SECOND LAURENCE TRÂN ARCTIC FUTURES AWARD WON BY SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING FIRM FOUNDED BY SAAMI SISTERS



© © Gobmi

The International Polar Foundation and the Trân Family are proud to announce the second winner of the annual Laurence Trân Arctic Futures Award.

The second edition of the annual award that gives 7,500 Euros of financial assistance to a fledgling startup or young entrepreneur based in the Arctic* is being given to Gobmi, a clothing brand founded in 2022 in Áltá, Norway, by sisters Hanna Moen Reinsnes and Live Moen Johannessen. The two sisters, who only a few years ago re-discovered their Saami heritage, set out to create sustainably-produced modern urban wear that incorporates elements of their Saami culture.

“We are deeply honoured and humbled to receive this prestigious award,” stated Hanna Moen Reinsnes, CEO and co-founder of Gobmi. “It acknowledges our dedication to marrying Saami traditions with modern style, and empowers us to further our journey in sustainable and culturally rich fashion.”

Gobmi was selected as the winner out of 18 candidates who applied from Alaska, northern Canada, Greenland, northern Norway, northern Sweden, and northern Finland by a committee of experts with years of experience working with startups in the North American and European Arctic.

“Gobmi is an example of the kind of startup unique to the Arctic that can be created by the innovative young people living in the region,” said Alain Hubert, Founder and President of the International Polar Foundation, life-long entrepreneur, and the initiator of the zero-emission Princess Elisabeth Antarctica research station. “It’s possible to achieve your dreams with hard work and determination.”

The startup stood out above the rest for many reasons.

“While there were several highly qualified candidates, Gobmi stood out because their business draws on their traditional Saami heritage to create a sustainably produced modern line of clothing,” commented Mads Frederiksen, Director of the Arctic Economic Council and member of the selection committee. “It’s promising to see that young, female, indigenous entrepreneurs are creating their own startups.”

An initiative of the International Polar Foundation and financed by the Trân family, the Laurence Trân Arctic Futures Award was established in 2022 to help a fledgling startup or young entrepreneur based in the Arctic* further establish their business.

The award was again presented during the annual Arctic Futures Symposium, an international conference organised by the International Polar Foundation and its many Arctic stakeholder partners that brings together in Brussels Arctic stakeholders from across the Arctic to discuss topics of importance to them.

Among the 18 applicants, the selection committee also chose to recognise three startups with honourable mentions. These companies include

- Air Vitalize from Alaska, which invented a low-power filterless industrial electrostatic precipitation (ESP) device to create outdoor "clean air pockets" in polluted Fairbanks, Alaska.
- Styga / Arctic Factory from Rovaniemi, Finland, which produces sustainably-produced mobile housing units, which can address the housing shortage in several parts of the Arctic
- Super Hipsters Oy from Oulu, Finland, which produces locally-sourced fermented food that maintains a long tradition of fermenting food in Arctic cultures to preserve it for long periods of time.

The award was presented by IPF Managing Director Nicolas Van Hoecke, Brigitte Trân-Loustau from the Trân family, and Director of the Arctic Economic Council Mads Frederiksen.

Sisters Hanna Moen Reinsnes and Live Moen Johannessen won the award during a ceremony during this year’s Arctic Futures Symposium, which took place on November 28th and 29th at Town Hall Europe in Brussels’ EU Quarter. Anja Márjá Nystø Keskitalo, who is an Advisor in the EU Unit of the Saami Council and from the same region as the winners, accepted the award on behalf of the founders of Gobmi, who were not able to attend the ceremony in person.

"Thank you for supporting Saami businesses," Ms. Keskitalo said as she accepted the award on behalf of the winners.

This year's Arctic Futures Symposium focused on topics such as Arctic cooperation in the current geopolitical climate, security, creating healthy Arctic communities, youth initiatives, critical raw materials, the Green Transition, and energy solutions and attracted nearly 200 people.

“Receiving this award reinforces our commitment to Gobmi's vision,” commented Live Moen Johannessen, Creative Director at Gobmi. “We are excited and inspired to continue blending our cultural roots with modern design, creating pieces that are meaningful and environmentally conscious.”

The Trân family is happy that their daughter's legacy will live on in an award that focuses on helping young entrepreneurs bring their innovative ideas to fruition.

“We congratulate the winners of this year’s Laurence Trân Arctic Futures Award for their hard work in developing Gobmi,” Brigitte Trân-Loustau stated. “We wish them lots of luck further developing their business!”

For more information about Gobmi, please consult their website.