

Between the Apollonian and the Dionysian: The ACM x Maison Valentino Industry Project

ROME, 20 May 2026 – **Accademia Costume & Moda** presents the Industry Project developed in collaboration with **Maison Valentino** for the **Master in Alta Moda, Fashion Design**.

The **18 students** involved in the project had the opportunity to engage directly with **Alessandro Michele**, *Creative Director of Valentino* and ACM alumnus, together with **Yvan Mispelaere**, *Design Director Haute Couture Valentino*, who personally followed every stage of the journey — from the launch of the brief to the mid-review and final presentation of the collections — accompanying the students through moments of dialogue, critique and in-depth creative exchange.

The project was coordinated by **Santo Costanzo**, Head of Fashion Department at Accademia Costume & Moda and Coordinator of the Master's Programme.

At the core of the brief was the relationship between the **Apollonian and the Dionysian**: two opposing yet complementary principles that run through the history of art and aesthetic thought, here translated into a reflection on contemporary Couture. On one side, measure, structure and the discipline of form; on the other, instinct, metamorphosis and expressive freedom.

Starting from this creative tension, students explored the identity codes of the Roman Couture Maison — artisanal techniques, embellishment and sartorial construction — developing collections capable of combining personal research, design awareness and a contemporary vision.

Throughout the project, students experienced every stage of the creative and sartorial development of a Couture collection, engaging in research, experimentation and garment construction. Through the study of volumes, proportions and silhouette, each proposal took shape through intensive atelier work involving moulage, embroidery, material manipulation and artisanal craftsmanship developed over months of design practice. Hours of hand construction, fittings, transformations and technical research enabled students to engage directly with the complexity and language of contemporary Alta Moda.

The uniqueness of the project lies precisely in the nature of the collaboration with Valentino: not a symbolic or occasional presence, but a genuine and generous dialogue with the Maison's Creative Director. For the 18 students, it represented a rare opportunity to experience the creative process of Couture in its most authentic dimension — one shaped by research, construction and transformation.

Accademia Costume & Moda would like to thank Alessandro Michele, Yvan Mispelaere and the entire Valentino team for making possible an experience of extraordinary value for its community. The opportunity to share months of research, dialogue and creative development in close contact with the Maison transformed this journey into something deeply formative, human and creative, leaving students with an experience destined to stay with them over time.

About Accademia Costume & Moda

Accademia Costume & Moda (ACM) was founded in Rome in 1964 by Rosana Pistolese — costume and fashion historian, costume designer, writer and journalist — under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Security, ENALC, the Municipality of Rome and the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana (CNMI). The Academy is a private institution belonging to the AFAM system (Higher Education in Art, Music and Dance) and offers First Level (DAPL) and Second Level (DASL) Academic Diploma programmes accredited by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR), in collaboration with more than 150 companies operating across the fashion and entertainment industries.

ACM is considered among the world's leading fashion schools (BoF, Fashionista) and currently counts around 500 students across its Rome and Milan campuses. Thanks to the work of its Careers & Placement Office, employment rates consistently exceed 85% across all programmes, reaching up to 100% in selected Master's courses.

The "Fiamma Lanzara" Library and Historical Archive of Accademia Costume & Moda represent the largest fashion cultural documentation centre in the Lazio region, housing over 6,000 monographic volumes and more than 14,000 magazine issues spanning over 200 years of fashion journalism. Open to the public, the archive provides research services for students and scholars working across costume, fashion, art, performing arts, communication and marketing.