

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Pucci mixes fashion and philanthropy to give back to Florence

April 27, 2015



*Pucci's SOS Battistero next to Baptistery of San Giovanni*

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By SARAH JONES

FLORENCE, Italy – From its beginnings, Emilio Pucci has always had a strong appreciation for its hometown of Florence, taking inspiration for designs from the historic city, according to the brand's CEO at the Condé Nast International Luxury Conference April 23.

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Paying back the city which has played a part in shaping its brand over more than half a century, Pucci announced it is embarking on a charity project to help restore a landmark it holds dear. Preserving its own heritage is intrinsically tied to saving its local landscape.

"Yesterday and today provided for tomorrow, and that's really the effort I've been doing all these years, and making sure it's relevant," said Laudomia Pucci, CEO of **Emilio Pucci**.

### Giving back

Ms. Pucci's father set up his label in the family's palazzo in 1950. Built between 500 and 600 years ago, the estate served as both the atelier and the venue for fashion shows.



*Emilio Pucci at work in his palazzo*

Palazzo Pucci provided inspiration to the designer, with the roofs of the house appearing in imagery along with the nearby city streets. Ms. Pucci said that her father, along with Ferragamo, was one of the first to actively communicate what being from Italy meant to his brand.

“It was a way of saying, ‘We belong here, these are our roots, these are our aesthetics,’” Ms. Pucci said.

In the present day, both the house’s archives and the brand’s location continue to be a source of inspiration for current collections.



## *Laudomia Pucci speaking at the Condé Nast International Luxury Conference*

Something close to Ms. Pucci's heart was the Battistero scarf designed in 1957 to look like an aerial view of Piazza San Giovanni.

Last year, when Pucci was called to participate in Firenze Hometown of Fashion alongside labels such as Gucci and Roberto Cavalli, it celebrated its personal heritage with the city by wrapping the Baptistery of San Giovanni, which features prominently in the Battistero print, with a gigantic "scarf."



### *Pucci's "Monumental" installation during Firenze Hometown of Fashion*

Ms. Pucci also brought new life to the print with a re-edition for its Cities of the World collection.

Now, Pucci has taken up the cause of the baptistery, looking to restore the monument through a crowdfunding campaign centered on a limited-edition "SOS Battistero" scarf, which honors the original print in new color palette. Available for purchase on Yoox and in two stores, the scarf will come with a handsigned note from Ms. Pucci thanking the buyer for their donation through fashion.

### Hometown causes

Due to its debt and stalling economy, the Italian government is unable to fund restoration projects for monuments itself, leaving the work to private companies.

Philanthropic efforts have been enacted by many brands worldwide, but when it comes to efforts in Italy, the home country of many luxury houses, internal philanthropic works are sparse, according to an executive from Tod's at The New York Times International Luxury Conference Dec. 3.

Luxury brands typically hold strong influences in their home cities and countries and can therefore present themselves as chief contenders to lead social change through philanthropy. Reaching out to foundations, historical landmarks and people in need can

create a positive aura around a brand and help the brands connect with their roots and impact local communities ([see story](#)).

Tod's itself has taken up the cause of the Colosseum, pledging about \$34 million to restore the landmark.

Also, Italian fashion house Fendi is the sole benefactor of the project to restore the Trevi Fountain and the Four Fountains in Rome.

The “Fendi for Fountains” initiative allows the brand to reinforce its Roman heritage by giving back to the city that has supplied inspiration to the label over the years. Due to the foot traffic at the Trevi Fountain, the brand will likely see a rise in brand awareness from tourists ([see story](#)).

These local causes can make a large difference in labels' communities, and ensure that important landmarks remain for years to come.

“I really hope we can do something special together and give back to Florence,” Ms. Pucci said.

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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