

# Blank Canvas

Rakelle Maurici

**LUXOS talks with Nicola Ricci, co-founder of menswear brand Sciamat, on tailoring the bespoke experience in Milan**

Italians have an innate ability to create masterpieces ex nihilo. Home to craftsmanship and an envied lifestyle, it's no surprise that the simplest collection of recipes equated to become one of the world's most beloved cuisines. Much like the mouth-watering dishes comes the sense of style; mastery in the stroke of a needle and thread. With the focus on menswear, creative visions are at the click of a button. With few artisans able to remodel men's tailoring, Italy remains eternally influential amongst bespoke tailors.

Che si tratti di moda oppure di cucina, il segreto dell'Italia è sempre lo stesso: la sapienza artigianale tramandata nel corso dei secoli, cuore di uno stile di vita fondato sull'amore per il bello. E come in cucina, utilizzando ricette ed ingredienti semplici, vengono creati capolavori del gusto amati in tutto il mondo, così la maestria nel trattare ago e filo è la chiave del successo internazionale della sartoria made in Italy: un primato che continua a consolidarsi soprattutto nel campo della moda maschile.

This page, Sciamat Sartoria at work, photo courtesy of Sciamat

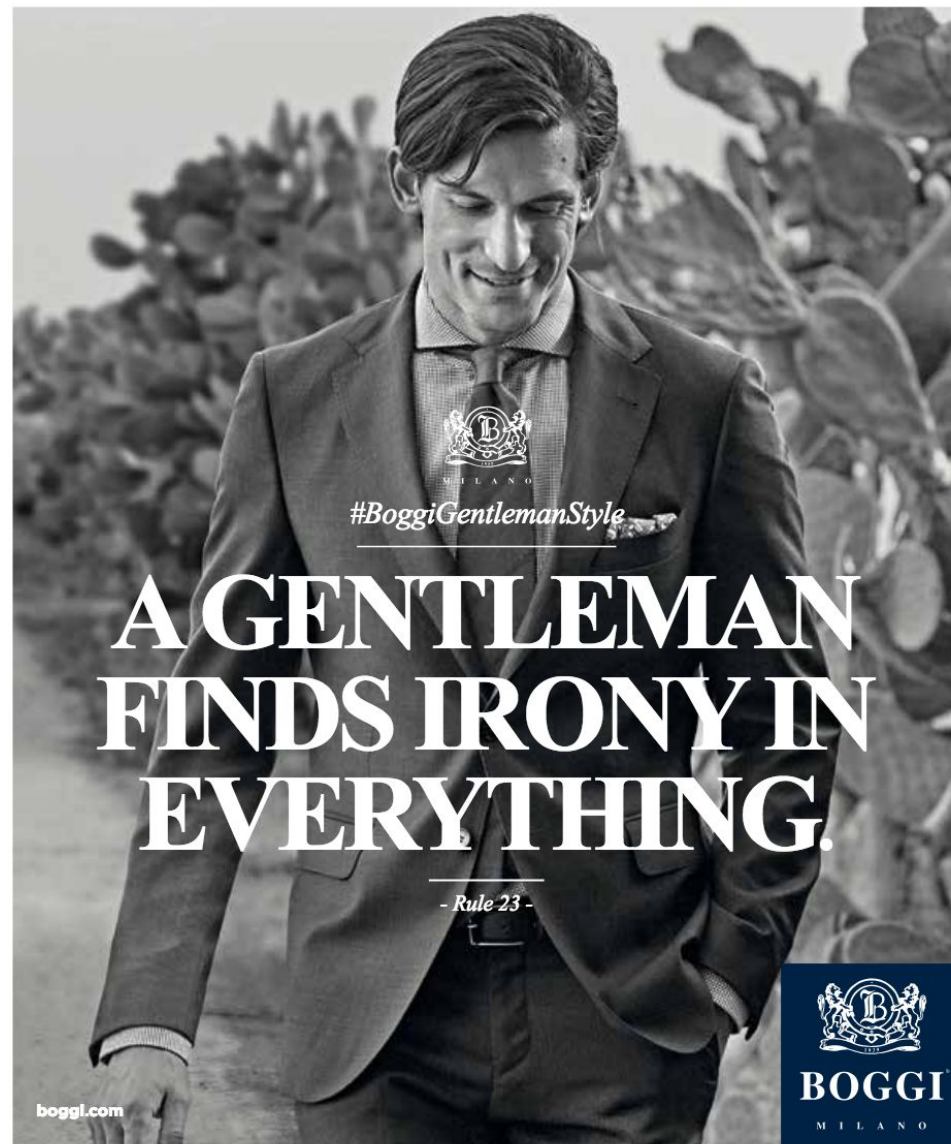




The Ricci brothers, Valentino and Nicola, along with Valentino's wife, Silvana and family friend, Pippo set out on a creative voyage inspired by a lack of new ideas in sartorialism. Their notion was to create unique pieces that can be worn everyday; and so Sciamat was born in 2002. Sitting serenely in their Milan showroom on a dusky afternoon, Nicola Ricci wears a blue, double-breasted 2-piece with a contrasting rust check. In one glance, I understand it's more than clothing; it's art. "We work with clients from all over the world. Each one is different. Working as a tailor isn't just about the fabrics and style, but also working with characters. An American has ideas that someone from Japan doesn't, this is a challenge but something we embrace."

I fratelli Valentino e Nicola Ricci, insieme a Silvana, moglie di Valentino, e all'amico Pippo, hanno creato ex nihilo un progetto che è un viaggio creativo alla ricerca di nuove idee in campo sartoriale. Alla sfida di creare abiti unici, ma da poter indossare ogni giorno, i Ricci hanno risposto dando vita nel 2002 a Sciamat. Basta uno sguardo a Nicola Ricci seduto nello showroom milanese, completo doppiopetto blu a quadri ruggine in contrasto, per capire immediatamente che non è solo questione di abbigliamento: è arte. "Lavoriamo con clienti da tutto il mondo: un americano e un giapponese sono diversi per carattere, non solo per stile. È una sfida, chiaramente, ma la accettiamo."

