

Wearing Heritage with Pride: Isabelle Müller’s Tribute to the Vietnamese Áo Dài

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As Áo Dài Fashion Week London 2026 brings Vietnamese fashion and cultural heritage to an international audience, the event is also creating connections beyond the runway. Among its supporters is the LOAN Foundation, whose founder and president, writer Isabelle Müller, sees culture as a powerful way to bring people from different backgrounds closer together.

“In a world where cultures increasingly come into contact with one another, fashion can be far more than an expression of beauty, craftsmanship and creativity,” Müller says. For her, fashion can become “a language of connection”, opening conversations, preserving cultural heritage and helping people discover shared values.



A runway moment at Áo Dài Fashion Week London 2026, where Vietnamese heritage takes centre stage.

Through its project *International basic convictions and understanding between nations*, the LOAN Foundation is supporting Áo Dài Fashion Week London 2026 as a platform where Vietnamese heritage, creativity, community and cultural exchange can meet on an international stage.

The partnership also carries a deeply personal meaning for Müller. At the event, she will wear the traditional Vietnamese Áo Dài, an act she sees as extending well beyond fashion.

“For me, wearing this garment is far more than a fashion choice,” she says. “It is a gesture of connection with Vietnam, its history, its craftsmanship and the people who continue to preserve and develop this cultural heritage.”



Isabelle Müller joins the Áo Dài parade in London, celebrating Vietnamese culture alongside fellow participants.



That emphasis on connection reflects the philosophy behind the LOAN Foundation itself. Its work spans educational, cultural and community-based initiatives, particularly those connected with Vietnam, with a focus on creating opportunities and strengthening human connections.

“The LOAN Foundation was founded on a simple but powerful conviction: hope grows wherever people are willing to give, share and create opportunities for one another,” Müller explains. She describes the Foundation’s work through the image of sowing seeds, where a contribution made today may become an opportunity tomorrow, and a cultural encounter can develop into friendship or a new path.



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Within this context, Áo Dài becomes a fitting symbol of the Foundation’s commitment to cultural visibility. One of Vietnam’s most recognisable cultural expressions, the garment carries stories of history, craftsmanship and identity, while contemporary designers continue to reinterpret it through new materials and artistic perspectives.

Presented in London, Müller believes Áo Dài can reach beyond the setting of a fashion show and invite international audiences to engage more closely with Vietnam. She hopes Áo Dài Fashion Week London can grow into a lasting platform where Vietnamese tradition remains visible while continuing to evolve.



Isabelle Müller at Áo Dài Fashion Week London 2026, where Vietnamese fashion and cultural exchange come together.

For Müller, the partnership ultimately comes back to the values shared by the LOAN Foundation and the event: creativity, cultural heritage, empathy and meaningful connection.



Isabelle Müller shares a moment with a fellow guest at Áo Dài Fashion Week London, dressed in a vibrant Áo Dài look.

“A fashion event can spark a conversation; a traditional garment can carry stories across borders,” she says, capturing the idea at the heart of the collaboration: that beauty can also become the beginning of understanding.