



The result of six years of renovation: Above: The exterior of the restored Rong Villa. Below left: The grand stained-glass skylight. Below right: The walls in a bedroom that uses enamel tiles instead of the more normal paneling. — Jiang Xiaowei/Ti Gong



Historic Rong villa brought back to life by Chinese, Italian craftsmen

Li Qian

A HISTORIC villa, associated with the renowned Rong family, will open tomorrow to the public for the first time.

There will be a free exhibition explaining the extensive restoration work over the past six years.

Called Rong Zhai or Rong Villa now, the three-floor villa at 186 Shaanxi Road N. in Jing'an District was the former residence of Rong Zongling, a pioneer of one of China's most renowned tycoon families.

He and his younger brother Rong Desheng were known as both flour and cotton yarn magnates.

His nephew, Rong Yiren, who was vice president of China from 1993 to 1998, set up the China International Trust and Investment Corp. or CITIC, in 1979.

The grand garden villa was bought by Rong Zongling from a German in 1918.

The classic Beaux Arts-style facade was maintained, while the interior design was furnished in Eclectic and Art Deco styles, and traditional Chinese elements.

Rong left Shanghai in January

1938 after refusing to work for the Japanese occupation forces. However, within a month after he arrived in Hong Kong, he died of illness.

Over the years, the villa has been rented as an office by the China Economic Research Institute as well as by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch. In 2011, the luxury Italian brand Prada became the new tenant.

The district government sought help from the business sector to preserve the historic building, and Prada, which has a big store in Plaza 66 just across the street, stepped in.

Patrizio Bertelli, Prada's chief executive, said, "we will promote our own products here, like fashion shows. Also, we will hold public activities and exhibitions."

Designer Michael Rock, and also a member of the restoration team, said: "Restoration doesn't mean copying the past. We should add some new meaning into it. We have to understand it in a deep way and make it a global hybrid."

Renowned history and architecture expert Zheng Shiling spoke highly of the project. "It's rare that a historic building is

used by one single company. Usually, it is divided into many units for different companies, which are bad for historical preservation."

Zheng estimated that the project cost the Italian fashion house hundreds of millions of yuan. Prada, however, hasn't released figures for the project.

The restoration involved three years of research, including ideas of how to combine Prada culture with the history of the villa and the Rong family.

During the work, a secret family safety box was found under paneling. "These are elements of life as it was, and we want them preserved," cultural official Qian Wei said.

Craftsmen from China and Italy together have given the historic villa a new lease on life. "Generally, the interior decoration, like glass, light and wall embellishment, is preserved. But it doesn't mean it's an easy job to repair," said Zheng, who is also a Tongji University professor. "The villa is given the top protection status by the city, which requires no change in decoration at all."

Architect Robert Baciocchi, responsible for the restoration,

said: "It took much time to find the original materials." So, he asked skilled Italian craftsmen to repair some of the broken pieces and make new ones in the old way.

The highlight of the ballroom is a 45-square-meter stained-glass skylight, comprising 69 glass panels. It features Art Deco styling lines and typical Greek ornamental laurel wreaths. However, the skylight was severely damaged over the years. The broken and missing pieces were replaced with vintage glass, made in Germany.

The restoration has won the heart of the Rong Family. John Yung, great grandson of Rong, said: "I've heard that there were many big names and celebrities gathered at our house, and they often attended parties held in the ballroom. I can feel those old glory days now."

The restored Rong Villa will open to the public from Tuesday to November 12, six days a week from Sunday to Tuesday. An exhibition of the restoration work is held inside. Reservation is required in advance via Prada's official WeChat (pradawechat.fortytwo.com.cn/Events/20170920/pc_cn.html).

Swans help deal with waterway menace

Hu Min

BLACK swans are being recruited to tackle unwanted water hyacinths.

A black swan breeding base in Qingpu District is using the bird to eliminate the aquatic plants — thereby easing the invasion of unwanted aquatic plants and tackling water pollution.

Water hyacinths are a headache because they block waterways and affect flood drainage.

An adult black swan can eat 2.5 kilograms of water hyacinths daily, according to Huang Haibo, executive director of the Shanghai Wildlife Protection Association.

Shanghai Daqian Ecological Estate, one of the biggest black swan breeding bases in China, has nearly 10,000 of the swans. About 30 percent of their food comes from concentrated feed, with the rest supplied by floating plants like water hyacinths.

Workers at the base salvage the hyacinths from rivers and put them into the estate's lake for the swans, to digest.

When the swans excrete the hyacinths, it then serves as feed for fish, and the expansion of fish will contribute to water purification, said Huang.

This way of killing aquatic plants has been proved feasible by experts of Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences. "We plan to release black swans into rivers filled with water hyacinths, which can ease the invasion of unwanted aquatic plants and tackle water pollution, and provide a solution for the shortage of food for black swans," Huang added.

The city's greenery and public sanitation authorities said the practice will be tested on a small scale initially, but expressed fears that the black swans might be stolen or killed. In April, a black swan in Xujiahui Park was illegally killed and eaten by a migrant worker.

This year, a warm winter and rising tide levels led to an early outbreak of water hyacinths from the usual September to June period.

Some areas in Songjiang and Jinshan districts, Suzhou Creek and upstream Huangpu River have all seen the invasive species.

