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Mannequins Need Colour Too

Interview with **Martina Favaro**,

International Sales and Marketing Manager of La Rosa Srl

Traditionally considered mere inanimate tools for displaying clothes and accessories, mannequins are now being brought to life through colour and a new interpretation of their role thanks to La Rosa Italy – so much so that, in addition to shop windows, they are now also conquering fashion catwalks and becoming part of the marketing strategies of major fashion houses.

La Rosa is a well-established business in the Italian fashion industry, which has made a name for itself internationally with its ability to present mannequins in a new light: no longer mere inanimate clothes holding tools, but actual protagonists of collections and shop windows. Can you explain the main aspects of this evolution process?

In short, in the 1920s, when European fashion turned its gaze to American cinema stars, mannequins moved from being purely functional, aesthetically undervalued objects to taking on the appearance of dynamic, independent, and avant-garde ladies, in order to fully represent women in society. Realistic mannequins remained as a constant until the 1980s, when La Rosa began to create and offer to the market more linear mannequins, which drew on abstract body concepts and sinuous, slender forms, without overly marked features and with more homogeneous colours, thus acting as a true pioneer of the abstract mannequin sector.

In the last few years, mannequins have undergone another change and they now tend to be more and more customised.

Each brand wants to reflect itself in our mannequins. Therefore, we design their own special products by following completely or in part their directions, which, under our guidance, are transformed into distinctive elements of their brand identity. Not only shape and poses are subject to customisation: other elements are involved as well, including colours (opaque, shiny, iridescent),

materials (solid or transparent), fabric coverings (from linen to cotton, from natural fibres to stain-resistant velvets), special finishes (wood veneer, paper, marble, stone), and many more. We are always researching and studying new applications and coating materials.

Sustainability has always been part of La Rosa's corporate philosophy. How does this approach integrate into the production process of your mannequins?

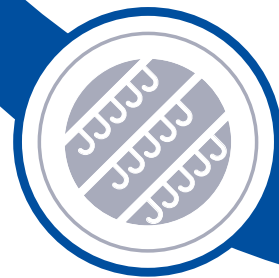
Long before sustainability and recycling became current issues, La Rosa had already been implementing circular and eco-sustainable production processes since the 1960s. We manufacture our mannequins using recycled shockproof plastic from both internal and external scraps. This enables us to obtain finished products that are fully recyclable, sustainable, and very durable through a 'zero waste' approach.

At the end of their service life, all La Rosa products can be either returned to our company to be reused into our manufacturing cycle or disposed of through separate waste collection, so that they can be recycled. Our production, which takes place entirely in Varedo, near Milan (Italy), uses renewable energy and reused water. We have a roto-concentrator and an afterburner for solvent and dust abatement. Unlike fibreglass, used by most of our competitors, the material we employ is non-toxic. Each mannequin we produce avoids the release of 10-15 kg of toxic fibreglass into the environment.



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Perfect combination of materials and colours is one of your flagships. How do you balance these two elements when creating a mannequin?

We believe that simplicity is often the key. We are inspired by what exists in nature and we just add our own touch. If we think about the combinations that nature has already created, if we stop and look carefully at the environment around us, the flora and the fauna, we can find a myriad of elements of inspiration.

This is how transparent mannequins with green and yellow tones, light blue and white shades, and wood, rock, and stone effects were born. On the other hand, fashion trends are the guidelines for these choices, based on which we decide whether to intensify a combination or not and opt for one material rather than another.

How important is coating in your production and which system do you use?

As well as all other production stages, our in-house coating process plays a very important role, because it does not only allow us to be flexible and respond quickly to customer needs, but it also gives us full control of our manufacturing flow, while cutting additional costs and reducing the environmental impact of outsourcing. We have 3 coating booths, 2 of which are fully robotised. After being moulded, every La Rosa product is sanded and finished. Then, a base coat is applied to makes its surface more homogeneous and guarantee good adhesion of the top coat. The liquid paint, which can be transparent or pigmented, glossy, matte, or even super-matte and soft-touch, is intended to last over time, achieving the desired aesthetic effect but also meeting the high quality standards that have always distinguished La Rosa.

In the world of fashion, fabric colours have always been a key determinant of consumer choice. Do you think that mannequins' colours can be as important?

Absolutely. Each brand tends to opt for tints and finishes that can characterise it. More and more often, we are seeing fashion brands rethink their strategies and choose to differentiate themselves from one another by breaking away from standardisation, which has been the dominant approach up until recently. Nowadays, brands try to imprint their personality in everything they are involved in and they want to be as recognisable as possible – and the visual factor that determines such differentiation also lies in the colours, materials, and shapes chosen.

For further information:
www.larosaitaly.com 



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