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COVERED



FLAVIO LUCCHINI



THE MASTER PROTAGONIST OF FASHION AND ART

By Dina Yassin

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It is with great honour that Covered got to interview the legendary Flavio Lucchini to learn more.

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Flavio at work in his studio

Flavio Lucchini is a leading figure and an ardent innovator in the world of Italian fashion, where he specialised in the publishing culture of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Today, at 93 years young, and an ostensibly recognized artist, he continues to link his works to what he's always known best; fashion. Using steel, resin and bronze for his enduring creations, he has been able to commemorate lost runway trends from various seasons making them infinitely timeless.

Lucchini was born in Mantua, Italy in 1928. He attended Politecnico di Milano where he studied Architecture, followed by the Brera Arts Academy from 1946-1950. As an avant-garde art director, graphics designer and publisher throughout the 60's and 70's and on behalf of Conde Nast, he created some of the most important Italian fashion titles including *Vogue Italia*, *L'Uomo Vogue*, *Casa Vogue*, *Vogue Bambini* and *Lei-Glamour*. He also collaborated with *Corriere della Sera* in 1979 and created Edimoda, the first Italian publishing group that produced top tier fashion publications including *Donna*, *Mondo Uomo*, and *Moda* among others.

Lucchini discovered and launched the likes of Oliviero Toscani, the Italian photographer who designed the controversial advertising campaigns for Italian brand Benetton, from 1982 to 2000; and advanced then-emerging designers Gianni Versace and Giorgio Armani (and yes he designed his famous logo!).



In 1983, he founded Superstudio in Milan to service of image and creativity at large. Today, this is known as Superstudio Piu.

By 1990, he left behind the publishing world to discover more about the correlation of art and fashion. He began experimenting with several techniques and materials, and after fifteen years of isolating himself in his studio to perfect his craft, he participated in his first exhibition. He published the book "Dress-Art, a life in fashion" in 2004 and in 2010 "From Fashion to Art: the Vogue Lesson" followed.

He was invited to Venice Biennale of Art as a representative for the Italian Pavillion in 2011 and in 2012, he exhibited more than one hundred works in the anthological and institutional exhibition "On the dream of the body 'living'" at the Palazzo Ducale, Sabbioneta in his hometown of Mantua.

In 2018, he published "Cahier", an artist's booklet signed and numbered in a limited edition of 100 copies, with original drawings inspired by the collections of Armani, Gigli, Versace of the early 90s and "Il Destino – I had to be a farmer but I met fashion (and I'm not a fashion designer)", an autobiographical book on the golden years of fashion and the experience of art in 90 memories.

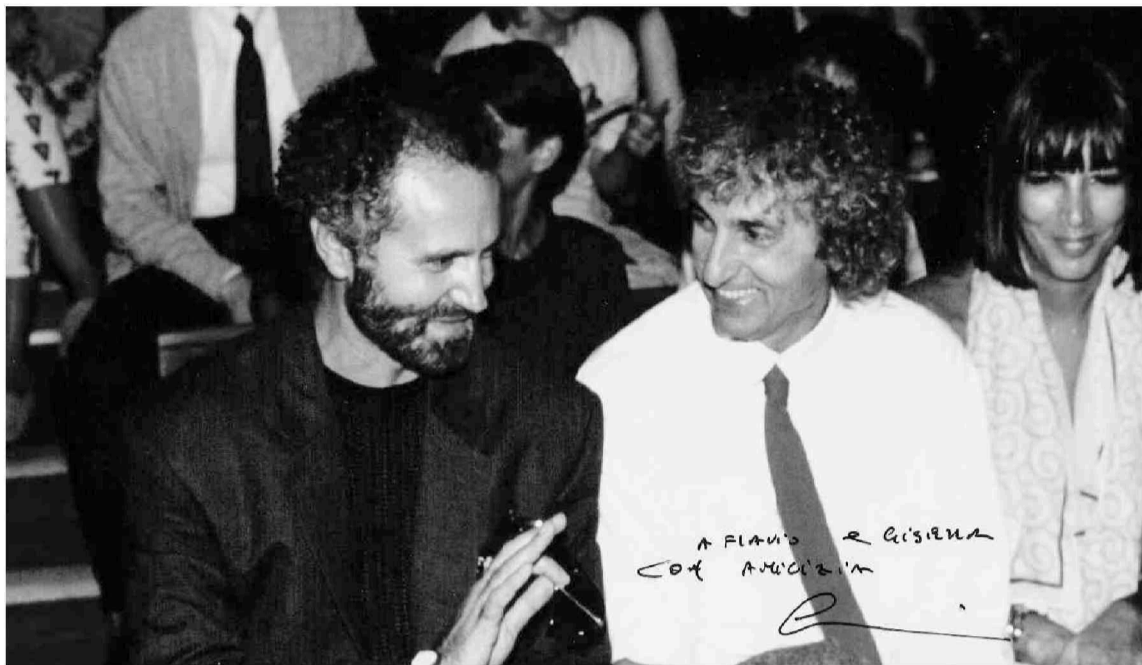
He currently divides his time between Milan, where he has his studio, Paris, in his Saint-Germain home-gallery, focusing on his art and Dubai where his magnificent pieces can be viewed at the Oblong Gallery.