This year, 147,000 tons of water hyacinths have been removed since June, a record in recent years.

October and November are the peak months of the plant invasion.

上海日报

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Historic Rong villa brought back to life by Chinese, Italian craftsmen

By Li Qian | 00:01 UTC+8 October 16, 2017 |  PRINT EDITION



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Prada Unveils Restored Mansion in Shanghai

Prada Rong Zhai was unveiled after a six-year renovation and restoration effort.

SHANGHAI — The Prada Group has unveiled its latest restoration project: Rong Zhai is a restored mansion in downtown Shanghai, which will be used as a multipurpose brand and cultural space.

As well as reshowing Prada's resort 2018 collection and inviting a select group of influencers and celebrities — including director Baz Luhrmann, actress Zhang Ziyi, model Liu Wen and artist Cao Fei — for an intimate dinner at the mansion on Wednesday, the doors of Rong Zhai were thrown open to 1,000 guests for a cocktail party on Saturday night.

The evening included a performance by actor and musician Ansel Elgort, the face of Prada L'Homme fragrance, and among the guests were Du Juan and Alexander Wang.

The unveiling of Rong Zhai — the name translates to "Rong House" — comes following a six-year renovation. Miuccia Prada and her husband Patrizio Bertelli, chief executive officer of the Milan-based group, are not new to such initiatives of preservation. They have supported the restoration of Milan's 19th-century luxury shopping arcade Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and Palazzo Ca' Corner della Regina, an opulent Baroque palace on the Grand Canal in Venice that was reconfigured as an art space for Fondazione Prada.



Miuccia Prada and actress Zhang Ziyi celebrate the opening of Prada Rong Zhai.

"The first question people ask is why Prada is doing this?" Bertelli said. "We want to do it because we want to give an identity and pride that goes beyond a fashion brand. When it came to [doing a project like this] in the Chinese market, we

thought about our Prada brand identity and what fits with our past, but also our present. So we grasped the opportunity and here we are today."

Located close to Prada's Plaza 66 store on the shopping thor-

oughfare West Nanjing Road in a street of low-rise buildings, the 21,500-square-foot villa was built in 1918 and also features an expanse of garden, a rarity in downtown Shanghai, overlooked by terraces and balconies on the south side of

the mansion.

Those terraces once connected to the second story bedroom of Yung Tsoong-King (also known in Mandarin as Rong Zongjing), a flour, textiles and banking magnate who built the home to accommodate his large family. Rong had 11 children, the youngest two born in their mother's powder blue bedroom with views over the street's leafy canopy.

As well as playing host to business and political dignitaries of the day, the Rong house was renowned for its blowout parties, with the ballroom — complete with a spectacular stained-glass skylight — hosting a rotating roster of Swing bands that would accompany festivities lasting up to 48 hours at a stretch.

John Yung, great-grandson of Rong Zongjing and grandson of H.C. Yung, the last living child of the "Flour King of China," now 94 years old and living in Hong Kong, was on hand for the opening and said the restoration of the home meant a great deal to his grandfather.

"My grandfather came in September and it was a very emotional visit, for him to see how the house was transformed was very important for him. We have visited a few times before when it was an office building [and] it was sad because it

wasn't in great shape, so he was very happy to see the renovation," John Yung said.

According to renovation specialist Roberto Baciocchi, who oversaw the Rong Zhai project and whose brief was to remain as true to the building's origins as possible, the villa wasn't in good shape when they started work in 2011, but it was easy to see the elements that made the mansion special, including spectacular stained glass, brass fittings and tile work.

"This building was constructed in a historic period, a period of cultural change and internationalization, [the period] was a door for Eastern culture to welcome Western culture," he said.

"It was a great effort to find the original materials, but the biggest effort was communicated between our staff and the Chinese artisans. But once we overcame that challenge and everyone understood the quality we were looking for, we were able to work together toward that common goal without translators."

From Oct. 17 to Nov. 12 the house will be open to the public, so Shanghai's people can see the restoration, as well as an exhibit documenting Prada's other architectural and restoration projects. —CASEY HALL

BEAUTY

OGX Aims to Jump-start Its Hairstyling Category

- The Johnson & Johnson-owned brand has driven significant growth in shampoo and conditioners. Can it do the same for styling?

BY ELLEN THOMAS

Can OGX reverse declining sales in the hairstyling category?

The Johnson & Johnson-owned brand in January is unveiling an ambitious range of hairstyling products — a first for OGX, which primarily focuses on shampoo and conditioners formulated with on-trend ingredients such as argan oil and coconut milk. OGX did a test of the line this year with Ulta Beauty, and it will roll out to drug and mass distribution in early 2018.

The line will consist of 16 products divided up into six ranges — each range is centered on a natural hero ingredient that provides a specific benefit, such as smoothing or texture. The line consists of traditional styling products such as mousse and hairspray as well as hot items in the prestige market like dry shampoo and innovative formats including a texture spray wax and a cream-mousse blend.

