



Sopra, due viste della fabbrica-giardino del gruppo Prada a Valvigna (Arezzo), dove l'architettura progettata da Guido Canali esplora il rapporto tra gli edifici e la libertà degli elementi naturali. Nella pagina accanto, Lorenzo Bertelli, a capo della corporate social responsibility e direttore marketing del gruppo. Laureato in filosofia e pilota di rally, è nato nel 1988, il 10 maggio, lo stesso giorno della mamma Miuccia Prada.



Sperimentare. Avere le idee chiare, ma essere disposto a cambiarle. E poi decidere: di creare un comitato di sostenibilità interno al gruppo Prada, di lavorare con gli NFT, di smentire con un sorriso voci di successione, persino quando arrivano dal suo ceo: «Mio padre dice che andrà in pensione, ma io non ci credo». Il metodo di Lorenzo Bertelli per rendere la responsabilità ambientale e sociale il business più vantaggioso di tutti è un esercizio di filosofia molto concreto.

Di Nicoletta Polla-Mattiot

«LA MIA PARTITA GREEN, FRA ERACLITO, MIO PADRE E L'AUTO ELETTRICA»

Il racconto di questa intervista comincerà dall'ultima domanda e siamo autorizzati a farlo direttamente da Eraclito. Chiamare in causa il sommo maestro del *panta rei* non ci pare fuori luogo, intanto perché è il primo ad aver detto che "ogni punto d'inizio può essere anche un punto di fine" e poi perché è di filosofia che finiamo per parlare per almeno un terzo della nostra conversazione con Lorenzo Bertelli. Ma prima liberiamo subito il campo dalla domanda delle domande: è vero che entro i prossimi tre anni raccoglierà il testimone del padre alla guida dell'azienda, come lo stesso Patrizio Bertelli avrebbe detto – frainteso o meno, come rivelazione a sorpresa, battuta o provocazione – all'agenzia Bloomberg in occasione del Capital Markets Day? È possibile? «Non credo che andrà in pensione e non so fra quanti anni avverrà la successione, è importante organizzarla bene». Da quel 18 novembre, il primogenito trentatreenne di Miuccia Prada deve averlo ripetuto talmente tante volte, che non vale la pena di riprovarci. Dunque torniamo ad Eraclito e la fine (o l'inizio) della storia suona, più o meno, così: «La risposta sta nel saper non dare una risposta». Alla luce dell'attualità, il ribaltamento di prospettiva si fa interessante. «Quello che intendo è che ho imparato a sposare un pensiero, farlo mio, e poi, la settimana dopo, immergermi in un modo di ragionare completamente diverso, magari opposto. Studiare filosofia è un esercizio di flessibilità mentale, non è una materia che puoi fare tua per il tempo di un esame e poi dimenticare, è un modo di procedere, un metodo di comprensione delle cose. Le tesi sono così complesse che devi appropriarti delle convinzioni di ogni filosofo



In alto sullo sfondo, il taglio delle pelli nei laboratori toscani, a Valvignone. Un fermo immagine della video-sfilata uomo P/E 22, nella parte girata in esterni tra Cala Zafferano e Cala Luna, in Sardegna. Sopra, un dettaglio dello show donna P/E 22, che si è svolto in simultanea live tra Milano e Shanghai, lo scorso settembre.

per poterne parlare. Ed è un esercizio di cambiamento continuo». Tutto scorre, lo si diceva, ma nel divenire, nell'adattarsi alle novità, anche le più inaspettate, sta la capacità di presenza sul mercato, tanto più nella moda che è l'incarnazione dell'essere contemporanei al proprio tempo. Si esiste e si è rilevanti stando nel flusso e questo, se non fosse un punto di vista del VI secolo avanti Cristo, è la descrizione del mondo digitale.

Lorenzo Bertelli non ha dubbi in proposito: «Non c'è più un solo modo di fare comunicazione, tutto è fluido, bisogna saper capire e registrare il momento, mutare. L'unica vera regola è che non ci sono regole. Lo scenario cambia, bisogna acquisire nuove competenze per sapere quello che si vuole. E studiare, studiare, studiare. Io lo sto facendo da oltre un anno sugli NFT, un progetto importante a cui stiamo lavorando». Che il leader italiano nel settore della moda, con quattro marchi in portafoglio (Prada, Miu Miu, Church's e Car Shoe), entri nel mondo dei Non Fungible Token è un'altra notizia. Tanto più pensando al potenziale rappresentato da Aura Blockchain Consortium, l'alleanza che ha unito Lvmh, Richemont, Prada e che recentemente ha visto l'ingresso anche di OtB di Renzo Rosso. Di Aura Lorenzo Bertelli è presidente e questa capacità di mettere intorno allo stesso tavolo i grandi rivali del mercato dei consumi di lusso, ci riporta al discorso di partenza. «Quando sei convinto di un'idea e c'è qualcuno che la pensa in modo completamente diverso, all'inizio tieni le distanze. Ma se lo ascolti, provi a guardare le cose dal suo punto di vista, scopri che anche quell'opinione mostra un pezzo di verità. Il vantaggio che mi ha dato la laurea in filosofia è la consapevolezza che ci sono tanti modi di vedere la stessa

cosa e sono tutti rispettabili. Il mondo non è in bianco e nero, la vita è fatta di sfumature. Il che non significa non essere pragmatici e risoluti nelle scelte, anzi! Proprio perché hai una chiara visione delle cose da più punti di vista, sai anche, in modo chiaro e sincero, che alla fine occorre arrivare alla sintesi e decidere».

Decidere, per il group marketing director ed head of corporate social responsibility, significa parecchie cose. Compreso aver puntato i piedi per pretendere la creazione di un comitato di sostenibilità con figure dedicate. Notizia che è stata annunciata sempre al *Capital Markets Day*. Due nuovi ingressi nel consiglio di amministrazione per ampliare le competenze in materia ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance), due figure di spicco nel mondo dell'impegno sociale e ambientale internazionale: Pamela Culpepper, fondatrice di Have Her Back Consulting e Anna Maria Rugarli, corporate sustainability vice president della Japan Tobacco International. «Servono persone che abbiano una visione strutturata di queste tematiche e che passino il loro tempo a pensare, investire e dedicarsi ad esse. Ricordiamoci che la sostenibilità è innanzitutto economica. Non basta essere sostenibili "a perdere" o "a termine" perché se no non si è sostenibili per definizione!». Ecco una delle ragioni per cui ha senso portare la questione a livello del board: è una scelta di business prima che di comunicazione o di immagine.

«Se vogliamo tornare alla filosofia, ci si potrebbe chiedere: esiste un mondo sostenibile senza il capitalismo? Possiamo starne a discutere per ore, ne hanno scritto e dibattuto in moltissimi. A me, però, una cosa è chiara: le partite si giocano dentro il campo. Non si può pensare di cambiare il mondo, tenendosene fuori. Occorre stare alle regole del gioco che c'è in quel momento. Poi le regole si potranno cambiare, e si potrà contribuire a cambiarle, ma prima bisogna iniziare la partita». Perché l'impegno CSR sia incisivo e centrale nel sistema produttivo mondiale, deve diventare conveniente e competitivo. Altrimenti non si va da nessuna parte e ci si ferma alle dichiarazioni di principio. «Al centro di tutto c'è la sostenibilità, ambientale e sociale. Non basta una leva, ne servono molte». Vale per i progetti di recycle e upcycle, vale per *Sea Beyond*, il programma didattico, ideato con Unesco, che punta a fare formazione nelle scuole sulla salvaguardia degli oceani. «Le buone abitudini devono partire dalle future generazioni. Spendere energie su menti che sono ancora plasmabili è più efficace». La chiarezza senza finti pudori è uno dei regali spontanei di appartenere alla generazione Y, e di sentirsi molto vicino e sempre in dialogo con la generazione Z. «Ci sarebbe voluta la digitalizzazione vent'anni prima. Il motivo per cui tutto sta accelerando è dovuto al fatto che chiunque ha un cellulare, chiunque può fare un video, scrivere, documentare, dire la propria. Se avessimo avuto internet e gli smartphone prima, avremmo anni di vantaggio nel processo di trasformazione. Detto questo, io sono fiducioso. La speranza è fondamentale per convincere le persone. Se si esagera in allarmismo, se si colpevolizza troppo, le persone alzano bandiera bianca. Pensano: tanto non dipende da me, è un problema troppo grosso, che cosa posso fare da solo? Invece più se ne parla, più si condivide, più ci si coinvolge e più si fa cultura».

Un ottimismo che si estende alle alleanze sulle sfide d'impresa. «Quando vedo qualcuno che fa meglio di me, a lui dico: Bravo! E a me dico: Voglio batterlo! Imparare da chi fa meglio è un volano incredibile. Poi, su alcuni temi d'interesse generale credo che, in città futura, ci sarà una forte convergenza e un'inferiore dispersione. È un normale processo: all'inizio ci sono una miriade di isole, ciascuna per sé e in gara con tutte le altre, ma via via diventano un continente». Un discorso che si applica, per esempio, alla ricerca sulla tracciabilità delle materie prime, sulla trasparenza degli approvvigionamenti, sui parametri di calcolo e attribuzione delle emissioni di CO₂ («non è vero che la moda è la seconda industria più inquinante»). Ma vale anche per le collaborazioni, come quella fra Levi's e Miu Miu, che ha dato vita a un progetto di recupero degli scarti di magazzino, vecchi avanzati di tessuto rivalorizzati, senza usare nuovo materiale.

