

Salvatore Ferragamo and Culture

For Salvatore Ferragamo, fashion and culture have always been linked. Salvatore began making shoes for Hollywood stars for both on and off the set, in California in the 1920s. Already then the young Ferragamo understood how much fashion and culture, especially art and cinema, shared in terms of history, exploration and creativity.

During his career, Ferragamo sought inspiration, cues and collaboration from the most important artists of his time. In the 1930s, after returning to Italy, he asked late-Futurist painter Lucio Venna to sketch the ads for some of his shoes.

Today, with the growing interrelationship between fashion, culture and contemporary art, the Salvatore Ferragamo company follows its founder's intuition and devotes great attention and resources to initiatives in this sector. Consequently, in 1999 the company won the **Guggenheim Enterprise and Culture Award** given each year to international companies that have invested significantly in the field of culture.

This form of patronage has, over the years, been fulfilled through different partnerships embracing various sectors of culture, from cinema to art.

In 1996 and 1998, Salvatore Ferragamo was one of the major sponsors of the first and second Fashion Biennial in Florence dedicated to the relationship between art and film. In 2001, the company helped organize the Festival du Film de Paris, France Cinéma in Florence and a traveling festival of eight short subjects by young Italian directors in the United States. The same year, and for the next three years, Salvatore Ferragamo became the sponsor of the foreign tours of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino orchestra, directed by Zubin Mehta, which is one of Florence's most important cultural institutions.

Salvatore Ferragamo has often been involved in designing and organizing events of international resonance through the collaboration with museums and cultural institutions.

In 1998, at the Contemporary Art Pavilion (PAC) in Milan, the company inaugurated a show of the works of Japanese graphic artist and designer, Ikko Tanaka, the first of his exhibitions in Italy. In the same year in Tokyo, a retrospective on Salvatore Ferragamo involved the collaboration of two important contemporary artists, Ikko Tanaka and Hiroshi Teshigahara. In 2002 Ferragamo helped to design and organize an exhibit at Palazzo Ducale in Genoa, *The Art and Luxury of Silk*; and from 1999 to 2001 its exhibition entitled *Audrey Hepburn: a Woman, the Style* travelled around the world, displaying not only the clothing and mementos of this famous movie star but also works by the following contemporary artists: Marina Abramović, Arman, John M. Armleder, Louise Bourgeois, Christo, Enzo Cucchi, Yasumasa Morimura, Ugo Nespolo, Gert Rappenecker, Peter Rosel, Tom Sachs, Kenny Scharf, Andres Serrano, Daniel Spoerri and Lawrence Weiner, all of whom freely interpreted the wooden last Salvatore Ferragamo made for Audrey Hepburn in 1954.

Press Office: Giuditta Mosetti, +39 02 77 111 441

Museo Salvatore Ferragamo: +39 055 33 60 456

The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum

The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum had its inauguration in Florence in 1995. It is located on the second floor of Palazzo Spini Feroni, the company's historic headquarters in Via Tornabuoni no. 2. The Museum extends over four rooms and comprises a collection of over **10 thousand models of shoes** created by Ferragamo over forty years of activity between the twenties and 1960, the year of his death. The Museum also includes a small collection of antique shoes (eighteenth and nineteenth century) acquired personally by Ferragamo, an archive of clothing from 1959 onwards, and an archive of handbags from 1970.

Effectively, Ferragamo products are not merely shoes and accessories, but works of exquisite craftsmanship. The inventive genius, the techniques of workmanship and the choice of materials all reveal a mind in constant harmony with the cultural atmosphere of the moment, and bear eloquent witness to the prestige and success which have been consistently connected with the creator's name.

Displayed on rotation every two years, each time the various creations are selected in line with different themes, so as to investigate ever-original fields in the relationship between fashion and culture.

The core of Ferragamo's cultural heritage and its support of contemporary art is showcased in the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, inaugurated in 1995 in Palazzo Spini Feroni in Florence, the company's historic headquarters. In addition to conserving and exhibiting the history of Ferragamo and its products, the museum also coordinates and supervises institutional and cultural events. The museum exhibits themes for reflection and study which can become sources of inspiration for new initiatives.

The work of the museum follows two guidelines: on the one hand it is firmly anchored to the values of the brand's great historical tradition, and on the other hand it is completely open to the most significant and experimental trends in contemporary art.

The intention of the company and the museum is to ideate, organize and promote worldwide events, exhibits and explorations of international breadth, devoted above all to contemporary fashion culture, with the awareness that a vital system lives not only on tradition and enhancement of the past, but also on the ability to integrate contemporary creativity, experimentation and avant-garde elements in all the most significant areas of expression.