Hairstyling is the problem child in today's mass market hair landscape. Kline & Co. recorded a 4.1 percent dip in styling product sales in 2016, while shampoo and conditioner grew at 2.3 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively. In the 52 weeks ending Sept. 10, IRI reported hairspray was down 3.9 percent overall and gels and mousses were down 2.5 percent overall, with all the

major players — Unilever, Procter & Gamble, Alberto Culver and Garnier — experiencing declines. The only bright spots were with brands offering natural ingredients and catering to a multicultural audience — SheaMoisture and Cantu saw double-digit growth in gels and mousses.

A recent report from Mintel showed that hairstyling products have been on the decline since 2011, despite positive gains in shampoo and conditioner. Mintel's research suggests that shampoo and conditioner sales have been powered by blockbuster launches such as Garnier Whole Blends, which answered consumer demand for natural ingredients. Meanwhile, most hairstyling product formulations have yet to be updated to reflect the consumer shift in preference toward natural ingredients — and products like gels and hairsprays are viewed as dated as more consumers embrace the current trend toward wearing hair in its natural texture, as well as focusing on the overall health of the hair.

"Innovation is what the mass hair-care category — and all mass categories — need to revive themselves," said Naira Aslanian, project manager for the beauty and personal-care industry at Kline & Co. "This is also needed to stand out, as many of the professional brands sell in the big-box retailers. Mass brands are competing with professional brands on shelves."

Innovation is what OGX focused on in bringing its hairstyling range to fruition.

"We're taking a modern approach to styling — the end result needs to be a soft, healthy look. Gone are the days of really sticky gels and hairsprays and hard-hold

fixatives, and within the range we've infused exotic ingredients that will give you an end benefit," said Jaime Kontz, associate director of product innovation at Vogue International. Johnson & Johnson acquired Vogue International in 2016.

The six collections that comprise the OGX styling range are the Bodifying Plus Bamboo Fiber Full, Texture, Extra Strength Plus Honey Hold, Protecting Plus Silk Blowout, Smoothing Plus Shea Sleek and Locking Plus Coconut Curls. Each product is priced at \$8.99.

Each collection harnesses a natural ingredient for an end benefit. Kontz listed the Protecting Plus Silk Blowout Quick Drying Thermal Spray, which uses silk extract and quinoa to protect against heat damage and speed drying time, as an example of the brand's innovation. "A quick-drying thermal spray that is multifunctional — there aren't a lot of products like it on the market," Kontz said. "It's [indicative]

of the type of products we're offering — they're going to be different from all the gels and other fixatives that have been sitting on the shelf for years."

Variety and versatility were two other key factors in developing the range, said Courtney Connelly, senior brand manager for Vogue International. Faced with research showing that consumers prefer to use fewer products to style their hair, the brand focused on multipurpose products and made sure to offer items that would work with every hair type. "The formula of how different brands approach things is very negative and focused on fixing you — our brand is focused on complementing exactly what you want to do and letting you do you. That really resonates with consumers," Connelly said.

Retailers are confident that the new OGX line will lift the styling category's sales.

"We've seen a lot of loyalty for OGX from our customers, who have been asking for styling products from this trusted brand, so there's definitely a lot of excitement surrounding this launch," said Maly Bernstein, vice president of beauty and personal care at CVS. "We anticipate that the OGX line extension will help drive growth in the hair category overall and revitalize styling innovation."

Also on deck for OGX in 2018 is a new product range called Salon Technology, which will usher into the mass market professional-inspired products. The first launch will be the Restoring Plus Bonding Plex, a trio of products — shampoo, conditioner and treatment — uses keratin proteins and Cystine, a cross-linking polymer, to strengthen and deep-condition overprocessed hair.

"We saw as a category that styling was down, however...there are professional products that are winning that haven't trickled down to drug yet," Kontz said. "It goes back to the fact that styling needs to be disrupted."



OGX Protecting Plus Silk Blowout range.

W



TRAVEL

Miuccia Prada Dropped In on Shanghai Fashion Week, Where China's It Girls Come Out to Play

October 15, 2017 8:30 am

Miuccia Prada Dropped In on Shanghai Fashion Week, Where China's It Girls Come Out to Play

Two seasons ago, [Shanghai Fashion Week](#) hosted the likes of Gigi Hadid, hosting a launch event for her Gigi x Tommy line, and this season, the emerging fashion week has earned Prada's endorsement. Though [Prada](#) presented its Resort 2018 show in Milan back in May, that didn't stop Miuccia Prada's namesake brand from staging a reprise in Shanghai just two days before the onset of Shanghai Fashion Week Spring 2018. Prada co-signed the restoration of the magnificent Rong Zhai villa, where its Resort 2018 show took place for a second time (with a few new, specially designed looks) on Thursday. It drew the likes of Prada herself, as well as front-row stars like the [supermodel Liu Wen](#)—but with the onset of Shanghai Fashion Week, the city's own street style stars, up-and-coming models, fashion editors, and more are snapping away at the sights of Shanghai and posting them on Instagram.

by

[Katherine Cusumano](#)

October 15, 2017 8:30 am



@brigittelacombe

French photographer Brigitte Lacombe documents backstage at Prada Resort 2018 in Shanghai, China, October 2017.



