

These 10 game-changing innovations are set to reform the sports and outdoor industry

The Woolmark Company and Salomon have announced the winners and 10 innovative finalists' concepts for the Woolmark Performance Challenge 2022 – the world-leading innovation and ideas incubation program for the sports and performance market.

Delivering bold, game-changing innovations that seek to reinvent head-to-toe running uniforms, including sweat-activated cooling technologies to auxetic mycelium fabrics, bacterial bio batteries, thermo- chromic fabric structures and more, this year's Woolmark Performance Challenge finalists carve new markets for Merino wool.

Internship winner **Keradapt Merino**

Michael Orlow has been awarded a three-month paid internship with Salomon. The University of Oregon student developed a 3D-printed waterproofing concept which most impressively met the design brief. Michael's Keradapt Merino presents a waterproof Merino wool fabric created using 3D printing technology which uses the keratin recovered from the processing stage. Built off body scans, the seamless whole-garment print will be mapped for environmental and physical stress.

"Michael was able to respond to the brief by transferring technologies from biomedical research, which was an expectation of the Salomon creative teams. The proposal to mix wool with other natural fibres with new assembly processes opens a virgin field for sustainable innovation," says Salomon R&D Footwear Manager Florian Traullé.

Research Bursary winner **Rapid Decomposing Merino**

Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti student Giulia Ciola was awarded €10,000 in prize-money for her idea which shows the greatest potential for commercial development. Guila designed a trail-running set that maintains and nurtures earth's balance of natural resources. In a circular movement from soil to soil, the materials take shape into garments and compost once they run their course. Using an innovative blend of Merino wool and milk fibre, seacell, crabbyon and nettle, Guila's innovative concept is for the trail runner of tomorrow, poised to wear performance-driven clothing with benefits to both the human body and natural environment.

"Giulia's Rapid Decomposing Wool responds to a growing need and interest in sustainable solutions for the performance wear market, with a focus on enhancing biodiversity," says The Woolmark Company General Manager for Education and Innovation, Julie Davies. "Highlighting the eco-credentials, innate circularity and regenerative properties of the wool fibre, her focus on the full lifecycle of a product is very in touch with the future of performance wear."

Adaptable Innovation Award winner **Adapting to Athletes**

A special award was presented to University of Cincinnati student Chloe Jerolaman, whose design concept caught the eye of Salomon and shows strong potential for commercial adoption. Chloe will receive a three-month paid internship at Salomon for her Adapting to Athletes concept, creating a trail-running kit championing inclusivity and specially designed for athletes with disabilities. Accessibility remains a problem for the fashion and outdoor industries, but Chloe's technical and adaptive running kit aims to break down these barriers.

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“Chloe surprised us by exploring a theme outside of the initial brief, but it resonates with the inclusivity projects being explored at Salomon R&D. We want to develop this talent and nourish reflection by exploring the concept proposed by Chloe,” says Salomon R&D Footwear Manager Florian Traullé.

The program

This year’s theme was long-distance trail running in the mountains, with students asked to invent the next generation of head-to-toe running kits for long-distance mountain runners, focussing on the use of durable bio fibres and the innovative nature of Merino wool.

More than 191 universities from 25 countries participated in this year’s program and the 10 most promising ideas were selected as finalists, before judges selected three winners.

“The Woolmark Performance Challenge has quickly cemented its rightful place as the world’s leading ideas platform for the sports and performance market, harnessing innovative design and the technical nature of Merino wool to deliver innovative solutions to enhance the performance-wear market,” says The Woolmark Company Managing Director John Roberts. “The ten concepts selected as finalists showcase revolutionary, design-led thinking which can carve new opportunities for the sports and outdoor industry, and we encourage their adoption to explore their commercial viability.”

Each of the ten finalists presented ground-breaking, revolutionary solutions for the sports and performance market, all harnessing the unique natural properties of Australian Merino wool and carving new markets for the fibre.

The Woolmark Performance Challenge is an open-source problem-solving platform, with finalists receiving mentoring from industry heavyweights as part of the Woolmark Performance Challenge Innovation Accelerator Program, designed to accelerate their concepts and elevate their design thinking.

“The ambition of all the young talents participating in the Woolmark Performance Challenge has reinforced Salomon’s teams’ conviction of the emergency to find sustainable solutions for the world global textile production,” explains Salomon R&D Footwear manager Florian Traullé.

Explore all 10 forward-thinking concepts here: (<https://www.woolmarkchallenge.com/latest-news/2022innovations/>) Brands who are interested in developing these forward-thinking ideas or partnering with the Woolmark Performance Challenge are encouraged to email WPC@wool.com

All assets can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/29xk0qy1d0q3u5a/AADwXlaCxzwHd4auU1iKMczAa?dl=0> (imagery from the announcement event being uploaded in the next 48 hours)

Youtube video featuring the finalists’ ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77GEydVd9V0>

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The Woolmark Company is the global authority on wool. Through our extensive network of relationships spanning the international textile and fashion industries, we highlight Australian wool's position as the ultimate natural fibre and premier ingredient in luxury apparel.

The Woolmark logo is one of the world's most recognised and respected brands, providing assurance of the highest quality, and representing pioneering excellence and innovation from farm through to finished product.

The Woolmark Company is a subsidiary of Australian Wool Innovation, a not-for-profit enterprise that conducts research, development and marketing along the worldwide supply chain for Australian wool on behalf of about 60,000 woolgrowers that help fund the company.

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