

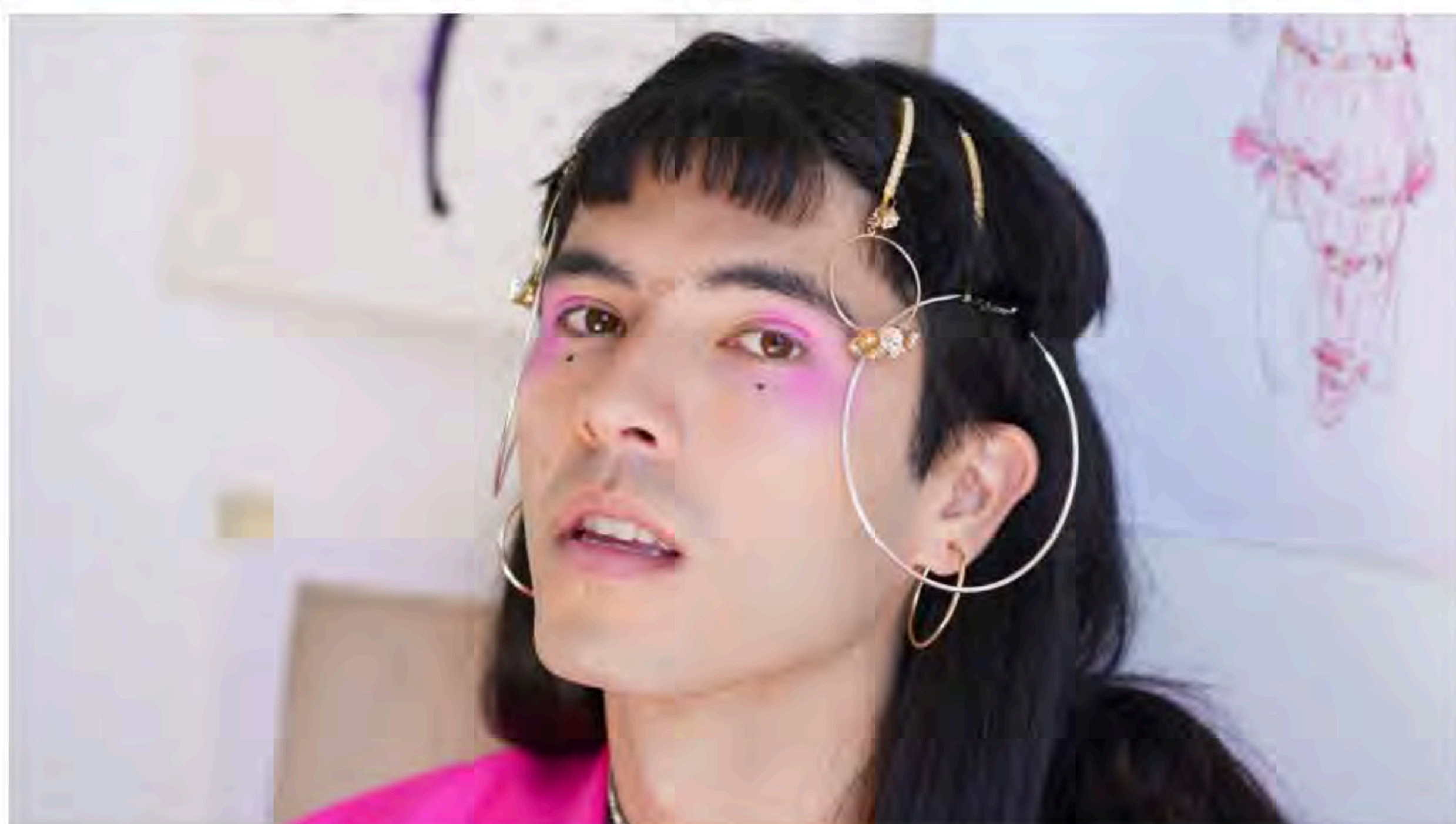
FASHION / FASHION SCOOPS

Brandon Wen Is Antwerp Academy's New Creative Director

The L.A. native will take over from Walter Van Beirendonck in September.

By **RHONDA RICHFORD**

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Brandon Wen AKHIL BABU / COURTESY ROYAL ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS ANTWERP

The **Antwerp** Royal Academy of Fine Arts has a new creative director of its fashion department.

Performance artist and designer Brandon Wen will take over the top post from Walter Van Beirendonck, who has been at the helm since 2007.

The academy touted the appointment of Wen, who is American, as “international, interdisciplinary and innovative.”

“I am audacious as hell as a person and an artist as I intend to be as a teacher and creative director,” Wen said. “I will focus on the traditions of creativity and artistry that made me fall in love with this academy. At the intersection of fantasy and reality, we will create another generation of designers and artists focused on authenticity, creativity and fun, that have the tools and chutzpah to make a space for themselves in the world, setting that example myself. We will grow together and redefine our sense of wonder and beauty in fashion.”

The Los Angeles-born and -bred Wen previously worked in Paris at **Chanel**-owned Maison Lemarié; for Michèle Lamy and **Rick Owens**, and the MoMu Fashion Museum in **Antwerp**. He is a graduate of the Antwerp Royal Academy with an MFA in fashion, and an undergraduate degree from Cornell University in the U.S.

He was awarded the Challenge the Fabric sustainability award at London Fashion Week, where he was recognized as a talent intent on changing the fashion industry from the inside out. In addition, he was an organizer and teacher at the international Arts of Fashion Foundation.

“Together with his team of teachers and with the colleagues of the academy, Wen will further put the fashion department on the international map of fashion and strengthen it for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century,” said academy head Johan Pas, who served as chair of the selection committee. “[He] convinced us with his generous creativity, strong drive, fresh ideas and his great connecting power.”

The Royal Academy is known for nurturing young talent. Graduates of the school include Balenciaga's Demna, Diesel and Y/Project's Glenn Martens, **Martin Margiela**, Peter Pilotto, Haider Ackermann, Kris Van Assche, Jan-Jan Van Essche and the famed Antwerp Six of **Ann Demeulemeester**, Dries Van Noten, Dirk Van Saene, Dirk Bikkembergs, Marina Yee and Van Beirendonck, who continues to show his menswear brand in Paris, with the next show scheduled for June 22.

Wen will start his tenure as the creative director of the fashion department this September.

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