

## Giorgio Armani Shines Light On CSR With New Values Site

The designer and, in his first interview, Andrea Camerana, named sustainability managing director, speak up about sustainability integrated within the group and business strategies.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – Giorgio Armani believes the time has come to map out his values and the designer will unveil a new site with this name on Earth Day. At the same time, Armani revealed that he has appointed his nephew, Andrea Camerana, as sustainability managing director.

“I believe that a designer and entrepreneur like myself has responsibilities and must be an example,” said Armani. “I have always based my work on authentic and solid values. I have done it designing timeless objects, pure and essential, that stem from the idea that less is best, made to last in time, and I have always turned my attention to people, convinced that a company must give back and not only take from our planet, which we must look after.”

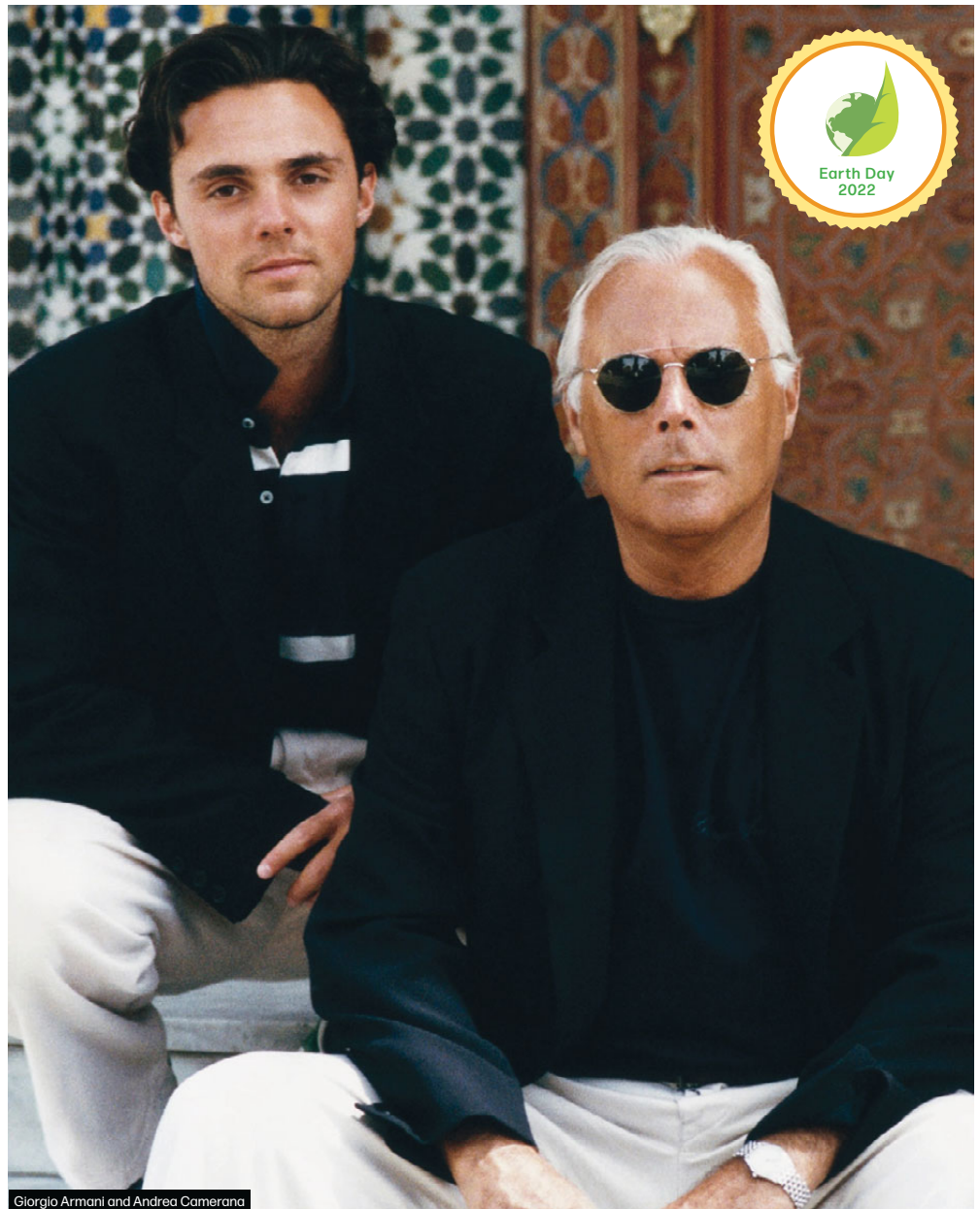
Case in point: in April 2020, Armani sent an open letter to WWD musing on the possibility of the pandemic yielding to slower fashion and long-lasting designs, which he has long embraced, and to collections aligned with the seasons.