La sostenibilità, per essere concreta, procede per

Beatrice Borromeo, Como 2021



BUCCELLATI

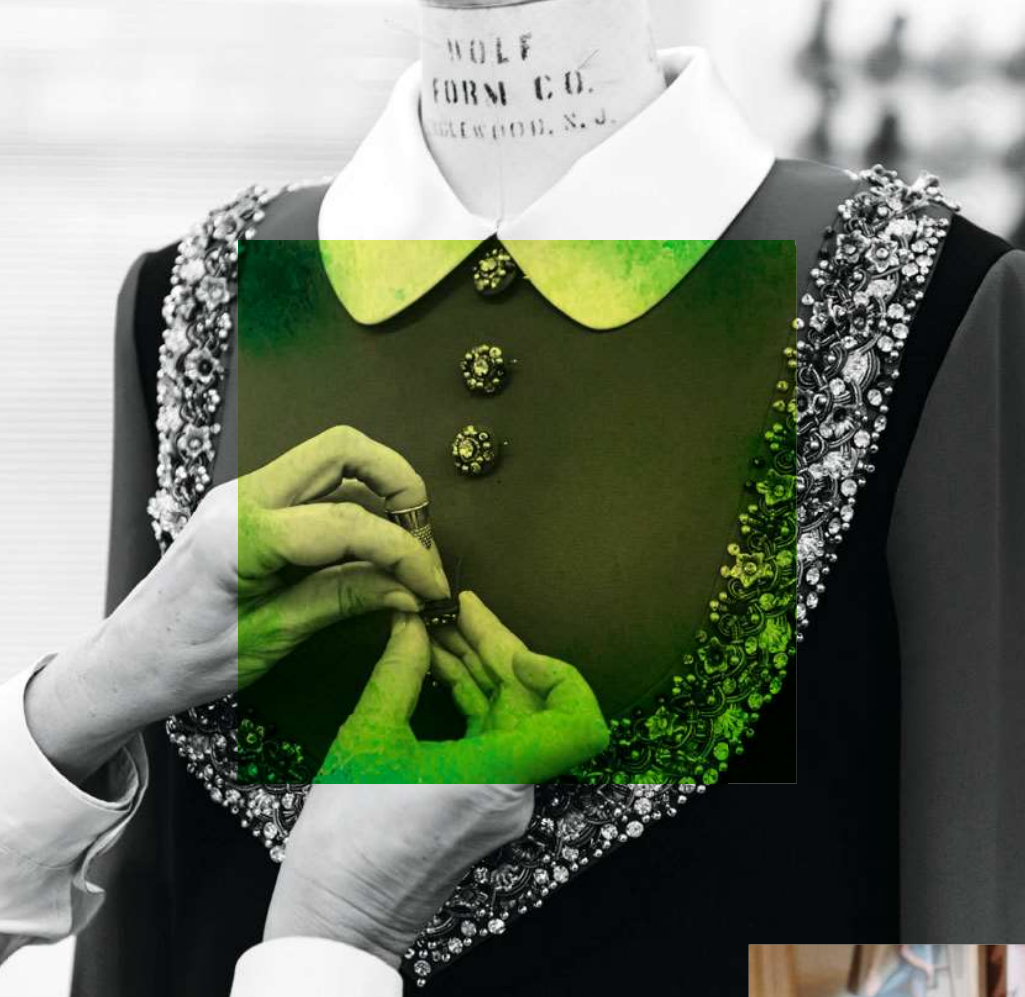
MILANO DAL 1919

Giardino Collection

Invito in Galleria

Rileggere un classico della pelletteria è un racconto che unisce cinema e moda.

Galleria è un archetipo neo-classico di Prada. La borsa, che sta per compiere 15 anni, nel tempo è cambiata in modo impercettibile. Del resto, prende il nome dalla sede dello storico negozio di Milano, la Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, che ospita ancora oggi la boutique dove il marchio fu fondato da Mario Prada, nonno di Miuccia, nel 1913. Il design è pulito e innatamente pragmatico, sta in mezzo tra forma e funzione, con il semplice manico superiore curvo. Ha dato origine a quei segni senza tempo, che uniscono il patrimonio artigianale dell'azienda, ma riflettono necessità contemporanee. Porta con sé una vocazione: essere longeva e creare un'abitudine d'uso e di condivisione. Ha debuttato in Saffiano, una pelle di vitello resistente ai graffi e all'acqua, disegnata da una texture a tratteggio incrociato. Brevettato da Mario Prada, il pattern viene pressato a macchina nel rivestimento in cera della pelle, conferendole così una leggera lucentezza e donando al colore un tono vibrante e saturo. Le tonalità dell'inverno 2021-22 sono otto, i classici accanto a tinte dai nomi poetici come petalo, astrale, fuoco, cammeo. Tre le dimensioni, mini, medium e large, 83 i pezzi singoli che la compongono, e all'interno un trio di scomparti paralleli. A rileggere la borsa sono stati chiamati questa stagione l'attrice Hunter Schafer, inserita da *Time* nella lista Next, che raccoglie le 100 persone under 21 che stanno plasmando il futuro, e il trentenne regista canadese Xavier Dolan. La possibilità di esprimere attraverso l'obiettivo, e in modo indipendente, la propria visione ha portato a un corto che parla di cinematografia e di moda. *Galleria*, come un talismano, è una presenza costante, una sorta di ossessione/sogno, di cui non esiste una sola narrazione, piuttosto vengono catturati pensieri, amori, emozioni in dialogo tra loro. (n.f.)



obiettivi e commitment chiari. «Il 2021 sta per finire e noi avevamo preso l'impegno della riconversione completa in nylon rigenerato: nonostante la pandemia e l'inevitabile rallentamento delle vendite, posso dire che ci siamo riusciti!». Non è il solo target raggiunto. Prada fa parte di The Valuable 500, associazione internazionale che si occupa di promuovere l'inserimento di persone disabili all'interno delle organizzazioni aziendali. Primo gruppo del lusso a impegnarsi su questa strada, aveva annunciato in primavera un piano a lungo termine di assunzioni nella rete retail. «Rispettare questi patti mi sembra di minimis!». Non aggiunge altro Lorenzo Bertelli, così come fa solo un cenno al profondo cambio di strategia su Car Shoe e su Church's. «Il digitale permette di osare, è agile nel breve termine e su brand più piccoli ci si può consentire di sperimentare. Provo-imparo, provo-imparo: è un approccio evolutivo continuo. Testi velocemente e acquisisci altrettanto velocemente informazioni. Insomma, è un buon modo per guadagnare know-how».

Questo è anche l'incarico più "antico" che Lorenzo Bertelli ha ricoperto in azienda, cominciando per età ed esigenze strategiche proprio dalla digital innovation. Alla prima sfilata post Covid, Prada, meglio di altri brand, è riuscito a integrare, in modo tutt'altro che scontato, l'esperienza del digital show con il ritorno alla presenza, realizzando due passerelle in simultanea, a Milano e Shanghai, che sdoppiavano l'esperienza, in un efficace slittamento temporale e reciproco riverbero. «Non potevamo tornare al vecchio modo di fare le cose, ci voleva una soluzione ibrida: io non ho mai visto il virtuale alternativo né in competizione con il fisico. È semplicemente un elemento in più all'interno della stessa ricetta. Come se fossimo in una di quelle trasmissioni televisive di cucina e la sfida fosse aggiungere un ingrediente in più. Hai quelli di prima e sei obbligato ad usarli tutti, ma ogni volta te ne danno uno nuovo. Ecco: in futuro dovranno esserci gli elementi che già ci sono e altri che si aggiungeranno. Dovremo fare un piatto che li comprenda e li equilibri tutti, e che sia pure buono. Anzi, migliore di prima».



Siamo partiti dagli antichi greci e siamo arrivati a *MasterChef*, ma la ricetta (qui è il caso di dirlo) resta la stessa: sperimento per apprendere, considero ogni punto di vista, anche il più distante dal mio (per età, storia, formazione) e cerco di integrarlo, ho le idee chiare, ma sono disposto a cambiarle. Persino sulla più grande passione: «L'auto elettrica, se guardiamo in una prospettiva lunga, è un passo imprescindibile e fondamentale. Quando risolveremo tutti i problemi collaterali, non ci sarà altro mezzo di trasporto». Parla il pilota, l'unico italiano che ha corso nella massima categoria del WRC: «È la giusta direzione, e figuriamoci se il motorsport sarà un problema!». Bisogna volere l'impossibile, perché l'impossibile accada. Questo, però, è di nuovo Eraclito. E ne riparliamo (di possibile, impossibile e verosimile) fra tre anni. ■HTSI

In alto a sinistra, uno degli 80 capi Miu Miu Upcycled. Il progetto, presentato esattamente un anno fa, segue un modello di moda circolare ed è basato sul riciclo e riutilizzo dei materiali, fatto con pezzi di abbigliamento vintage scelti tra gli anni '30 e gli anni '80, decostruiti e rimodellati secondo lo stile del brand. Sopra a sinistra, la borsa Galleria, formato medio, in pelle Saffiano, PRADA (2.200 €). Accanto, un'immagine tratta dallo short-movie realizzato dal regista Xavier Dolan in omaggio alla borsa.