Top, the Ricci brothers, photo courtesy of Sciamat



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Despite a bold aesthetic that menswear connoisseurs are in awe of, Nicola has an excitement to be innovative, like a young pilot on his first flight. He talks with the client about the style, fabric and form; he takes all the measurements at the showroom and conducts all the fittings. Valentino, his brother, lives in their hometown of Bitonto, Puglia, and manages the tailoring house, doing all the cutting of fabric by hand.



Born from an extraordinary vision, the Sciamat experience isn't there to tell you how to dress. Said with enthusiasm, "Our passion is what drives us. We use craftsmanship to create what our customers want. We propose our ideas, and produce the garments together without losing our DNA. It's like Frank Sinatra singing 'Yellow Submarine'; the performance is original and evokes a certain sentiment."

L'estetica audace, che suscita ammirazione nei connoisseurs di moda maschile, fa il paio con l'entusiasmo suscitato in Nicola da tutto ciò che è innovazione. Nicola ama parlare con i clienti di stile, tessuti e forme, e ne prende personalmente le misure nello showroom, mentre suo fratello Valentino, che vive nella città natale di Bitonto, si occupa della sartoria, dove il tessuto viene ancora tagliato rigorosamente a mano.

Frutto di un entusiasmo visionario, l'esperienza Sciamat non intende imporre uno stile, un criterio uniforme di eleganza: è piuttosto la proposta di un'idea basata sulla passione, che si serve di una raffinata perizia artigianale per realizzare i desideri dei clienti. Il risultato è un'originale fusione, ricca e piena di sentimento.

From the top, Sciamat's showroom in Milan; Valentino Ricci at work; Nicola Ricci wearing Sciamat, all photos courtesy of Sciamat







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"Our trademark is our style of patch pocket, known as a 'sciolata'. It is the bucket pocket at the hip of a Sciamàt jacket," explains Ricci. The bespoke maestri are renowned for extreme lapels and British draping, making their details hard to imitate. "We create designs and cut without a canvas, this gives our suits the ability to be rolled, well dressed, folded and even when stowed away, come out relatively crease-free."

