

WWD



Shake-up

Richemont shifts its top management after first-half profits fall by more than 50 percent.

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Pushing the New

Buyers say spring accessories focus on innovation, and hope strong sales will follow.

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Artful Touch

Giorgio Vasari's restored "Last Supper" is unveiled in Florence, with help from Prada.

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Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Baggage Patch Kids



Pals and former collaborators Marc Jacobs and artist Julie Verhoeven teamed up again for spring on the shoes and bags the designer showed on his runway. The duo, who collaborated on bags during Jacobs' Louis Vuitton tenure, used motifs such as eyes, lips, cigarettes, fruits, clouds and planets in leather, suede and python to create elaborate patchwork collages on the accessories headlining one of the biggest spring trends: appliqué bags. *For more, see pages 5 and 6.*

Marc Jacobs' python, suede and leather bag.



BUSINESS

What Clinton Or Trump Would Mean For Trade

● Experts expect Hillary Clinton would make changes to the Trans-Pacific Partnership as president, while Donald Trump has vowed to drop the deal altogether.

BY KRISTI ELLIS WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ARTHUR FRIEDMAN

WASHINGTON — As one of the most divisive and mud-slinging elections in U.S. history hurtles to a close, the fashion and retail industries are holding their collective breaths to see which way the new president will tilt on key decisions impacting trade and the economy.

With the polls tightening in key battleground states and Hillary Clinton battling to maintain her overall lead, both she and her rival, Donald Trump, stepped up their attacks over the weekend — Clinton on Trump's character and Trump on everything from Clinton's e-mail scandal to the state of the economy.

For the industry, the key questions remain on what either candidate would do on trade — most urgently, the looming Trans-Pacific Partnership deal — and on such issues as the minimum wage, Made in the U.S. and immigration.

Trump is firmly a protectionist when it comes to trade and he has vowed to not only drop TPP, but even renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement and impose tariffs on all imports from China and Mexico. He has also said he will label China a "currency manipulator," all of which sends chills through the business industry.

Clinton has voiced opposition to the 12-nation pact on the hustings, under pressure from the left wing of her party, which rails against job losses associated with trade deals. If she does stay true to her word, experts believe there could be an impact on the U.S. economy, mainly in the area of lost economic opportunities.

The trade and business community is banking on Clinton to make changes to TPP and then give her approval if she wins the presidency. Most trade experts believe Clinton won't just walk away from the pact after the U.S. invested seven years in the

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FASHION

Restoration of Vasari's 'Last Supper' Unveiled

- Prada contributed about \$390,000 to the costs of the restoration of the painting.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

FLORENCE — Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" in Milan may be instantly more recognizable around the world, but there is another painting of the same name by Giorgio Vasari that has a highly symbolic value and that was unveiled in Florence on Friday after a technically complex restoration with Prada's contribution.

Badly damaged during a devastating flood on Nov. 4, 1966, the presentation of the restored art work, covering five wooden panels, took place as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations here, drawing Italy's President Sergio Mattarella; the Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Dario Franceschini; Mayor Dario Nardella, and the city's cardinal Giuseppe Betori, among others.

"This event is happening at a time of tragedies in central Italy, such a beautiful country but so fragile," said Prada's chief executive officer Patrizio Bertelli, referring to the deadly earthquake that hit the Marche region at the end of August and the ongoing aftershocks that continue to rock and shatter several regions surrounding that epicenter. "I call upon all companies, small and big, to help out on rebuilding monuments that go back centuries," he said, speaking after a brief private meeting with Mattarella.

The restoration of Vasari's "Last Supper" has an additional, personal value for Bertelli, who hails from Arezzo, the artist's hometown, an hour's drive from Florence. "I was born next to Vasari's own home, I would play soccer under the Vasari loggia until I was 16, and my school would take us to visit his home. He was fundamental in life at Arezzo," said Bertelli, expressing his pride in having contributed to the restoration.



Giorgio Vasari's "Last Supper" painting unveiling ceremony.

