

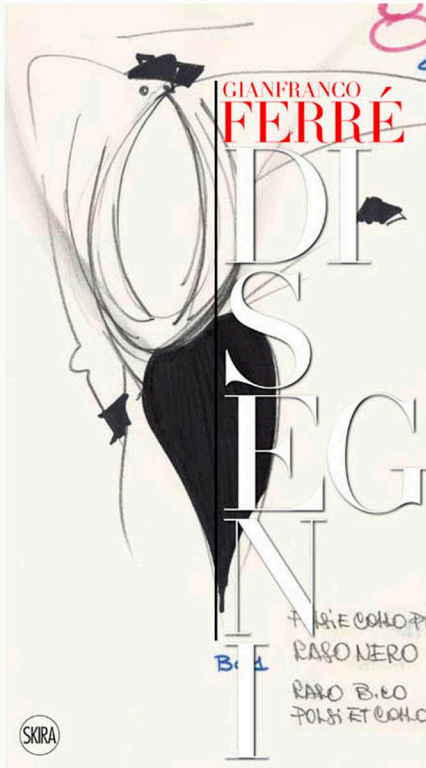
Gianfranco Ferré Book Highlights

Designer's Drawings

by LUISA ZARGANI

Posted TUESDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2010

From WWD.COM



An invitation to the launch of Gianfranco Ferré's new book.

Photo By Courtesy Photo

MILAN — For Gianfranco Ferré, "drawings were a real work tool," according to Rita Airaghi, the late designer's cousin, longtime collaborator and director of the Fondazione Gianfranco Ferré headquarters here. "He would sketch on anything."

Now some of the designer's sketches are collected in the bilingual Italian-English tome "Gianfranco Ferré Drawings," which hits bookstores today, published by Skira and distributed in the U.S. by Rizzoli U.S.-Random House.

"I thought it was right to highlight Gianfranco's peculiarities and uniqueness," said Airaghi. "Anyone can do a book of photos, it's not as exclusive. There are not that many designers that sketch as much and in such a functional way."

An exhibition of Ferré's drawings is scheduled at the Triennale Museum in Milan in fall 2011.

The Fondazione Gianfranco Ferré was established in February 2008 to honor and preserve the work of the designer, who died in June 2007. The headquarters, inaugurated this fall, are located in the Via Tortona fashion district in a building complex designed by Matteo Thun. The space, acquired by the designer's brother Alberto Ferré, president of the foundation, and his wife Charlie, covers 6,480 square feet on two levels and was designed by architect Franco Raggi, a university friend and colleague of Ferré's, who also conceived the fashion brand's Milan headquarters in Via Pontaccio.

The foundation's venue is multifunctional, designed to offer documentation and exhibitions, but also lectures and conferences. Airaghi has been compiling 30 years of history, texts, sketches, clothes and accessories, interviews, photos, publications and catalogues in paper and virtual archives. Airaghi said there are 30,000 documents in the archives and 6,000 pieces of clothing and accessories, which have been photographed, numbered and filed and will be gradually and thematically exhibited.

In the space, there are furniture items designed or loved by Ferré, such as a big table made with a plate of iron, a pony-hair chaise longue, Biedermeier armchairs upholstered in lacquered lizard and mementos from his trips around the world, like Chinese vases, a Japanese kendo suit of armor, collections of bracelets and helmets, and chairs by Tom Dixon, Ron Arad and Urano Palma. "This is not a container per se, but we'd like it to be open in a dynamic way, to students, for example," said Airaghi, recalling how Ferré used to lecture in schools around the world. A Web site, fondazionegianfrancoferre.com, is available for consultation.

Former IT Holding chairman Tonino Perna previously held the title of president of the foundation. IT Holding, which used to control the Ferré company, has been under state-backed administration for less than two years, and the firm's commissioners have accepted the offer by Prodos Capital Management LLC to acquire the Ferré fashion house this fall.

Airaghi said the foundation's covenant and regulations prevent any conflict with a change of ownership. As for the future of the firm that bears the designer's name, she said: "I hope the company will return to being strong and with a prestigious aura."