

RETAIL

La Rinascente explores its cultural impact in centennial exhibit

May 25, 2017



"LR100 Rinascente: Stories of Innovation" exhibit

By SARAH JONES

Italian department store la Rinascente is marking its 100-year milestone with a look at how its own story is linked with the broader history of Milan.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

The retailer is staging a retrospective at the Palazzo Reale that focuses on the culture and fashions in Milan over the last century. Titled "LR100 Rinascente: Stories of Innovation," the exhibit investigates the impact that the store had on establishing Milan's central position in the fashion industry.

"I don't doubt that this brand has become well established and has a large following," said Dave Rodgers, retail industry executive at [Microsoft Canada](#), Toronto. "Rather than asking customers to buy a ticket to schedule a tour within a confined space, they could have made a much bigger impression by making this a storewide celebration.

"If they were trying to celebrate the exclusiveness of a 'museum experience,' they've succeeded," he said.

Mr. Rodgers is not affiliated with [la Rinascente](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [La Rinascente](#) was reached for comment.

Name game

La Rinascente's story actually dates back 150 years, when the Bocconi brothers set up a small store in Milan's Duomo.

Fifty years later, Magazzini Bocconi was bought by Senator Borletti. At this time, the politician asked poet Gabriele D'Annunzio to rename it, and he devised the name "Rinascente."

It is this lifetime that the exhibit centers on, looking at the retailer's past 100 years through the lens of culture.



Poster for Palazzo Reale's exhibit

From la Rinascente's collaboration with Gio Ponti and Emilio Lancia on a furniture design in 1927 to its creation of Compasso d'Oro Award for design in 1954, the store has retained a role in art throughout its history.

Curated by Sandrina Bandera and Maria Canella, the exhibit tells the story through artworks, design objects and archival images displayed in 11 rooms.

Join us on a 100 years journey through fashion, design, art and history. Discover #Rinascente100 . . .
#departmentstore #instatic#bestoftheday #placetobe #placetovisit #fashionblogger #instafashion
#fashion#milan #exhibition #palazzoreale @palazzorealemilano

A post shared by la Rinascente (@larinascente) on May 24, 2017 at 3:24am PDT

Agency OMA/AMO designed the exhibit to be a "living archive," making it more of a collage of personalities and moments than a sequential story.

One room is devoted to Marcello Dudovich, who helped establish la Rinascente's name through billboard designs. Included are striped shirt dresses from the capsule collection devised for the store by Missoni in 1958.



Rendering of Missoni's fashions on display

Sponsored by Comune di Milano Cultura along with Palazzo Reale and la Rinascente, the exhibit opened May 24 and will be up through Sept. 24.

In addition to the Palazzo Reale display, OMA/AMO created a window display tied to the concept of the exhibit. These panes will be up for two weeks.

Retail retrospective

While not brands in a traditional sense, retailers can benefit from telling their story, particularly around significant years.

Department store chain Barneys New York recently celebrated the timeline of its almost century-long business through its print debut.

"Barneys New York," published by Rizzoli, looks at the retailer's impact on the city of New York and the fashion industry through a mix of photographs and quotes from famous fans of its stores. For Barneys, this first tome offers a chance to educate consumers on its heritage and brand story in a long-form medium ([see story](#)).

Also, Chinese department store chain Lane Crawford celebrated 165 years in the retail business with a comprehensive campaign that examined the relationship between fashion and art.

Featuring unique designs, capsule collections, art exhibitions, product showcases and video, the campaign simultaneously drew attention to Lane Crawford's rich heritage and looked forward to an exciting future. The

expansive campaign likely drew attention from around the country and help Lane Crawford forge connections with a new generation of consumers ([see story](#)).

"Retailers today need to engage a broader audience that reflects a wider range of interests and demographics," Mr. Rodgeron said. "A curated experience need not be so controlled.

"In fact, the more interactive and engaging the better," he said. "This would have been a wonderful opportunity for the retailer to engage their customers and have them contribute to the celebration through social media."

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.