A Sciamàt suit is light, and when worn, gives the illusion that it's structured; however, it is made with no structure at all. Their distinct shoulder is created without any padding. The fabric is, instead, beautifully formed through heating, stretching and shaping. Sciamàt's garments go beyond suits and include coats, ties, shirts and shoes, all featured in their portfolio, including a ready-to-wear collection available at exclusive boutiques around the world.

"Il nostro marchio di fabbrica è la 'sciolata', il taglio di tasca a toppa che si può vedere sul fianco di una giacca Sciamàt," spiega Ricci. In effetti, i maestri sono rinomati per dettagli impossibili da imitare, come il taglio estremo dei bavero e il drappeggio in stile inglese delle loro giacche. "Disegniamo e tagliamo il modello senza una tela, così i nostri abiti possono essere indossati per bene, arrotolati e piegati, e persino una volta riposti tendono a non stropicciarsi".

Un abito Sciamàt è leggero, ma quando lo si indossa dà l'illusione di avere una struttura che, infatti, non ha: ad esempio, non ci sono spalline di alcun genere. È il tessuto, invece, a prendere forma, dopo esser stato riscaldato, allungato e modellato. Oltre agli abiti, le collezioni comprendono cappotti, cravatte, camicie e scarpe. Interessante è la linea prêt-à-porter, disponibile nelle esclusive boutiques Sciamàt in tutto il mondo.



From the top, men's shoe collection; bottom, a sartorial fitting; right, view of the collection, photo courtesy of Sciamàt

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## Suit yourself

Rakelle Maurici

The power suit just made a bold comeback

The art of power dressing is a concealed notion that only a few can master. Deriving from the Western world, the modern suit first made an appearance in 19th century England as a traditional form of dress, inspired by King Charles II. At the beginning of the 1800s, a man's style of dress was far more elaborate than the tailoring we see today. Suits consisted of coats with tails, heeled shoes and a top hat. New-century tailoring (1900s) saw a deflection to darker colours, heavier fabrics and contrasting double-breasted vests under a single-breasted jacket. Today, this would be a forbidden sartorial regulation. As time has passed, in harmony with economic crashes and turbulent periods, we've seen the rise and fall of the suit worn by gentlemen. Much like the 1920s and 1980s when lapels and 'power dressing' were at their peak, men wanted to make a statement of wealth with their chosen style of chalk stripe, banker stripe and padded shoulders – a staple that Wall Street and Don Draper would be proud of.

权力着装的艺术是少数人能够掌握的秘密。现代西服首次出现在19世纪的英国，当时的西服是一种从查理二世国王的服饰上获取灵感的传统装束。在19世纪初，男装的风格远比今天的繁复。一套正装必然包括燕尾礼服、高跟鞋和高顶礼帽。而20世纪初的设计则喜好深色、厚重的织物与隐藏在单排扣外衣下的双排扣马夹。这在今天看来是无法接受的。随着时间流逝，经济危机、局势动荡，不同风格的男士正装也起起落落。就像在1920和1980年代，翻领与权力着装如日中天时那样，男人们希望用中条纹、银行家条纹和垫肩来彰显他们的财富——正是华尔街和《广告狂人》中的德尔柏为之骄傲的风格。

Ermengildo Zegna spring/summer 2018 menswear collection, presented at the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan





For women, the story is somewhat different one. Thanks to Coco Chanel, females can wear trousers today. Chanel broke boundaries and chose not to conform to fashion etiquette by creating something that was yet to be discovered for the female counterpart. In 1914, the designer launched the first ever 'pantsuit', an outfit that pioneered in the industry and led to the famed 'Le Smoking' by Yves Saint Laurent in the late 1960s. Shortly after, women were seen in classic satin shawl lapel jackets with satin stripe pants over a white shirt and black bow tie. Alas androgynous dress was born; think Marlene Dietrich's top hat days centre stage.

While 'rules', for want of a better word, still exist when it comes to tailoring, juxtaposing fit or experimenting with tonal colours, is the definition of a sartorial dresser at play. What makes a suit stand out from the rest? Well, emerging from the runway today it's not unusual to see statement suiting. We can see a move to bold patterns and daring prints that are bigger and brighter, with loud colours on unexpected fabrics.

