Visionary Fashion Icon Elio Fiorucci Died

Alessio Shostak (July 23, 2015)

Fashion designer and visionary Elio Fiorucci was found dead in his Milan home on Monday. He was 80 years old. Famous for their stretch jeans, his brand's eccentric, funky and sometimes promiscuous image encapsulated the youthful enthusiasm which characterized the disco era during which the Fiorucci cherubs were such a powerful fashion force.

Mr. Fiorucci was bled young in the retail sector, collaborating with his father in the latter's boutique when he was a teenager. In 1967, however the ever adventurous Fiorucci branched out, launching his own store inspired by London's Carnaby Street, and particularly by the impressively inventive designs in the iconic Biba store.

In the 1970s he would branch out, creating his own namesake label famous for its stretch jeans for women and its long T-shirts featuring the twin cherubs.

His brand quickly spread globally, culminating in the 1976 opening of the flagship Fiorucci [2]store on East 59th Street. Needless to say, the store quickly transcended the world of fashion and became a symbol of the rapidly growing disco era of the time.

Fiorucci drew countless high-profile figures from the world of art and entertainment, for instance Madonna [3], Yves Saint-Laurent [4] and Andy Warhol [5], who would visit the store daily. The store also became a platform for eccentric emerging artists and designers such as Anna Sui and Betsey Johnson.

The latter recalled that "in 1978 I came out with my first collection, and Fiorucci was the only store that wanted it. It was all the stuff from the movie 'Rock 'n' Roll High School', and I guess it was just

too out there for the other stores." Indeed, countless shoppers remember Fiorucci as a lifestyle choice; Kim Hastreiter, a founder of Paper magazine who frequently visited the store, stated that "it was culture, it was music, it was lifestyle, all in one, and everybody came: Greta Garbo [6], Andy Warhol and the king of Spain."

Fiorucci was a restless innovator, and many of his ideas have been replicated by boutiques around the world. He was the first man to hire D.Js to spin tunes at his boutique, long before turntables became the norm. He was also the first to hire a group of fashion scouts, who would tour the globe in search of the latest trends from discos worldwide. Designer Marc Jacobs [7] touched on this novel phenomenon;

"I had this wide-eyed glamour about these beautiful young people that globetrotted from club to club dressing in these fabulous clothes. It was like a living, breathing fashion show that I wanted so much to be a part of." His inventory was also nothing to sniff at, styled in Day-Glo colours and eye-catching materials such as Lurex. Fiorucci was never one to rest on his laurels, constantly reshuffling his brand's wardrobe to mark the latest trend to better encapsulate the Fiorucci lifestyle.

Elio Fiorucci; a radical, visionary genius whose talent would see his namesake transcend the world of fashion and enter the annals of history as a symbol of a liberating, empowering lifestyle adored and adopted by many. He will be sorely missed.

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