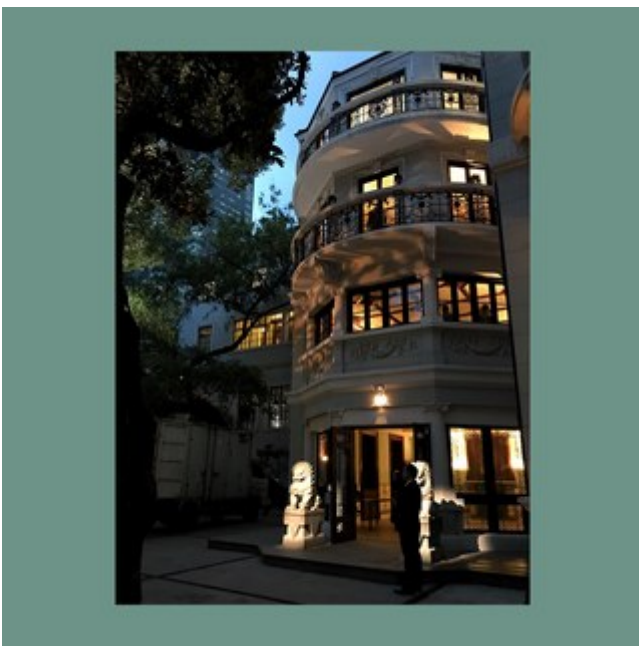
@liuwenlw

Model Liu Wen was among those in the front row at Prada's Resort 2018 show in Shanghai, China, October 2017.



@louise.robert

Model Louise Robert at the Prada Resort 2018 show in Shanghai, China, October 2017.



@ryanscarter

The exterior of the newly restored Prada Rong Zhai villa, which was the site of Prada's second Resort 2018 show and will officially open October 14.

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NEWS MONDAY 16TH OCTOBER | BY FINN BLYTHE

PRADA UNVEIL THE RESTORED RHONG ZHAI VILLA IN SHANGHAI

Story time: many moons ago, in the Jing'an district of old Shanghai, the esteemed mercantile family of Yung Tsoong-King held residence in Rong Zhai, one of Shanghai's finest Western-style garden villas. Mr. King was, after all, The Flour King of China. But now the historic house has got a new, altogether more fabulous resident, in the form of Miuccia Prada. Not the lady herself, we're sure she's very happy in Milan, but her brand – almost 100 years later, the house of Prada will be re-opening the site as a hub of cultural activities that will be open to the public.

The meticulous restoration programme, which begun in 2011 together with architect and renovation specialist Roberto Baciocchi, is now complete, and serves as an emblem of Miuccia Prada's admiration of Chinese aesthetic heritage and her deep commitment to the city of Shanghai, as evidenced by Prada's recent Resort show at the site. "Prada has always drawn inspiration from the arts, not least of all architecture," said Miuccia of the new maison. "China — the country itself and the European perception of it — has maintained a valued place in the imagination of Prada." Prada are good at this.

Closer to home, other renovation projects include the very grand sounding Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, as well as the palazzo Ca' Corner della Regina, a baroque-era palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, now reconfigured as an art space. Isn't Miuccia nice?

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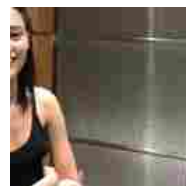
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LA NOVITÀ

La casa del fashion a Shanghai

PRADA ha una nuova "casa" in Cina. Si chiama "Prada Rong Zhai" ed è una residenza del 1918, una delle più belle ville di Shanghai. Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli hanno realizzato il progetto di restauro di questo edificio che, dal 2005, fa parte del patrimonio storico di Shanghai. La villa che ospiterà le molteplici attività del Gruppo Prada in Cina, ha riaperto i battenti con la sfilata della collezione Resort 2018 e per un mese, a partire dal 17 ottobre, sarà

possibile visitare la villa tornata al suo antico splendore. Da anni Prada è impegnata sul fronte della conservazione storica degli edifici. Un capitolo che comprende, tra gli altri, il restauro di alcune sezioni della Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II a Milano e di Ca' Corner della Regina a Venezia. La villa di Shanghai prende il nome da Yung Tsoong-King (Rong Zongjing nel moderno sistema di trascrizione), un famoso magnate, il "re della farina cinese", che qui visse con la sua

famiglia e che ne fece anche un punto di riferimento per un'attività culturale. «Con l'espansione delle nostre attività sia con l'azienda che con la Fondazione, abbiamo allargato le nostre esplorazioni cultural-architettoniche in Cina – spiegano Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli – è una ricerca che va oltre i confini delle boutique, crea interazioni con mondi diversi. Un nuovo modo di fare moda».

(l. a.)

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INNOVATION

The house of fashion in Shanghai

PRADA has a new “house” in China. It is called "Prada Rong Zhai" and is a residence from 1918, one of the most beautiful villas in Shanghai. Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli have implemented the project for the restoration of this building, which, since 2005, has belonged to the historical heritage of Shanghai.

The villa, which will host the many activities of the Prada Group in China, has reopened its doors with the parade of the Resort 2018 collection and for one month, starting from 17th October, it will be possible to visit the villa, which has been returned to its former splendour. For years Prada has been committed on the front of the historical conservation of buildings. This is a chapter that includes, among others, the restoration of some sections of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan and Ca' Corner della Regina in Venice. The villa in Shanghai takes its name from Yung Tsoong-King (Rong Zongjing in the modern transcription system), a famous magnate, the “Chinese Flour King”, who lived here with his family and made it a point of reference for cultural activities. “With the expansion of our activities, both with the firm and with the Foundation, we have extended our cultural-architectural explorations in China” - explain Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli - “it is research that goes beyond the confines of the boutiques; it creates interactions with different worlds. A new way of making fashion”.