After the ceremony, asked about the day of the flood, the entrepreneur said he remembered it "very well," and that for two weeks, he would "come here to the library and help clean the books with my friends," armed with sponges to clear the pages from the mud. "We worked so much on those books," he reminisced.

Bertelli emphasized the "virtuous partnership" between private and institutional parties that worked together on this project, with restorers from all over the world. Five of them were financed by Prada, who contributed to the works with 350,000 euros, or \$388,500 at current exchange rates.

He saw "a problem" in the fact that "people always talk about the government and the state asking for help, but then we forget that we citizens are the state. There should be a national conscience. The government does not have a magic wand."

He reiterated that he was "appealing to all companies" to take action in central

Italy and "not the ones that say they will do it and then don't actually spend a lira [old Italian currency]."

"I called upon everyone as an instinct, it will be a problem for how serious the losses will be. The state can help but it does not have such massive capitals, it's too much. And we don't even know when the aftershocks will be over. The state will firstly help the citizens, the mountainous agriculture, but we need private help for the monuments and churches," remarked Bertelli.

The painting, which dates back to 1546, was unveiled at the Santa Croce basilica and Irene Sanesi, president of the Opera di Santa Croce, a private nonprofit laical institution in charge of the administration of the monumental complex, underscored that "Prada realized not only the artistic value but also the story it tells, it's a tale of rebirth and hope."

She noted that the "Last Supper" had been left in a deposit box for 40 years, and

that there was little hope of recovering it, after being under water and mud for 12 hours. It was originally created for the refectory of the convent of the "Murate [enclosed nuns]."

A new mechanical system allows the painting to be hoisted six meters, or almost 20 feet, which is one meter higher than the level the water rose 50 years ago.

Prada revealed in 2014 that it was going to help finance the restoration.

The work began in 2004 by the restoration laboratory of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, a Florence-based public institute controlled by the Ministry for Cultural Affairs, focused on the conservation and restoration of Italy's artistic heritage. The restoration follows the conservation work one on the wooden panels conducted in 2010 by the Getty Foundation, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Prada has collaborated with Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the Italian National Trust.

FASHION

Alexander Wang Discusses His Future

- The designer didn't hold back in a talk with Fern Mallis at 92Y.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Alexander Wang wasn't allowed to shoot free T-shirts into the crowd on Nov. 3 during the Q&A at 92Y as he had hoped, but the designer fired away all sorts of facts about his life.

Keeping attendees laughing throughout his lengthy chat with Fern Mallis, the American designer didn't hold back about some of the more trying challenges he faced breaking into New York's fashion scene and starting his business 11 years ago. How a Parsons School of Design dropout rocketed to international fame is a story in itself, but Wang's trajectory was only enhanced by his humor. Whether describing dealing with his first hangover, the trials of working with family members or how the 2008 recession was a ho-hum event for his mega-million dollar company, the designer kept the audience entertained.

In New York to attend Parsons, Wang spent his first summer working mornings and some weekends at Barneys and interned at Marc Jacobs. School didn't have



Alexander Wang and Fern Mallis at 92Y.

the same excitement. "Everyone has a different way of learning and adapting for an environment. It just wasn't for me," he said. Wang told Mallis that young designers need all kinds of experience "Retail, editorial and from the creative side, you have to get it from all the angles."

Recalling how it was "all hands on deck" when he started interning for Marc Jacobs months before one of his fall shows, Wang learned, "You've got to multitask. Marc has a very specific way of working that works for him. He works on the collection and a lot of his creative ideas come toward the end. It's an amazing energy in the office. People get very excited by his

energy and his ideas. They go all-in. It was an incredible time especially as my first New York experience."

There were also more sobering exchanges such as his promotion to chairman and chief executive officer of his company, succeeding his mother and sister-in-law. "From Day One, my family has said, 'We're here to support you, we want to do the right thing for the business.' I'd come back from Paris [as creative director of Balenciaga] and I wanted to have more communication in the brand. I have always said that is the most important thing in the operation and the success of the company," noting his sister-in-law wanted

to spend time with her children and his mother wanted to chill out a bit. "I don't know that this is forever but right now at this moment I felt this was the time for me to really be more educated in all aspects."

