

# ITALIANA

L'ITALIA VISTA DALLA MODA  
1971 — 2001

a project conceived and curated by  
Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi

MILANO  
PALAZZO REALE

22.02 — 06.05  
2018



ITALIANA  
L'Italia vista dalla moda  
1971-2001

## **ITALIANA** **Narrating Italian History through Fashion 1971-2001**

**a project conceived and curated by Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi  
and promoted by Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana**

Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana is pleased to present *Italiana. Narrating Italian History through Fashion 1971-2001*, a project composed of an exhibition and a book both in celebration of Italian fashion. The former will take place at Milan's Palazzo Reale, a destination bringing together the worlds of art and culture.

ITALIANA is a project that looks to celebrate the country's fashion by retracing that crucial period – the years from 1971 to 2001 in which the national fashion system's ascent was fueled by the overseas success of Made in Italy and its unmistakable lifestyle. This time frame marked a pivotal, captivating period characterized by fruitful collaborations and exchanges among the members of an Italian generation including artists, architects, designers and intellectuals who shaped the cultural evolution.

Composed of rooms featuring different themes, ITALIANA focuses on both the main characters and the supporting cast who emerged together as the protagonists in different stages across the Italian fashion system's development. These moments include the early period defined by the establishment of high-end industrial production (1971 marked the transition from haute couture to the rise of Italian ready-to-wear. Not coincidentally, that same year Walter Albini organized a show in Milan to present its namesake line); the success of designers in the Eighties; the glocalization of the Nineties, and then 2001. The year was marked by the September 11 attacks, which shook up the whole international system and thus affected the Italian fashion business. The industry was forced to change and turn into a new global phenomenon – still to be understood in all its creative and productive forms.

The word Italiana is an adjective, but in this case, it is to be considered a noun that collects all the items, styles and atmospheres belonging to Italian culture in its multiple facets and expressions. Fashion, in this project, is the chosen point of view. This project comes into being as a strategic effort to develop a dictionary of mythology by narrating all the events involving designers, companies, cities and districts as their protagonists – producing treasure that is unparalleled elsewhere in the world and that continues to exercise its influence over the current Italian scenario.

Rather than following chronological order, the exhibit will unfold at Palazzo Reale over the course of several chapters dedicated to distinct themes – using a critical method that combines events from different decades.

A selection of iconic objects from varying fields, including fashion, art, design, photography and publishing, highlights specific turning points in time.

The book, scheduled for release in conjunction with the exhibition opening, completes the project. Conceived as a special tool, the volume will explain the development of Italian fashion as a polycentric phenomenon boosted by different skills and cultural approaches. Photographs taken by photographers for both magazines and designers document Italian fashion's successful evolution. New texts provide information and insight on the lesser known topics. The book juxtaposes these contents with a selection of previously published pieces written by Italian authors during the decades analyzed throughout the project.

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Massimo De Carlo's gallery, one of the most emblematic international locations for contemporary art, will host the presentation of ITALIANA.

## **ITALIANA**

### **Narrating the Italian History through Fashion 1971-2001**

Milan, Palazzo Reale

Inauguration: Feb. 21, 2018 during Milan Fashion Week

Open to the public from Feb. 22 to May 6, 2018

**Maria Luisa Frisa**, critic and curator, is ordinary professor at Venice's Luav University, where she oversees the Fashion Design and Multimedia Arts Bachelor program. Her latest book is titled "The shapes of fashion" (Il Mulino, 2015)

**Stefano Tonchi** has been the editor-in-chief of W Magazine since 2010. Previously, he was editor-in-chief of T: The New York Times Style Magazine, creative director of Esquire and Self Magazine, as well as fashion editor at L'Uomo Vogue.

Together, Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi curated several exhibitions, including *Uniform. Order and Disorder* (2001); *Excess. Fashion and Underground in the Eighties* (2004); *Human Game. Winners and Defeated* (2006); *Bellissima. Italian Haute Couture 1945-1968* (2014-2016)

Associated curator

**Gabriele Monti**

Exhibition design

**Annabelle Selldorf**

with **Matteo Mocchi**

Graphic project

**bruno** – Andrea Codolo

and Giovanni Covacich

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*Italiana. L'Italia vista dalla moda 1971-2001* (Italian. Italy as seen through fashion, 1971-2001), an exhibition and publishing project conceived and curated by Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi and promoted by Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana.

ITALIANA is part of a wider programme being developed by CNMI to reassert the unique identity of Italian fashion by opening up at the same time to a wider public. The choice of the magnificent Palazzo Reale is in this sense structural as well as strategic. The idea is in fact to create an osmotic dialogue between the fashion system and the city, at the same time igniting a lively cultural debate around one of the pillars of Italian economy.

ITALIANA is a system-level initiative that is both historical and political. Underpinning the project is the curators' plan to construct a mythology of Italian fashion based on history, products and protagonists. Italian designers, manufacturers, cities and districts constitute a unique heritage that brings together this industry's past and present. By reconstructing the founding moments and the key developments, the project aims at to re-establish the importance and peculiarity of Italian fashion in the international fashion system, tracing a way forward towards future.

A project by



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Italy is almost entirely defined by its visual culture. We have the heritage, the manufacturing base, and the DNA to build fashion houses with staying power and global reach. Our unfaltering self-confidence has enabled us to forge our own path, rather than follow the lead of New York, London or Paris.

