



1944

Gianfranco Ferré was born on August 15, in Legnano (Milan).

“*The so-called solid middle-class values – sense of duty, measure, discretion, discipline – have, I feel, been the best starting point, the best ‘springboard’ I could have hoped for. They have let me face all the tests and challenges which my rather special work has posed over the years with great determination and rigor, in the conviction that every achievement and every success had to be attained with utmost sense of commitment and responsibility. Solid middle-class values are part of my makeup and my life.*”

Gianfranco Ferré



Politecnico di Milano Identity Card



Politecnico di Milano Degree

1963-1969

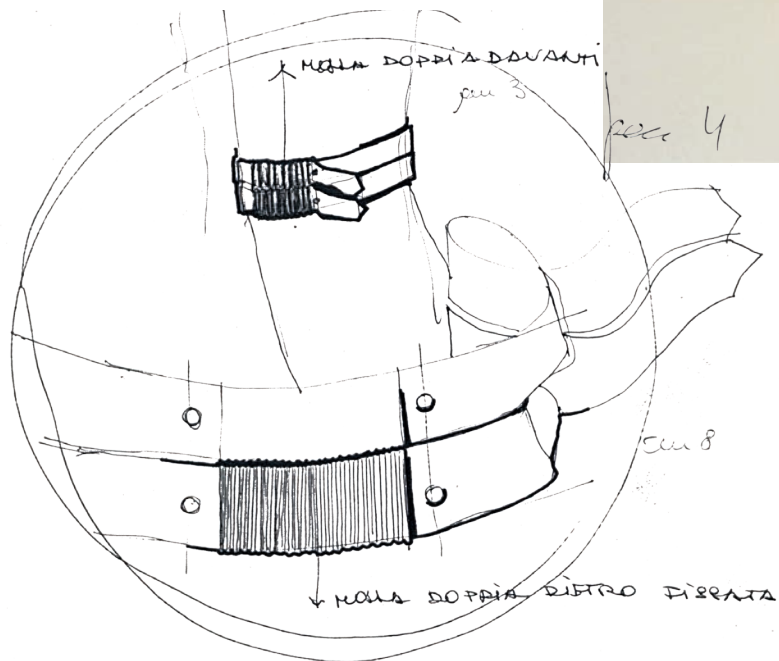
After earning his high school diploma specializing in sciences, Ferré enrolls in the School of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano University, graduating in 1969.

“I graduated from the Milan Polytechnic Institute in 1969 with a degree in architecture. I wrote my thesis on the “Methodology of the Approach to Composition,” with Franco Albini as my major professor. The architectural design project that I presented had to do basically with urban sprawl. These were the years of the student protest movement but also a time of great ferment and enthusiasm. The level of teaching at the institute was very high in that period. The deans were initially Carlo de Carlo and then in my last year Paolo Portoghesi. A lot of my professors – primarily Franco Albini, Ernesto Rogers and Marco Zanuso – had put their stamp on the post-war reconstruction and rebirth of Milan. And some of today’s greatest Italian architects and artists – such as Aldo Rossi, Gae Aulenti, Renzo Piano and Corrado Levi – were on the faculty as lecturers or teaching assistants.”

Gianfranco Ferré



1969, belt



Ferré very first entry into the world of fashion takes place in the university years. He designs jewelry and accessories that he gives to friends and classmates: noticed by several fashion journalists, they are photographed by some specialized magazines.



Advertising, 1975, ph. Rocco Mancino



Ketch, Fall/Winter 1978

1973-1978

In 1973, Gianfranco Ferré makes the first of his many trips to India for an Italian clothing company. There he creates and takes care of the production of the Ketch fashion collection: a fundamental and unforgettable experience in the evolution of his style. Contemporarily, during his stays in Italy, he designs knitwear and beachwear lines for other companies as consultant.



