

EVENTS/CAUSES

Bulgari highlights role in Italian fashion's rise with exhibit sponsorship

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"Bellissima: Italy and High Fashion 1945-1968" exhibit in Rome

By STAFF REPORTS

Jewelry house Bulgari is further cementing its ties to Italian fashion by presenting an exhibit at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale in Florida.

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"Bellissima: Italy and High Fashion 1945-1968" takes a look at the post World War II period in the country's fashion scene, as designers including Emilio Pucci and Valentino Garavani helped to shape Italy's image around the world. In addition to being a key partner in the exhibit, a number of one-of-a-kind jewels from the Bulgari Heritage Collections will be on display.

Fashion capital

Bellissima, originally shown in Rome, is a project by MAXXI: National Museum of the XXI Century Arts in Rome ([see story](#)). The exhibit was co-curated by fashion critic and IUAV University of Venice professor Maria Luisa Frisa, MAXXI art director Anna Mattiolo and W magazine editor Stefano Tonchi.

While the exhibit centers on fashion, it looks at fashion's relationship to other creative outlets, with art, photography and film on display beside designers' work. It also traces the way in which the cities of Rome, Florence, Milan and Venice impacted the way in which Italian fashion was produced and shown.



Bellissima presented in Rome

Following World War II, the government made investments in fashion. In turn, the industry helped the country's workforce return to jobs, creating demand for skilled craftsmen at factories making leather, silk and other textiles.

More than 230 designer garments on display form a picture of the early identity of Italian fashion, from black-and-white graphic ensembles to the colorful garb of the 1960s. Some are custom designs created for actresses such as Ava Gardner, Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner.

Exploring the origin of the made in Italy brand will be accessories including handbags, costume jewelry, shoes and hats from the likes of Salvatore Ferragamo and Gucci.

A collection of Bulgari's jewelry also pays homage to its role positioning Italy as a fashion capital. For the exhibit, collections have loaned the museum Serpenti pieces made of diamonds or rubies and necklaces dating from the 1960s set with precious stones. Added specially for this appearance of the exhibit is a pair of diamond pendant earrings once owned by Elizabeth Taylor.



Earrings previously owned by Elizabeth Taylor

"Partnering with the NSU Art Museum and the brilliant curators behind this collaboration is meaningful for Bulgari," said Daniel Paltridge, president, Bulgari North America, in a statement. "Collectively we brought to life one of the most profound eras of the fashion industry a period of great importance to Italy and international success of Bulgari. From the immediate post-war years to the magical period of the Dolce Vita, Bulgari emerged as the emblematic jeweler of Italian excellence.

"The exhibition will feature extraordinary Bulgari designs during this pivotal period that helped define the history of jewelry," he said. "Bulgari's involvement in the Bellissima exhibition pays homage to this era, and dedication to craftsmanship and timeless designs."

Bellissima, which is also supported by Cond Nast, will be on view from Feb. 7 through June 25.

To celebrate the opening, Bulgari will host a black-tie gala on Feb. 5, the proceeds of which will go to benefit the museum's educational programs and exhibitions.

Bulgari also strengthened its relationship with the fashion industry by sponsoring The Glamour of Italian Fashion exhibit April 5 through July 27, 2014 at London's Victoria & Albert Museum.

Although a main sponsor, Bulgari is promoting its involvement with the museum exhibit on its London hotel and residence property's Facebook account. Instead of seeming pushy, Bulgari's use of its hotel to promote the exhibit may persuade guests and enthusiasts to book a stay ([see story](#)).