Fondazione Pitti Discovery will present the second edition of *Dress Like a Man/ Vestirsi da Uomo* curated by Marc Ascoli:
at Villa Favard, between coup de théâtre and magic

At Pitti Uomo 81, the Fondazione Pitti Discovery will proudly present the second edition of *VESTIRSI DA UOMO* [Dress like a Man], the special project devoted to the new contemporary classic look with a focus on new generation masculine elegance. It is a strong trend in today’s men’s fashions that Pitti Uomo captures fully and Pitti Discovery will feature it in an originally scripted event-performance. Art director Marc Ascoli – who has created some of the most powerful and memorable images of fashion – will stage this edition. The performance of *Dress Like a Man* will take place Thursday 12 January from 4 pm to 7pm in the magnificent, recently reopened Villa Favard, where Polimoda, International Institute of Fashion Design & Marketing, has its new premises.

The stars will be clothes and collections from a group of very different and distinct Italian and international firms that express this new fashion concept through a product that can consistently combine artisan tailoring, styling, innovative materials and details with concreteness. The brands at this edition will be: Barbour, Black Fleece By Brooks Brothers, Borsalino, Cruciani, Engineered Garments, Folk, Herno, Lardini, Salvatore Piccolo, Santoni, Tonello, Yuketen.

“It will be like a game,” says Marc Ascoli, “a game between real and surreal, between the real garment and the imagery it evokes: exuberant, filled with energy, fanciful, dreamlike and visionary. I decided to work on this project with Polimoda students because they, the new generation with eyes that are not clouded by stereotypes, can interpret this dichotomy between the tangible and the imaginary and move beyond the static appearance of things.”

Along the rooms and halls of Villa Favard, nineteenth-century architecture designed by Giovanni Poggi, Marc Ascoli has created a series of tableaux vivants and dream visions, sometimes funny sometimes disturbing, animated and performed by actors, musicians, artists, models and students. To support and engage the public an atmosphere between dream and reality, enigmatic characters - as released by the movie "Rabbits" and "Inland Empire" by David Lynch - a "Black Widow" that floats and touches, inspired by Baroness Fiorella Favard of Langlade, and more playful and theatrical stage presences. A special soundtrack, composed by Frederic Sanchez that takes turn with live performances from the French young talented Owlle and the Belgian band of Lawrence Wasser. Coup de théâtre and magic, as magical and surprising should be today’s fashion: full of energy and fun, passionate and impeccable workmanship, with a distinct anti-serialism, desirable and marketable.

Vestirsi da Uomo has been realized in collaboration with Linda Loppa, Director of Polimoda, and Patrick De Muyinck, Design Department manager. “It is a great privilege to work with Marc Ascoli”, says Linda Loppa, Director of Polimoda, “this opportunity, to build an imaginary world inside the real world of men’s fashions was an important cultural exercise for refreshing contemporary fashion for all of us, students, faculty and myself. We were able to create dreams, images and stories together with Marc Ascoli, and at the same time, leave all the fashion clichés behind us, and then even have fun bringing a fantasy-filled world to the stage. And it is a world that will find its perfect fit in our Villa Favard!”
Among the protagonists of this second act there are Barbour’s heritage jackets, an article of clothing that is a must, a fundamental item for contemporary citylife. Between tradition and innovation, Black Fleece by Brooks Brothers, a brand that has a long history of elegance since 1818, now designed by the visionary mind of Thom Brown. Borsalino, a brand became a fashion category: the hat which goes over time and trends. Sophisticated knitwear of Cruciani, rigorously Made in Italy. A totally different style with Daiki Suzuki and Engineered Garments’ collections, a brand that builds subtle balances between suit elegance and the Bermuda cheerfulness. The echoes of the Scottish highlands and its manufactures come back to a new life in the total look of Folk, as well as the reference to the typical workwear shoes from North-America is the feature that characterizes the unpredictable collection of Yuketen. The balanced mix of tradition and innovation in Herno and its hi-tech outerwear. More and more lightweight, warm and unstructured, but with a formal appeal, the new Lardini jacket. A touch of lightness is the distinctive element of Tonello’s jackets. From jackets to shirts, following the Neapolitan tradition of the "made-to-measure" of Salvatore Piccolo, who inherited the family tradition by renewing it with unusual combinations of modern fabrics. Completing the look, Santoni’s footwear which is the result of great skills and craftsmanship: a company founded in 1975 and rooted in Marche county, a highly specialized district for shoes.

To set up and create the atmosphere of "Vestirsi da Uomo" at Villa Favard, the contribution also of Francesca Pazzagli and Alessandra Foschi Personal Store.

Marc Ascoli’s profile:
Mr. Ascoli has created some of the most powerful and memorable images of fashion: he began working with Yohji Yamamoto in 1984 and then worked with Jil Sander, Cerruti, Chloé, Hugo Boss and Martine Sitbon. During his career he has worked with photographers such as Nick Knight, Peter Saville, Mario Testino, Paolo Roversi, and Stephane Sednaoui, and he is always on the lookout to discover young, unknown talents such as the photographer team of Mert Alas and Marcus Piggot – to launch them on the international stage.

Some of the artists and performers of Vestirsi da Uomo

Frederic Sanchez. Musician, DJ, composer and inventor of musical worlds, Frederic Sanchez began his career in 1988, and ever since he has become one of the most acclaimed creators of music for the leading names in the fashion system. He started with Martin Margiela, then Prada, Hermès, Valentino, Balmain, Chloé, Roger Vivier, Marc Jacobs and Ann Demeulemeester, just to name a few. His artistic collaborations include Herzog & de Meuron, Louise Bourgeois, Larry Clark, Jack Pierson, and in 2010 he completed his first movie, The Soldier Sans Visage.

Owle. Young French singer and musician, self-taught, she performed as a soloist accompanied by the sounds of “Omnichord” - electric instrument of the early 80s - who handles with grace and precision. With her ethereal melodies, a unique, warm, bright and magnetic voice Owle caught the attention of the leading French music magazine “Les Inrockuptibles” that crowned her as one of the most promising young talents of the current scene.

Laurence Wasser. Innovative and experimental band born in Belgium, led by the homonymous singer. The band is the star of a very experimental and unclassifiable music genre, protagonist of a new wave, post-punk, rockabilly, surf, lo-fi, indie pop and - as the leader of the band likes to call himself - no wave and primitive disco music.

Raphaëlle Boitel, is one of the young emerging figures of live performances in France, including contemporary dance and timeless, mysterious performances. Among her most famous
characters we find the “Black Widow”, inspired by the Countess of Castiglione. Raphaëlle performs at Club Silencio, the club opened in Paris by David Lynch.

**The Dromosofisti.** An Italian and Argentine circus company of artists who followed in their family footsteps promoting itinerant circus tradition. Popular theater made of live music, clowns, puppets and juggling.

**Zaches Theatre Company.** Born in 2006 to investigate the possibility of a blend among different artistic languages: contemporary dance, puppetry, the use of masks, the relationship between plastic movements and electronic live music. With the latest productions they have participated in national and international festivals and received numerous awards and recognitions.

**Gogmagog.** Theater project created in 1998, the company is located at the Teatro Studio di Scandicci (Florence). Since 2006 the Gogmagogs are the curator of the "ZoomFestival - image of the new theater" at the Teatro Studio di Scandicci. In 2008 the company won the New Creativity ETI project.

*Florence, 10th January 2012*