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“MY GREEN PARTY, WITH HERACLITUS, MY FATHER AND THE ELECTRIC CAR”

Experimenting. Knowing what you want, but willing to change. And then deciding: to create a sustainability committee within the Prada Group, working with NFTs. And debunking succession rumours with a smile, even when they come from his CEO: “My father says he’s retiring, but I don’t believe it.” Lorenzo Bertelli’s way of making environmental and social responsibility the most advantageous business of all is a very concrete exercise in philosophy.

By Nicoletta Polla-Mattiot

The story of this interview starts from the last question, and we’ve been authorized to ask it directly by Heraclitus. We don’t feel that calling on the supreme master of the “panta rei” (translated as “everything flows”) quote is out of place, since he was the first to have stated that “every starting point also has an end point”, and because it is about philosophy that we will end up talking for at least one-third of our conversation with Lorenzo Bertelli. But first, let’s get the question of questions out of the way: is it true that within the next three years you’ll be taking over to lead the company, as Patrizio Bertelli himself stated to Bloomberg - misinterpreted or not, as a surprise revelation, joke or provocation - during the Capital Markets Day? Is it possible? “I don’t believe he’s going to retire and I don’t know when the succession will take place. The important thing is to organize it well”. Since that 18th of November, the thirty-three year old first-born of Miuccia Prada must have repeated it so many times that it’s not even worth trying again. So we’re back to Heraclitus, and the end (or beginning) of the story more or less sounds like this: «The answer is knowing not to give an answer. In light of current events, the reversal of perspective becomes interesting. What I mean is that I have learned to acquire a thought, make it my own, and then the next week, immerse myself in a completely different and perhaps opposite way of thinking. Studying philosophy is an exercise in mental flexibility, not a subject that you can study for an exam and then forget about, and a way of proceeding, a method of comprehending things. The beliefs are so complex that you have to be familiar with the beliefs of every philosopher in order to talk about them. And it is a continuously changing exercise>>. As they used to say, everything flows, but it is evolving and adapting to new things, even the most unexpected ones, that highlights the ability to be present on the market, even more so in fashion, which is the embodiment of being contemporary with the times. One exists and is relevant by being in the flow and this, if it were not a 6th-century BC viewpoint, is the description of the digital world.

Lorenzo Bertelli has no doubts in this respect: «There is no longer just one way of communicating, everything is fluid, you have to be able to identify and capture the moment, to change. The only rule is that there are no rules. The scenario is changing, and you need new skills to know what you want. And to study, study, study. I’ve been doing it for over a year with regard to the NFTs, a major project on which we have been working. That the Italian leader in the fashion sector, with four brands in its portfolio (Prada, Miu Miu, Church's and Car Shoe), is entering the world of Non Fungible Tokens is news in itself. All the more so considering the potential represented by the Aura Blockchain Consortium, the alliance that has brought together Lymh, Richemont, and Prada, and which recently saw the entry of Renzo Rosso's Otb. Lorenzo Bertelli is chairman of Aura, and this ability to gather major rivals in the luxury goods market around the same table brings us back to the start of our discussion. << When you’re sure of an idea and someone has a completely different way of looking at it, at the beginning you keep your distance. But if you listen to them

and try to look at things from their point of view, you'll discover that there's some truth to their opinion as well. The advantage that my degree in philosophy has given me is the awareness that there are many ways of looking at the same thing, and all of them are worthy. The world is not black and white, life is made of nuances, which does not mean not being pragmatic and resolute in your choices, on the contrary! Precisely because you have a clear view of things from several standpoints, you also know, clearly and sincerely, that in the end you have to reach a decision>>.

Deciding, for the Group's Marketing Director and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, means many things. Including putting one's foot down to demand the creation of a sustainability committee with dedicated positions. News that was announced on Capital Markets Day as well. Two new additions to the Board of Directors to expand its expertise in matters of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance), with two leading figures on the international social and environmental commitment scene: Pamela Culpepper, founder of Have Her Back Consulting, and Anna Maria Rugarli, Vice President of Corporate Sustainability of Japan Tobacco International. We need people with a structured vision of these issues and who spend their time thinking about, investing in and dedicating themselves to them. Let's remember that sustainability is first of all economic. It's not enough to be sustainable "when we have time" or "just for a specific period", because that would make us non-sustainable by definition!>> This is one of the reasons to bring the issue to the attention of the Board: it's a business decision, before a communication or image decision.

<<Going back to philosophy, we can ask ourselves: is there a sustainable world without capitalism? We can talk about it for hours, so many have written about it and debated it. But one thing is clear to me: games are played on the field. You can't expect to change the world by staying out of it. You have to play by the rules of the game that exists at the time. Then you can change the rules, and you can help change them, but first you have to start the game>>. For the CSR commitment to be an incisive and central part of the global production system, it must become affordable and competitive. Otherwise, we go nowhere and stop at our declarations of principle. << At the centre of it all is environmental and social sustainability. One lever is not enough, we need many. This is the case for recycle and upcycle projects, and for Sea Beyond, the educational programme created with Unesco, which aims to visit schools and teach about protecting the oceans. << Good habits must start with the future generations, investing resources on minds that are still malleable and more ethical>>. Clarity without false modesty is one of the spontaneous gifts of belonging to generation Y and feeling very close to and constantly interacting with generation Z. <<We could have used digitalisation twenty years earlier. The reason everything is accelerating now is because everyone has a cell phone, anyone can make a video, write, document and have their say. If we had internet and smartphones in the past, we would have had years of advantages in the transformation process. Having said that, I'm optimistic. Hope is fundamental in convincing people. If you exaggerate in alarming people, if you blame too much, they raise the white flag. They think, it's not up to me anyway, it's too big of a problem, what can I do on my own? But the more we talk about it, the more we share, the more we get involved and the more we create culture>>.

An optimism that extends to alliances on business challenges. <<When I see someone doing better than me, I say: Bravo! And to myself I think: I want to beat him! Learning from those who do better is an incredible driving force. Moreover, on some topics of general interest, I believe there will be strong convergence and less dispersion in the future. It's a normal process: at the beginning, there are a myriad of islands, each independent and competing with all the others, but gradually they become a continent>>. This applies, for example, to research on the traceability of raw materials, on the transparency of supplies and on the parameters for calculating and

allocating CO₂ emissions (it's not true that fashion is the second most polluting industry). But it also applies to collaborations, such as the one between Levi's and Miu Miu, which has given way to a project to recover warehouse waste and old fabric scraps to be reused, without using new material.

In order to be concrete, sustainability must proceed through clear objectives and commitments. <<The year 2021 is coming to an end and we had committed to full conversion to regenerated nylon: despite the pandemic and the inevitable slowdown in sales, I can say that we succeeded!>>. And it's not the only target we achieved. Prada is part of The Valuable 500, international association working to promote the inclusion of disabled people in business organisations. As the first luxury group to commit to this path, in the spring it announced a long-term recruitment plan for its retail network. <<Respecting these terms is the least we can do!>>. Lorenzo Bertelli adds nothing else, and only hints at the profound change of strategy at Car Shoe and Church's. <<Digital allows us to dare, it is agile over the short term and allows one to experiment on smaller brands. Try-learn, try-learn: it's a continuous evolutionary approach. You can test quickly and obtain information just as quickly. In other words, it's a good way to acquire know-how>>.

This is also the "oldest" role that Lorenzo Bertelli has held in the company, starting right from digital innovation, given his age and the company's strategic requirements. At its first post-Covid show, Prada surpassed other brands in integrating, in an entirely unpredictable way, the digital show experience with a return to in-person events, creating two simultaneous catwalks, in Milan and Shanghai, which doubled the experience, with an effective temporal shift and mutual reverberation. <<We couldn't go back to the old way of doing things, we needed a hybrid solution: I've never seen the virtual as an alternative to or in competition with the physical. It is just an extra ingredient within the same recipe. As if we were in one of those TV cooking shows and the challenge was to add another ingredient. You are forced to use all of the ingredients you already have, but each time they give you another one. Essentially, the future will include the elements that are already here plus others that will be added. We will have to make a dish that includes and balances them all, and which also tastes good. In fact, better than before>>.

We started from the ancient Greeks and ended with MasterChef, but the recipe (and it must be said) stays the same: experimenting to learn. I consider every point of view, even the most different from mine (due to age, background, training) and try to incorporate it. I have clear ideas, but I'm willing to change them. Even with respect to my biggest passion: <<The electric car. This will be an essential and fundamental step over the long term. Once we resolve all of the collateral problems, there will be no other means of transport>>. The driver in me is speaking, the only Italian to race in the top category of the WRC: «It is the right direction, and motorsport will most certainly not be a problem!>>. You need to want the impossible, for the impossible to occur. But this is Heraclitus once again. We'll talk again (about the possible, impossible and probable) in three years. □HTSI

FLEXIBILITY PRADA GROUP, www.pradagroup.com

ANNIVERSARIES

Invitation to Galleria

Revisiting a leather classic with a story that combines cinema and fashion.

