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*The story of **Nicolas Ghesquière** and how
Balenciaga became 21st Century Fashion, p. 49–86*



BACKPACK VEST. STONE ISLAND



BACKPACK VEST. STONE ISLAND "CAMPAGNA SICUREZZA"



BACKPACK VEST. STONE ISLAND



BACKPACK VEST. STONE ISLAND



PROTOTYPE. STONE ISLAND MARINA



VINTAGE BACKPACK VEST



PROTOTYPE. STONE ISLAND



BACKPACK VEST. STONE ISLAND MARINA



BACKPACK VEST. STONE ISLAND



HIGH VISIBILITY VEST. STONE ISLAND



REFLECTIVE VEST. STONE ISLAND MARINA



SHOCKPROOF VEST WITH INTEGRATED AIRBAG. ICD



INSULATING ACCESSORY. PROTOTYPE FOR ICD



GILET WITH COIL HEATING SYSTEM. PROTOTYPE FOR STONE ISLAND



THERMO-REGULATING ACCESSORY. PROTOTYPE FOR ICD



PROTOTYPE. ICD



PROTOTYPE. ICD



PROTOTYPE. ICD



PROTOTYPE. ICD



PROTOTYPE. ICD



VINTAGE HIGH VISIBILITY VEST



CREW LIFE JACKET



PROTOTYPE. ICD



PROTOTYPE OBJECT CARRIER MICRO VEST. ICD

Ariela Goggi (vice-director of *Vogue Italia*) recalls Stone Island garment engineer MASSIMO OSTI'S boat, "the mythical Guapa," one summer back in the late 1980s. During a maritime storm, Daniela Facchinato - Osti's wife - passed around prototype jackets made from an extremely lightweight, opaque, wrinkled nylon, to shield their guests from the rain. That's when, amidst the elements, they witnessed something both "disquieting and beautiful": according to Goggi, a "tableau of fluctuating colors" spread across the deck of the Guapa, oozing from the jackets in a kind of "fluo mix." Whimsical stories like this formed a strong identity for Stone Island. As Carlo Grazia evokes, "Stone Island allowed one to dream! To dream of adventurous pastimes, of holidays on a yacht or on the ski slopes in a jacket that changed color."

Osti defined a future aesthetic. His development of experimental materials and styles gave birth to a new era of cult fashion. The functional revolution of the 90s and the hooliganism culture in Britain is unfathomable without the iconic brands of Stone Island and Chester Perry (C.P.). The father of sportswear - or "urban armor" - set the requisite standards of a modern lifestyle brand.

Ideas from Massimo Osti - published by Damiani Bologna - explores a catalytic turning point in men's fashion. The styles Osti saw in shop windows in the early 70s did not reflect the cultural changes already underway in society. "Ironic Forms for the Daily Life of a Transitory Population," an essay by Franco "Bifo" Berardi - writer, media theorist, and activist - speaks of the political acceleration that was occurring in Bologna at that time.

As Berardi points out, "the production of Massimo Osti matured in this linguistic climate which produced objects to underline a function and at the same time negate it, dissolve it, and mock, in a certain sense, the function itself." Osti was the architect during these years. Previously unimaginable forms, shapes, and

Ideas from Massimo Osti: Life Savers - "A motor scooter is the preferred method of transportation for teenagers in Italy and Massimo becomes preoccupied with the disequilibrium created by school books in the backpacks of young drivers so he invents a type of vest with a rear pocket which can be tightened around the chest lending more stability to the load. Towards the end of the 90s he begins to research shock proof materials and the safety equipment used by laborers and the military. From this research he begins a more profound experimentation with designs for reflective garments, made from Luminol, which are also buoyant, heated, equipped with built-in air bags and shockproof pads, as well as backpacks and object-carrying vests which leave the hands free while working or driving."

