

# Ermenegildo Zegna



PRESS RELEASE

## AN EXHIBITION CELEBRATING THE ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN CHINA "A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE"

Ermenegildo Zegna. One Hundred Years of Excellence.

Opening on September 15, 2011, at the Today Art Museum in Beijing, the Ermenegildo Zegna Exhibition celebrates Zegna's 20th Anniversary in China.

The Exhibition follows two parallel and equally inspiring themes: the sum and substance of the Italian global luxury brand, and a century of industry, craftsmanship, art, style and environmental sustainability. Through four sections – Mind, Hand, Style and Environment – the exhibition explores how Ermenegildo Zegna developed and revitalized the concept of excellence, whilst remaining true to its distinctive ethical policy.

Staged by the architects *Antonio Citterio, Patricia Viel and Partners*, with the collaboration of *Maria Luisa Frisa* for the Style section, the Exhibition tells a century-long story through vision, sound and touch using a wealth of photographs, movies and documentaries, vintage materials and outfits, projects and unpublished works of art, originating predominantly from "*Casa Zegna*," the historical archives of the Group.

### Mind

The Exhibition begins with a dedicated i-Pad area where visitors can virtually page through the Centennial Book.

The real journey through the history of the Zegna family begins with the man who started it all: Ermenegildo Zegna, the founder of the House. His life is an outstanding example of the best Italian entrepreneurial skills dating back to 1910, a time when Italy was still treading along the path to become a leading country in creativity.

To evoke his presence, original outfits and objects from his wardrobe are showcased. Several exhibits recreate the pioneering atmosphere of the Zegna wool mill in Trivero and take the visitor into his mind as he was guided by an uncompromising mission to manufacture fabrics of unrivalled quality and to create an international identity through branding his name on the selvedge of fabrics.

A photographic narrative path accompanies the visitors to the founder's sons – Aldo and Angelo – the proud third generation heirs of the Zegna family name, who after the Second World War continued the family's international venture through corporate modernization and the additions of ready-to-wear collections in 1968 and "*Made to Measure*" in 1972.

Today Gildo and Paolo, respectively Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the company, the family's fourth generation, continue this vision, making Ermenegildo Zegna a global luxury and style brand, with 560 stores in over 87 countries and 7,000 employees.



## Hand

From theory to practice: an art installation takes visitors from the Mind to the Hand, displaying the noblest of natural fibers in their raw material state, before they are artfully transformed into fabrics through a process which remains fully controlled by Zegna. On display are works capturing the origins of these acclaimed fibers, by *Roberto Cecato* and by the celebrated National Geographic photographer *Mattias Klum*. To recreate the atmosphere of the Zegna wool mill, *Toni Meneguzzo* has produced two videos; one totally dedicated to the loom and the other one explaining the entire process of creating fine fabrics from raw materials. A special sound track has been developed by the artists of *Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto* who, within the framework of their "*Zegna Suit(e)*" project, give visitors an artistic representation of the looms.

The finished fabrics, which have formed the backbone in the creation of this historical brand, complete the journey through the Hand. Renowned fabrics float from ceiling to floor: Trofeo, High Performance, Cool Effect, Micronsphere amongst others. Eleven banners that give testimony to the never ending quest for innovation, all incredibly light and soft to the touch.

## Style

Video artist and photographer *Giovanni Caccamo* is the creator of a film that focuses on the work of the over 500 hands needed to produce a "*Made to Measure*" Zegna suit from fiber, to fabric to the finished product.

This film marks the transition from the Hand to Style, the section conceived by curator *Maria Luisa Frisa*. Original suits are grouped by decades and displayed on suspended busts, taking the visitor on a journey from the 1970s until present day. Each piece individually marks the changes in tastes, trends and proportions -- from the advent of sporting collections in the Seventies represented by the pure silk jersey to informal wear in the Nineties -- highlighting the explicit signals of a changing society. And finally, twenty mannequins dressed in the Zegna Centennial suit recount the uninterrupted thread of Zegna Style: unmistakably masculine, classic and elegant and backed by the greatest sartorial know-how.

Special sections are devoted to the brand as featured on the pages of international magazines, seen through advertising campaigns and photo shoots by renowned fashion photographers. An exclusive video, filmed by *Giovanni Caccamo*, is devoted to portraits of some of the world's greatest conductors, including Valery Gergiev, Gianandrea Noseda and the renowned piano player Yundi Li, for whom Zegna exclusively creates the "Concert Suit," a made-to-measure evening suit that offers comfort, performance and elegance.