而女装则有着完全不同的故事。我们要感谢可可·香奈儿女士给予今日女性穿着长裤的权利。当年，香奈儿打破了传统的束缚，创造出对于女性而言前所未见的设计。1914年，香奈儿展示了世界第一件裤装，引领了整个行业的前锋，并导致Yves Saint Laurent在1960年代晚期设计出著名的Le Smoking吸烟装。不久后，出现了用缎子的披肩领外套与缎子条纹裤搭配白衬衫黑领结的风潮。而后中性化服装开始亮相，想想玛琳·黛德丽颠倒众生的礼帽吧。

然而“规则”依旧存在于时装设计领域，搭配不同风格，试验各种色调——这是时尚达人们不可拒绝的使命。是什么让一套正装脱颖而出？在今日的T台上，权力着装并不罕见：更加大胆的图案与印染，更明快的色彩，更多变的织物，脱胎于传统服装。

This page, from left, Diane Von Furstenberg; middle and right, Andreas Kronthaler for Vivienne Westwood. Opposite page, backstage at Fendi spring/summer 2018 womenswear show





Springing into summer we're seeing a plethora of two-piece suits, taking power dressing to another dimension - leaving chalk stripe jackets on the backs of office chairs. Will a red windowpane sports jacket worn over a floral shirt reinvent menswear in the corporate world? Although this may take a season to digest it is a fashion movement that isn't settling just yet: Fanta-coloured 3-piece ensembles and Crayola-shaded smoking jackets are covering the shoulders of even the most straight-laced of men.

While designers are gambling on their hues, the form and fit are also seeing a shift. Shoulders are sloped, armholes are low, and the materials are very lucid, somewhat 1980s-inspired. It is a style that can be paired with a shirt and classic lace up shoe, or relaxed with a plain t-shirt and loafers, giving traditional sartorialism a creative nod.

An injection of novelty makes quite the statement when it comes to men's tailoring, however patterns are nothing new to a lady's wardrobe. Floral designs and all-over prints are quite apparent this season, as well as gelato shades sweeping store windows. Loose fitting pantsuits in pistachio green, strawberry pink and berry lilac is prevalent over a plain white tee or blouse. Components of traditional tailoring with innovative features make way for influential dress, shouldering a millennial style. ■

由春入夏，更多的两件套纷纷亮相，将权力着装带进了另一个维度。把中条纹的外套扔在办公室的靠椅上吧。窗格纹红色运动外套与鲜花纹衬衫的搭配能否颠覆男人们在商界的主流风格？虽然男人可能需要花上一个季节来消化这场时尚运动，然而即使是直直的直男也不会拒绝多彩三件套与差色吸烟外套。

在设计师们尝试不同色彩组合的同时，男装的款式也在经历变迁。肩部更加倾斜，袖孔放低，直白的材质选择多少带有1980年代的风格。不论是搭配经典的绑带鞋与衬衫，还是更加休闲的T恤与懒汉鞋，都在传统的风格上加入了创意十足的一笔。

这些新的创意在男装领域堪称大胆，然而在女士的衣橱里这只能算是司空见惯。鲜花图案与遍及全身的印染是当季的主流，恍如意大利冰淇淋的配色席卷了时装店与冰淇淋店的橱窗。开心果绿、草莓粉与浆果紫，宽松的裤装搭配简单的白T恤或衬衫成为了当下的主流。传统服饰的元素携手创意十足的新特色，开辟了新世纪权力着装的新道路。■

This page, top, Salvatore Ferragamo; bottom, Stella McCartney. Opposite page, Versace



# Milliner to The Stars

LUXOS lifts the lid on the life of LA based hatter Nick Fouquet



Photography by Matthew Rennie



Born in New York and bred in France, Nick Fouquet artfully conveys his colourful back story through unique headwear creations. With a laid back presence and a humble posture, the French beau effortlessly evokes an air of cool; sporting boho Cali hair combined with 'euro elegance'. Mostly seen in a hat of course, Nick has a style that mixes comfort with fun; a combination of Alice in Wonderland meets Keith Richards.

'I love wearing sunglasses, Dior Havanas have been my go to recently, but right now I can't find them, which is bothering me...otherwise I love soft tees with Levi's.'