On the Balenciaga years:

"I would fly Sunday night, get to Paris at 6 a.m., go to the office at 9 and work until 8 [p.m.] Monday through Friday. Then I'd take the red-eye back on Friday, have dinner with my friends [in New York] and do it all again two or three weeks later. It was pretty crazy....It was an incredible team of people keeping me on track and disciplined. But I decided it was time to go back to my own brand and really focus my efforts on clearly something I started from the ground up."

On the importance of winning the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund's \$200,000 versus the mentorship with Diane von Furstenberg that came with it:

"The mentorship — for sure. Money is like in and out. You've got to pay a bill or... Diane came to my showroom, and the first thing she said was, 'Clarity, you have so much clarity with what you want to do.' I was like, 'Oh, I do? I feel like I'm so confused.' But I was like, 'I'll take that.'"

On working with his family:

"It's kind of like cutting an onion. You're really excited to have the onion, but you're crying at the same time.... They'll ask, 'Why don't you come over for dinner?' and I'm like, 'I spent Monday through Friday with you.'"

Saving Vasari's 'Last Supper'

Damaged in the 1966 flood in Florence,
a masterwork is reinstalled 50 years later

FLORENCE, ITALY

BY PAULA DEITZ

In early morning light, the low buildings lining both sides of the Arno River here glow in their myriad shades of ochre, like the shallow river itself, which flows calmly through the city.

When I was here on Nov. 4, 1966, with my husband-to-be on our first trip to Europe together, it was quite a different sight. It had rained for days, and, totally saturated, the water table rose up; the river, coursing angrily with a release from an upriver dam, overflowed its retaining walls into the streets. Stranded in our hotel along the river, I looked down from a second-floor interior balcony and saw that the water had risen frighteningly to the ceiling of the lobby. I asked for two candles, two bottles of water and a couple of packets of breadsticks.

Would the foundation of the old building collapse? I took two flat wooden drawers from the armoire and placed them by the window in case we needed flotation devices. Then we took turns sleeping until dawn broke. Outside, large metal drums of heating oil, already topped off for winter, were swept into the Arno and banged all night against the bridges. Otherwise, all was ghostly quiet. By the next morning, the headline in *La Notte* described the scene: "Florence — City of Ghosts."

The city was a sea of sludge. With no food or water, and the risk of typhoid, we were told by the hotel staff to leave immediately to unburden Florence. One enterprising guest with a car on a hill ferried us in shifts to the train for Bologna.

We knew we were leaving behind hundreds of ruined treasures — more than 1,500 artworks damaged by the muddy water and oil mix, by one count, as well as entire library collections. Of the eight major floods that have afflicted Florence since 1333 — three of them on a Nov. 4 — this one in 1966 was considered the worst.

I have returned here, now the editor of an arts journal, to remember and to observe the preparations for the 50th anniversary of this catastrophic flood. The city abounds with commemorative exhibitions, but the main event on the day itself is the reinstallation in the Cenacolo, the old refectory of Santa Croce, of Giorgio Vasari's "Last Supper" (1546).

Long in the news, the five-panel painting is the final, most complex, severely damaged masterpiece in the flood to be restored.

On that Friday, the water rose to 20 feet around Santa Croce, and "Last Supper" was totally immersed for more than 12 hours, its lower segments for even longer. The ceremony itself represents the symbolic end of an era, a poignant half-century in modern art history during which scores of experts in Florence, and young apprentices just learning their trade, labored painstakingly to restore priceless works. But the challenges for the Vasari appeared insurmountable until the last decade, with conservators hoping for new expertise to help them.

