

A FASHION EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM: POLIMODA OPENS NEW MANIFATTURA CAMPUS

Florence, 15 October 2024. For the 2024/2025 Academic Year, Polimoda **unveils its new Manifattura Campus** at Florence's Manifattura Tabacchi. This milestone marks a significant leap forward in the Florentine institute's fashion education mission, which began in 1986. This initiative gives way to a genuine creative ecosystem, positioning fashion at the center of a simultaneous dialogue with various disciplines, fostering interactions that mirror the contemporary evolution of the fashion system.

The project is presented today by **Ferruccio Ferragamo**, President of Polimoda, and **Massimiliano Giornetti**, Director of Polimoda, in the presence of the Mayor of Florence, **Sara Funaro**, and with a special message from **Anna Maria Bernini**, Minister of University and Research, and Senator **Alessandra Gallone**, joining remotely from Rome. The collaboration between the school and industry is further highlighted by contributions from: **James Ferragamo**, Chief Transformation & Sustainability Officer and Board of Directors at Ferragamo Group; **Francesca Ragazzi**, Head of Editorial Content at Vogue Italia; and **Matteo Ward**, CEO and co-founder of WRÅD.

A CREATIVE FASHION CAMPUS

"Since its foundation in 1986, Polimoda has established itself as a center of excellence in fashion education. The inauguration of this expanded and renovated campus represents a fundamental step toward the future. With over 15,000 square meters, including more than 10,000 dedicated to workshops, Polimoda is the only fashion school in Italy, and among the top in Europe, to have these state-of-the-art facilities," explains President **Ferruccio Ferragamo**.

The Manifattura Campus redefines the standards of fashion education: modern and multifunctional spaces host classrooms and technologically advanced workshops designed to faithfully reflect the industry's environment and equipment. **Spanning over 10,000 square meters**, the campus includes numerous labs for **apparel design** and manufacturing, a new wing dedicated to **footwear, accessories**, and leatherworking, an entire floor devoted to **knitwear** and **textile research**, as well as **six photography studios** of various sizes. Drawing spaces, theoretical classrooms, and computer labs with cutting-edge design and publishing software complete the facility. Two **shops** providing tailoring and leatherworking supplies, along with an **archive of fabrics and leathers**, ensure constantly updated resources.

In one location, students can explore every aspect of fashion: design, accessories, pattern making, prototyping, fashion styling, art direction, fashion photography, communication, and more. This integrated vision not only fosters comprehensive education but also encourages active **collaboration between different disciplines and courses of study**, simulating real-world industry dynamics.

At the heart of the campus lies a **multifunctional auditorium**, designed to host traditional classes as well as events such as conferences, talks, and cultural events open to the city.

With this new campus, Polimoda confirms itself as the **leading fashion education institution in Italy, and among the leaders globally**, offering a bold, integrated vision that attracts talent from around the world to Florence. In a multicultural and cosmopolitan environment, fundamental values such as **diversity, inclusivity**, and sustainability are fully integrated into the concept of renewal that guides the institute.

Polimoda Press Office

Polimoda Media Relations Coordinator
Tessa Pisani, press@polimoda.com

Reference Studios
Valentina Giarisi: valentina@referencestudios.com

TWO CAMPUSES, ONE SCHOOL

With the new opening, Polimoda exceeds **15,000 square meters** of fashion education spaces, capable of accommodating over 2,000 students. The two campuses at Manifattura Tabacchi and Villa Favard, located a short distance from each other, form a single base for fashion education.

The **Villa Campus**, situated in the historic Villa Favard complex, remains Polimoda's headquarters and nerve center. Here, **courses dedicated to fashion business** — from marketing to communication, merchandising to retail, and product management to sustainable fashion — are held. Beyond offering a stimulating learning environment, the Villa Campus remains the **administrative heart** of the institute, hosting essential services such as student orientation, academic administration, corporate relations, and career development.

Villa Favard is also a **vibrant cultural hub for Florence**, where fashion intersects with other disciplines. It regularly hosts events and meetings with international figures, enriching not only the students' educational journey but also the city's cultural landscape.

"Innovation, agility, and multidisciplinary are the foundations of fashion, which by definition is change and renewal. University is where experimentation comes to life, through projects developed in collaboration with the industry and various fashion disciplines," emphasizes Giornetti.

VAN BEIRENDONCK, PILOTTO AND OTHER NEW INITIATIVES

Polimoda's educational ecosystem focuses on a **strong synergy with the industry**, creating a bridge between the academic and professional worlds that prepares students to face real-world challenges. Ferragamo, Gucci, Tod's, Etro, Vogue Italia are just some of the partners of its educational programs, while the faculty includes renowned figures like Matteo Ward, Bruce Pask, Marco de Vincenzo, and many others, serving as student mentors.

There are many exciting innovations for the new academic year: *"For the 2024/2025 academic year, Polimoda is preparing to introduce numerous exciting developments. We welcome **Walter Van Beirendonck** as a mentor for the Master in Fashion Design, and **Peter Pilotto**, who will teach in our renowned Undergraduate in Fashion Design. We are also developing new programs, including courses in Costume Design, Fashion Filming and Photography, Men's Tailoring Techniques, Fashion Law, and Fashion Archive. These programs not only reflect our commitment to innovation but also our dedication to training future leaders in the fashion industry,"* announces Giornetti.