Lucchini, Gran Sera

You are one of the most influential figures in fashion publishing throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s. How did you discover your aspiration or pursuit for fashion?

During the school years it's always hard to decide what you would like to be when you grow up. Inside you feel certain things that fuel you, different stimuli and preferences, you begin to choose and love certain things more than others. It is important to understand who you are, your interests and what you are really passionate about. I loved drawing and art because I saw that I succeeded where others wouldn't be able to. My love for art made me discover a world in progress, with its culture being a constant change. Art, architecture, graphics, design, fashion and beauty have always been, from a young age, my passion as well as my life.



Flavio and Gianni Versace

Could you share some of the early memories of building your exciting journey?

The discovery of Vogue America and Harper Bazaar by the Americans, on sale on the stalls, in the early 50s after the war, fascinated me. I had never seen publications like them in Italy. The content, images and culture of the publications were amazing. Great photographers, great authors and the most beautiful dresses. I understood there and then where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do with my life.

Throughout your career, you've spent time in the worlds of publishing, architecture, art and graphic design. What importance did they have in your professional training and why?

Knowing graphics, design, architecture, photography, literature and theater means understanding and participating in the change of society. Fashion is part of this continuous evolution, it reflects it and often anticipates it. All these expressions of contemporaneity were equally important to me, I felt they were close to my desires, my nature and I experienced them all, in one way or another.

What has been the fuel to your creativity and behind your magnificent works of art? We've learnt that you were in isolation for about 15 years while perfecting your work. Tell us more.

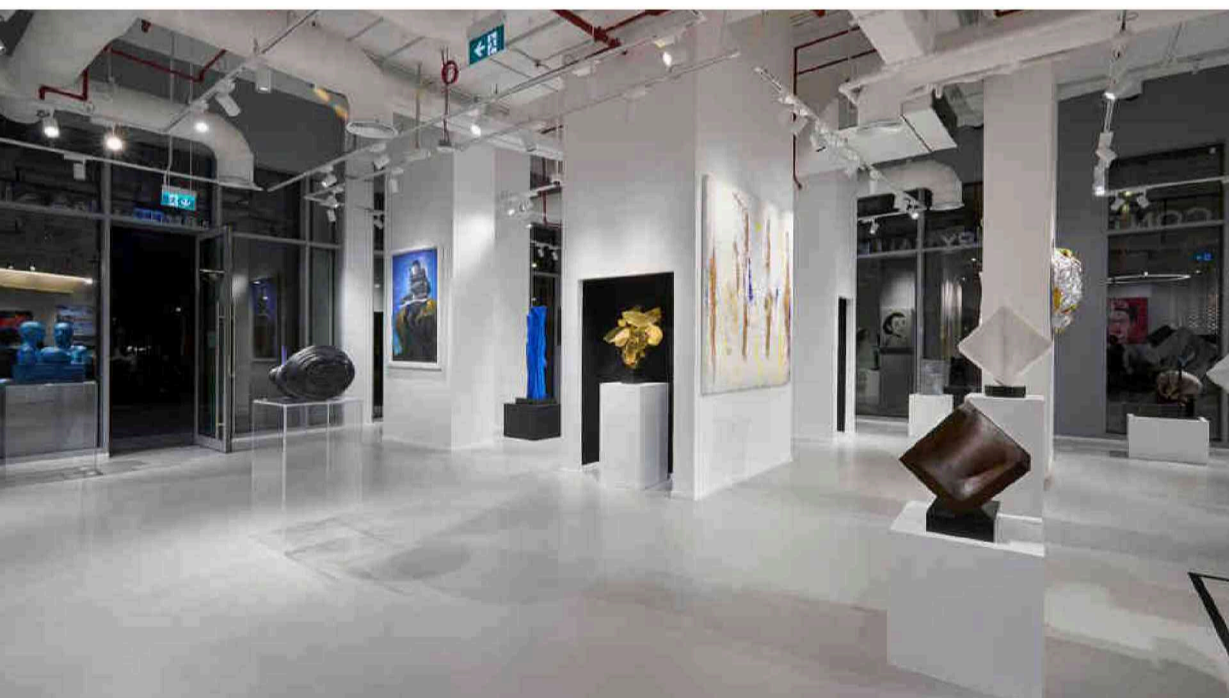
My aspiration, given my experience as an art director in the field of fashion, has always been to make people discover, understand and love this world. Many see fashion as frivolity or whim. Fashion is much more. It is research, progress, imagination, talent. Fashion can make women happy and divine. Occasionally fashion reaches the heights of art. I wanted to pay homage to its beauty, the mastery of its great creators and the profound meaning of fashion. Sometimes idealizing it, sometimes treating it with irony, sometimes suggesting a different way to look. To do this, I left publishing after thirty years and I opened my atelier where I dedicated myself exclusively to artistic research to make fashion indelible.

