fashion designers, including Tom Ford, Marc Jacobs, Donna Karan, Isaac Mizrahi, Tracy Reese, Narciso Rodriguez, Anna Sui, Prabal Gurung, Derek Lam, Proenza Schouler, Vena Cava, Alexander Wang, and Jason Wu. For more information, visit [www.newschool.edu/parsons](http://www.newschool.edu/parsons).

#### **About Kering**

A world leader in apparel and accessories, Kering develops an ensemble of powerful Luxury and Sport & Lifestyle brands: Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Saint Laurent, Alexander McQueen, Balenciaga, Brioni, Christopher Kane, McQ, Stella McCartney, Tomas Maier, Sergio Rossi, Boucheron, Dodo, Girard-Perregaux, JeanRichard, Pomellato, Qeelin, Puma, Volcom, Cobra, Electric and Tretorn. By 'empowering imagination' in the fullest sense, Kering encourages its brands to reach their potential, in the most sustainable manner.

Present in more than 120 countries, the Group generated revenues of €9.7 billion in 2013 and had 31,000 employees at year end. The Kering (previously PPR) share is listed on Euronext Paris (FR 0000121485, KER.PA, KER.FP).

**Style.com**, a Fairchild Fashion Media brand (FFM), takes its global audience deep inside the world of fashion. From catwalk to sidewalk, backstage to after-party, Style.com employs breakthrough technology to deliver instant gratification to fashion obsessives. Based in New York, Style.com launched in September 2000. FFM, a division of Condé Nast, includes WWD (Women's Wear Daily), Style.com, FN (Footwear News), NowManifest, Beauty Inc, M and Fairchild Summits.

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