"On Ferragamo company's view, the most suitable meaning of modern patronage is to know how to integrate and enhance the great legacy of the past in an innovative route in which the company is no longer just an external, and inevitably extraneous, sponsor, but an entity that produces culture directly as an integral and strategic part of business".

In the past few years the Salvatore Ferragamo company has been committed to extending its proposals in this field in its flagship stores in New York and Tokyo, designed in a new, functional and contemporary architectural concept that devotes an area to exhibits and events focused not only on the company's history but attentive to current artistic and cultural movements.

An undertaking that reinforces the company's interest in design and innovation, presenting art in places not traditionally destined for this function is intended to attract the attention not only of habitual gallery-goers but also of casual visitors, store customers.

Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, via Tornabuoni 2, Palazzo Spini Feroni (2nd floor).

Museum hours: Monday - Friday, 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.; 2.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Free entrance. Reservation requested for groups.

The visits are guided for groups more than 10 people.

e-mail: museo@ferragamo.com

Ideas, models, inventions

Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, from January 9th, 2004

"Today, I have more than twenty thousand models in the archives and more than 350 patents, some of which have been put to use; and the others will be too, when the world realizes how beautiful the models really are."

From the autobiography of Salvatore Ferragamo, *The Shoemaker of Dreams*, London, 1957, p. 59.

The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum is renewing its exhibition collection by opening a new show called, *Ideas, models, inventions*.

Following *Shoes and Famous Feet*, this occasion will focus on those ideas, projects and inventions of Ferragamo, that have contributed to defining the brand identity. These creations have changed the way one conceives footwear accessories and has helped define the fundamental meaning of *Made in Italy*.

This show concentrates on the patents and trademarks of Salvatore Ferragamo, from 1927 – the year he returned to Italy from the United States – until his death 1960. These patents have recently been retrieved from the Central State Archives in Rome.

This extraordinarily creative heritage of design will enrich the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum and provide a glimpse into the ever-extending world of Italian patent documentation. In recent years, this world has attracted the interest not only of historians and academics, but also of designers and companies, who all see in this accumulation of ideas, new possibilities for creative renewal and a stimulus for contemporary design research.

In Italy today, complaints about the lack of innovative product design are frequently heard. Therefore, studying these historical patents can provide the occasion not only to observe, experiment and learn, but also to create.

Patents and Trademarks: The History of Italian Design in the Central State Archives in Rome

The public administration archives preserve unexpected secrets and hidden treasures such as those in the Central State Archives in Rome, which gather together a huge quantity of sources for contemporary research and creativity. Among these sources are the series of documents held in the Italian Patent and Trade Mark Office that amount to almost **900,000 files**. These files reveal either the innovative technical abilities of companies, or the inventive talents of individuals.

The collection includes **171,000 Trademark files from 1869 to 1965**; and **613,000 Invention Patents, from 1855 up to the year 1961**. From these, the evolution of certain sectors can be traced. For example, the patented telephonic apparatus of Guglielmo Marconi. There is also another series relating to **100,000 Model Patents from 1874 to 1965**. Here, apart from practical applications, the desire to create beautiful shapes or unusual designs and colors prevails.

Through these documents, we can follow the evolution of customs, fashions and language, and how the creation of new ideas has changed the daily lives of ordinary people and made Italians world-famous for innovative design.

Ideas, models, inventions

The Retrieval of the Ferragamo Patents

The year 2000 saw the first complete publication of the patent series from 1946 to 1965 and concluded a research operation which involved the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Crafts – together with private individuals –, in order to make accessible the heritage of patent documentation after World War II.

On this occasion, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum was involved for the first time. Under the name of Salvatore Ferragamo, the greatest numbers of patents in the footwear section were found. The unexpected rediscovery of these documents was evidence of what Salvatore Ferragamo had previously written in his autobiography, in which he had claimed to have registered 350 patents. This posed a new problem: if 162 of these patents were registered from 1945 up to 1965, then the missing others must have been registered before this date.

Further research of documents from 1945 to 1927 was pursued which entailed negotiations over an abundance of documents. These documents had never before been filed in a data bank. And, indeed, **369 patents were found, covering the years from 1927 to 1964**, the year in which the final design patents were still autographed by Salvatore himself.

The Birth of an Idea

Usually, the word “patent” does not really strike us as exciting. It immediately conjures up ideas of documents in dust-filled rooms, of boring technical descriptions. However, when we leaf through the Ferragamo patents, we begin to understand the sheer quantity of his inventiveness, contained in the hundreds of ideas that expressed his brilliant creativity.

A patent allows us to trace back the formation of an idea: from the moment of its conception, to its design and to its application. It offers an objective historical testimony, which makes it possible for us to reinterpret a history we thought we had already completely understood. A patent also provides the opportunity to analyze the structural characteristics of designs and production models, often when the documents have not survived and there have been no examples produced.

