

THE PROCESS AS MANIFESTO: FRANCESCO RISSO RETURNS TO POLIMODA WITH A LANDMARK LECTURE

Florence, December 2, 2024 - Today, Polimoda had the privilege of welcoming back one of its most esteemed alumnus, Francesco Risso, Creative Director of Marni, for an extraordinary lecture entitled “The Process as Manifesto”, in the brand new Aula Magna of the new Manifattura Campus, a school led by Massimiliano Giornetti, from 2021.

This highly anticipated event brought together an audience of over 200, both international students from all over the world studying Fashion Design, Creative Direction, Fashion Business, Fashion Art Direction, Fashion Styling, Luxury Business and industry insiders, celebrating not only the exceptional journey of one of Polimoda's most illustrious graduates, but also the transformative power of creativity and the extraordinary role that Italian design plays in the global creative community.

Francesco Risso captivated students and attendees with his distinctive vision, presenting the creative process as a cornerstone of authentic innovation. Structured into three chapters, the day offered an insightful exploration of his methodology, featuring interactive exercises, intimate dialogues, and inspiring discussions. The landmark lecture underscored that the creative process itself is not merely a means to an end but a fundamental ethos.

CHAPTER 1: THE WARM-UP

The day began with an immersive exploration of deep listening and meditative intuition. Risso guided students through a brief period of total silence, inviting them to tune into the vibrations of their surroundings, as well as their own inner states.

This was followed by a collaborative writing exercise where participants contributed to a spontaneous, collective text. Each student added a new sentence without having read the previous ones, creating a raw yet cohesive narrative. This unfiltered composition, described by Risso as a “manifesto of collaboration,” will be published as a commemorative symbol of the event.

CHAPTER 2: INSIDE THE MARNI CAVE

In a candid and introspective dialogue, Risso unveiled the creative thought and processes behind the “Marni Cave,” the epicenter of the brand’s innovation. He shared insights on the interplay between chaos and structure, intuition and discipline, providing attendees with a rare glimpse into how ideas are cultivated, expressed, and realized in his unique environment.

CHAPTER 3: OPEN DIALOGUE

Creativity thrives in conversation, and this chapter placed the students at the forefront. Through an open Q&A, they were granted the unique opportunity to personally engage with Risso on themes ranging from creative vision to the

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challenges of fostering innovation within rigid bureaucratic systems. This exchange offered attendees invaluable perspectives and emphasized the importance of questioning as a driver of discovery.

A MANIFESTO FOR THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Francesco Risso's lecture transcended traditional notions of teaching, positioning the creative process as the essence of meaningful artistry and innovation. As Risso articulated:

"This is not about answers, but about questions that break the surface. It is not the final piece but the raw material of creativity that truly matters."

Today's event not only celebrated the remarkable achievements of an alumnus who is leaving an indelible mark on the global fashion community but also reaffirmed Polimoda's role as a continued catalyst for future talent. Fashion and design institutions like Polimoda are essential to continued innovations in the creative industry. Today's encounter was only one stop on Risso's cosmic journey through academia. From The Mountain School of Art and the Royal Academy of Antwerp to the Savannah College of Art and Design and Pratt NY, each of his lectures serves as a powerful source of inspiration for the next generation of designers, who have proven themselves ready to redefine the boundaries of creativity through innovations across the industry.

Polimoda

Polimoda is an internationally renowned fashion institute based in Florence, Italy. Recognized for its forward-thinking approach and deep connections to the industry, Polimoda offers cutting-edge programs in fashion design, business, and communication. With a global network of partners, state-of-the-art facilities, and a commitment to nurturing the next generation of creative leaders, Polimoda stands as a bridge between tradition and innovation in the world of fashion education.

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Francesco Risso and Marni

Francesco Risso has held the role of Creative Director at Marni since 2016, where he has reimagined the brand's avant-garde DNA with a contemporary twist. Known for his innovative approach to fashion as a "total work of art," Risso combines conceptual storytelling with Italian craftsmanship. A Polimoda alumnus, Risso began his journey in Florence before studying at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and earning an M.A. at Central Saint Martins in London. Before joining Marni, he honed his craft at Prada and other renowned design houses. Under his direction, Marni has become a hub of creative experimentation, fostering collaborations across disciplines and celebrating the intersection of fashion and art.

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