

GRAZIA
EXCLUSIVE

GAIA TRUSSARDI'S DESERT DREAM

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THE LAST PLACE YOU'LL FIND GAIA TRUSSARDI IS RIFLING THROUGH RAILS OF VINTAGE CLOTHES FOR INSPIRATION.

"I hate going to those boutiques. I never do it! It doesn't work like that for me," dismisses the granddaughter of Dante Trussardi, who founded the family empire in 1911. But then, why would she, when she's had the run of the Trussardi archives for as long as she can remember? "My earliest fashion memory is the factory outside Bergamo," she recalls. "I used to go there as a kid because my parents used to work on Saturdays. If they left us at home, they'd never see us so they'd take us to the factory and we'd play there. And as a teenager, I used to watch my mother work there with designers, stylists, and models, doing fashion shows because there was a catwalk there." A childhood, it seems, which perfectly prepared her for the role of Creative Director of the Trussardi Group, when she took up the mantle in 2013.

"I never fell in love with fashion," she states with a certainty that only someone born with fashion running through her veins could possess. "I like how fashion is an element of a much broader identity of a social reality or an individual. It's a cultural element rather than a garment or an accessory. I like fashion to be art, an expression. I like fashion when it's part of a bigger experience. When I create a show, I always want to create an emotion, so it's about the clothes, but it's also about the casting, the way the models walk, and the way they're styled, and the eye contact they're making."

Gaia's conviction that the way you put pieces together is just as important as the single garments themselves can be traced back to her formative years where, despite coming from one of the most ostentatious fashion dynasties of the time, she was raised knowing not to take her fortune for granted. "Our parents really kept us away from the idea of celebrity and glamour. I grew up in a humble, hardworking family, caring about simple pleasures. I didn't have a big wardrobe. I used to have three pairs of jeans, two skirts, four jumpers, three shirts and

"The level of luxury the Middle East wants to experience is a need Trussardi can meet very easily as a brand," observes Gaia

two T-shirts to turn around in a week to last for the whole season. Fashion is disposable now while everything at that time had much more value.”

Gaia has just landed in Dubai from a research trip in London. “I send my boys to do more in-depth research into vintage detailing, materials, and colours. Me? The way I research is I walk around and let myself be inspired. It works like this: you’re there three days, and a random girl walks by, and there’s something in the mix of what she’s wearing that strikes you – maybe her hair, maybe her glance – and at that moment, you have a vision that translates that personality into something different.”

She elaborates, “I saw a girl walking in front of the V&A in a pink skirt and a mustard top, and from that, I imagined a whole idea of skirts – completely different from what she was wearing, but somehow I found that unlikely colour combination so cool – she triggered something. That’s the way I’m inspired.”

The former model adds, “I love the British. I love the way they mix and match in that very elegant, pop way. This is going to sound very patronising, but in London even ugly people look beautiful and cool. They just put outfits together with so much ease – a shearling coat, with a denim mini skirt and a banal black boot, but the right vintage sunglasses and they just look cool. In Milan, that would never happen!”

Because everybody’s beautiful in Milan, *Grazia* ventures? “No, it’s just because they don’t dare. Or they dare too much. There’s not that ease and that element of cool that exists in London.”

Despite this, it was a spark of inspiration in her home city, and dreams of a faraway desert, that gave rise to Trussardi AW15. “I was cycling to my office in Milan one morning, and it was just a flash. I was listening to a song, and there was open space, and an expansive atmosphere, and I imagined this desert safari jacket, with the patch pockets, and open stitching. It was reversible, leather on one side, suede on the other, and no matter which way

IT’S TRUSSARDI’S TIME



1. Galleria **Dhs2833.60**
2. Milano **Dhs2784.96**
3. Milano **Dhs2281.60**
4. Galleria **Dhs2833.60**
5. Galleria **Dhs2631.20**
6. Milano **Dhs2281.60**

you wore it, you could see the stitching. I imagined a pair of trousers underneath, and colour palette which became blues and browns.”

She continues, “Two days later, by chance on TV, I came across the film *Tracks* about Robyn Davidson, a woman in the ‘70s who crossed the desert in Australia on three camels. Not the clothing she was wearing – just a desert safari jacket and a man’s shirt – but her dreamy, strong sense of belonging with nature, her need to feel the wind and the sun burning her face, and her strong contact with the animals and the earth made me develop even more the first idea I had. It inspired me to give the clothes a sort of continuation – rising from the earth and the sky, becoming dresses and coats in all the materials in the desert, including rough cottons, and linens, together with raw cuts. These were then finished with stitching used in glove manufacturing, mixing this roughness with the artisanal and luxurious detailing that is typical Trussardi. So it was about empathy with nature, and a spirituality that goes beyond religion.”

Infusing empathy and spirituality into an audacious ‘80s power brand seems as significant a contribution to the Trussardi legacy as any. Yet Gaia’s not about to stop there. “When you see a garment and think, ‘That is very Marni, that is very Gucci,’ because it’s a mix of colours and fabrics that’s immediately recognisable to you, I’m working on that for Trussardi. I’m happy because I’ve already seen many major brands copying me. That’s a good sign.”

• Trussardi is available at Paris Gallery stores across the UAE

