

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **ANISH MALPANI OF LABEL ‘WITHOUT’ WINS THE CIRCULAR DESIGN CHALLENGE 2023**

*~ Organised by Reliance Industries Limited's- R|ELAN™ in association with the United Nations in India, CDC's 6 global and Indian finalists competed at the UN House in New Delhi on Sustainable Fashion Day~*

*~ Felipe Fiallo from the European Union was announced runner up ~*

**National, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2023:** Designer **Anish Malpani of label ‘Without’ from India** won the 5<sup>th</sup> Circular Design Challenge (CDC) – India’s biggest sustainability award organized by **R|Elan™**, the next-gen fabric brand of India’s largest conglomerate - **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**, in association with the **United Nations in India**. The challenge culminated at a finale show at the UN House during Lakmé Fashion Week in partnership with FDCI. **Felipe Fiallo from the European Union** was announced the runner-up.

With the aim to give a global platform to fashion design talent that integrates sustainability in design and production to reduce waste and pollution and recycle products, **Circular Design Challenge (CDC)** embarked on a worldwide expansion to EU, UK and the Asia-Pacific region.

Circular Design Challenge (CDC) is India’s largest award for designers and entrepreneurs that recognises and promotes circularity, sustainability and innovation in the fashion and textile industries. The fashion and apparel industry are amongst the highest polluters and CDC attempts to transform the ecologically intensive sector. The CDC advocates for the recognition of India’s heritage, the relevance of creating fashion labels with social impact, and the necessity of adopting a circular manufacturing model to advance sustainable practices that address extractive impacts on the environment.

Five years ago, RIL and United Nations pioneered this creative and innovative platform that nurtures, mentors and promotes environmental champions – torchbearers of sustainable design and manufacturing practices – and advocates of sustainable production and consumption.

CDC has identified and supported remarkable winners who combine fashion with environmentally friendly innovations. Some past winners include I Was A Sari, which upcycles discarded saris, while empowering women artisans, Malai Biomaterials Design, which creates sustainable alternatives to leather, Bandit, which masters the art of upcycling various materials into eco-cool products, and Pieux, which focuses on recycled materials and modular garment construction. Moreover, the platform has supported 25 alumni through workshops and networks to gradually transform the fashion ecosystem.

CDC partners across borders include **British Council for the UK, Redress for Hong Kong/Asia Pacific, and Istituto Marangoni for The European Union.**

The winner, Anish Malpani received funding worth INR 15 lakhs, the coveted CDC trophy, and a six-month mentorship program along with a stand-alone showcase at Lakmé Fashion Week in partnership with FDCI in March 2024. Felipe Fiallo, the runner up received funding worth INR 5 lakhs. The winner and runner up will be mentored by **Orsola de Castro, Co-founder of Fashion Revolution & Creative Director of Estethica.**

Since 2018, CDC champions are selected through an annual competition, judged by captains of the industry and the United Nations India teams. **The jury for the final contest comprised** Atul Bagai: Country Head, United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) India Office; Christine Goulay: Founder, Sustainabelle Advisory Services, Ex Head of Sustainable Innovation, Kering group; Aditi Mayer: Sustainability Activist & Photojournalist and Rahul Mishra: Fashion Designer.

Circular Design Challenge demonstrates how industry, the fashion eco-system and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations can come together to effect catalytic change towards circularity and sustainable thinking, in line with the principles of Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) announced by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. **Talking about Mission LiFe, Chief Guest, Honorable Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi** addressed the audience, *“Each one has a responsibility, and each one has to participate, and each one needs to practice, and not just preach, be part of Mission Life. The intention is to increase positivity and work towards finding solutions, because that’s the very Indian way, of finding solutions, taking the middle path between the two extremes.”*

**Mr Hemant D. Sharma, Sector Head – Polyester, Reliance Industries Limited,** said, *“CDC is one of the most remarkable initiatives to promote circularity in material usage by Reliance Industries. The CDC has nurtured, mentored, and promoted environmental champions leading circular and innovative collections using sustainable and recycled materials. The Challenge has established itself as the largest sustainable fashion award in India. The initiative has played a crucial role in promoting circularity and sustainability in the Indian fashion industry, and after four editions in India, we have now gone international to promote sustainability, and circular economy adoption globally.”*