The work of Salvatore Ferragamo was distinguished by the originality of his footwear designs and by a continuous experimentation with models, construction techniques and materials. In some cases, his designs were simply avant-garde, while in others, they were perfectly in line with the general mood of the times.

At the end of the 1920s, Ferragamo’s creations could be situated in a stylistic context that had been in vogue since the early years of the 20th century. This style was formed in harmony with the art world and characterized by an acceptance of unusual materials, geometric designs and surprising color matching – the tangible signs of changing attitudes to clothing fashions and accessories.

Salvatore Ferragamo made footwear design a leading player on the world stage and created works of art not only for the perfection created by the highest quality workmanship, but also by creating an independent space for research into shape, material and color. During these years, close attention was paid to the surface of the upper and the creation of surprising effects through the use of color or the paradoxical matching of different luxurious and ‘poor’ materials. The sense of modernity for Salvatore Ferragamo – as for the other *couturier* in the same period, such as Elsa Schiaparelli – was identified with an unexpected substitution of a material and with the research into surfaces with surprising results such as corrugated, glossy, opaque, pleated or highly-polished surfaces, in order to realize a creative idea.

From the middle of the 1930s, many patents were concerned with shape and form, whether for functional or aesthetic considerations. The **“Wedge” is perhaps the most famous Ferragamo creation and was patented in 1937**. It was designed with functionality in mind, to elevate the heel and give both the heel and the instep a stable support. However, in its numerous varia-

Ideas, models, inventions

tions, it gradually became pressed and rounded, grooved and painted, decorated with tiny mosaic mirrors or set with precious stones, allowing experimentation with shape and expression of an innate aesthetic sense. And this is an overall characteristic that is common to the entire history of Italian design, owing perhaps to the fact that whoever works in Italy is lucky enough to have a surrounding artistic and cultural heritage unequalled throughout the world. In Italy, one is continuously under the influence of beauty, good taste and a sense of harmony.

The "sanctions" imposed on Italy after the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 worsened the problems connected with the shortage of material and energy resources and launched the "autarchic programmes". They also stimulated Ferragamo's inventiveness, both in ornamental design and also in the technological field. Ferragamo patented the special procedures for the preparation of leather substitutes, for a system to connect the uppers and wooden soles and for the production of uppers in raffia or knitted materials and soles in galalith, glass and other similar materials. In the war year of 1943 he threw himself into the design of offensive and defensive war machines, such as the "**Marine Fort**", the "**Multi-Launcher Torpedo Boat**" and the "**Anti-Aircraft Offensive and Defensive System**".

Certain invention patents involved the revolutionizing of centuries-old traditions of making shoes. For example, in 1931, a system of instep reinforcement in metal laminates, the "**shank**", was created which was lightweight but able to provide a rigid support.

In 1946, Ferragamo designed **children's soles called "First Steps"** made with a suction cup system that provided a better underfoot adhesion. In 1953, he created "**Uppers Mounted on an Elasticized Support Structure**" which allowed the insertion of the foot into the shoe without openings or lacing.

The post-war years of economic recovery were especially prolific times for patent applications. 1947 saw the creation of continuous weave uppers, made with a transparent nylon woven material; this led to the "**invisible**" sandal with which Ferragamo won the *Neiman Marcus Prize* at the Fashion Oscars. In 1950, he applied for the patent on a women's sandal combined with a sock upper which adhered to the foot – the famous "**Kimo**". Its function was not only to protect the foot but also to introduce a new imaginative aspect to women's fashion by varying colors and materials. In 1952, he created a shoe with the shank covered by the leather of the uppers and the sole restricted to the toe and the heel. This model was strong but highly flexible, like a glove, and the patent was called "**Gloved Arch**".

1956 was the year of women's footwear heels made with an external metallic structure formed by "**Caged**" woven elements, and the footwear with "**Interchangeable Sheaths**". The patent for "**Metallic Soles**", resulted in the celebrated 18-carat gold sandals originally made for an Australian customer. The "**Shell Soles**" of 1957, had the special feature of rising the uppers and heel in such a way that gave an added stability to the shoe. This sole was also used in a wide range of models and also for ballet shoes.

Today, many of these patents are a precious source of inspiration for designers and creative artists, who have based their own collections on works from these archives. Even after the death of Salvatore Ferragamo, the company continued to devote enormous care and attention to its creations, and to patents, both ornamental and everyday wear models.

