



Embassy of Italy  
Athens



## MARIA LA CALLAS

### The Art of Italian Costume design in the film

Duration of the exhibition: 27.05.2026 – 13.09.2026

Benaki Museum of Greek Culture  
(1, Koumbari St., Athens)

Press kit:

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/27rkp10memi41b7rgz32b/AAOcxDrQ1kXTN0\\_K3VebBYQ?rlkey=npl3t89vhng8p8nq9meb53npf&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/27rkp10memi41b7rgz32b/AAOcxDrQ1kXTN0_K3VebBYQ?rlkey=npl3t89vhng8p8nq9meb53npf&dl=0)

#### PRESS RELEASE

This summer, the exhibition “**Maria La Callas: The Art of Italian Costume design in the Film**” will be presented at the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture from **Wednesday, May 27** through **September 13, 2026**.

It is an ambitious joint initiative by the **Embassy of Italy** in Athens and the **Benaki Museum**, under the patronage of Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana, which presents for the first time—as a separate project—a **selection of 18 costumes from the film *Maria* (2024)**. The exhibition is curated by the film’s costume designer, the internationally renowned and award-winning Italian costume designer **Massimo Cantini Parrini**, in collaboration with students from the

Undergraduate in Fashion Art Direction program of **Polimoda**, the Florence-based fashion school of which he is both an alumnus and a mentor.

The exhibition celebrates in Greece the “Italian Fashion Days in the World”.

### **The Film**

The film *Maria*, production year, 2024 by Chilean director Pablo Larraín, starring Angelina Jolie as Maria Callas, follows the Greek diva during her retirement in Paris after a glamorous and turbulent life, revisiting the legendary soprano in her final days as she reflects on her identity while coming to terms with the weight of her immense legacy, revealing previously unknown facets of her personality. *‘I imagined how she would have dressed in her last days of life. We knew she was ill and showing signs of depression, but she didn’t expect to die. It was an exercise in sensitivity and precision, taking care of the smallest detail’* says Massimo Cantini Parrini in an interview.

### **The Costumes**

Massimo Cantini Parrini’s approach explores the powerful and multifaceted personality of Maria Callas, focusing on snapshots of pivotal moments in her life and artistic career. Legendary opera costumes coexist with pieces redolent of the glamour of her social life. A vibrant tribute to the captivating identity of “La Divina,” one of the most refined and recognizable divas of the twentieth century, an icon of style and timeless elegance.

The creative process behind the costumes fabricated for Angelina Jolie is a tribute to meticulous historical research. Massimo Cantini Parrini and his team thoroughly studied photographs, stage performances, and recordings of Callas from the 1940s to the 1970s. One of the most exciting challenges was recreating the diva’s iconic looks in her performances, on her album covers, and in her photo shoots, such as the one for *Life* magazine.

One of the elements that distinguishes him is his obsession with historical authenticity and his vast personal collection of vintage clothing and accessories, consisting of authentic pieces dating from the 17th century to the present day. He is often called a “fashion archaeologist” because he treats costumes as historical artifacts rather than merely styling objects. Consequently, through the collection’s iconic “Made in Italy” pieces, the exhibition reflects on the sociological and cultural evolution of three critical decades of the 20th century (the ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s), highlighting Italian ascendancy to the top of the fashion industry.

### **Massimo Cantini Parrini**

Born in **Florence**, Massimo Cantini Parrini developed a deep passion for clothing from an early age. His education took place entirely in his hometown: he attended the **State Institute of Art of Porta Romana** and later studied at **Polimoda**, a school affiliated with the **Fashion Institute of**

**Technology (F.I.T.) of New York.** He later graduated in **Fashion Culture and Styling** from the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy.

During his academic years, he won the competition for admission to the **Experimental Center of Cinematography** in Rome, where he joined the costume design course led by **Oscar-winning designer Piero Tosi**, his mentor and a pivotal figure in his training.

After several years collaborating with **Oscar-winning costume designer Gabriella Pescucci**, he launched a brilliant independent career. Alongside his professional work, he has taught costume design for performance in Florence, first at the **University of Florence** and later at the **Academy of Fine Arts**.

Since **2020**, he has been a member of the **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences**.

In **2021**, he received his first Academy Award nomination for costume design for *Pinocchio* by **Matteo Garrone**, followed by a second nomination in **2022** for *Cyrano* by **Joe Wright**.

Since **2016**, he has won **six David di Donatello Awards** out of nine nominations, a **European Film Award**, six **Nastri d'Argento**, the **Flaiano Prize**, and five **Ciak d'Oro Awards**, in addition to numerous other national and international honors.

His major nominations also include the **Critics Choice Award**, three nominations for the **Costume Designers Guild Awards**, and one **BAFTA** nomination.

In **2019**, he was awarded the title of **Honorary Academician** by the **Academy of Fine Arts of Florence**, and in **2025** he received the same recognition from the **Academy of Fine Arts of Parma**.

He collaborates with major directors and contributes to films, theatrical productions, exhibitions and major international events, including the costume design for the opening ceremony of the **Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games**.

## **Polimoda**

Polimoda is recognized worldwide for its high-quality fashion education. Listed among the best fashion schools in the world, Polimoda is not only an educational institution, but a creative campus training the industry's next generation of professionals. With 2,000 students from 107 countries worldwide, the school combines design expertise with the production know-how of

Made in Italy, within a cosmopolitan perspective. Founded in 1986 in Florence, Polimoda has been at the forefront of fashion and luxury education for 40 years.

## Parallel Events Programme

### Special Tours

Special guided tours will take place in the following days:

**Thursday, 18/06/2026, at 18:00.**

**Thursday, 25/06/2026, at 18:00.**

**Thursday, 02/07/2026, at 18:00.**

**Thursday, 09/07/2026, at 18:00.**

**Thursday, 10/09/2026, at 18:00.**

Limited number of participants.

Plus €2 to the admission cost of the exhibition.

Tickets may be bought in advance at [tickets.benaki.org](https://tickets.benaki.org) or by attending the Museum on the day of the visit.

### Screening of the film “Maria”

**Monday 25/05/2026 at 20:00**

As a pre-exhibition event, the Embassy of Italy, the Benaki Museum and in collaboration with the streaming platform CINOB0, organised a screening of the film *Maria* with free admission for the public.

ORGANISED BY



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Athens



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Visiting hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday:10:00-18:00, Thursday:10:00-00:00,  
Tuesday: κλειστά | Exhibition ticket: €9, €7 – Tickets may be bought in advance at [tickets.benaki.org](http://tickets.benaki.org)