Italians refuse to take their cues from elsewhere, some may say this has held us back, but I believe it's this strong belief in our country's aesthetics that has led us to become the arbiters of international elegance and home to many of the world's most recognisable star designers and houses.

When I returned to Milan after completing my MBA at Columbia in New York back in 1999, I was an outsider. I had very few contacts within the industry, yet designers from Giorgio Armani to Valentino opened their doors and got on board. The e-commerce concept was in its infancy but these businesses had a vision, they knew the future was global and they jumped on it – busting the mistaken belief that the industry is closed or that Italians remain in the past. The period that we're examining throughout this thought-provoking exhibition - 1971 - 2001 - was indeed a seminal period for Italian fashion and the *Made in Italy* movement, and incidentally also marks the creation of both YOOX and NET-A-PORTER in 2000 – another and most recent game changer within the luxury industry.

Sure, we may look to the past for our futuristic vision, who wouldn't when we have such a glorious one to mine? Yet, our glances are far from nostalgic. We are working harder than ever to promote emerging talent and build an even stronger ecosystem for the talents that call Italy home.

Federico Marchetti,  
CEO, YOOX NET-A-PORTER GROUP

Main sponsor

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## **Pomellato sponsors *Italiana: L'Italia vista dalla moda 1971-2001*, an art exhibition celebrating italian fashion**

Asserting its creative Milanese style, Pomellato is proud to sponsor *Italiana: L'Italia vista dalla moda 1971-2001*, an exhibition celebrating the colorful, peerless origins of modern Italian fashion. Conceived and curated by Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi, the exhibition extols three decades of prêt-à-porter Italian fashion, a world in which Pomellato jewels were a major player.

During this exciting time in history, ready-to-wear took the reins of supremacy from haute couture. Meanwhile, Milan began to turn into Italy's fashion capital; today the city is one of the driving epicenters of the international fashion system. Thanks to this era of design, Milan became a city of fruitful cultural debate, of endless cross pollination, and of ultimate innovation – constantly striving for the new while remaining ahead of the times. Pomellato was born in Milan in 1967 on the cusp of this cultural shift; the formative years of Italian fashion that followed helped to shape Pomellato's singular character.

Pomellato plays an integral part of the history narrated in ITALIANA, as it details the Maison's unique and unconventional point-of-view. Pino Rabolini founded Pomellato exactly fifty years ago, with his more spontaneous, far-less traditional jewelry designs. His original vision was to create a modern approach to jewelry, akin to the task Walter Albini, Mariuccia Mandelli and their peers undertook with the Italian fashion revolution. Pomellato was a major part of the new movement, as the Maison sought to create contemporary and fashion-forward designs while still using the finest materials and time-honored craftsmanship techniques. This Milanese design renaissance appealed to the modern woman of the time. As social changes were bringing women to the forefront in life and work, these 'liberated' women felt they needed new clothing and new jewels to express their newfound roles: it was in Milan they found the designers who provided it.

Celebrating the foresight, intuition and innovation of Italian fashion over the last several decades, Pomellato is proud to sponsor the ITALIANA exhibition, as it is deeply intertwined with its own rich history. Through this artistic event, Pomellato dives into the historical milieu in which its creativity flourished, and in which its revolutionary spirit was born. Meanwhile, it strongly affirms the driving values of the artisanal jewelry Maison today.

By no coincidence, this artistic project coincides with Pomellato's 50th birthday, a time to look back, but also ahead. By sponsoring ITALIANA, Pomellato expresses what it stands for today and always – without a hint of nostalgia. Who Pomellato affirms who Pomellato is: a Milanese jeweler with a vision.

Project  
in collaboration with

*Pomellato*

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La Rosa is close to the Italian fashion and the excellence of Made in Italy since 1922. Leader in the manufacture of mannequins, appreciated for aesthetic research, for being close to fashion and creativity world, it is a reference point for luxury maisons, fast fashion giants, curators and international museums who choose La Rosa also thanks to the exclusive mannequins archive from 1922 to today.

Its ability to develop tailor-made products, coupled with a production fully made in Italy that guarantees a design capability and a qualitative level that is hardly comparable, has shaped La Rosa a major role in the birth of prêt-à-porter and in the affirmation of Italian and world fashion. Gigi Rigamonti, current President of La Rosa, has sculpted the mannequins that have identified the iconic style of Gianni Versace, Giorgio Armani and Valentino in the windows of their first brand-stores paving the way for the company's international success.

La Rosa is an example of the typical family-run business of Made in Italy: Gigi Rigamonti has been at the helm of the company since 1970, and from 1995 he has been flanked by his son Mattia, managing director, who introduced innovations to the production process and an integrated approach to environmental sustainability, another strong point of La Rosa.

"La Rosa is honored to be among the sponsors of ITALIANA and to support Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi in this new major exhibition", says Mattia Rigamonti, La Rosa CEO. "Being part of ITALIANA means to emphasize the role La Rosa has had in the birth of made in Italy and the diffusion of Italian style in the world. It is also an occasion to confirm the esteem in the deep work of cultural enhancement of Italian fashion that Frisa and Tonchi are carrying on."

Milan, June 26, 2017

Mannequins

La ROSA  
mannequins since 1922

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