HISTORIC RESTYLING, URBAN REGENERATION

The renovation of the new campus is the result of careful conservation and meticulous space reorganization, representing a perfect blend of heritage and innovation. This project not only respects the historic essence of Manifattura Tabacchi but transforms it into a cutting-edge educational space.

The restyling of the historic 1924 **cigar factory**, designed by engineers **Nebbiosi** and **Nervi**, was led by **Concrete Architectural Associates** in collaboration with **Q-bic**, as part of the broader **urban regeneration project** of the **Manifattura Tabacchi** complex. This initiative goes beyond Polimoda, transforming the entire site into a new district of Florence, with the goal of returning it to the city as a cultural and creative place.

Polimoda Press Office

Polimoda's project, which includes **buildings B4 and B6**, preserves and enhances the original architecture, maintaining the industrial aesthetic and historical soul of the Manifattura. The **high ceilings** and abundant **natural light** that characterize the structure means the spaces are bright and open, making them both functional and welcoming.

RICK OWENS FOR AN/ARCHIVE

The **AN/ARCHIVE** project is a cornerstone of Polimoda's new campus, a creative hub in development, dedicated to fashion research. Located on the top floor of Building B4, this space will not be a traditional museum but rather a dynamic and interactive fashion archive. Its aim is to serve as a living, accessible space for research, as well as a venue for meetings and events, curated around iconic pieces by great designers.

To mark the opening of the new campus, Massimiliano Giornetti **announces the acquisition of the first pieces for the AN/ARCHIVE** collection: two works by **Rick Owens**, selected in collaboration with the brand's team to represent the **aesthetic evolution** of Owens' work, creating a dialogue between past and future.

The concept of **transformation** is intrinsic to the values Rick Owens seeks to express through his **complex pattern constructions**. His **distinctive style**, influenced by the Japanese school of **Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, and Rei Kawakubo**, focuses on **organic** and **sculptural** forms, combined with anatomical manipulation. This **anthropomorphic** vision of fashion blends the ancestral idea of clothing with pure **experimentation**.

From a technical perspective, the garments embody the perfect synthesis of the **ultra-architectural** approach to the **body** that Rick Owens has defined since 2002. The **neutral colors** evoke the brutalist buildings of the 1950s, characterized by the use of concrete. The **spiral** construction of the down jacket and the exaggerated tailoring of the felt cape's shoulders accentuate the designer's **post-apocalyptic** vision.

"AN/ARCHIVE" is a non-space, conceived for study and research in the field of fashion. These garments represent the first symbolic acquisition by Polimoda. The idea of non-archiving is what makes this project so contemporary and unique. These two silhouettes will be studied in the classroom, thanks to the exceptional presence of Ahmad Daher, Head of Women's Patternmaking at Owens, and Aurora Fiorentini, costume and fashion historian," states Massimiliano Giornetti.

THE FASHION LIBRARY

Looking to the future, a key component of the AN/ARCHIVE project will be the Polimoda Library, currently located at Villa Campus. This library is one of the most comprehensive fashion libraries in Europe, housing over 29,000 volumes that include monographs, photography books, specialized magazines, videos, and lookbooks. Its collection is an invaluable resource not only for students but also for researchers and professionals in the industry.

Massimiliano Giornetti explains, *"The Polimoda Library has the potential to evolve from an internal resource to an international research center for fashion, paving the way for significant academic collaborations, as already demonstrated in the recent Uzbek-Italian Educational Forum, in which Polimoda participated representing Italy in the field of fashion education."* This vision highlights not only Polimoda's ambition to become a leader in fashion education but also its commitment to fostering international relationships that enrich the academic community.

Polimoda Press Office

With the inauguration of the new **Manifattura Campus**, Polimoda reaffirms its role among the leaders in international fashion education. In a constantly evolving context like that of fashion, Polimoda is dedicated to preparing the next generations of professionals to meet global challenges, building a bridge between academic excellence and industry, between Florence and the world.

Polimoda

Polimoda represents the high training in the fashion industry in an internationally recognized center of excellence, located in the heart of one of the most important production areas of Made in Italy. Founded in 1986, over time the institute has constantly guaranteed high standards of specialization, consolidating its reputation as one of the world's leading fashion schools. Though deeply rooted in Florence, Polimoda is an international institution that has developed strong relationships with the most important businesses in the sector. Here the next generation of fashion professionals receive unique interdisciplinary training, designed to transmit the expertise and vision they need to stand out in the job's market today.

www.polimoda.com

Manifattura Tabacchi

Manifattura Tabacchi in Florence is one of Italy's most important urban regeneration projects, involving the redevelopment of the storied cigar factory made up of 16 buildings, which will be transformed into lofts, homes, offices, retail space, coffee shops and restaurants, student housing and a hotel, as well as hosting important institutions such as Polimoda for a total of 100,000 square metres. April this year saw the opening of the Factory, a creative hub and state-of-the-art workplace appealing to an international community of professionals who want to live and work in Florence, in a setting animated by a vibrant community and eco-friendly spaces, surrounded by culture, fashion, art and design. Work is planned for completion in 2026.

www.manifatturatabacchi.com

Polimoda Press Office

Polimoda Media Relations Coordinator
Tessa Pisani, press@polimoda.com

Reference Studios
Valentina Giarisi: valentina@referencestudios.com