

***GIORGIO ARMANI: RETROSPECTIVE* OPENS IN ROME  
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROMAN ANTIQUITIES AT  
THE BATHS OF DIOCLETIAN ON MAY 6**

**From May 6 to August 1, 2004, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and the Ministry for Cultural Heritage / Archeological Superintendence of Rome, present the exhibition *Giorgio Armani: Retrospective* at the Baths of Diocletian. This major exhibition, first shown at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (2000), and now on a new five-venue international tour, explores the work of the internationally renowned fashion designer, Giorgio Armani.**

**Featuring more than 500 garments, together with original sketches and audio-visual presentations, the exhibition offers a thematic look at Armani's career over the last three decades. It explores the cultural and sociological impact of Armani's designs and highlights his pioneering involvement in cinema.**

**Robert Wilson, the acclaimed theater and visual artist, has created a site-specific installation design for the exhibition at the Baths of Diocletian, an important ancient Roman monument and museum that is a striking and unusual setting for this contemporary design exhibition.**

***Giorgio Armani: Retrospective* is made possible by Mercedes-Benz.**

Additional support is provided by American Express.

Giorgio Armani is recognized as one of the most influential and iconic designers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He has been universally credited with both radically changing the rules of contemporary fashion and creating a timeless vision of modern dress. By removing excess ornament and translating traditional sportswear looks into business and evening wear, Armani has developed the contemporary casual style that defines the modern wardrobe.

More than 500 garments, original sketches, and audio-visual presentations explore the depth and range of Armani's work. Arranged thematically, the exhibition at the Baths of Diocletian includes clothes from various periods of Armani's career, from the late 1970s when he began to achieve prominence, up to his most recent designs for fall 2003.

One section explores the pivotal impact of Armani's designs on the modern, androgynous look, presenting the designer's groundbreaking deconstructed jacket, which evolved into soft, sensual suits for both men and women. The exhibition also examines the influence of Eastern and North African cultures on Armani's work, as well as the designer's emphasis on the "non-color" palette, which has contributed to his reputation for subtle elegance. Other sections explore Armani's linear and minimalist style, his interpretations of traditional ultra-feminine gowns, his black-and-white women's evening ensembles, and his use of texture and layering to create extraordinary effects of light and translucency.

Film imagery has a strong impact on both Armani's clothing designs and advertising campaigns, while Armani's designs for films, such as *American Gigolo*, have had a lasting influence on modern style. The exhibition features a gallery devoted to Armani's relationship with the entertainment industry, with particular reference to the Academy Awards and the films for which he has created wardrobes, and presents

many of the evening ensembles he has created for the Oscar ceremonies throughout his career.

Through a dramatic combination of architectural elements, customized mannequins, projections, light, and music, Robert Wilson has created a spectacular, site-specific installation for Rome. Its strong contemporary forms offer new perspectives both on Armani's contribution to design and on the ancient architecture of the Baths of Diocletian. Mr. Wilson engages the magnificent high-ceilinged galleries of the baths by employing a sculptural language that leads the visitor through the thematic sections, while still revealing the impressive architecture of the Roman complex. Moving beyond the traditional boundaries of exhibition design, Wilson's installation surrounds the visitor in a total environment that is rich in sights, sounds, and movement. Composer, violinist, and conductor Michael Galasso created the music to accompany the exhibition.

Originally presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2000), and shown at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2001), the *Giorgio Armani* exhibition is currently on a new five-venue tour. It was recently presented at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (May 8–July 12, 2003) and the Royal Academy of Arts' space at Burlington Gardens in London (October 18, 2003–February 15, 2004). After Rome the exhibition will travel to Tokyo and Los Angeles.

The Baths of Diocletian, the largest baths in Rome and in the ancient Roman world, were completed at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. *Giorgio Armani* is the first non-archeological exhibition to be presented in its immense galleries.

The exhibition is co-curated by Germano Celant, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Harold Koda, guest curator for the

exhibition and Curator-in-Charge at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, with Susan Cross, Associate Curator, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Karole Vail, Assistant Curator, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Celant has organized a number of exhibitions that express his interest in the fusion of artistic languages, including *The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943–1968* (1994), which featured an extensive costume section, and *Art/Fashion* (1997), which examined the dialogue between the two disciplines. Koda has co-organized numerous significant costume exhibitions, including *Haute Couture* (1995) and *Christian Dior* (1996), *Dress Rehearsal* (2001), *Extreme Beauty* (2001), and *Goddess* (2003) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## **SPONSOR**

By supporting this exhibition, Mercedes-Benz is continuing its activities in the world of fashion. “We are proud to give our support to an exhibition of such a legendary designer as Giorgio Armani who shares our passion for design and style,” says Dr. Joachim Schmidt, Executive Vice President, Mercedes Car Group, “The design characteristics of Giorgio Armani’s creations, such as timeless elegance, effortless grace, high quality, and a fresh modern sensibility, are all attributes that Mercedes-Benz has admired and embraced for over 100 years.”

*For more information, please contact*

**Electa**—Ilaria Maggi

Telephone: +39 02 21563250

Email: [stampill@mondadori.it](mailto:stampill@mondadori.it)