Nella villa dell'ex re della farina cinese il regno di **Miuccia**

A Shanghai dopo sei anni di lavori, **Prada** apre con una sfilata la nuova sede

Shanghai 1918, già una metropoli internazionale, la città cinese più aperta al mondo. Yung Tsoong-king, industriale venuto dal nulla e diventato il Re della farina in un grande Paese che ha sempre avuto come primo obiettivo sfamare la popolazione, cercava una residenza per la sua numerosa famiglia. La trovò in una villa di tre piani nel distretto di Jing'an, il cuore della città. Il primo proprietario era stato un tedesco e lo stile della palazzina è occidentale, come quello del giardino. Yung Tsoong-king (che ora si trascrive Rong Zongjing) oltre che di farina si occupava anche di cotone: al culmine del successo nel 1936 possedeva 21 stabilimenti, tra quelli per la macina del grano e quelli per la filatura. La sua villa al numero 186 della Shaan Xi Bei lu (la via Shaan Xi Nord) era splendida, fu teatro di incontri mondani e colloqui politici. La storia, an-

che drammatica, è passata sulla cupola rossa e attraverso il colonnato della facciata. Rong Zongjing lasciò Shanghai nel gennaio 1938, mentre i giapponesi stavano invadendo la Cina. Si racconta che la notte della partenza volle fare un ultimo giro tra le stanze e le sale della villa, assieme alla famiglia; poi in carrozza raggiunse il Bund di Shanghai e si imbarcò su una nave che discese il fiume Huangpu. Non rivede più la sua amata Rong Zhai, la villa di via Shaan Xi: morì un mese dopo a Hong Kong, all'età di 66 anni.

Guerra, Rivoluzione Culturale maoista, poi il boom economico della Cina a partire dagli Anni 90 hanno stravolto il tessuto urbano di molte città della Repubblica popolare. Shanghai da qualche anno ha cominciato a preservare il suo patrimonio architettonico, dai palazzi sul lungofiume del Bund alle case basse nel quartiere della vecchia concessione francese; la municipalità ha onorato Rong Zhai con una targa intitolata all'antico proprietario, perché il Re della farina era stato anche un benefattore e mecenate, ispirato da una visione del mondo confuciana. Ma per fermare la decadenza della villa serviva un intervento

radicale. E qui, per chiudere il cerchio della storia, sono intervenuti Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli. Con un progetto di recupero della palazzina avviato nel 2011 e appena terminato. A Shanghai, portati da Prada, sono venuti architetti e artigiani italiani che hanno restaurato le sale usando spesso le stesse tecniche di costruzione e i materiali di inizio Novecento. L'architetto Roberto Baciocchi di Arezzo ha fatto un miracolo con stucchi, vetri piombati, boiserie e piastrelle decorative.

Dopo sei anni di lavori Rong Zhai riapre come quartier generale e spazio contemporaneo dedicato alle attività anche culturali della casa italiana. «La curiosità nei confronti del mondo, della società e della cultura sono il fulcro della creatività e della modernità dell'azienda — spiegano Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli —. La ricerca ha spinto Prada oltre i confini delle boutique e degli showroom, ha provocato un'interazione con mondi diversi e apparentemente lontani, e introdotto un nuovo modo di fare moda, una quasi "non moda"».

I nuovi inquilini italiani di Rong Zhai arrivano come fossero abitanti del quartiere, desiderosi di socializzare con i vi-

cini: dopo l'inaugurazione di questa settimana, con una sfilata di moda e una mostra, la villa sarà aperta per un mese solo per gli abitanti del quartiere. Poi diventerà il centro delle attività di Prada e della sua Fondazione in Cina. E a ben vedere, anche la sfilata di moda con la collezione Prada Resort 2018 che inaugura il nuovo spazio si riallaccia al passato splendore della villa: negli Anni 30 nel recinto della residenza il milionario cinese fece installare un palcoscenico per rappresentazioni dell'opera di Pechino.

Veder rinascere la villa di famiglia ha emozionato gli eredi dell'antico proprietario. Ha detto Yung junior: «Dopo quasi cent'anni la magnifica residenza della nostra famiglia era diventata un edificio obsoleto. Questo rinnovo ha riportato la vivacità di un tempo e ora Rong Zhai accoglierà élite e celebrità provenienti da ogni parte del mondo. Credo che, se fosse ancora vivo, Yung Tsoong-king sarebbe felicissimo». Ai tempi di Rong il Re della farina, il cibo era al centro dell'economia di sopravvivenza di centinaia di milioni di persone. Oggi i cinesi si nutrono anche di moda, aspirazioni e cultura.

Guido Santevecchi

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La nostra ricerca ci ha spinto oltre i confini di negozi e showroom, provocato interazioni tra mondi in apparenza lontani e differenti



I restauri sono stati realizzati da artigiani italiani e maestranze cinesi: da metà ottobre la villa aperta al pubblico per un mese

Il progetto

● Nel 2011 Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli (foto) acquisiscono la residenza di Yung Tsoong-king industriale cinese della farina e del cotone del '900.