The beloved Vasari painting of Christ and his disciples, shockingly contemporary for his time, was commissioned by the Benedictine nuns of the Florentine Murate Convent, whose cloistered life prohibited male artists from entering to paint a fresco. But a painting on poplar panels was easily transportable from Vasari's studio. Known for his 1568 second edition of *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, and his design of Michaelangelo's marble tomb at Santa Croce, Vasari created a tableau of realism that drew viewers into the scene, to the empty place at Christ's table.

Following the Napoleonic era and the unification of Italy, the convent was closed, and the painting was eventually relocated to the Castellani Chapel in the basilica of Santa Croce in 1865 and finally to the refectory in the Museum of the Opera there in the 1950s.

Marco Grassi, now an art conservator in New York, apprenticed in Florence at the Uffizi Gallery. At the time of the flood, he was dividing his work between his studio in Florence and the Villa Favorita in Lugano, Switzerland, as a visiting conservator for the collection of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza. He was in the Villa studio when the elderly custodian came in. "Aren't you from Florence?" he asked, explaining that flood water in the city was up to the first floor of the Pitti Palace. After listening to the radio, Mr. Grassi jumped into his car. It took over 12 hours to make the usual five-hour trip, negotiating between military convoys.

FLOOD, PAGE 21

50 years after the flood

FLOOD, FROM PAGE 16

On Nov. 5, he put on his boots and went immediately to the Uffizi, where a major meeting was held. "In truth," he recalls, "the experience was new, and no one could stand up and say what should be done next technically with works that had been immersed for hours in water mixed with mud and black heating oil." What they understood was that panel paintings would first expand and then shrink, so the immediate decision was to protect the painted surfaces, which would eventually buckle.

With acres of paintings affected, "It was a complete war zone at Santa Croce," Mr. Grassi recalled. While visitors were fleeing, swarms of volunteers called *Gli Angeli del Fango* (The Angels of Mud), descended on Florence to offer assistance.

Mr. Grassi started working on "Last Supper." "We placed sheets of Japanese wet-strength mulberry paper on the painted surface and brushed on methacrylate resin to make them adhere," he said. Nobody could foresee what an ordeal it would be later to remove the papers. It would take 40 years to acquire the technology and expertise to accomplish the whole restoration.

Two weeks later, the five panels were divided and placed flat on racks in the Limonaia, the conservatory for the Boboli Gardens' lemon trees in winter, with its high level of humidity; there they could dry slowly, along with racks of hundreds of other works of art, often for years. But as the panels dried, they shrank, becoming two centimeters narrower, leaving many cracks and fissures in the wood itself. The gesso undercoating became unstable.

In 2004, the panels were moved for the first time to the Opificio delle Pietre Dure (O.P.D.), Italy's first modern restoration laboratory, set in an old military warehouse. The workshop was founded by Ferdinando I de' Medici in 1588 for the inlay of precious stones but now is the major institution for the conservation of art.

When I recently walked with the director, Marco Ciatti, through its cavernous spaces, I saw one young woman in her white lab coat and jeans sitting on a stool with a fine paintbrush applying careful crosshatching — two-way strokes — to a "Last Supper" disciple's almost-finished pink robe. "Miraculous" is the first word that came to mind when

I saw the almost-finished panel. To guide her strokes, she constantly looked down at her cellphone screen, following Vasari's preparatory underdrawing, which had been obtained by electronic scans. "It was like bringing back alive a painting that had literally died," Mr. Ciatti said.

A major turning point in the process came in 2010, when the Getty Foundation, through its Panel Paintings Initiative and a grant of 300,000 euros (\$329,000) to the O.P.D., assembled experts to train the next two generations of conservators in structural treatment and stabilization. "The breakthrough in technology came incrementally over the years as conservators learned how to improve the wooden support systems by allowing lateral movement as well as curvature," said Antoine M. Wilmering, a senior program officer at the Getty.

It took surgical skills to enlarge the Vasari wooden panels. The chief "surgeon" was Ciro Castelli, now a senior painting conservator but at the time of the flood a 23-year-old carpenter drafted into service. Over the years, he figured out how to expand the panels to their proper size with tiny slits and pieces of poplar wood filler, so that the backs now resemble abstract mosaics.

