Art expo: Zegna’s Milan HQ bursts into bloom with Lucy and Jorge Orta mural

In honour of Milan’s Expo, which officially opened its doors on Friday, Emilio Zegna’s Milan headquarters have been blanketed with enormous blooms designed by artists Lucy and Jorge Orta. The latest addition of the house’s ZegnaArt initiative, the installation welcomed guests to a performance feat created in tandem with Italian chef Davide Oldani and the Ortas; a true sight to behold.

Entitled ‘Fabulous Nature’, the headquarters’ new floral murals are part of an enchanted forest exhibit that meanders freely across walls and ceilings of stark cement and chain glass. Curated by art and fashion historian Maria Luisa Frisa, the project was inspired by recently acquired floral-based archival fabric and also features a second chapter of Spirit characters, which deemed this weekend wearing costumes and masks. These were invented by the Ortas for a Zegna exhibit at Rome’s MAXXI museum in 2016. The Ortas have also designed a collection of limited edition Linenga prints, featuring their new floral design, which will be sold to fund an agricultural development project in Peru Mescu, near the Cinque Terre.

"We’ve put together a great big mix of all of Zegna’s souls," explains Anna Zegna, president of the Zegna Foundation. "But it makes sense. Fabrics come from our archives, nature is fundamental to our world and what we are doing with Zegna Oasis and every generation of Zegna, starting with my grandfather, has been deeply interested in the world of art."

Though it couldn’t be more apt for Milan’s sustainable food themed Expo, Zegna’s voyage into a floral and food wonderland began over two years ago when the fashion house purchased an enormous archive of over 1,500 vintage textile volumes from Hefelestein, a Swiss based family run fabric company. "Our fabric archive is already one of the biggest in the world," says Anna Zegna, "but we’ve always looking to expand it. We bought this one without even knowing what was in it."

Anna Zegna perused over the enormous contents (which included 40 different themes ranging from the 1920s to 1980s) for over two years with the help of Maria Luisa Frisa and finally settled on florals as a first theme to develop. The Ortas’ artwork is inspired directly by this botanical material and played a beautiful backdrop to both the musical performance entitled ‘Symphony for Absurd Wildlife’, as well as the Sprint’s performance called ‘XXXVII Act of the artists’ ‘2017 The Meal’, which took place in Milan over the weekend.

Watch a time-lapse film of the the Ortas’ installation come to life. Courtesy of Zegna