● Rong Zhai, il nome della villa, dopo 100 anni è ritornata a nuova vita, dopo 6 anni di restauri affidati all'architetto Baciocchi; utilizzati anche materiali e tecniche di inizio Novecento



L'esterno e gli interni della villa di Rong Zhai, dopo il restauro. L'edificio, al 186 di Shaan Xi Nord, nel cuore di Shanghai, fu abbandonato dal proprietario nel 1938 con l'invasione giapponese



In the villa of the former Chinese Flour King the kingdom of Miuccia

In Shanghai after six years of work

Prada opens its new premises with a fashion parade

Shanghai 1918, already an international metropolis, the Chinese city most open to the world. Yung Tsoong-king, an industrialist who went from rags to riches to become the Flour King, in a great country that has always had feeding its population as its primary objective, was looking for a residence for his large family. He found it in a three-storey villa in the district of Jing'an, in the heart of the city. The first owner had been a German and the style of the villa is Western, as is that of the garden.

Yung Tsoong-king (which is now transcribed as Rong Zongjing), traded in cotton as well as flour: at the peak of his success in 1936 he possessed 21 establishments, including those for milling wheat and for spinning. His villa, at number 186 Shaan Xi Bei lu (Shaan Xi North Street) was splendid; it was the venue for society events and political talks. Its history, which is also dramatic, pervades the red dome and the colonnade of the façade. Rong Zongjing left Shanghai in January 1938, while the Japanese were invading China. It is said that on the night of his departure he wanted to make a last tour of the rooms and halls of the villa, together with his family; then he reached the Bund of Shanghai in his carriage and embarked on a ship that went down the River Huangpu. He never saw his beloved Rong Zhai, the villa in Shaan Xi Street, again; he died a month later in Hong Kong, at the age of 66.

War, Maoist Cultural Revolution, then the economic boom of China beginning in the 1990s, have all upset the urban fabric of many cities of the People's Republic. In recent years Shanghai has started to conserve its architectural heritage, from the buildings on the riverside of the Bund to the low houses in the district of the old French concession; the municipality has honoured Rong Zhai with a plaque bearing the name of its former owner, because the Flour King had also been a benefactor and a patron, inspired by a Confucian world view. But a radical intervention was needed to halt the deterioration of the villa. And it was here, to close the circle of history, that Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli intervened. With a project to restore the villa, begun in 2011 and just finished. Italian architects and craftsmen came to Shanghai, brought by Prada, and restored the rooms, often using the same construction techniques and materials as in the early 20th century. Architect Roberto Baciocchi from Arezzo has done miracles with the stucco, leaded glass, wood panelling and decorative tiles.

After six years of work, Rong Zhai reopens as a headquarters and also a contemporary space devoted to the cultural activities of the Italian fashion house. "Curiosity in relation to the world, society and culture are the fulcrum of the activities and the modernity of this firm" — explain Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli —. "Research has pushed Prada beyond the confines of the boutiques and the showroom; it has brought about an interaction with different and apparently distant worlds, and introduced a new way of making fashion, an almost "non-fashion".

The new Italian tenants at Rong Zhai arrive as through they were inhabitants of the district, keen to socialise with their neighbours: after this week's inauguration, with a fashion parade and an exhibition, the villa will be open for a month solely for the inhabitants of the district. Then it will become the centre for Prada's activities and its Foundation in China. And, as can easily be seen, the fashion parade with the Prada Resort 2018 collection that inaugurates the new space also links up with the past splendour of the

villa: in the 1930s the Chinese millionaire had a stage installed for performances by the Peking Opera within the walls of the residence.

Seeing the rebirth of the family villa has excited the former owner's heirs. Yung Junior said: "After almost a hundred years, our family's magnificent residence had become an obsolete building. This renovation has brought back the vitality of former times and now Rong Zhai will welcome élites and celebrities from every part of the world. I believe that, if he were still alive, Yung Tsoong-king would be very happy". At the time of Rong the Flour King, food was at the centre of the subsistence economy of hundreds of millions of people. Today the Chinese are also nourished by fashion, aspirations and culture.

Guido Santevecchi

"Our research has pushed us beyond the confines of the shops and the showroom; it has brought about interactions with different and apparently distant worlds".

"The restorations have been carried out by Italian craftsmen and Chinese workers: from mid-October the villa will be open to the public for a month"

The project

In 2011 Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli (photo) purchased the residence of Yung Tsoong-king, Chinese industrialist of flour and cotton of the 20th century.

After 100 years, Rong Zhai, the name of the villa, has returned to new life, after 6 years of restoration entrusted to architect Baciocchi; materials and techniques from the early 20th century were also used.

The exterior and interiors of villa Rong Zhai, after the restoration.

The building, at 186 Shaan Xui North, in the heart of Shanghai, was abandoned by the owner in 1938 with the Japanese invasion.