In 2014, Prada, in collaboration with the Fondo Ambiente Italiano (Italy's National Trust), provided the O.P.D. with another grant for an intricate procedure that required flattening out the paint and filling in the missing areas. Roberto Bellucci was responsible for this aesthetic restoration.

As a matter of record, paint restorers are careful to distinguish between the original and restored areas. But step back today, and the soft folds and shadows of the colorful robes of the figures stretched across the work appear fluidly of a piece. Christ, in pale rose, drapes his left arm over St. John in mustard gold, and a bearded St. Peter sits on his right in blue with a toga-like garment in yellow clasped at his right shoulder. A footed glass of wine gleams. It is a scene of camaraderie as elongated figures under a twilight sky converse. Only Judas turns away as darkness gathers in the room. Enhanced by scrupulous attention to details of color, light and shadow, "Last Supper" radiates its new life without losing Vasari's original strength in portraiture.

The gilded period frame is actually the edge of a new state-of-the-art climate control box that stabilizes the interior humidity. A metallic hoist has been devised to raise "Last Supper" to the roof — well over the water line — in case of a future flood.

One of the most admired works at Santa Croce is Cimabue's "Crucifix," the 13th-century painted cross in wood that was submerged in the flood up to Christ's golden halo. Although the work lost 60 percent of its paint, many chips floating in water nearby were salvaged by rescuers. Now hanging in the church's Sacristy, "Crucifix" is a testament to the first decade of restoration.

"Conservation was born here in Florence," Mr. Ciatti said, citing Medici documents listing payments to restorers. But this latest decade, he contends, has changed the world of restoration.

Speaking recently at the opening of "The Flood," an exhibition of photographs at the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, the mayor of Florence, Dario Nardella, said that while experts might have thought the Vasari impossible to restore, "with determination it was rebuilt."

Walking around Florence and entering almost any church, I found restorers on scaffolding willing to tell their stories about the flood itself or the environment that continues to affect frescoes everywhere. In the Basilica of the Santissima Annunziata, I met Contessa Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda, the American co-founder and president of Friends of Florence, and her team, who are involved in restoring 12 wall paintings by Florentine artists which survived the flooding but are now endangered by damp and pollution.

In the evening, I returned to the same hotel on the Arno where I had stayed in 1966. I remembered my feeling then that the world around us was in grave danger. As isolated as we were in it, a devotion and romance developed between my future husband, Frederick Morgan, and me that lasted our lifetime together. Every year thereafter, until he died in 2004, we lit our two candles on Nov. 4, Florence Flood Day, to commemorate the occasion.

Disastrous as it was, that event determined my lifelong devotion to the city. Fifty years later, as I look out my window onto the dark water glittering with reflections of the stately row of riverside lights, fireworks suddenly light up the sky over the Ponte Vecchio. People are celebrating somewhere, and here there is much to celebrate — renewal.



ARCHIVES OF THE OFFICIO DELLE PIETRE DURE, FIRENZE



BRITTA NEW, NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON



ARCHIVES OF THE OFFICIO DELLE PIETRE DURE, FIRENZE

From top: Removing the facing paper that had been applied after the flood of 1966; detaching paint film; conservators positioning panels of the work to align.