Take the men's "**Non-Slip Sole**" footwear of 1997, or the "**Bag with Detachable Upper Sections**" of 1999 – allowing the body of the model to be changed –, or the "**Suitcase in Carbon Steel: one side concave and one side convex and rounded in the centre**" of 2000; or the "**Heel with Suspension Element**" of 2002. These recent patents illustrate the main principle of the company's culture, which has always bestowed great importance on materials and function, simultaneous with research into aesthetic effects.

Ideas, models, inventions



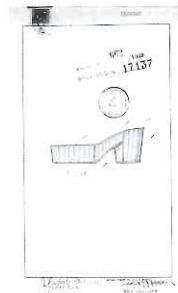
1 Patent 6939,
November 27, 1929:
vertical zigzag
footwear.



5 Sandal, 1939:
satin upper and kid-
covered cork wedge.



2 Patent 354889,
December 13, 1937:
one of Ferragamo's
most famous
inventions, the wedge
heel.



6 Patent 17137,
February 10, 1940:
heel and sole for
women's shoes with
metal reinforcement
and a set of gilt-glass
strips.



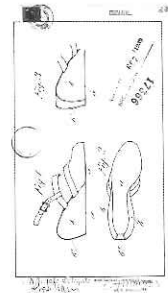
3 Patent 16083,
March 27, 1939:
pump with antelope
upper and prow toe.



7 Sandal, 1939:
upper in satin and kid.
Cork platform sole
and heel covered with
a gilt-glass mosaic
glued to waxed
canvas. Created for
Carmen Miranda.



4 Patent 15953,
March 10, 1939:
sole in several layers
of leather-bound cork.



8 Patent 17366,
February 21, 1940:
footwear with a
curved wedge heel.

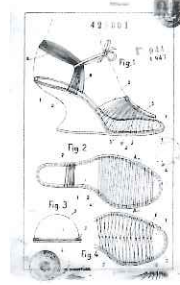


9 Sandal, 1940:
suede and kid upper,
wedge heel.

Ideas, models, inventions



10 Patent 19736,
February 12, 1941:
sandal with layered
platform sole and
connection between
heel and sole.



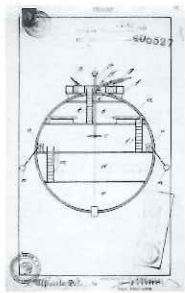
14 Patent 426001,
October 17, 1947:
process for making
footwear with an
upper in transparent
thread.



11 Sandal, 1940:
velvet and kid upper,
high heel and platform
sole in kid-covered
cork.



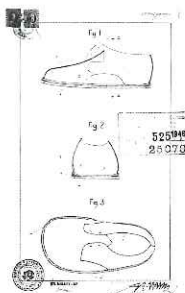
15 Sandal, 1947:
upper consisting of
a single nylon thread,
wooden wedge heel
covered in green calf.



12 Patent 405527,
August 18, 1943:
marine fortification.



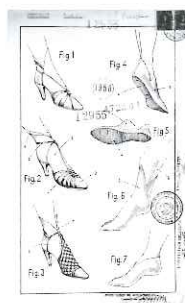
16 Patent 32826,
December 14, 1949:
shoe with jutting
upper and divided
sole.



13 Patent 25078,
September 7, 1946:
child's shoe with
"first-steps"
no-slip sole.



17 Lace-up shoe, 1949:
suede upper with
cross-grooved
platform sole.

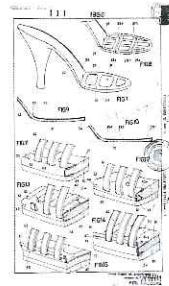


18 Patent 472261,
June 13, 1952:
women's sandal
with instep adhering
to the foot.

Ideas, models, inventions



19 Sandal, 1951: kid upper, "Kimo" interchangeable. Ferragamo used this model for the first show of Italian fashion, with Schubert dresses.



22 Patent 546658, July 28, 1956: footwear-sole system with front sole comprising metal elements.



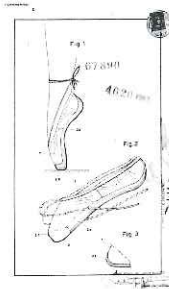
20 Patent 41888, July 7, 1952: half-sole shoe with shank covered in the same leather as the upper.



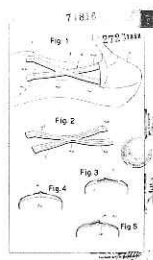
23 Sandal, 1956: 18-k gold upper, shank and high heel in embossed gold leaf.



21 Pump, 1952: calf upper, high heel in wood and calf-covered shank.



24 Patent 67890, April 22, 1950: ballet toe-shoe with tapered-edge sole glued to the sides of the upper to reinforce the toe.



25 Patent 71816, March 21, 1959: X-shaped reinforcement in the shoe stiffener to support body weight and limit metatarsal articulation.