Courlande
 Fall/Winter 1974

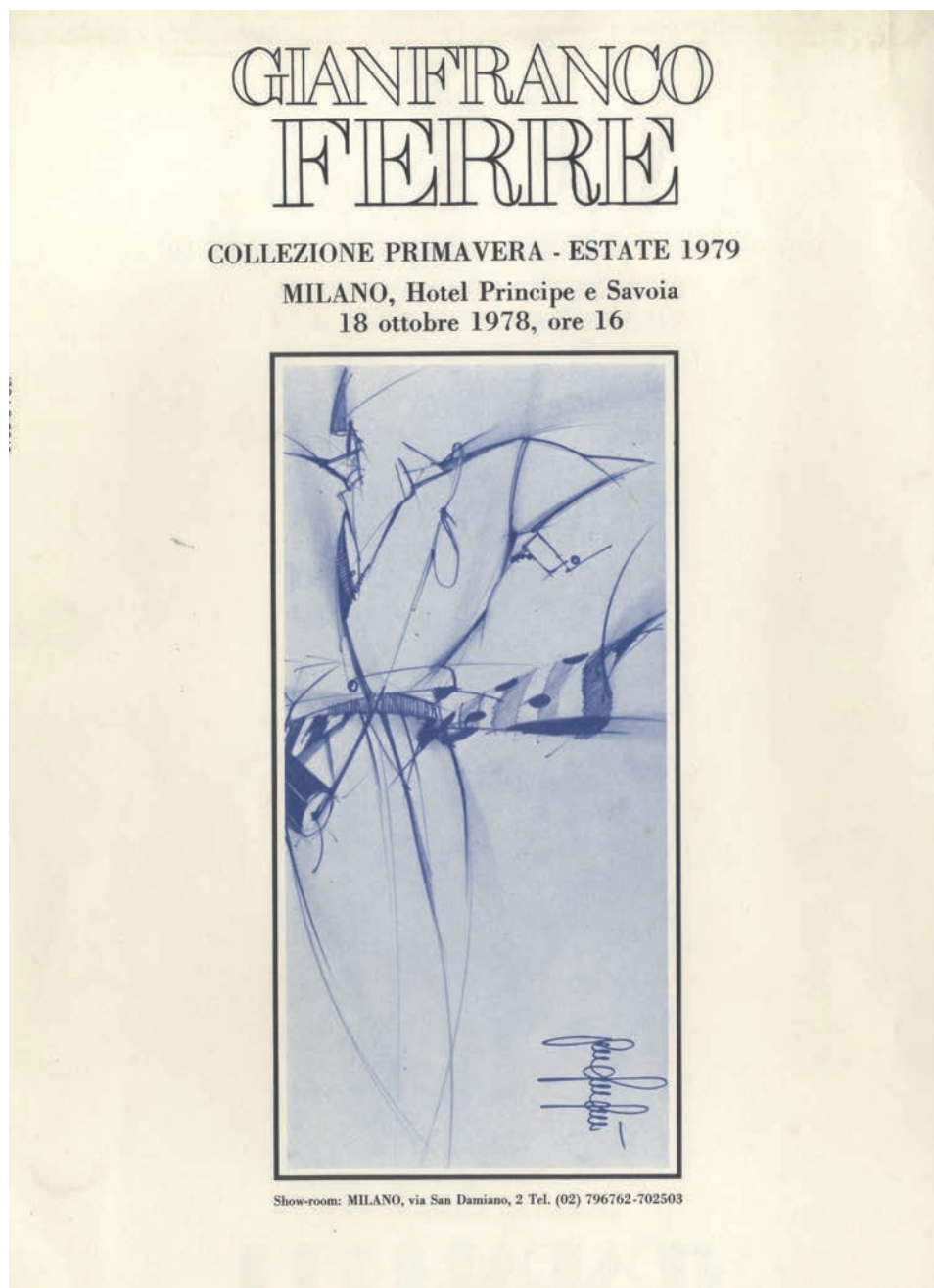
In 1974, Ferré designs and presents the first collections and fashion shows of “Courlande” and “Baila”.



Baila
 Fall/Winter 1974

“I remember the Baila debut, at the “Elefante Bianco” restaurant, on Via San Maurilio in Milan. With no catwalk, the guest were seated around tables. The press shows up, even not in great numbers. And obviously my friends were there. I remember the wild applause, lots of enthusiasm, a good degree of astonishment. White shirts, high high boots, jersey jumpsuits, for trimmed shawls. I made a significant impact, also got some negative feedback (“too many boots, too much in the way of avant-garde...”).”