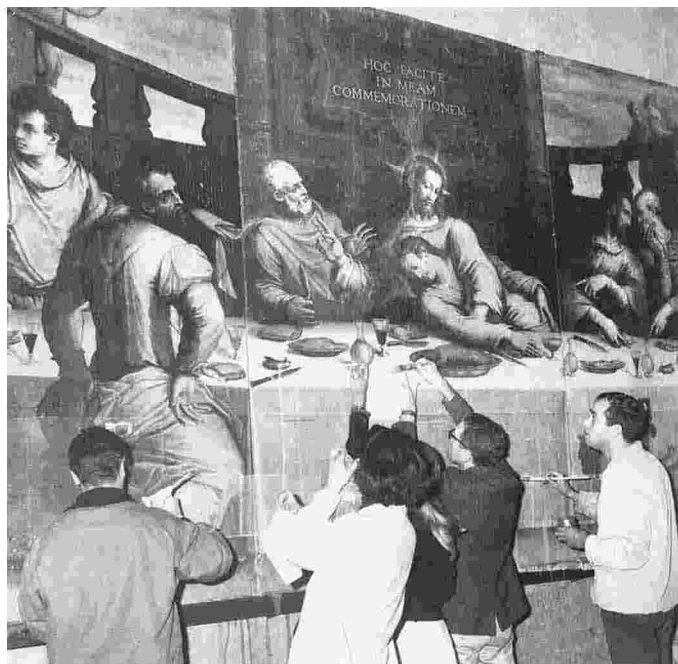
Vasari's "Last Supper," with some of those responsible for its restoration.



CLARA YARBROCK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



BULTEAZNE KORUAS VIA THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



VIA MARCO GRASSI

Top, the Arno River during the Florence Flood, Nov. 4, 1966. Left, conservators working to preserve Vasari's "Last Supper" after the flood.



CLARA VANNUCCI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Cimabue's "Crucifix," a 13th-century work that had been submerged but is now restored.

ART

A Resurrected 'Last Supper'

BY DEBORAH BALL

IN NOVEMBER 1966, torrential rains sent the Arno River pouring over its banks and flooding the streets of Florence. The surging waters damaged or destroyed thousands of paintings, frescoes and manuscripts, a tragic loss for a city considered the birthplace of the Renaissance.

One victim was "The Last Supper," by Giorgio Vasari, a 16th-century Italian artist and author of an authoritative biography of the artistic geniuses of his time.

"The Last Supper," which was painted on wood panels, was hung inside a museum within Florence's Santa Croce basilica. Because the museum was lower than the main cathedral, Vasari's work remained submerged under a viscous mix of flood water, sewage and oil for more than 12 hours, causing the wood to warp and the paint to peel.

Now, 50 years after the devastating flood, Vasari's rendering of Christ's last supper will return to Santa Croce after a painstaking restoration funded by the Getty Foundation and fashion house Prada. Its unveiling, on Nov. 4, marks the last major flood-damaged work to be restored to public viewing.

"It is such a triumph," says Antoine Wilmering, a senior program officer at Getty involved in the grant and an expert on wood restoration.

For decades, restorers were loath to even touch "The Last Sup-



MIRACLE WORKERS Damaged in a flood, Giorgio Vasari's 'The Last Supper' took decades to restore. Below, experts remove paper from the painting.

per" due to the extensive damage. The gesso, a type of glue that held the paint to the wood panels, had sagged during the flood, while the panels cracked and curved after they dried. For decades, it was kept in storage, laid horizontally because of its fragility.

"It was considered impossible to restore," says Marco Ciatti, head of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, a renowned restoration center in Florence that handled the project.

The painting was also covered with a thin crust of dried paper. Volunteer conservators who rushed to save works of art after the 1966 flood had attached conservation paper to keep the paint from sagging off the wet wood. When they ran out of conservation paper, they used tissue paper and Kleenex.

When a new team of conservators undertook the project in 2009, they X-rayed the work to understand where the cracks were. Originally, they feared they would have to separate the painting from the panel and reapply it to a new layer of wood. But after the conservators began to carefully peel the paper away from the painting's surface, using tweezers, they found the work in better condition than they expected. They managed to reattach the original gesso using surgical needles.

Now, the restored work gives art historians a new window into Vasari's artistry. "When we saw the painting standing, it was like someone who had risen from their sickbed after being very ill," says Mr. Ciatti. "Overcoming a challenge that was considered impossible and handing this work back to Florence was very emotional."



ARCHIVES OF THE OPIFICIO DELLE PIETRE DURE, FLORENCE (2)