Galleria is a neoclassical archetype of Prada. The bag, about to celebrate 15 years, has changed imperceptibly over time. After all, it takes its name from the location of the historic shop in Milan, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, still home to the boutique where the brand was founded by Mario Prada, Miuccia's grandfather, in 1913. The design is clean and innately pragmatic, a balance of

form and function, with a simple curved handle. It gave rise to those timeless signs, which bring together elements of the company's historic craftsmanship but reflect contemporary needs. And it carries with it a vocation: to last for a long time and be used regularly and shared. It debuted in Saffiano leather, a scratch-resistant, water-resistant calf leather, with a cross-hatch texture. Patented by Mario Prada, the pattern is machine-pressed into the wax coating the leather, giving it a slight sheen and giving the colour a vibrant, saturated hue. There are eight shades in the winter 2021-22 collection: the classics, plus shades with poetic names such as petal, astral, fire and cameo. Three sizes: mini, medium and large, comprising 83 individual pieces, with a trio of parallel compartments inside. Called upon to revisit the bag this season were actress Hunter Schafer, included by Time in its Next list of 100 people under 21 who are shaping the future, and 30-year-old Canadian director Xavier Dolan. The possibility of expressing one's own vision through the lens, independently, led to a short film on cinematography and fashion. Galleria, like a talisman, is a constant presence, a sort of obsession/dream, which does not have just one narrative, but rather captures thoughts, loves, and emotions interacting with one another. (n.f.)

Caption page 28

Above, two views of the factory-garden of the Prada Group in Valvigna (Arezzo), where architecture by Guido Canali explores the relationship between the buildings and the freedom of the natural elements. On the side page, Lorenzo Bertelli, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility and Marketing Director of the Group. Degree in Philosophy and rally driver, he was born in 1988 on May 10, the same day as his mother Miuccia Prada.

Caption page 30

Above background, cutting of leather in the Tuscan laboratories in Valvigna. A freeze-frame of the men's spring/summer 22 video-show, recorded outdoors at Cala Zafferano and Cala Luna, in Sardinia. Above, a shot of the women's spring/summer 22 show, held simultaneously live in Milan and Shanghai last September.

Caption page 32

Top left, one of the 80 Miu Miu Upcycled pieces. The project, presented exactly one year ago, follows a circular fashion model and is based on recycling and reuse of materials, made with vintage clothing pieces selected from between the 1930s and 1980s, deconstructed and remodelled according to the brand's style. Above left, the Galleria bag, medium size, in Saffiano leather, PRADA (€ 2,200). Next to it, an image from the short movie created by director Xavier Dolan as a tribute to the bag.



REUTERS NEXT-Prada's heir designate vows to keep group in family hands

By Lisa Jucca
4 MIN READ

VALVIGNA, Italy, Nov 25 (Reuters) - Lorenzo Bertelli, the eldest son and heir designate to Prada's Chief Executive Patrizio Bertelli, vowed to keep the family-controlled luxury fashion group independent when he takes the reins [here](#) in a few years, he told Reuters.

Lorenzo Bertelli, a 33-year old former rally driver, is currently Prada's marketing chief and has helped bolster the group's digital business, which aims to account 15% of retail sales in the medium term from just 2% before the pandemic.

At an investor presentation [here](#) last week, his father officially crowned him as his successor, saying he could hand over to him in three to four years.

Earlier this year, Patrizio Bertelli described Lorenzo as a "key element in the turnaround of the group" that he and his wife, top fashion designer Miuccia Prada, put in place to revive sales.

The revamp strategy, which has focused on moving Prada upmarket by eliminating mark-downs and cutting wholesale distribution, has paid off and Prada is often cited by rival groups as an attractive potential prey.

However, like his father, Lorenzo Bertelli said the Hong Kong-listed group - in which the family has an 80% stake - was not up for sale.



“This is a question for my parents but for me, absolutely yes,” he said in an interview that will air in full at the upcoming Reuters Next conference on Dec.1, when asked whether he wanted to keep the group in the hands of the family.

“I do not see other directions, also because I hope to have still a long path ahead and so I have to do something with my life. So I would like to stay independent,” he added, speaking at the group’s industrial headquarters and prototyping centre in Valvigna, in Tuscany.

He did not rule out acquiring other brands, saying there were no opportunities for the time being, but “tomorrow we do not know.”

And he dismissed, at least for the time being, the possibility of the group’s main labels - Prada and the younger line Miu Miu - selling on Amazon.com, which is seeking to lure prestigious luxury names to its platform.

“We tried with one of our smallest brands (Car Shoe) just to have a try,” he said. “We don’t think at the moment Amazon is ready for the bigger brands ... We don’t see either Prada or Miu Miu on the Amazon platform at the moment.”

Instead, he reiterated that Prada could be interested in taking a stake in a joint e-commerce venture that Cartier-owner Richemont and U.S.-listed online retailer Farfetch are discussing.

Richemont said earlier this month it was in advanced talks with Farfetch about selling it a minority stake in its online business Yoox Net-a-Porter (YNAP). It added it would also invite other firms to participate in turning YNAP into an industry-wide platform with no overall controlling shareholder.

A direct investment in the platform “could be an opportunity,” Bertelli said.



The group last week unveiled a medium-term goal of raising its operating profit margin to 20% of sales, below that of bigger competitors like Louis Vuitton or Gucci and Prada's own profitability margin of 27% in its heyday.

Bertelli said that in the long term the group could go back to that kind of profitability level. But he said Prada preferred to give itself reasonable goals and when possible do even better, rather than aim too high and risk disappointing.

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Writing by Claudia Cristoferi, editing by Silvia Aloisi and Nick Zieminski




BUSINESS STORY

17 DÉCEMBRE 2021



PRADA, PRÉPARER L'APRÈS MIUCCIA

Par Pierre de Gasquet
Photographe: Isabella Balena 

Lorenzo Bertelli, qui devrait prendre la tête du groupe en 2024, photographié à la Fondation Prada, à Milan. Derrière lui, une maquette du site, une ancienne distillerie de gin réhabilitée pendant dix ans par Rem Koolhaas et ses équipes.



Miuccia Prada, la créatrice, entre dans l'entreprise de maroquinerie de son grand-père Mario Prada à la fin des années 1970. Elle en fera un fleuron de la mode « made in Italy »...

Son ombre discrète plane toujours sur la griffe la plus intello de la mode italienne. À 72 ans, Miuccia Prada règne encore sur les collections, avec le créateur belge Raf Simons. Mais, c'est officiel depuis peu, son fils aîné, Lorenzo, devrait reprendre la barre en 2024. Confidences d'un trentenaire qui a fait du grand virage écologique une de ses priorités.

C

e jour-là, Miuccia Prada a délaissé son bébé préféré. Elle a déserté le cinéma favori de Wes Anderson et de Quentin Tarantino à Milan. Un écrin de velours cousu main, conçu par Rem Koolhaas, l'architecte fétiche de la maison, au siège de la Fondation du groupe. Les chiffres et les prévisions, ce n'est pas pour la Madone du minimalisme. Pas question de se mêler au raout d'analystes qui s'y tient, fût-il présidé par son mari, Patrizio Bertelli. Comme toutes les stars qui entretiennent un halo de mystère, elle s'est contentée d'envoyer un message vidéo où elle livre les ressorts de son tandem créatif avec le styliste belge Raf Simons, dans un croustillant accent anglo-italien plein de chatolements. *Basta così...*

Pourtant, si Miuccia avait été là, elle aurait pu assister à une scène d'anthologie, digne d'un film d'Antonioni ou de Fellini. Où le fringant héritier à la chevelure ondulante, son propre fils Lorenzo, 33 ans, s'est vu intronisé à l'improviste par un « padre padrone » de 75 ans, à la fois fier et contrarié, sous l'œil médusé des analystes.

... avec Patrizio Bertelli, fabricant de ceintures et de sacs qui avait copié ses modèles, et qui deviendra son mari.



Il fallait voir le dauphin couvrir d'un air mi-inquiet, mi-attendri, son père Patrizio annonçant, en pleine bourrasque, être prêt à lui céder la barre à l'horizon de trois ans.

«*Io non ci credo...*» («*Moi, je n'y crois pas!*»), a aussitôt lâché Lorenzo le modeste, en guise de boutade. Zen, forcément zen, le dauphin sait qu'il faudra compter avec les cabrioles de l'Arétin, connu pour ses ires légendaires. Costume bleu roi sur chemise blanche à col anglais, l'actuel Chief Marketing officer (CMO) Lorenzo Bertelli, qui a fait son entrée au conseil de Prada il y a huit mois, s'exprime dans un anglais impeccable. Volubile, plutôt sûr de lui mais sans arrogance, il a hérité de la verve de son père, en plus posé. «*Pour le moment, un seul des deux frères s'est présenté, son cadet Giulio est un autre numéro*», badine de son côté Patrizio Bertelli. Mais le message est clair : après un sévère trou d'air en 2020 et un début de reprise encourageant, la marque la plus convoitée du «made in Italy», fondée en 1913 par le grand-père de Miuccia, Mario Prada, entend jouer la pérennité familiale.

En marge de la récente arrivée de Paolo Zannoni (ex-Dolce & Gabbana et Goldman Sachs) à la présidence du groupe pour trois ans, Miuccia Prada a transféré la nue-propriété de ses actions de Prada Holding, la société qui contrôle 80% du capital du groupe, à ses fils, Lorenzo et Giulio. Une manière de dire que le groupe, qui inclut aussi Miu Miu, Church's et Car Shoe, n'est pas à vendre. «*L'histoire ne s'achète pas et nous avons construit une identité de marque mieux que tous nos concurrents*», martèle Patrizio Bertelli, dix ans après la cotation à Hong Kong. Comme pour mieux souligner sa volonté de garder son indépendance. Malgré une perte nette de 54 millions d'euros en 2020, sur un chiffre d'affaires en chute de 24% (à 2,42 milliards d'euros), Prada a redressé la barre cette année grâce à ses résultats en Chine et en Asie.