## Environment

For Ermenegildo Zegna the ideal link between Style and Environment is Architecture. This is represented by two dedicated videos, one to the Zegna Global stores and Flagship stores worldwide, and the other one focused on the Zegna stores in China. Celebrating this concept is the work of several great architects which is displayed in a virtual tunnel: from the Milan Headquarters by *Antonio Citterio & Partners*, to stores all over the world by *Roberto and Gianmaria Beretta*, to the Global Store Concepts by *Peter Marino*.

Yet for Ermenegildo Zegna, the closest relationship with the environment remains with the company's roots in Trivero, where respect for the natural environment is derived. The family's endeavors are also well rooted in their love for art, evidenced by the "ALL'APERTO" project, which was conceived by



*Andrea Zegna and Barbara Casavecchia* and features "site-specific" works by contemporary artists such as *Daniel Buren* and *Alberto Garutti*.

At the entrance to the section is a large mirror with the work "Woolen-la Mela Reintegrata" by the artist *Michelangelo Pistoletto* and his *Cittadellarte*. Eight pictures of the "Oasi Zegna" by *Mimmo Jodice*, twenty four images of the Giant Panda by *Mattias Klum*, and two exclusive art works from the Chinese artist, *Ding Yi*, whose inspiration for the works was spawned during a visit to the Zegna wool mill in Trivero and the fabrics produced there.

The longstanding collaboration between Klum, world famous filmmaker and photographer, and Ermenegildo Zegna has been built upon a mutual passion for the protection and preservation of what is beautiful, natural and rare. Working closely with Fondazione Zegna in support of the Company's many environmental conservation projects, Klum recently led an expedition to Qinling China to photograph the Giant Panda and its habitat, which have been protected by Fondazione Zegna in partnership with WWF China since 2004.

The alliance between Mattias Klum, Fondazione Zegna and WWF China plays a leading role within the celebrations. The exhibit includes the 24 photos of the Giant Panda and a short film dedicated to Oasi Zegna (Zegna Oasis), an "open-air laboratory" and natural park stretching more than 100km<sup>2</sup> in the Biella Alps that was created and is protected by Gruppo Zegna.

## Ermenegildo Zegna. One Hundred Years of Excellence.

Open to the public from the 16<sup>th</sup> of September till the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2011.  
At the Today Art Museum

### *About Ermenegildo Zegna Group*

*The Ermenegildo Zegna Group is a leading luxury menswear brand and one of the most renowned businesses in Italy. Founded in 1910 in Trivero, in the Biella Alps, by the young entrepreneur Ermenegildo, whose vision was to ethically create the world's finest textiles through innovation and sourcing the noblest fibers directly from their markets of origin, the company is managed today by the fourth generation of the Zegna family. Since the late 1980s, the company has implemented a comprehensive strategy of verticalization, creating a global luxury brand which now ranges from fabric to clothing to accessories, is focused on retailing, pioneering early entry in emerging luxury markets, BRIC and Asia in particular, and was the first luxury brand to open a monobrand store in China in 1991.*

*Ermenegildo Zegna celebrated 100 years of excellence in 2010. Today there are over 560 Zegna stores (330 company-owned) in 87 countries around the world. The total Group revenues in 2010 reached € 963 million.*

### *About Mattias Klum*

*Mattias Klum (Sweden) is a filmmaker, National Geographic photographer and Fellow, and a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum. Over the years, Klum has described and portrayed animals, plants and natural and cultural settings through articles, books, films and exhibitions at renowned museums, and has won many awards for his work. He is a dedicated spokesman for the preservation of biodiversity on our planet and regularly presents lectures to diverse audiences worldwide. His images have also appeared in numerous international publications including BBC Wildlife, Geo and The New York Times. For Ermenegildo Zegna, following his 2009 visualization of Oasi Zegna in Italy and contribution to the Zegna Centennial Book, Klum led an expedition to Qinling in March 2011 to photograph the Giant Panda and its habitat, protected by Fondazione Zegna in partnership with WWF China since 2004.*

# Ermenegildo Zegna



## *About Ding Yi*

*Ding Yi (1962 Shanghai) is one of China's leading abstract painters. His signature takes the form of a cross that is repeatedly and carefully constructed across surfaces. Created by the layered intersection of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines across the surface, the paintings encourage the process of perception. Crosses, as the intersections of two lines, such as longitude and latitude, are often the means by which a precise location is indicated. In Ding Yi's work they take on an existentialist significance, as mantra-like gestures they reiterate the fact that the artist physically "was there".*

*Since the mid-1980's, he has produced a large body of abstract paintings on different supports, from canvas to cardboard, from ready-made fabrics to furniture, using diverse media, such as oil, acrylic, charcoal and ballpoint pen. He has exhibited widely, such as at the Venice Biennale (1993), Yokohama Triennial (2001) and Guangzhou Biennale (2002).*

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