In 1983, you founded Superstudio 13, the first centre for photography and image, and in 2000, you started Superstudio Più that specializes in fashion, art, design and communication. What would you say is the relationship between these immaculate fields for you?

The idea of Superstudio was born to still give space, visibility, attention and opportunity to the passions that had been the basis of my work: fashion, photography, art, design, communication, innovation. I wanted to become an entrepreneur to have control over the quality of these businesses. A hub for the images of fashion, Superstudio 13. A hub for expressions of creativity in general, Superstudio Più. At the end of the year, a third will open, as a bridge between Italy and the Middle East, Superstudio Maxi, the largest private exhibition space in Milan, dedicated to all of the above, new trends attentive to the future as well as sustainability.

How did your relationship with the Oblong Gallery in Dubai come to fruition? Share with us about your recent visit to Dubai for the showcase of your work.

Oblong Gallery, Dubai



I love Dubai very much because it is a future life project. It is something that goes beyond the city also as a metropolis. It represents a great change in the traditional lifestyle, while respecting traditions. A metropolis-state that wants to concentrate the best in all fields, daring in its projects, courageous in its choices, visionary in its strategies. I think my artistic production linked to fashion, is far from traditional art models which gives it a suitable presence in Dubai as such a forward thinking city.

I see Oblong Contemporary Art Gallery as a bridge between Italy and the Middle East, a cross cultural exchange as such. It is a place and reference point for all those who love contemporary art of high value. With Oblong in Dubai, I was immediately satisfied, unfortunately Covid-19 has struck so I haven't been able to go back since my exhibition in Feb, From Fashion to Art: The Vogue Lesson.

I love Dubai very much because it is a future life project



Totem

ART PIECES BY FLAVIO LUCCHINI



Totem



Blue Evening Dress



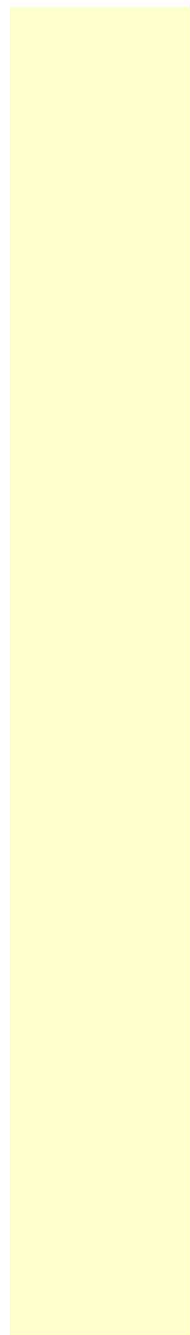
Dress Memory - Issey Miyake



Top Model



Oblong



Bronze Dress Totem



Dress Memory - Armani



Lucchini and his white dress totems

Do you have an inner critic?

You have to. I am the worst critic of myself. This stimulates me to always go further.

When you ran L'Uomo Vogue, you managed to convince Yves Saint Laurent and Andy Warhol to pose for a fashion shoot, how did that come about?

When we are young we think that everything can be done. Being a part of a team of innovators brings us closer. Yves Saint Laurent and Andy Warhol were young and already very famous, but Lucchini the art director of Vogue Italia who had created L'Uomo Vogue, the first men's fashion magazine, and his young photographer Oliviero Toscani had already stood out. It was completely natural and a friendship was born with both of them.

With the current global climate, a lot is changing, and in terms of fashion and publishing, it's inevitable for drastic transitions through inclusivity, diversity and more. Being an inventor of many important fashion magazines and launching Vogue Italia on behalf of Condé Nast, we'd love your input on where you see this going and how do you think the future will unfold?

With my innovative publications, since the 70s, I have touched on the theme of diversity, inclusion, social and cultural environmental changes. I even published a special All Black issue of L'Uomo Vogue that the American newsstands did not dare to show off!

The future will take place in large cities, increasingly in a cultural cross that requires education and tolerance.

You're now a young man of 93. Thinking of the future, what sort of creative wisdom would you like to pass on to the next generation of designers, creatives and entrepreneurs?

What the future holds for us, nobody can know. But creativity will take many paths, many still unknown. The creatives of all kinds (arts, sciences, technologies ...) will be the real protagonists. I would like to be there because the change will be even more accelerated and surprising than that of the century I have lived. To the next generation, I wish them to not forget the past.

Today, Lucchini remains as one of the most influential persons in fashion editing. He continues to scout and support many young artists who will become stylists, photographers and successful journalists. Through his work he continues building a thriving legacy, one to stand strong for years to come.



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