Mais on est encore loin des résultats record de l'année 2011, où Prada et Miu Miu caracolaient sur les marchés asiatiques. Et le choix de la cotation à Hong Kong est aujourd'hui perçu comme un frein, voire un

handicap, par certains observateurs.

«*Le contrôle du groupe est encore entre les mains de mes parents. Le transfert de la nue-propriété ne change rien*», minimise Lorenzo Bertelli, installé dans un grand bureau dépouillé au siège du groupe qui jouxte la Fondation Prada (voir encadré p. 32). Pour Luca Solca, du cabinet Bernstein, un des meilleurs analystes du secteur, basé à Genève, «*la montée en charge de Lorenzo Bertelli est un facteur positif. Depuis son arrivée, Prada est déjà passé à la vitesse supérieure dans le marketing et le numérique, tout en nouant aussi des collaborations importantes avec Adidas*».

FOU DE VITESSE

À 33 ans, le jeune dauphin, diplômé en philosophie de l'université privée San Raffaele à Milan, a hérité à la fois du côté sportif de son autodidacte de père – grand passionné de voile arrivé deux fois en finale de l'America's Cup avec son voilier *Luna Rossa* – et «*intello*» de la mère, l'ancienne étudiante en sciences



politiques que l'on croisait dans les manifestations féministes dans les années 1970. En un peu moins rebelle. Il a au moins un point commun avec Barbara Berlusconi, la fille cadette de Silvio Berlusconi : tous deux ont eu comme professeur de philosophie l'ancien maire de Venise, Massimo Cacciari, un ex-communiste, spécialiste de Nietzsche et de Giotto, rallié au centre.

Mordu de ski, de courses automobiles et de motos – avec Tom Cruise, Lorenzo Bertelli a été l'un des premiers à enfourcher la Vyrus, un des modèles les plus puissants au monde fabriqués en Émilie-Romagne –, ce pilote de rallye a dû sacrifier sa passion à la raison familiale en 2017. Contrairement à son jeune frère, Giulio, 30 ans, passionné de voile comme son père et membre de l'équipe du *Luna Rossa*, en compétition pour l'America's Cup.

Finis le Rallye de Monte-Carlo en Ford Fiesta... « *Je ne regrette pas les choix que j'ai faits* », assure l'aîné des frères Bertelli. Après avoir démarré comme responsable de la communication numérique et de l'innovation, il a été nommé directeur du marketing en 2019, et directeur RSE (responsabilité sociétale et environnementale) du groupe, l'année suivante. À ce titre, il est chargé de piloter la transition de l'entreprise dans une industrie encore considérée comme l'une des plus polluantes au monde, avec quelque 100 milliards de vêtements vendus chaque année à l'échelle du globe et des dizaines de milliers de tonnes de déchets textiles déversés dans le désert d'Atacama, au Chili, devenu la « poubelle mondiale de la fast fashion ».

À première vue, le côté posé de Lorenzo tranche avec le style éruptif de son père – connu pour avoir fait voler en éclats les phares des voitures de ses employés mal garés au siège du groupe. Dans la famille Prada, il y a Patrizio le volcanique et Miuccia la rebelle. Un cocktail souvent explosif, mais aussi à la base de leur succès. Le dauphin n'élude pas le sujet. « *Mieux vaut avoir un climat pétillant qu'un calme plat et monotone.* » Quant à l'ambiance familiale parfois tumultueuse, il y voit surtout le « sel de la vie... » « *Tous les deux sont des personnalités créatives, parfois un peu trop* », concède-t-il, avec un zeste

L'OMBRE DES AGNELLI SUR LE « MADE IN ITALY »

On peut comprendre pourquoi Prada éprouve le besoin de réaffirmer son indépendance au moment où des acteurs de poids se penchent sur le secteur. Selon Reuters, la société d'investissement des

Agnelli aurait déjà approché, en juillet 2021, le groupe de Giorgio Armani, 87 ans, en vue d'un rapprochement. Tout en insistant sur leurs « excellentes relations », en particulier à travers Ferrari, le président

d'Exor, John Elkann, a voulu couper court aux spéculations, le 30 novembre, en rappelant que la griffe milanaise (valorisée à 6 milliards d'euros) n'est pas à vendre. La société des Agnelli n'a pas dit son dernier mot dans le luxe. Après

sa récente entrée, en mars, au capital du chausseur Louboutin, pour un prix record (24% pour 541 millions d'euros), la dynastie turinoise ne cache pas son intérêt pour le « made in Italy ». Outre la reprise de Shang Xia, la griffe de luxe

chinoise créée en 2010 par la designer Jiang Qiong Er, en partenariat avec Hermès, Exor a conclu, en septembre 2021, un accord de partenariat à long terme avec le studio LoveFrom de l'ex-designer d'Apple, Jony Ive, pour

mener un certain nombre de projets créatifs. D'autant qu'après la vente du réassureur PartnerRe au français Covéa, en octobre, Exor dispose d'une cagnotte de 9 milliards d'euros pour sa diversification.

de malice. Comme tant d'autres, il a apprécié l'hilarante série « Succession » de Jesse Armstrong diffusée sur HBO, directement inspirée de la vie de Rupert Murdoch. Mais il n'en tire pas de loi implacable. « *Chaque famille a son histoire et sa dynamique. Pour ma part, je me considère comme plutôt chanceux sur ce plan. Le verre est plus qu'à moitié plein.* »

Pour l'heure, la division du travail est claire. Comme directeur du marketing, Lorenzo Bertelli dialogue régulièrement avec sa mère et voit Raf Simons tous les mois. Mais il s'occupe surtout du développement numérique et de la stratégie de durabilité du groupe. « *Je ne suis pas un styliste, je laisse faire les créatifs, même si je collabore beaucoup avec eux. Comme mon père, je travaille plutôt sur la partie organisationnelle.* » Pour autant, il s'intéresse aussi de près à l'identité de la marque. « *Notre travail est justement d'expliquer aux nouvelles générations l'identité de la marque et son ADN. Les valeurs de Prada sont toujours les mêmes, ce que nous appelons dans notre jargon la "Prada-ness", c'est-à-dire son caractère polyédrique: c'est l'unique marque qui peut être crédible à la fois sur le sportswear, la tradition et le modernisme.* »

EXTENSION DU DOMAINE DU LUXE

Pour bien comprendre les racines milanaises de Prada, il faut visiter son magasin historique de la grande galerie Vittorio Emanuele II à Milan, le temple néoclassique de la mode italienne entre le Dôme et la Scala. Là où le grand-père de Miuccia, Mario Prada et son frère avaient ouvert leur première boutique, Fratelli Prada, il y a plus d'un siècle. Une boutique culte de 1500 m² dont le loyer annuel, versé à la ville, est de 2,2 millions d'euros. Née Maria Bianchi – elle a repris le nom de son oncle en se faisant adopter par sa tante –, l'ancienne militante communiste rencontre en 1977, sur le stand d'une foire professionnelle, Patrizio, un obscur fabricant de ceintures et de sacs, né à Arezzo, qui a copié ses modèles. Le premier « choc » électrique entre le Taureau et le Bélier. Ils se marieront dix ans plus tard et fusionneront leurs sociétés pour donner naissance au nouveau groupe Prada en 2003. « *Ils se disputent comme des animaux, mais sont parfaitement complémentaires. Elle est tout intellect et idées et lui la ramène sur terre* », confiera l'historien d'art Germano Celant, un proche du couple qui dirige la Fondation et a été victime du Covid en 2020 (1).

En réalité, l'un et l'autre s'accordent sur l'essentiel : défier les notions de bon et de mauvais goût. Ni lui ni elle n'ont jamais été très à l'aise avec le concept d'« industrie du luxe ». L'ancienne étudiante en sciences politiques préfère parler d'idées et de beauté. « *J'aime la beauté et le travail que je fais, je suis heureuse d'afficher la richesse et la profondeur des produits du travail collectif, mais pour moi, ce n'est pas quelque chose de cher à exhiber* », confiait-elle à la mi-novembre, à Milan, aux côtés de Raf Simons. Celle qui a introduit le Nylon dans le domaine de la mode avec son fameux sac Vela

À gauche, en haut : vue de la « maison hantée », espace d'expositions entièrement doré à la feuille, au sein de la Fondation Prada. En bas : défilé printemps-été 2022.

Ci-dessous : Miuccia Prada et Raf Simons (arrivé en 2020) partagent la création artistique de la griffe. En bas : le magasin historique dans la galerie Vittorio Emanuele II à Milan.

noir Pocono en 1984 n'a jamais renoncé à son regard ironique sur le luxe, quitte à revendiquer hautement son approche décapante du « ugly chic » (le chic moche) ou du « pretty ugly » dans les années 1990... « *Nous restons fidèles à l'ADN de Prada. Mais le "ugly chic" est davantage un terme pour les spécialistes* », concède aujourd'hui le fils de Miuccia Prada. « *Geek chic" est aussi une composante de notre identité.* »

Car la maison Prada se veut aujourd'hui à la pointe des nouvelles tendances. « *La pandémie a accéléré certaines tendances, comme la croissance des ventes en ligne et l'intégration entre physique et numérique* », explique Patrizio Bertelli.

