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Fashion

ZegnArt launch at the Maxxi Museum, Rome



The artists, who often employ fabrics into their artwork, sourced many of their materials from Zegna. Here, a wearable tent blends fashion with shelter

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By J.J. Martin

Is anyone at [Zegna](#) familiar with the word small? After the Italian luxury menswear brand's bash at the [Maxxi](#) museum in Rome (where 900 guests were fed a gastronomic spread from 3 Michelin-star catering company Da Vittorio), it would appear not. Just as big and burly was the concept behind the mega fest: the kick-off of the [ZegnArt](#) project, a multi-tiered contemporary art initiative that will span the globe over the next four years.

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Rome's bonanza event marked the debut of the Special Project arm of ZegnArt with an exhibition by Paris-based contemporary artists [Lucy and Jorge Orta](#) entitled 'Fabulae Romanae'. Curated by Maria Luisa Frisa, the exhibition presents mixed-media installations and a video created specifically for the Maxxi.

A concoction of [fashion](#), [architecture](#) and [design](#), the character-based installations feature domed tents, huts, colourful parachutes, bundled sacks of used clothing, and mannequins who interact with it all. The duo originally created 40 separate characters, illustrated on a series of 20 ink and pencil storyboards that are also part of the exhibition. 'We call them spirits,' says Jorge of the heavily layered characters. 'They are not precise people. It's more of a mirror on society.'

Each spirit harbours some connection with the duo's fascination with survival: 'The Reconnaissance Man' is attached to four parachutes, 'The Traveller' is the guy loaded up with felt suitcases, whilst 'The Bale Maker' is tugging blocks of bundled, used clothes. 'Not vintage,' Lucy clarifies, 'the clothes were salvaged from surplus stores.'

The artists also took to the streets of Rome to create a video that brings the artwork to life on real people in the middle of the sunny, chaotic city. The action is accompanied by a hypnotic poetic soundtrack by [Mario Petrucci](#).

'We like to take art outside of museums and have it integrated into society in some way,' remarks Lucy. Oddly, the live art-filming barely caused a blip in Rome's traffic infested streets. 'There are so many film crews in Rome, they probably thought we were a stage set.'

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