

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Dolce & Gabbana spotlights Italian artisans in charitable craftsmanship campaign

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The new "Fatto A Mano" series examines Italian craftsmanship. Image credit: Dolce & Gabbana

By ELLEN KELLEHER

Italian fashion brand **Dolce & Gabbana** has unveiled a short film series which offers a glimpse of Italian artisans at work as part of a bid to raise funds to combat the pandemic.

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With each short running under five minutes in length, the "Fatto A Mano" series shares everything from the making of homemade tagliatelle and tiles to painting Sicilian carrettos and constructing marionettes. The aim is to showcase the label's appreciation of Italian craftsmanship and also to direct money to Milan's Humanitas University's scientific work on COVID-19.

"By sharing these videos, it showcases an integral element to Italian culture, how it was done and why they do this today and want it to be remembered," said Kimmie Smith, co-founder of **Athleisure Mag**, Atlanta. "Being able to keep these traditions alive and relevant to a modern audience is a way to ensure that this form of creation is not something that is relegated to the past."

### Country life in Sicily

Each video of the #FattoAMano series, which translates roughly to handmade, shares the processes behind unique artisanal goods. The seven videos are wide-ranging, which all serve to add an aura of authenticity to Dolce & Gabbana.

One vignette starts with the affable Sicilian artist Gianfranco Fiore offering a lesson on how to paint the "chiave di carretto."

### *Carrettos were everywhere in Sicily before the Second World War*

These rectangular-shaped planks are located in a position of prominence at the back of the brightly-colored carrettos which were the only method of transport used in Sicily prior to World War II.

Once pulled by donkeys or oxen, the detail of the paintings on the carts is elaborate and an array of bold colors are used for their decoration. Mr. Fiore uses classic oil paints to decorate his modern version and not the earth-based pigments diluted with linseed oil, used when carrettos were more popular than cars in Sicily.

"My passion is painting and decorating these typical carts from my homeland," Mr. Fiore says. "Vibrant colors are characteristic of the Sicilian cart.

"Strong, bright brilliant colors," he says. "Every single available surface of the cart is painted."

The various pieces of the cart are carved in relief and treated with a primer of plaster or chalk before paint is applied.

In another short, the audience is treated to a presentation by the equally charismatic Sicilian Alessio Patania, who describes how to make pupos, or traditional marionettes from Sicily.

*Pupos or Sicilian marionettes are made from either beechwood or cherrywood.*

"The production process for making a pupo has been passed down from father to son and is an almost sacred ritual," he says. Speaking from his workshop where intricate marionettes hang behind him, he says his family has been in the business since 1969.

Constructed with a combination of beechwood or cherrywood as well as brass, the marionettes are built via a complex series of steps and are dressed in velvet clothes and armor. The tradition of marionettes in Sicily dates back centuries to the Opera dei Pupi, a marionette theatre which used puppets to perform epic poems from the 11th century like The Song of Roland.

In another short, Santina, the Sicilian owner of "U Bagghiu" restaurant in Polizzi Generosa near Palermo offers notes on how to make tagliatelle.

Water and wheat flour are its primary ingredients and Santina rolls the mixture onto a pastry board and kneads it. The pasta is then rolled and cut into strips. Eventually, Santina makes a dish with the pasta, fennel and local badda beans, typical of Polizzi, in a crockpot.

Giovanni D'Angelo, also from Polizzi Generosa, on making hand-made tiles.

Tiles are shaped by putting clay in an iron mould and then put out to dry for three weeks to a month. Fired later in a kiln, eventually designs are traced on the ceramics by Mr. D'Angelo by hand before being fired again and sold.

*The designs on the tiles are especially intricate.*

Artisan Giulio Amore offers tips on how to weave baskets while Denis, a designer from the eyewear group Luxottica, turns sunglasses into a unique pair of ones for the Dolce & Gabbana label. Lastly, the focus shifts again to rural life when the school-age Gandolfo Pantina offers a look at how to milk sheep on his family farm.

As each film closes, the humanitarian side of D&G's campaign is underlined and viewers are encouraged to turn to [dolcegabbana.com/funding](https://dolcegabbana.com/funding) with donations to COVID-19 research.

All of the presentations are part of an effort to raise money for Milan's Humanitas University work in combating the coronavirus.

Dolce & Gabbana is a well-established supporter of the medical university and its spring-summer 2021 men's fashion show was filmed at its campus in Milan ([see story](#)).

A bit of background

The #FattoAMano campaign originated in 2019, providing a glimpse of the practicalities of how Dolce & Gabbana produced its clothes and products.

Last year Dolce & Gabbana's films provided an intricate look at the making of its cross-shaped earrings, for instance. The process started with a detailed drawing of pen on paper to then replicate the vision of the sketch and turn it into reality ([see story](#)).

A number of Italian brands are embracing authenticity in their campaigns and showing their artisanal side as the coronavirus pandemic continues to upend Italian life.

Fendi recently showcased the intricacy of the handiwork of its artisans in a new film series focusing on craftsmanship.

In "Hand in Hand", the company's creative director Silvia Venturini Fendi cast a light on the Italian craftsmen who are responsible for the various pieces in Fendi's collection. The campaign reflects Fendi's desire to evaluate its

place at the end of the supply chain at a difficult time and broadcast its solidarity with its network of suppliers ([see story](#)).

"D&G much like many brands regardless of their length in their industries has had to re-evaluate what it means to connect and to be sensitive to the current environment and to find ways to create content that does not feel like a massive billboard is being thrown into our feeds," Ms. Smith said. "Taking a cultural take and providing an unexpected conversation into the mix presents a means to educate the consumer on the history while also showing the house as one that is multi-faceted."

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