Un défi pour Lorenzo qui a déjà lancé une



LA FONDATION, UN LABORATOIRE MUSÉE AU SERVICE DU GROUPE

C'est son bébé à part entière. Miuccia Prada voulait la localiser en Chine ou aux États-Unis. Son mari, Patrizio, l'a convaincue de l'installer dans la proche périphérie de Milan, dans une ancienne distillerie. En six ans, la Fondation Prada, conçue par l'archi-star néerlandais Rem Koolhaas, est devenue à la fois un écrin pour l'immense collection d'art contemporain du couple, mais aussi un laboratoire. « On dit



Flippers et juke-box rétro dans le bar Luce, imaginé par le cinéaste américain Wes Anderson pour la Fondation Prada.

souvent que si on pouvait faire la Fondation sans faire des sacs à main, on le ferait, plaisante Lorenzo Bertelli. Mais c'est une forme de divertissement très sérieux.» Inaugurée en 2015, la Fondation

Prada à Milan est pratiquement devenue un des piliers culturels de la capitale lombarde avec le musée de Brera, la Triennale et la Scala, sans compter son antenne à Venise, au palazzo Corner della Regina. Le clou

de la Fondation est le Studio d'Orphée de Jean-Luc Godard. Une reconstitution minutieuse de son studio d'enregistrement et de montage qui se visite uniquement sur rendez-vous.

plate-forme de communication numérique pour toutes les marques du groupe (Church's, Car Shoe, Miu Miu...) créée en 2017 ainsi qu'une autre plate-forme d'e-commerce. Prada a aussi commencé à revoir son réseau de distribution en Chine. Mais la question est également celle du renouveau créatif de la griffe. À cet égard, « l'arrivée de Raf Simons [comme codirecteur créatif, NDLR] a beaucoup aidé car c'est un grand expérimentateur, estime Fabiana Giacomotti, spécialiste des sciences de la mode à l'université Sapienza de Rome. Avec Miuccia Prada, il forme un tandem très original. Ce sont deux super-intellectuels. »

Annoncée à la veille de la pandémie, l'alliance avec le créateur belge a produit ses premières collections en 2021. « La collaboration avec Raf Simons a été bien accueillie et fonctionne bien, remarque Luca Solca. Même si Prada garde une forte identité, toutes les marques qui ont misé sur l'arrivée de nouveaux créatifs (Gucci, Valentino, Dior...) en ont énormément profité. » Lorenzo Bertelli confirme. « Nous y avons beaucoup réfléchi en famille: c'est une forme de collaboration très profonde qui est une première absolue dans le secteur de la mode, une

confrontation très stimulante pour tous les deux. » Il reste à voir comment Miu Miu, la « petite sœur » anticonformiste de Prada lancée en 1993, sur laquelle Miuccia Prada garde seule la haute main, peut trouver un second souffle face à son ralentissement.

L'avenir de Prada passe aussi par le commerce électronique et la transition écologique, deux domaines où Lorenzo Bertelli a déjà largement pris ses marques. « Pour Prada, c'est une priorité culturelle. Le réchauffement climatique est devenu un thème très sensible en Italie, ne serait-ce que parce que nous en ressentons déjà les effets concrets à Venise ou dans le sud du pays, avec les problèmes de sécheresse. » Pour lui, même le greenwashing a son utilité. « Comme pour tout changement culturel, il faut en parler. C'est important qu'il y ait un débat. Le greenwashing a eu son effet positif en obligeant de nombreuses entreprises à parler d'un thème qu'elles étaient réticentes à aborder, plaide Lorenzo Bertelli. C'est normal dans un processus de transition. Greta Thunberg a aussi joué son rôle. Tous les fonds d'investissement vont dans la bonne direction, même si ce n'est pas assez rapide. L'important,

c'est le changement de cap. » Parmi les chantiers concrets qui lui tiennent à cœur, il évoque Sea Beyond, un programme éducatif sur la préservation de l'océan lancé en partenariat avec l'Unesco, et surtout son projet Re-Nylon, lancé en 2019.

CAP SUR LE NYLON RECYCLABLE

L'initiative s'inscrit dans le cadre du grand virage écoresponsable de Prada, lancé il y a deux ans. En guise de contribution à la transition écologique, comme la plupart des groupes de mode, Prada a mis le turbo sur ses engagements RSE (Responsabilité sociétale et environnementale) en visant un objectif de réduction de 29% de ses émissions de gaz à effet de serre d'ici à 2026. Mais le groupe milanais a aussi fait du Nylon recyclable le fer de lance de sa politique de développement durable. À partir de la fin de l'année, tous ses accessoires en Nylon seront fabriqués à partir d'un matériau recyclé, appelé Econyl, lancé avec le producteur de textile italien Aquafil, sous la ligne baptisée Re-Nylon (voir encadré p. 34).

« Cette initiative est la preuve que l'on peut faire quelque chose de durable pour notre planète qui est pertinent en termes de revenus », insiste Lorenzo Bertelli. Le lancement des premières collections en Nylon recyclé est même une de ses grandes fiertés. « Ce projet permet de régénérer un tissu à l'infini sans perte de qualité. C'est une évolution naturelle de la recherche et de l'innovation du groupe. Historiquement, nous avons introduit un matériau "pauvre" dans le domaine du luxe en le transformant en matériau "iconique" pour la marque dans les années 1990 et maintenant nous en avons fait une fibre

« durable. L'objectif est de convertir toute la production du Nylon en matériau renouvelable d'ici la fin 2021. » Mais ce n'est qu'un début. « Notre priorité est de valoriser les déchets de l'industrie. Nous sommes prêts à utiliser toute fibre qui puisse être durable. »

Un Prada plus vert que jamais pour préparer l'après Miuccia ? « Lorenzo peut garantir la continuité de la famille au sens large. Mais il est difficile de concevoir Prada sans Miuccia », confie Gian Luigi Paracchini, le biographe de Miuccia Prada. Et si Patrizio Bertelli fait un pas en arrière, il aura encore besoin d'un dirigeant fort pour le remplacer. » Judicieux il y a dix ans, le choix de la cotation à Hong Kong pourrait se révéler pénalisant à moyen terme, compte tenu du contexte géopolitique. « Prada reste l'une des marques les plus innovantes en Italie avec Moncler et contrôle mieux que d'autres sa distribution directe à travers son propre réseau de magasins », estime Luca Solca. « Longtemps idolâtrée en Asie, l'image de Prada a un peu perdu de son éclat sous l'impact du boom de Gucci, avec l'arrivée d'Alessandro Michele qui a bouleversé le lexique de la mode », nuance un autre observateur italien, sous le sceau de l'anonymat.

« JOUER COLLECTIF »

Prada sous la pression de la maison au « double G » reprise par Pinault (Kering) en 1999 ? La récente entrée du super-banquier d'affaires, Yoël Zaoui (ex-Goldman Sachs) au conseil de Prada pourrait être interprétée comme un signal. Quinze ans après avoir revendu Jil Sander, Helmut Lang et Azzedine Alaïa, la maison Prada semble désormais vaccinée en termes d'acquisitions. Seul le chausseur britannique Church's figure encore sur son tableau de chasse. L'heure est plutôt aux partenariats. « Nous sommes entrés dans l'ère des collaborations : nous devons chercher à créer des synergies pour atteindre des objectifs communs comme ceux sur le changement climatique », reconnaît Lorenzo Bertelli. « L'industrie italienne a intérêt à jouer collectif face aux géants de la distribution. Collaborer ne veut pas dire ne pas se faire concurrence, mais au moins éviter de perdre son temps dans des combats stériles », ajoute-t-il en citant les excellents rapports du groupe avec Zegna.

Dans un autre registre, Prada s'est allié, en avril, à LVMH et Cartier (Richemont) pour lancer une plate-forme blockchain dédiée à la lutte contre les contrefaçons. Mais pour Bertelli père et fils, les dynasties italiennes (les Salvatore Ferragamo, Armani, Moncler ou Zegna...) peuvent encore jouer la carte des synergies, sans passer forcément par les fusions-acquisitions. Et elles ont le cuir plus



épais qu'il ne semble. Pour preuve, les déboires passés de la famille Gucci, récemment ressuscités par le « biopic » de Ridley Scott, *House of Gucci*, avec Adam Driver et Lady Gaga, n'ont pas empêché l'autre fleuron du « made in Italy » de renaître de ses cendres. Prada connaît d'ailleurs bien le sujet puisque le groupe avait repris, temporairement, 9,5% du capital de son rival florentin en 1998.

« Le problème de l'Italie, c'est qu'elle prête souvent le flanc à la caricature, déplore aujourd'hui le dauphin de Miuccia et de Patrizio. La saga Gucci a été une dynamique privée non représentative du pays. C'est une excellente caricature très divertissante, mais cela reste une caricature. » Le diable ne s'habille pas seulement en Prada... ●

(1) Cité dans « Vita Prada », de Gian Luigi Paracchini. Éditions Baldini + Castoldi, 2019.

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LE NYLON, FIBRE CLEF POUR LA TRANSITION

Créer des produits de luxe griffés à partir de déchets de fibres textiles : rien n'arrête la créativité de la maison Prada. Dès 1984, Miuccia Prada avait fait du Nylon un vecteur d'innovation en lançant son sac à dos noir en toile de parachute, au logo ultra-discret. À la fin des années 1990, le Nylon devient une marque de fabrique et donne naissance à la ligne Linea Rossa en 1997. En 2019, Prada présente sa première collection d'accessoires en Nylon écoresponsable issu du recyclage et de la purification du plastique récolté dans les océans et les décharges ou de filets de pêche abandonnés et des déchets de fibres textiles. Un an plus tard, Prada lance sa première collection de prêt-à-porter en Nylon recyclé, baptisée Re-Nylon : vestes, parkas, doudounes ou blousons... Objectif : utiliser exclusivement ce matériau recyclé pour la fin 2021.