“I think fashion can contribute to the renovation that is taking place in many ways. Values count, corporate responsibility is central for us and with this site I wish to share an invitation to build, all together, a more responsible system,” said Armani.

Camerana, in his first interview, and the designer told WWD exclusively that with Armani/Values “the intention is to engage the entire organization at a global level in the implementation of the sustainability strategy, because we think it’s fundamental to raise the level of awareness on these issues.” Values will also post the group’s annual sustainability report.

Camerana has contributed to creating a sustainability strategic committee to analyze and integrate the objectives in the company’s strategies “through an inclusive approach that engages all our people, our suppliers and our clients, and, naturally, the extended community. The environmental challenges, the inclusion and the well-being of people, the circularity of our business, the eco-design are some of the priorities on which we have focused from Day One,” said Camerana, who is the son of Armani’s sister Rosanna.

A graduate in agricultural science, after working for Auchan and Galbani, Camerana joined the Armani Group in 2000. A counselor and formerly a licensing director at his uncle’s fashion house, he exited the group in 2014, while remaining on the board. He has often been mentioned as a possible successor to Armani and, as a relative of the Agnelli family (his



Giorgio Armani and Andrea Camerana

father, Carlo, was the cousin of Gianni and Umberto Agnelli), he has been seen as a link with the Exor holding company when rumors last year swirled around its potential interest in the fashion house.

Camerana said corporate social responsibility practices at the Armani Group were set in motion a few years ago and that he is now “tasked with evolving the policies in a new direction of sustainability, connecting CSR more closely to the vertex of the company. In this view, we have hired a director of sustainability integrating sustainability in the company’s business strategies. The team is growing.”

The site Armani/Values is also a point of reference as it details the history of the group since its foundation in 1975. There is an introduction called Overview, which provides information on the brands; Armani’s lifestyle; hotels, resorts and restaurants, and the Silos exhibition space, and the site is then structured around three main themes: People, Planet and Prosperity.

“We wanted to synthesize, in line with our style, our principles and values, and we started from people, our human capital, to move on to the planet, and to close with prosperity and all the actions

related to the community,” said Armani. “The attention to people, to planet and the sustainable growth models that can create a positive impact perfectly reflect our business strategy. In fact, dividing the site in these three categories is programmatic, offered as an action plan to follow in time, in ways that are both autonomous and interconnected.”

Armani has kept many of his philanthropic activities on the quiet side for years, supporting several nonprofit organizations in the fight against the pandemic and poverty, as well as those focused on environmental protection, from Save the Children to the Acqua for Life or supporting WWF. But he has become more active in communicating these initiatives of late, hoping his efforts could be seen as an example but warning against turning them into mere means of communication.

Seeing how strong the attention to these issues has become, Armani believes it’s the right moment to “chronicle in a transparent and clear way, what we have done so far but also our future initiatives and challenges. So, we speak to the sector, but not only,” engaging in constructive discussions.

Asked about the main message he wishes to convey with Values, Armani said

that he wants to leave “an impression of authenticity, consistency and transparency, of a constant engagement on more fronts, rooted in time.” He underscored how this “history of actions” was “part of the Armani company and not simply adherent to the current imperatives of the moment. Our commitment on the issues of sustainability is increasing more and more and is deeply rooted in our values and in our history, in addition to being integrated in our business strategy.”

For the designer, “ethics and aesthetics” go hand-in-hand and the site reflects his message as he described it as “essential, clean and easy to navigate.”

Camerana said that he learned about corporate responsibility directly from his uncle. “At the base of the strength of the brand, of the ability to manage such an articulated business, there is an ensemble of unique values that Giorgio Armani with his collaborators has built and pursued in time. It is these values that differentiate us and that can contribute to the well-being of those that come into contact with the Armani world. What I am setting for myself with the contribution of my collaborators is to emphasize the idea that ‘less is more,’ also in the choice of priorities.”