

## Exhibition in Review: The White Shirt According To Me, Gianfranco Ferré

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The newest exhibition to arrive at Phoenix Art Museum, *The White Shirt According To Me Gianfranco Ferré*, is a masterpiece tribute to the great architect of fashion as well as a visual experience not to be missed here in the Valley.

Gianfranco Ferré was from Italy, with a background in architecture, and came into the fashion industry with a unique and distinguished eye. As the stylistic director of Christian Dior, he created iconic couture pieces. Leaving Dior in 1997, he developed his own collection and focused it on ready to wear pieces with an enduring design.

The focus for this exhibition: Ferré's white shirts, made fashionable for women, are reconstructed by the design of a classic white shirt to instill elements of high fashion and quality contributing to the cachet that is "Made it Italy."

Entering into the exhibition is beautiful and seemingly humble until you pass into the main exhibition space. Walking into the exhibition is like walking through the wardrobe but instead of Narnia, it's a black and white world of fashion both feminine and structured. With a floor-to-ceiling mirror lining the back of the gallery, the space appears to be endless. The black and simplistic yet modern design of the gallery gives a great contrast to the almost ghostly pieces on display. The shirts seem to be crisp yet they have a lightness and feminine flow about them. Outlining either side of the exhibition space lay glass cases with original sketches from Ferré as well as magazine pages featuring Ferré's pieces in editorial spreads. Most of the sketches and editorial spreads feature the designs that are on display in the exhibition connecting an idea to a tangible piece of cloth.

In stark contrast to the main exhibition, there is a separate component for Gianfranco Ferré in the Ellman Fashion Design Gallery. This gallery space, unlike the stunning black and white main show in the Steele Gallery is a colorful display of Ferré's vibrant style with couture pieces and original illustrations and drawings.

The exhibition presents a nearly full cycle story for fashion design beginning with the conception of a design, the idea, to defining the technical components for bringing a design to life and then the final product.

While Gianfranco Ferré may be an unknown name to some, anyone familiar with fashion will see the impact that his designs have made in the fashion industry even today. Ferré designed pieces that were timeless and will continue to influence fashion design in the future, most famously, the white shirt.

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