Lorenzo Bertelli a fait du Nylon recyclé un fer de lance de la stratégie de développement durable du groupe, comme avec ce sac à dos de la gamme Re-Nylon.



ENG

Its discreet shadow still hangs over the most intellectual label of Italian fashion. At 72 years old, Miuccia Prada still reigns over the collections, with the Belgian designer Raf Simons. It has been recently formalized that his eldest son, Lorenzo, should take the helm of the Company in 2024.

Confidences of a thirty-three year-old who has made the great ecological shift one of his priorities.

That day, Miuccia Prada abandoned her favorite “baby” (ndr Fondazione Prada). She deserted the favorite cinema of Wes Anderson and Quentin Tarantino in Milan, a hand-sewn velvet case, designed by Rem Koolhaas, the Maison’s favorite architect, at the headquarters of the Group's Fondazione Prada. Numbers and forecasts are not for the Queen of minimalism. There is no question of mingling with the forecasts and questions of analysts that take place there, even if her husband, Patrizio Bertelli, chairs it. Like all stars who maintain a halo of mystery, she contented herself with a registered video conversation on the Prada vision with her creative tandem Belgian stylist Raf Simons, in a crisp Anglo-Italian accent full of shimmers. “*Basta cosi...*” However, if Miuccia had been there, she could have attended a scene of anthology, worthy of an Antonioni or Fellini film. Where the dashing heir with wavy hair, his own son Lorenzo, 33, was suddenly enthroned by a 75-year-old “*padre padrone*”, both proud and upset, under the dumbfounded eye of analysts.

You should have seen the dolphin brooding with a half-worried, half-moved air, as his father Patrizio announcing, in the midst of a squall, that he was ready to cede the helm to him on the horizon of three years.

“Io non ci credo...” (“I don't believe it!”), Lorenzo immediately responded, as a joke. Zen, necessarily Zen, the dolphin knows that he will have to reckon with the antics of the Aretin, known for his legendary ires. Royal blue suit on a white shirt with an English collar, the current Head of Marketing Lorenzo Bertelli, who joined Prada BoD eight months ago, speaks an impeccable English. Talkative, confident but without arrogance, he inherited his father's verve, in addition to being calm. “For the moment, only one of the two brothers has come forward, his younger brother Giulio is another story, for his part jokes Patrizio Bertelli. However, the message is clear: after a severe soft spot in 2020 and an encouraging start to the recovery, the most coveted “Made in Italy” brand, founded in 1913 by Miuccia's grandfather, Mario Prada, intends to play family business.

On the sidelines of the recent arrival of Paolo Zannoni (ex-Dolce & Gabbana and Goldman Sachs) as Chairman of the Group for three years, Miuccia Prada transferred the bare ownership of its shares to Prada Holding, the Company which controls 80% of the capital of the group, to her sons, Lorenzo and Giulio. One way of saying that the Group, which also includes Miu Miu, Church's and Car Shoe, is not for sale. “History cannot be bought and we have built a brand identity better than all of our competitors,” insists Patrizio Bertelli, ten years after listing in Hong Kong, as if to underline its desire to maintain its independence. Despite a net loss of 54 million euros in 2020, on a turnover down 24% (to 2.42 billion euros), Prada raised the bar this year thanks to its results in

China and Asia. However, we are still far from the record results of 2011, when Prada and Miu Miu pranced on the Asian markets. In addition, the choice of listing in Hong Kong is now seen as an obstacle, even a handicap, by some observers. “Control of the Group is still in the hands of my parents. The transfer of the bare ownership of shares does not change anything”, minimizes Lorenzo Bertelli, installed in a large stripped office at the head office of the Group which is right next to the Fondazione Prada. For Luca Solca, from Bernstein firm, one of the best analysts in the sector who is based in Geneva, “Lorenzo Bertelli's rise in charge is a positive factor. Since his arrival, Prada has already moved up a gear in marketing and digital, while also forging important collaborations with Adidas”.

Fan of speed, at 33 years old, with a degree in philosophy from the San Raffele University in Milan, Lorenzo inherited both the sporting side of his self-taught father - a great sailing enthusiast who arrived twice in the final of the America's Cup with her sailboat Luna Rossa - and mother's “intellectuality”, the former political science student we met in feminist protests in the 1970s. A little less rebellious. He has at least one point in common with Barbara Berlusconi, the youngest daughter of Silvio Berlusconi: both had as philosophy professor the former mayor of Venice, Massimo Cacciari, an ex-communist, specialist of Nietzsche and Giotto, rallied to the center.

Passionate about skiing, racing and motorcycles - along with Tom Cruise - Lorenzo Bertelli was one of the first to ride the Vyrus, one of the most powerful motor models in the world made in Emilia-Romagna - this rally driver had to put on th side his passion for

family reasons in 2017, unlike his younger brother, Giulio, 30, passionate about sailing like his father and a member of the Luna Rossa team, competing for the America's Cup.

The Monte-Carlo Rally in a Ford Fiesta is over... "I don't regret the choices I made", assures the elder brother Bertelli. After starting as Head of Digital Communication, he was appointed Marketing Director in 2019, and CSR Director (Social and Environmental Responsibility) of the Group the following year. As such, he is responsible for leading the Company's transition into an industry still considered as being one of the most polluting in the world, with some 100 billion garments sold each year around the globe and tens of thousands tons of textile waste dumped in the Atacama Desert in Chile, which has become the "global fast fashion landfill". At first glance, Lorenzo's posed side contrasts with the eruptive style of his father - known for shattering the headlights of his employees' cars badly parked at the group's headquarters. In the Prada family, there is Patrizio the volcanic and Miuccia the rebel. An often-explosive cocktail, but also the basis of their success. The dolphin does not evade the subject. "Better to have a sparkling climate than a flat and monotonous calm." As for the sometimes tumultuous family atmosphere, he sees it above all as the "salt of life" ... "Both are creative personalities, sometimes a little too much", he concedes, with enthusiasm.

THE SHADE OF THE AGNELLI'S IN THE "MADE IN ITALY" - We can understand why Prada feels the need to reaffirm its independence at a time when major players are looking into the sector. According to Reuters, the Agnelli investment company has already approached, in July 2021, the group of Giorgio Armani, 87, for a merger. While insisting on their "excellent relations", in particular through Ferrari, the president of Exor, John

Elkann, wanted to cut short the speculations, on November 30th, by recalling that the Milanese brand (valued at 6 billion euros) is not for sale. The Agnelli Company has not said its last word in luxury, though. After its recent entry, in March 2021, in the capital of the shoe manufacturer Louboutin, for a record price (24% for 541 million euros), the Turin dynasty does not hide its interest in "Made in Italy". In addition to the takeover of Shang Xia, the Chinese luxury brand created in 2010 by designer Jiang Qiong Er, in partnership with Hermès, Exor concluded, in September 2021, a long-term partnership agreement with the studio LoveFrom of the former Apple designer Jony Ive to lead a number of creative projects. Especially since, after the sale of the reinsurer PartnerRe to the French Covéa, in October 2021, Exor has a pot of 9 billion euros for its diversification.

Like so many others, Lorenzo enjoyed Jesse Armstrong's hilarious "Succession" series aired on HBO, directly inspired by the life of Rupert Murdoch, but he does not derive an implacable law from it. "Each family has its history and its dynamics. I consider myself rather lucky in this regard. The glass is more than half-full". For now, the tasks are clear. As Marketing Director, Lorenzo Bertelli talks regularly with his mother and sees Raf Simons every month. However, he is mainly responsible for the digital development and the Group's sustainability strategy. "I'm not a designer; I let the creatives do it, even if I collaborate a lot with them. Like my father, I work more on the organizational part". Nevertheless, he is also very interested in the identity of the brand: "Our job is precisely to explain the brand's identity and its DNA to new generations. Prada's values are always the same, what we call in our jargon the "Prada-ness", that is to say its polyhedral character: it is the only brand that can be at the same time credible for sportswear, tradition and modernism".

EXTENSION OF THE LUXURY FIELD – In order to fully understand Prada's Milanese roots, one must visit its historic store in the Vittorio Emanuele II arcade in Milan, the neoclassical temple of Italian fashion between the Duomo and La Scala. Where Miuccia's grandfather, Mario Prada and his brother opened their first boutique, Fratelli Prada, over a century ago. A cult store of 1500mq² whose annual rent, paid to the city, is 2.2 million euros. Born as Maria Bianchi – Miuccia took the name of her uncle by being adopted by her aunt. The former communist activist met in 1977, on the stand of a trade fair, Patrizio, an obscure manufacturer of belts and bags, born to Arezzo, who copied her grandfather's product models. The first electric "shock" between Taurus and Aries. They married ten years later and merged their companies to give birth to the new Prada in 2003. "They argue, but are perfectly complementary. She is all intellect and ideas and he brings her back to earth ", confided art historian Germano Celant, a close friend of the couple who run the Foundation, before passing away due to Covid in 2020.