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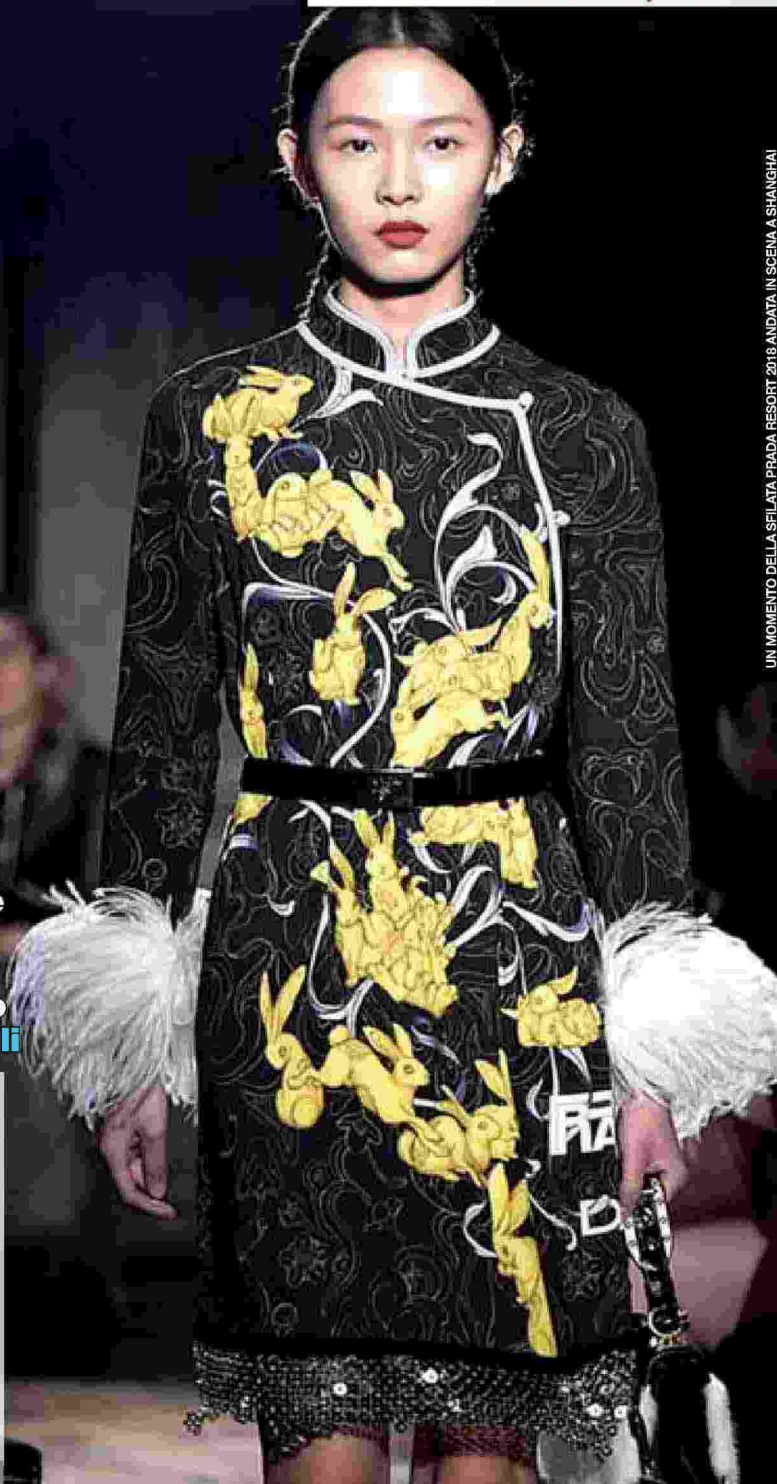
Prada rilancia sulla Cina

Il gruppo, quotato a Hong Kong, ha inaugurato con maxi-evento e sfilata il suo nuovo spazio culturale a Shanghai. «Questo Paese ha sempre occupato un posto di rilievo nell'immaginario del marchio», hanno detto Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli

Prada rilancia sulla Cina nel segno della cultura. Con un maxi-evento che ieri sera ha unito moda e arte, grazie a una sfilata ad hoc per inaugurare il suo ultimo progetto nell'ex Celeste impero. Il gruppo quotato alla Borsa di Hong Kong, che ha chiuso il semestre con ricavi per 1,47 miliardi di euro, ha alzato il velo su **Prada Rong Zhai**, restauro scrupoloso di una residenza storica del 1918 nel quartiere centrale di Shanghai. Uno spazio che ospiterà d'ora in avanti le sue molteplici attività nel Paese asiatico, una sorta di headquarter culturale, che conferma il grande impegno di Miuccia Prada e Patrizio Bertelli sia nei confronti della città cinese che nei confronti del patrimonio artistico in generale. Come dimostrato dalle iniziative di conservazione storica realizzate in tutto il mondo, tra cui il restauro di alcune sezioni della Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, a Milano, e di Ca' Corner della Regina, palazzo barocco di Venezia, affacciato sul Canal Grande riconvertito in spazio dedicato all'arte. L'evento di inaugurazione, svoltosi in concomitanza con la fashion week di Shanghai (in scena fino al prossimo 18 ottobre), ha previsto una sfilata della collezione **Prada resort 2018** cui farà seguito, domani, una conferenza stampa con le istituzioni e un cocktail. Lo spazio sarà poi aperto al