Gianfranco Ferré



1978

In May 1978, the Gianfranco Ferré company is established. The designer presents his women's ready-to-wear debut signature in October of the same year.



Ready-to-wear Spring/Summer 1979, Fashion Show finale

“My first runway show was held in a hotel, because at that time in Milan, there wasn’t the big organization that exists today. It was October 1978, the hotel was the Principe di Savoia, and the collection was the Spring/Summer 1979. In the front row there were journalists that I only knew by name: Pucci Gabrielli, Anna Piaggi, Anna Riva, Adriana Mulassano, and even the legends of transalpine, John Fairchild and Polly Mellen. They wrote: ‘A five stars collection’ and I wondered ‘What does that mean?’ Can you imagine? I didn’t realize it. It was just Rita and me, two girls and one dressing room that was misery. But the collection was beautiful: all of my designs were there and I would do them all again. Emotion? The greatest joy I felt was when American Vogue published a design of mine and one from Armani with the caption ‘Two pieces made in Italy that you won’t forget’.”

Gianfranco Ferré

Fall/Winter 1993-94



Fall/Winter 1992-93



Fall/Winter 1988-89

1979-2007

Gianfranco Ferré's ready-to-wear collections show in Milan during fashion weeks.

“She is tall and slender, agile and energetic. She may not have perfect features, may not be a classic beauty, but she always exerts a distinct feminine charm. The allure is in her eyes, in her smile, in her sense of grace.”

Gianfranco Ferré



Autunno/Inverno 1994-95



Autunno/Inverno 1995-96

In 1982, he designs the first Gianfranco Ferré Men's Collection.

1986



Advertising, 1984, ph. Steven Meisel



Advertising, 1997, ph. Michelangelo Di Battista

Alongside the men's ready-to-wear collection, he launches the Gianfranco Ferré accessories collections and designs other product licenses.

“Fundamental complement to the dress, decorative element for the body: as such, the accessory has always sparked in me a keen creative attention, a special and ever stronger passion. For me the connection between accessory and article of clothing is indispensable, indissoluble. They arise from a common inspiration, live in harmony from the very moment I begin envisioning the collection. They reflect the same influences, although in different forms, through different materials. Mostly, they capture the same idea of quality and uniqueness, elegance and beauty. Dress and accessory: one mirrors the other, one serves in understanding the other. Better still, the latter is a tool for interpreting the former, for reading the garment from a subjective viewpoint. Allowing anyone to easily identify with a style while at the same time giving it a personal slant. Not unlike the accessory, fragrance represents a world way to personalize a style, express a manner of being or merely a fleeting mood. In a scent, the woman looks for characters and identity, subtleties and shadings, sensation and allusions. But mostly a great flexibility, natural adaptability to her very self.”

Gianfranco Ferré



1983-1989

In 1983 he is involved in the foundation of the Domus Academy: the Design, Design Management and Fashion Design Postgraduate School in Milan where he leads the course in “Dress Design” until 1989.



Fall/Winter 1986-87



Fall/Winter 1988-89

1986-1989

In 1986, Gianfranco Ferré signs his first Haute Couture at Rome fashion week.



Fall/Winter 1996-97



1989-1996

In May 1989, Gianfranco Ferré begins the extraordinary experience in the most prestigious Maison of the French Couture with an exceptional traditional background: he is appointed creative director of Christian Dior for the Women's Haute Couture, ready-to-wear and fur collection.



Spring/Summer 1991



Fall/Winter 1989-90



Paris, July 28, 1989

At the end of his first collection for Christian Dior, Gianfranco Ferré is awarded the "Dé D'Or de la Couture".



ph. Aldo Castoldi

June 17, 2007

Bibliography

Extract from: Rita Airaghi, Paola Bertola, and Federica Vacca, "Gianfranco Ferré. Design Principles", Corraini Edizioni, Mantova, 2023.