

First Day of School at the new Polimoda location in the Manifattura Tabacchi building

Lessons begin in the new classrooms and fashion workshops at the iconic industrial complex undergoing a major urban regeneration project in Italy.

Florence, 7 January 2020 – The doors of the *clock building* at Manifattura Tabacchi in Florence - the school's third location, along with Villa Favard and the Design Lab - are now open to Polimoda students. The start of lessons marks the completion of the recovery and transformation of the building, **the first within an ambitious urban regeneration project in Italy.**

Polimoda as Central Saint Martins

As for the relocation of Central Saint Martins from its historic Soho headquarters to the newly-renovated complex in the heart of King's Cross, **Polimoda becomes the protagonist of an important recovery and redevelopment plan from an urban, social and cultural standpoint for an entire area of the city.**

After the opening of a temporary location in October of last year, on the occasion of the Pitti Immagine Uomo 97 event, the monumental spaces of the former cigar factory - which hosted some of the most evocative fashion events in Florence, including Gucci, Hugo Boss and the Polimoda Fashion Show - is once again full of young talents who will take their first steps towards a professional career in the fashion world.

The third Polimoda location spreads over 6.700 square meters and four levels, in addition to a basement and a 360° panoramic terrace overlooking Florence. **Thanks to a conservative renovation and an ad-hoc reorganization of the spaces**, the building houses clothes-making and knitwear laboratories, photography studios, IT laboratories, as well as drawing and theory classrooms and a 250-seat Auditorium to accommodate a total of about 800 students hailing from all over the world, as well as teaching personnel and staff.

"Polimoda starts 2020 with the first day of school in Manifattura" – announces Polimoda's Director, Danilo Venturi. *"It is a gift we are pleased to give to our 2.300 students, a group of young people from 70 different countries, hyper-connected and looking for a real future. Therefore, it is also a gift we give to Florence, allowing our city to give life to a new Renaissance in which familiarity with technology, education and creativity may become the new currency for trade."*

A school side by side with businesses

Polimoda is ranked among the most prestigious fashion schools in the world, and it stands out for its international scope and its strong connection with the industry, thanks to excellent partners and mentors - including Missoni for Knitwear Design, Lola Young for Sustainable Fashion and Lisa Lang for Digital Fashion, in addition to big names in the training world, such as Parsons and FIT - and teachers hailing from the industry with a practical approach to training. A vision that reflects and makes the new location unique, allowing students to follow every step in the creation of fashion collections and projects - from fashion design to art direction courses – right at the school. These include graduating students who will work on their final collections and projects before their debut next June, during the new edition of Pitti Uomo.

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In fact, the new Polimoda facility is equipped with latest-generation professional equipment to allow students to work in an environment faithfully reproducing the reality of the fashion field: 12 workshops, including 10 tailoring and 2 knitwear workshops, and an entire open space floor dedicated to the tailoring and study of the graduating students' collections, equipped with cutting stations and sewing machines, and specific machines for tailoring, as well as ironing boards in each workshop, knitting and linking machines and tailoring mannequins of different sizes and types.

The first floor of the building houses the IT labs, equipped with 200 computers, digital tablets, instruments and software used in the fashion field to create a modern design laboratory, in line with the professional standards of the sector, in addition to a photography and recording studio that will promote the development of fashion styling, art direction and communication courses. Lastly, a specialized shop provides students with all the materials and tools of the trade. All the environments were designed to promote teamwork, with large laboratories designed to accommodate multidisciplinary study and work teams.

From People to Spaces

The Polimoda building was designed by Concrete Architectural Associates in cooperation with Q-bic, the Florence-based architectural studio founded by Luca and Marco Baldini, who supervised its implementation. The project focused on the recovery of contemporary style spaces and the configuration of functional areas for teaching and practice. The original architecture of the building was enhanced, preserving the industrial charm and the unique character of Manifattura, a place where the refinement of the Italian rationalist architecture of the early twentieth century gives shape to a manufacturing company. By giving new life to the Polimoda building, architectural proportions were preserved and characteristic elements - such as the large interior door and window frames - were reused.

The opening of Polimoda inside Manifattura Tabacchi building is the first portion of a wider urban regeneration project aimed at returning a strategic area in terms of size and location to the city, through the recovery of industrial buildings amounting to a total of about 100.000 sq.m. and their functional conversion.

A project focused first of all on people, and thus on the students and their needs, in search for solutions to express creativity, sharing experiences and connection in a territory rich in resources in terms of tradition and manufacturing industries, started in 2016 by a joint venture established by the real estate company of Cassa Depositi e Prestiti Group and the investment fund PW Real Estate III LP, part of Aermont on its first project in Italy, **with the aim of creating a new district for the city of Florence and a center for contemporary culture, arts and fashion, complementary to the historical center, accessible to all and connected with the world.**

"We are delighted that Polimoda has chosen Manifattura Tabacchi for its new location in Florence, and we are thrilled by the quality of the space that we were able to provide" – announces Giovanni Manfredi, Aermont Managing Director. "Seeing this magnificent industrial building come back to life crowns 2 years of very hard work and marks the beginning of a new phase of our development. Polimoda, one of the top fashion schools in the world, sets the bar very high for will come next – we are determined to provide an environment where fashion students, artists, makers and young creative minds can thrive and innovate. Together with Polimoda we have started to build a new, contemporary Florence".

With the progress of the works, whose completion is expected by 2023, Polimoda students and the people of Florence will progressively be able to enjoy numerous services and common spaces as part of a new functional program that includes areas for training, co-working, co-living, concept stores, ateliers, laboratories, residences, exhibition spaces and green areas: a place where creativity, fashion, art and contemporary craftsmanship can give life to a unique destination, attractive for the international community of professionals and creative people interested in working and living in Florence.

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Press kit: <http://bit.ly/Polimoda-Manifattura-Tabacchi>

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Polimoda in Manifattura Tabacchi - project data:

April 2018

Announcement of the agreement for the third Polimoda location and start of works

October 2018

Building 7 – ground floor (temporary)

1.000 sq.m.

opening of the clothes making labs

January 2020

Clock tower building – 4 floors plus a basement and terrace

6.700 sq.m

clothes making labs, knitwear, photography studios, drawing rooms, classrooms and auditoriums

A property of:

Aermont Capital LLP, Gruppo Cassa depositi e prestiti (Cdp)

Project management:

MTDM Manifattura Tabacchi Development Management srl

Architectural project:

Concrete Architectural Associates, Amsterdam in cooperation with Q-bic, Florence

Other Polimoda locations:

Villa Favard - Via Curtatone 1, Florence

opened in October 2011

5.000 sq.m

It houses classrooms and IT labs, the Auditorium, Polimoda library and the management and administrative offices

Design Lab - Via Galileo Galilei 31, Scandicci (Florence)

opened in January 2015

3.100 sq.m

It houses the clothes-making labs and leather and accessories workshops, art labs and two incubators

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