

Institutional Greetings

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Good morning. Thank you for inviting me to this important meeting about an event that left a truly indelible mark on the history of Italian fashion and the City of Florence. But I believe that as well as standing as an opportunity to remember a memorable event, this celebration — in times which continue to be so difficult for all of us — can be considered as a true symbol of recovery and rebirth.

Although I am not a fashion expert, I know that the parade organised by Maestro Giorgini in Florence on 12 February 1951 signalled the entry of a different style, a fresh and brightly-coloured style far from the French Haute Couture one that ruled the fashion world at that time. Today, therefore, we are not celebrating just a great personality. We are also celebrating the brilliance of a city and two areas of its economy: artisan manufacturing and fashion, which since then have united knowhow, fine craftsmanship, style, elegance and creativity in a balanced mix — all themes that believe will never stop despite the pandemic. They create what will become Made in Italy.

All these qualities were magnificently represented by Fabiani, Simonetta, Germana Marucelli, and above all by Emilio Pucci, a great innovator. He was one of the first to accept Giorgini's challenge and to show in 1951. His EMILIO line of fresh, modern clothing and sportswear immediately won over the American buyers interested in the 'boutique' proposal that updated his business model with a combination of wearability and artistic crafts flair.

This is one of the reasons why our Foundation has decided to promise, together with Intesa Sanpaolo, the "Rinascimento Firenze project". Two of the project's five facilities are expressly dedicated to these two, closely connected, economic areas. And for the same reason, we have been collaborating with the Archivio Giorgini since 2011, when, on occasion of the 60th anniversary of the birth of Italian haute couture in Florence, our Osservatorio dei Mestieri d'Arte published Letizia Pagliai's *Giovanni Battista Giorgini. Artigianato e moda fra Italia e Stati Uniti*, in which the author paints this illuminated ambassador of 'Made in Italy' as a forerunner of the international buyer of that Italian excellence is the result of the talent and hard work of so many masters of the 'handmade', which had become reference point for Florentine export to the United States.

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Since that time, the Archivio Giorgini has never ceased to interact with Fondazione CR Firenze and, in 2019, together with OMA and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, commenced preliminary cataloguing of unpublished materials and inaugurated a far-reaching and precious research effort with the collaboration of the University of Bologna. The research was explored and valorised at the meeting “*Artigianato e Moda a Firenze nelle carte inedite di G. B. Giorgini*” meeting held at our Foundation’s headquarter that same year. It was attended by many prestigious speakers including Dr. Sonnet Stanfill, Senior Curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum and an authoritative scholar of Made in Italy — and I am pleased to announce that today she is again with us.

Our institution is firmly intentioned to continue its collaboration with Fondazione Giorgini. We sincerely hope that this year’s dual anniversary — the 70th of the historic first fashion show and the 50th of the Maestro’s death — will act as a stimulus to look to the future with enthusiasm and optimism. With the same enthusiasm and desire for ongoing renewal that fashion has always transmitted so efficaciously. Qualities that are absolutely necessary today — in all areas of our economy — if we all pursue the goal of restarting and reshaping our country.

Thanks to all of you.