**Mr Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator, India,** said, *“The world is facing a triple planetary crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change. The Circular Design Challenge (CDC) demonstrates that fashion can be a powerful driver for responsible production and consumption, weaving together style and sustainability. It also resonates with the global Lifestyles for Environment (LiFE) movement, recently endorsed by the G20, and the increasing urgency of environmentally conscious lifestyles and consumer choices. The CDC and LiFE are important threads in the UN partnership tapestry, and we are thrilled that the CDC is bringing its message to the global catwalk for the first time. This reflects the centrality of India as a leader in both sustainable culture and climate action. Where India, and its fashion industry goes, the world will increasingly follow.”*

**Jaspreet Chandok, Group Vice President, Reliance Brands that organizes Lakme Fashion Week in partnership with Fashion Design Council of India,** said, *“After witnessing the growing participation and appreciation for CDC over the last five years, taking CDC to the global stage aligns perfectly with our vision of promoting sustainable fashion worldwide. Together with R|Elan™ and the United Nations in India, we have elevated the Circular Design Challenge to become the biggest sustainability platform within the country. As we move forward, our focus is on making this platform an even greater success on an international scale, alongside our global partners and welcome creative minds from around the world join us in our mission to promote sustainable fashion.”*

**Cristina Cancer, Istituto Marangoni Head of Alumni, Career Service & Industry Relationship, added on Felipe Fiallo being the runner up, “As one of the leading educational institutions focused on Fashion, our mission is to train the new generation of Designers creating a culture of circularity and sustainable fashion and an eco-conscious mindset. We are really proud of our Alumnus Felipe Fiallo because of his strong commitment to sustainability recycling and we are honored that he was recognized as the runner up of this edition of the CDC because with his work and innovative approach he perfectly represents the values and vision of this new eco-conscious culture.”**

## **THE COLLECTIONS BY THE SIX FINALISTS**

### **WITHOUT BY ANISH MALPANI – INDIA**

The brand ‘Without’ by Anish Malpani brought great eyewear fashion on the ramp but with a revolutionary patent pending technology. Recycling discarded Multi-layered Plastic Packaging (MLP) ‘Without’ transformed it into a fashion item. Recycled packets of chips were created into stylish sunglasses that had functionality at their roots – they were UV polarized, comfortable and durable. The ‘Without’ brand has empowered the lives of waste pickers and created products that offer guilt free consumption that is truly circular in its essence.

### **FELIPE FIALLO – EUROPEAN UNION**

Ecuador national, Felipe Fiallo, based in Italy, created a footwear line that was an amazing effort at combining digital fabrication, style and of course sustainability. Designing highly unconventional footwear, Felipe combined his creative sensibilities around the bio mimicry of nature and combined technology with craftsmanship. Deeply respectful of the environment, Felipe focused on Regenerative designs and promoted cradle-to-cradle sustainable practices for the fashion industry. The footwear ranged from knee high boots to almost futuristic in style and appearance ankle booties. The geometric structure in the black/white for the ankle high boots almost had a space age feel.

### **BANOFI + STUDIO BEEJ BY JINALI MODY AND ARUNDHATI KUMAR – INDIA**

Studio Beej by Jinali Mody and Arundhati Kumar created ‘Banofi’ an amazing plant-based leather from banana crop waste that resonates with the brand’s DNA perfectly. The collection “Biparita” was an innovative merger of bio research, Indian craftsmanship as well as environmental awareness. Deeply rooted in Bengal, the home state of the designing duo, the “Biparita” range was totally vegan, cruelty free and circular in nature. The stylish, boxy bags, clutches, folders, portfolios, tags, and accessories revealed the beauty of the plant-based leather that can be molded into fashion items.

### **STUDIO MEDIUM BY RIDDHI JAIN – INDIA**

The ‘Studio Medium’ brand by Riddhi Jain is well known for its expertise in Bandhani creations, which are a part of the brand’s fashion DNA. To create the most exquisite Bandhani, thread waste and textile offcuts are disturbing to environmentalists. Bringing forth an innovative solution ‘Studio Medium’ turned the large quantities of silk offcuts and discarded yarns into stylish garments. The result was a great offering of apparel and home textiles that ensured zero waste with inventive designs. The long-sleeved, 7-button, hip length jacket with a perky collar in an abstract weave was a practical colorful offering, while the 4-side-buttoned, long-sleeved coat in multi-hued weave proved that waste could turn into a great fashion story.