In reality, they both agree on the essential: to challenge the notions of good and bad taste. Neither one has ever been very comfortable with the concept of the "luxury industry". The former political science student prefers to talk about ideas and beauty. "I love the beauty and the work that I do, I am happy to display the richness and depth of the products of collective work, but for me, it is not something to show", she confided in mid-November, in Milan, alongside Raf Simons. The one who introduced Nylon into the fashion industry with her famous black Vela Pocono backpack in 1984 has never given up her ironic look at luxury, even if it means loudly claiming her stripping approach to "ugly chic" or "pretty ugly" in the 1990s... "We remain true to Prada's DNA. But "ugly chic" is more a term for specialists", says Lorenzo, today "Geek chic" is also a component of our

identity". Because Prada today wants to be at the forefront of new trends: "The pandemic has accelerated certain trends, such as the growth of online sales and the integration between physical and digital," explains Patrizio Bertelli. A challenge for Lorenzo who has already launched a digital communication platform for all of the Group's brands (Church's, Car Shoe, Miu Miu, etc.) created in 2017 as well as another e-commerce platform. Prada has also started to review its distribution network in China. However, the question is the creative renewal of the label. In this regard, "the arrival of Raf Simons [as co-creative director, Editor's note] has helped a lot because he is a great experimenter - believes Fabiana Giacomotti, a fashion science specialist at the Sapienza University in Rome - With Miuccia Prada, he forms a very original tandem. They are two superintellectuals". Announced on the eve of the pandemic, the alliance with the Belgian designer created its first collection in 2021. "The collaboration with Raf Simons has been well received and is working well," notes Luca Solca. Even if Prada keeps a strong identity, all the brands, which have bet on the arrival of new creatives (Gucci, Valentino, Dior...), have benefited enormously". Lorenzo Bertelli confirms: "We thought about it a lot as a family: it's a very deep form of collaboration, which is an absolute first in the fashion sector, a very stimulating confrontation for both of us". It remains to be seen how Miu Miu, the nonconformist "little sister" of Prada launched in 1993, over which Miuccia Prada alone keeps the upper hand, can find a second wind in the face of its slowdown.

Prada's future also depends on e-commerce and ecological transition, two areas where Lorenzo Bertelli has already made his mark. "For Prada, it's a cultural priority. Global warming has become a very sensitive topic in Italy, if only because we are already feeling the concrete effects in Venice or in the south of the country, with the problems of drought".

For him, even greenwashing has its benefits. "As with any cultural change, you have to talk about it. It is important that there is a debate. Greenwashing has had its positive effect by forcing many companies to talk about a topic they were reluctant to tackle", argues Lorenzo Bertelli. This is normal in a transition process; Greta Thunberg also played her part. All investment funds are moving in the right direction, even if it is not fast enough. The important thing is the change, of course". Among the concrete projects in which he strongly believes, he mentions Sea Beyond, an educational programme on ocean preservation launched in partnership with Unesco, and especially the Re-Nylon project, launched in 2019.

FOCUS ON RECYCLABLE NYLON - Launched two years ago, the initiative is part of Prada's great eco-responsible shift. As a contribution to the ecological transition, like most fashion groups, Prada has boosted its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) commitments by targeting a 29% reduction target in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2026. Alongside, the Milan group has also made recyclable nylon the center of its sustainable development policy. By the end of 2021, all of its Nylon accessories will be made from a recycled material, called Econyl, launched with the Italian textile producer Aquafil, under the collection called Re-Nylon. "This initiative is the proof that we can do something sustainable for our planet that is relevant in terms of income", insists Lorenzo Bertelli. The launch of the first recycled nylon collections is even one of his great pride. "This project allows the fabric to be regenerated infinite times without any loss of quality. It is a natural development of the Group's research and innovation. Historically, we introduced a "poor" material in the luxury sector by transforming it into an "iconic" material for the brand in the 1990s and now we have made it into a regenerated fiber.

FONDAZIONE PRADA, A MUSEUM AND A WORKSHOP SERVING THE GROUP - "It is her baby". Miuccia Prada wanted to locate it in China or in the United States. Her husband, Patrizio, convinced her to move it to the outskirts of Milan, in an old distillery. In six years, the Fondazione Prada, designed by Dutch arch-star Rem Koolhaas, has become both a showcase for the couple's immense collection of contemporary art, but also a workshop. "It is often said that if we could do the Fondazione without making handbags, we would," jokes Lorenzo Bertelli. Nevertheless, it is a very serious form of entertainment". Inaugurated in 2015, the Fondazione Prada in Milan has practically become one of the cultural pillars of the Lombardy capital with the Brera Museum, the Triennale and the Scala, not to mention its branch in Venice, at the Palazzo Ca' Corner della Regina. The highlight of the Fondazione is the Studio d'Orphée by Jean-Luc Godard, a meticulous reconstruction of its recording and editing studio that can only be visited by appointment.

SUSTAINABILITY - The goal is to convert all the nylon production into a renewable material by the end of 2021. "But this is only the beginning - Our priority is to recover all industrial waste. We are ready to use any fiber that can be sustainable". A Company more sustainable than ever is about to prepare for the post Miuccia: "Lorenzo can guarantee the continuity of the family at large. But it is difficult to conceive Prada without Miuccia", confides Gian Luigi Paracchini, the biographer of Miuccia Prada. If Patrizio Bertelli takes a step back, he will still need a strong leader to replace him. The choice of listing ten years ago the Company in Hong Kong could prove to be penalizing in the medium term, given the geopolitical context. "Prada remains one of the most innovative brands in Italy along

with Moncler and controls its direct distribution better than others through its own network of stores," says Luca Solca. "Long idolized in Asia, the image of Prada has lost some of its luster under the impact of the Gucci boom, with the arrival of Alessandro Michele who has upset the lexicon of fashion", says another Italian observer, under the seal of anonymity.

COLLECTIVE PLAY – Is Prada under pressure from the “double G” house taken over by Pinault (Kering) in 1999? The recent entry of the investment super-banker, Yoël Zaoui (ex-Goldman Sachs) in the board of Prada could be interpreted as a signal. Fifteen years after having sold Jil Sander, Helmut Lang and Azzedine Alaïa, the Prada house now seems “vaccinated” in terms of acquisitions. Only the British shoemaker Church's still appears on his hunting chart. Now is the time for partnerships. "We have entered the era of collaboration: we must seek to create synergies to achieve common objectives such as those on climate change", recognizes Lorenzo Bertelli. “The Italian industry has an interest in playing collectively against the distribution giants. Collaborating does not mean not competing, but at least avoiding wasting time in fruitless battles”, he adds, citing the Group's excellent relationship with Zegna.

Passing on to another chapter, Prada joined forces in April 2021, with LVMH and Cartier (part of Richemont) to launch a blockchain platform dedicated to the fight against counterfeits. Nevertheless, for Bertelli father and son, the Italian dynasties (Salvatore Ferragamo, Armani, Moncler or Zegna...) can still play the synergy card, without necessarily going through mergers and acquisitions, and they have thicker leather than it looks. As proof, the past setbacks of the Gucci family, recently revived by Ridley Scott's

"biopic", House of Gucci, with Adam Driver and Lady Gaga, did not prevent the other flagship of "Made in Italy" from being reborn from his ashes. Prada also knows the subject well since the Group had temporarily taken over 9.5% of the capital of its Florentine rival in 1998.

“The problem with Italy is that it often lends itself to caricature, deplores the dolphin of Miuccia and Patrizio today. The Gucci saga was a private dynamic not representative of the country. It is an excellent story, very entertaining, but it is still a caricature. “The devil does not only dress in Prada...” (1) Quoted in “Vita Prada”, by Gian Luigi Paracchini. Baldini + Castoldi editions, 2019. More info on lesechos.fr/weekend

NYLON, A KEY FIBER FOR THE TRANSITION - Creating designer luxury products from waste textile fibers: nothing can stop the creativity of the Prada maison. As early as 1984, Miuccia Prada had made Nylon a vector of innovation by launching its black parachute canvas backpack with an ultra-discreet logo. At the end of the 1990s, Nylon became a trademark and gave birth to the Linea Rossa collection in 1997. In 2019, Prada presented the first collection of sustainable nylon accessories made from the recycling and purification of plastic collected in oceans and landfills or abandoned fishing nets and waste textile fibers. One year later, Prada launched its first ready-to-wear collection in recycled nylon, called Re-Nylon: jackets, parkas, down jackets or jackets with the objective to use exclusively this recycled material by the end of 2021.

Pierre De Gasquet

Lorenzo Bertelli, who is expected to lead the Group in 2024, pictured at the Prada Foundation in Milan. Behind him, a model of the site, an old gin distillery rehabilitated for ten years by Rem Koolhaas and his teams.

Photo credit: Photographer: Isabella Balena

Miuccia Prada, the designer, entered the leather goods business of her grandfather Mario Prada at the end of the 1970s. She made it a flagship of "Made in Italy" fashion ...
... With Patrizio Bertelli, manufacturer of belts and bags who had copied his models, and who will become her husband.

Photo credit: BRIGITTE LACOMBE

Photo credit: ISABELLA BALENA POUR LES ECHOS WEEK- END PRADA BEATA ZAWRZEL / NURPHOTO

Left, top: view of the "Haunted House", an exhibition space entirely gilded with leaf, within the Prada Foundation. Below: Spring-Summer 2022 fashion show.

Below: Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons (arriving in 2020) share the brand's artistic creation. Below: the historic store in the Vittorio Emanuele II Gallery in Milan.

Pinball machines and retro jukeboxes in the Luce bar, designed by American filmmaker Wes Anderson for the Prada Foundation.

Lorenzo Bertelli has made recycled nylon a spearhead of the group's sustainable development strategy, as with this backpack from the Re-Nylon range.

Photo credit: ISABELLA BALENA FOR THE WEEKEND ECHOS