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Milan, 19.11.2012



IHT  
THE PROMISE  
OF AFRICA:  
DAY TWO

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Diego Della Valle is first speaker of the day on Friday morning, talking about Rome, the beauty of Italy and on "how it is important to preserve our culture and tradition. It is our duty to commit and expose ourselves. And restoring the Colosseum is a way to intervene in a tangible way for society, to preserve Italian beauty so that everyone can make use of it. Social commitment is the core of the duty of those who can, towards those who have no financial means."

Bono and his wife Ali Hewson joined Renzo Rosso on stage. Bono said: "Changing the life of young Africans is very important for me and I've been working with Nelson Mandela since my late teens. He asked me to use some of the accessories of fame to highlight some of the challenges of the continent. Mine is not only a philanthropic but also a marketing project. The governments have collaborated and today millions of children can go to school. The Edun collection is a business that Ali has started in respect of the environment and of the population and now we are creating a new collection with longtime friend Renzo Rosso." Diesel+Edun, the new collection, will have a huge distribution thanks to Renzo Rosso. The collection will be in stores at the end of February and will be 100% made in Africa. "I have spent my life trying to help others", added Bono, "By 2050 the population of Africa will double the population of China. This Continent is the future. And many people know already exactly what they want to do and how the quality of education is growing. I would like to see [Edun] profitable", commented Bono. "I started out in Uganda in Gulu" adds Ali and Renzo Rosso confirms that "the collection will be developed with production and also using African people for communication and using also African bloggers and music too. Africa is the cradle of music and especially in Mali and we will help run the Mali music festival."

Guillaume de Seynes spoke on behalf of Hermès explaining that already in 1996 Hermès owner Mr. Dumas had discovered a young artist, Kwumi, in an orphanage in Sudan and made him design a series of headscarf patterns that were then sold in Hermès boutiques. "Things are moving in Africa especially in some countries and while Hermès is not present I suppose it will be in the future."

Joanne Crewes, President of P&G Global Prestige, has underlined that dreams and beauty are universal. "Beauty has always had a great impact and the Mediterranean with all the countries overlooking it has a great tradition, culture and history and this also comes from Africa with all its essences, just like essences come from Sicily for Dolce e Gabbana's fragrances".

Uchenna Okonkwo, Executive Director and founder of Luxe Corp, "Africans respect the environment deeply and luxury can have a negative impact if not used in an ethical and positive way. The Africans are proud of their products and don't think they have a lot to learn from the West. They admire the West, obviously, but want to have their autonomy. Africa has its own heritage regarding music, cinema, dance, art. Nollywood is a huge reality just like the media,

Umberto Angeloni, President & CEO of Caruso, underlined that in Ancient Rome luxury objects such as textiles, jewelry and mosaics were shipped from various countries, including Africa. Luxury for Ancient Romans was democratic meaning that the Baths of Diocletian or Caracalla were open to all. Made in Italy is luxury and producing outside Italy is impossible.

We are in Rome and fashion designers based here talked about their own vision. Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pier Paolo Piccioli showed a beautiful and romantic video which truly represents the soul of their style. Showing the atelier and the women seen at work embroidering, and all is based on uniqueness and craftsmanship. "This is passion and Rome is inspiring and unique."

Manolo Blahnik was born in the Canary Islands and "so close to Africa that I've always been influenced by music. I am close to African culture. I also furnished my store in African style and I remember John Galliano and the Maasai collection and the Watusi. I love the Mediterranean and in each collection I add an African touch. I was scouted by Diana Vreeland when she saw my designs. I wanted to be a set designer. I worked with Saint Laurent but also with Victoria Beckham. In any case I produce in Italy. I love Made in Italy."

Frida Giannini, creative director of Gucci, is a big supporter of UNICEF and went to Malawi and Gucci donated several millions of dollars in the last years to help children affected with Aids and providing education and hospital care. Giambattista Valli was born in Rome and although he is based in Paris he feels fully Roman. He showed a video that also featured Gore Vidal explaining why Rome is so loved by American, and other film footage from movies like La dolce vita, Juliet of the Spirits and Rome, and other examples of the Roman film tradition he is inspired by for his collections.

Then Livia Firth and I discussed the possibility of a true African evolution both sustainable and ethical. I will post the speech for you as soon as it will be available. And so these two days are over, intense and strong, and everyone is determined to do something both in Africa and Italy to help out those in need. As usual, each one in their own way and according to their possibilities.

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