**AMESH WIJESEKERA – UNITED KINGDOM**

Sri Lankan designer Amesh Wijesekera based in London has worked extensively with the island’s artisans for knitwear, crochet, and handloom. Working with factory surplus fiber, Amesh, a semi-finalist for the LVMH prize has always aimed to prevent clothing waste that exists in Sri Lanka and provide support for the industry that has often suffered from unethical behavior and ill-treatment of crafts people. Amesh’s men’s wear in vibrant colors offered a choice of multi-colored, long trench coat or biker’s jacket with contrast sleeves in interesting weaves.

**PEI-WEN JIN – ASIA PACIFIC**

Pei-Wen Jin’s ambition had always been to perfect the art of zero waste designing for a circular future. At the Redress Design Awards 2021 - the World’s Largest Sustainable Fashion Design Competition, Pei-Wen was the runner up for her collection “Tangram Club”. Pei-Wen is aware that 80 per cent of the environmental impact is when the product starts at the inception stage. She ensured that she coexists with nature and has always considered sustainability as a necessary priority. Her mix and matched, layered creations featured maxi skirts teamed with comfy, asymmetric, tunic or midi with cute, frilled gilet. The vivid colors, stripes and detailing were the highlight of the looks.

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**About Reliance Industries Limited:**

Reliance is India’s largest private sector company, with a consolidated revenue of INR 9,74,864 crore (US\$118.6 billion), cash profit of INR 1,25,951 crore (US\$ 15.3 billion) and net profit of INR 73,670 crore (US\$9.0 billion) for the year ended March 31, 2023. Reliance’s activities span hydrocarbon exploration and production, petroleum refining and marketing, petrochemicals, advanced materials and composites, renewables (solar and hydrogen), retail and digital services.

Currently ranking 88th, Reliance is the largest private sector company from India to feature in Fortune’s Global 500 list of “World’s Largest Companies” for 2023. The company stands 45th in the Forbes Global 2000 rankings of “World’s Largest Public Companies” for 2023 - the top-most among Indian companies. Reliance has been ranked among the world's 20 best companies to work with, and highest amongst Indian companies in Forbes’ World’s Best Employers for 2022. It features among LinkedIn’s “Top Companies 2023: The 25 Best Workplaces To Grow Your Career In India”. Website: [www.ril.com](http://www.ril.com)

**About R|Elan™:**

R|Elan™ is the next-gen fabric, that has been created from specially engineered fibers and yarns using cutting-edge technological expertise, state-of-the-art R&D, and the robust testing systems of Reliance Industries. These smart fabrics have been designed to enhance comfort and aesthetics and it is being increasingly sought-after fabric by renowned domestic and global brands, retailers, and apparel manufacturers. The technologies that power R|Elan™ fabric imparts several attributes such as moisture management, odor-free, and thermal insulation while ensuring that they contribute something back to Mother Earth.

**About United Nations in India:**

The United Nations system in India includes 26 organisations that have the privilege to serve in India. The Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General to the Government leads the UN Country Team to advocate the mandate of the United Nations, while drawing on the support and guidance of the entire UN family. For more information, please visit: [india.un.org](http://india.un.org)

**About Lakmé:**

Lakmé, is India's no.1 colour cosmetics and leading premium skincare brand from Hindustan Unilever Ltd. Lakmé has been the pioneer of the make-up and colour cosmetics in India since 1952 by launching numerous trends leading and high-performance products. Combining international cosmetic technology with an in-depth understanding of the Indian woman's needs, Lakmé offers women a comprehensive beauty experience through its extensive product portfolio. For Further Information log on to [www.Lakméindia.com](http://www.Lakméindia.com)

**About Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI):**

A non-profit organisation, the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), is the apex body of fashion design in India, represented by over 400 members. Founded on the premise of promoting, nurturing, and representing the best of fashion and design talent in the country; its prime objective is to propagate the business of fashion. FDCI stays true to its commitment to promote the 'Make in India' label as handlooms take centre stage, in a country, who's heritage is soaked in the flavours of indigenous crafts. For more information, please visit: [www.fdc.org](http://www.fdc.org)