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UN MOMENTO DELLA SFILATA PRADA RESORT 2018 ANDATA IN SCENA A SHANGHAI

segue da pag. 1

pubblico da 17 ottobre per circa un mese, in attesa della definizione di un calendario di eventi vero e proprio. «Prada ha sempre tratto ispirazione dall'architettura. Lo studio delle implicazioni pratiche, commerciali e storiche degli edifici ha sempre rivestito un ruolo essenziale nello sviluppo dell'attività del gruppo, attraverso un profondo impegno per progetti di sperimentazione architettonica contemporanea e di rigorosa



Il Prada Rong Zhai a Shanghai

conservazione storica», hanno sottolineato **Miuccia Prada** e **Patrizio Bertelli**. «In particolare, la Cina, il paese e la percezione che gli europei ne hanno, ha sempre occupato un posto di rilievo nell'immaginario di Prada. Con l'espansione delle svariate attività culturali attraverso l'azienda e la **Fondazione Prada**, abbiamo ricercato opportunità di ampliare le nostre esplorazioni in campo architettonico e in altri ambiti artistici in Cina. È stato questo im-

perativo che ci ha portato a Rong Zhai, residenza storica capace di manifestare adeguatamente il nostro impegno costante per la cultura cinese e per il dialogo sino-europeo». Il restauro, avviato nel 2011, è stato pensato come il frutto di un interscambio tra Milano e Shanghai, che rende onore alla famiglia che ha originalmente commissionato questa residenza (la famiglia del magnate **Yung Tsoong-King**), agli architetti e artisti cinesi che l'hanno realizzata, e ai team di artigiani cinesi e italiani che le hanno restituito il suo splendore. L'intervento di restauro ha riparato i danni e recuperato l'aspetto storico degli interni e dell'esterno dell'edificio, dichiarato patrimonio culturale del distretto di Jing'an nel 2004 ed entrato nell'elenco degli edifici storici più interessanti di Shanghai nel 2005, provvedendo anche alle necessarie opere di rafforzamento strutturale e attualizzazione

funzionale. «Vorrei esprimere il mio più sentito ringraziamento al gruppo Prada per aver restituito alla residenza il fascino e lo splendore di un tempo. Grazie a una pianificazione accurata, la villa diventerà sicuramente un punto di riferimento per la moda di Shanghai e accoglierà élite e celebrità provenienti da ogni parte del mondo», ha sottolineato, **H.C. Yung**, figlio minore di Yung Tsoong-King. (riproduzione riservata) **Chiara Bottoni**



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The photographic gallery of the S/S 2018 collections now online on MFFashion.com

Prada relaunching in China

Quoted in Hong Kong, the group has inaugurated its new cultural space in Shanghai with a maxi-event and fashion show. "This country has always held a significant position in the brand's collective imagination", state Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli.

Prada is relaunching its presence in China under the banner of culture, with a maxi-event that yesterday evening brought together fashion and art, thanks to an ad-hoc fashion show to inaugurate its latest project in the ex Celestial Empire. The group quoted on the Hong Kong stock exchange, which closed the first six months with earnings of 1.47 billion euros, raised the curtain on Prada Rong Zhai, the careful restoration of a historical residence of 1918 in the central district of Shanghai. This space will henceforth host the group's many activities in China, constituting a sort of cultural headquarters, and confirming the major engagement of Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli with regard both to the Chinese city and to the artistic heritage in general. As demonstrated by the historical conservation projects implemented around the world, including the restoration of some sections of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, and of Ca' Corner della Regina, a baroque palace in Venice overlooking the Grand Canal, reconverted into a space dedicated to art. The inaugural event, held at the same time as the Shanghai fashion week (running until 18 October), included a show of the Prada resort 2018 collection, to be followed, tomorrow, with a press conference with the public authorities and a cocktail party. The space will then be opened to the public from 17 October for about a month while a proper calendar of events is prepared.

"Prada has always drawn inspiration from architecture. The study of the practical, commercial and historic implications of buildings has always played an essential role in the development of the group's activities, through a deep commitment to contemporary experimental architectural projects and to rigorous historical conservation", stressed Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli. "In particular, China, the country and the perception Europeans have of it, has always occupied a significant place in Prada's imagination. With the expansion of the various cultural activities through the company and the Fondazione Prada, we have sought opportunities to broaden our exploration in the architectural field and in other artistic fields in China. It was this imperative that led us to Rong Zhai, a historic residence able adequately to show our constant commitment to Chinese culture and Sino-European dialogue."

Started in 2011, the restoration has been planned as an exchange between Milan and Shanghai, paying tribute to the family that originally commissioned this residence (the family of a magnate called Yung Tsoong-King), to the architects and Chinese artists who built and decorated it, and to the teams of Chinese and Italian artisans who have returned it to splendour. The restoration has made good the damage the building had suffered and recovered the historic appearance of the building's interiors and exterior. It was listed as cultural heritage in the Jing' district in 2004 and joined the list of most interesting buildings in Shanghai in 2005, and has undergone structural strengthening work and modernisation in terms of function.

"I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Prada group for having restored the residence to the charm and splendour of the past. Thanks to careful planning, the villa will become a point of reference for fashion in Shanghai and will welcome the elite and celebrities from every part of the world", stressed H. C. Yung, younger son of Yung Tsoong-King. (All rights reserved)

Chiara Bottoni