Along with his effortless exterior, staying grounded comes naturally to Nick despite his success; 'it was an accident, whilst recovering from a surfing injury, I began learning about garment and accessory design.' Following his mentoring, Nick set up a workshop in a craftsman bungalow in California's boho quarter of Venice in 2014, and was able to express himself through his creative cosmos. Today, Mr Fouquet has an extensive portfolio of celebrity clients seen wearing the renowned match stick accompanied fedora - from Pharrell Williams to Madonna. The man himself even describes the journey as a surprise; 'it began as pure passion and it still is.'

But, his designs don't stop at their atypical exterior; made from 100% beaver fur, with an unusual fiery process Nick has been able to create a cult of remarkable hand made headwear, now sold all over the world in high end boutiques. 'When I began, the plan was to make the best hats possible. I knew that musicians gravitated towards hats but I had no idea of the magnitude and number of high profile celebrities, actors and musicians that would be wearing Nick Fouquet hats.'

Although his success story may sound like a walk in the park, beyond his blue eyes it's not all rose tinted glasses; like any fruitful business, you're met with hurdles. 'I face challenges everyday, how you get past them defines your personal strength'. Whilst admitting that these obstacles are often a result of his own doing, he doesn't allow them to hinder his growth.

When the hat maker is not out surfing or hiking in the hills of California, he's following in his father, Bernard Fouquet's modelling footsteps. 'I recently shot a campaign for The Kooples with Emily Ratajkowski. Luckily it runs parallel to my business so it's never a big inconvenience and it helps with marketing purposes.'

It's not a profession Nick proactively pursues, but when you have the looks and you're met with a good opportunity, who wouldn't take it?

With a lot of projects currently going on, Nick was excited to tell us he recently met with the head of PSG soccer team's marketing department in Paris about creating a small capsule collection for them. Given his French heritage this is a sentimental project in his career.

Now onto a second collaboration with Borsalino, Nick was honoured to have the chance to put his take on such an iconic hat brand. 'I chose a film noir concept for my second collection. It has a contemporary meets gangster feel, darker colours, with a lot of details. It was a fun process and I think it's a very solid collection.'

# London's Cutting Edge Grooming Establishments

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Slowly becoming a man's best friend; grooming salons are popping up frequently in the most loved fashion cities across the globe. With the rise of the modern razor, salons were useful for nothing other than a tidy up and a quick shave; however, today they're seen as a part of a man's lifestyle. Here's where you can give your hair and beard some extra attention across the Queen's capital.

### **Ruffian's Barbers**

With exposed wood interiors this masculine salon houses traditional aromas to play with your senses; whilst you enjoy a beverage of your choice upon arrival. However Ruffians is not your typical barbershop, their skilled craftsman pay close attention to details, are consistently connected and inspired by current beard and hair trends to offer personal styling tips and suggestions, as well as working with the client's wants and needs.

### **Murdock London**

This Victorian-style grooming establishment is a place for gentlemen to relax and socialise; not only with your barber but also other locals who come here for an afternoon of man-pering. When grooming was in its golden age, the relationship you had with your barber was just as important as the relationship you had with your tailor. Murdock have created a space for exactly that, with now six locations across the city; however just a short stroll from Shoreditch High Street you'll find their original salon where the brand's soul still lies.

### **Gentlemen's Tonic**

For the refined gentlemen amongst us, nestled away in the middle of London's Mayfair, Gentlemen's Tonic has an extensive range of hands-on treatments for both grooming and lifestyle. With a masculine interior of wood, leather and marble; it's the perfect retreat from the stresses of everyday life. With dedicated care and attention, their craftsman give client's the opportunity to experience true vitality and well-being.

### **Drake's of London**

An award winning grooming destination, Drake's of London is a mecca for the grooming aficionados. Check in for a chop at this parlour, where the urban male meets the traditional city-dweller. Head-quartered in Fulham, with another branch in Tower Hill the team are skilled to precision to adapt to their client's needs including full beard reshapes with hot towel shaves as well as the Drake's Signature facial. Pre treatment, make yourself comfortable in their leather seating with a beverage.