MASSIMO **SELECT** OSTI

Three decades of garment engineering that transformed sportswear

Bologna Laboratory

Massimo Osti (1944–2005) in his studio, photo: Carlo Orsi



REVIVAL SYSTEM WP Lavori in Corso excels

WP Lavori founder and president Christina Calori says: “You need to understand that the early 80s were a turning point in the Italian modernization.” Upon finishing art school in 1982, Calori was approached by her father’s friend to see if she would be interested in importing products like casual shoes and T-shirts from the U.S. into Italy. That’s when a small team in Cadriano, Bologna, began scrutinizing foreign markets for the most influential global brands of the time.

The group’s creative director Andrea Canè was brought on board when he was only 18; a few years later, he was joined by Luca Caccioni. The group became a holy trinity of sorts, and set out to crystallize the wavering images of brands that may have lost touch with

their heritages. The Woolrich brand, for instance, had once been something of a paradigm for the American dream, but, at the time, was struggling to survive amidst the country’s evolving values. Once WP got their hands on it, that aged aesthetic was revitalized, its core soaked and nourished by the Italian laboratory as a desert is made to flower after a storm.

Woolrich would not be the last brand to flourish in the WP portfolio. More recently, the group tackled Baracuta – the label that brought us Steve McQueen’s famous Harrington jacket – bringing the brand into a definitive network of audiences and producers that has grown past the scope of the Italian-American vector, towards Japan and Britain. *Thirty Years of Research in Style: WP Lavori in Corso* (2013), edited by Canada’s *Inventory* magazine, showcases the vision behind the brand strategy. “We have the same perception of the external, the same perception of ‘the moment,’” Caccioni has noted of the team. That may well define WP’s molecular codex over the last three decades: a rare and perfect intersection of opportunism and calculation.

Thirty Years of Research in Style: WP Lavori in Corso, published by Rizzoli, 2013, www.rizzoliusa.com



IDEAS FROM MASSIMO OSTI

materials emerged, expressing this sensation: plastic jackets, tone-on-tone. Osti put every design and material through rigorous and continual experimentation: under his instruction, his team tested and re-tested every last fiber used through rubber-coating, emery-brushing, resining, silicoining, oil finishing, bonding, and dying (the latter, with the help of in-house chemists). Berardi proclaims that this “was our communal strut towards a future, a future which already no longer existed.”

Osti collected over 35,000 historical pieces throughout his career, which he kept in a large warehouse and bestowed incredible value on them when envisioning new collections. His belief that “the important thing is to know how to pick the right moment to revisit a garment, adapting it to current needs” developed his unique understanding of functionality and anticipation in the market. As Osti once said, “I like to play with forms which don’t belong to the history of the 20-year-olds of today using materials which were unknown to the 20-year-olds of yesteryear.”

Debunking the strict bond with trends, Osti, as he once said, set out to “make items of clothing whose *raison d’être* were founded on a precise strategy of research into materials and forms.” With all of his celebrated material innovations, such as Tela Stella and Raso Gommato, from C.P. Company to MO Double Use – right before his death in 2005 at age 59 – Osti never faltered in his non-stop work ethic. Still echoing today, Osti proclaimed, “The only impulse which justifies the efforts undertaken over the years, in a constant cycle, is passion. The energy is not explainable purely in terms of reason. I believe myself to be somebody who responds passionately in an apathetic world.”

Ideas from Massimo Osti, published by Damiani Bologna, 2013, www.damianieditore.com



Bottega Veneta

A dress is not a dress is not a dress is not a dress – for Summer 2013, Tomas Maier quasi-paraphrased Gertrude Stein with 33 frocks that employ subtle variation to devastating effect. Pleated, pin tucked, fluted, studded, paneled, appliquéd, and edged with shiny snake, as in the number above, the Maierian tour-de-force is more than a manifesto in the potential of a myriad-and-one techniques: it’s a poetic promise that, in this designer’s hands, discreet luxury will never mean discreet boredom.