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## Tod's Unveils Exhibit Celebrating Venetian Craftsmanship

Eleven Venetian artisans interpreted Tod's signature Gommino through their own craft and tools, contributing to spread a message of expertise and know-how prized by the brand's chairman Diego Della Valle.

By [LUISA ZARGANI](#)  
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Artisans at work at the Tod's exhibition "The Art of Craftsmanship — a Project by Venetian Masters" in Venice. ALFONSO CATALANO

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**VENICE** — “We are here in Venice, in one of the dream cities in the world, and every time it’s a new experience,” said **Tod’s Group** chairman and chief executive officer Diego Della Valle, introducing the exhibition “The Art of Craftsmanship — a Project by Venetian Masters” on Friday evening.

The event was timed to the opening of the 60th Biennale International Art Exhibition, which kicked off Saturday and runs until Nov. 24, and celebrated the Italian Pavilion and the **partnership** with the Italian **luxury** brand.

Eleven Venetian artisans interpreted **Tod’s** signature Gommino through their own craft and tools, contributing to spread a message of expertise and know-how.

For example, glassblower Roberto Beltrami and goldbeaters Marino Menegazzo and Mario Berta revisited Tod’s loafer in glass and covered in gold leaves, respectively. Sergio Boldrin, who made the masks seen in the Stanley Kubrick film “Eyes Wide Shut,” created eight masks by employing Tod’s leather scraps and swatches. Rowlock makers Saverio Pastor and Piero Dri created an oar made in wood and shaped like a needle that rested in the oarlock arm. From the needle, a thread of leather composed the graphic profile of a life-size gondola covered in leather.

The artisans were seen busy at work and their creations were strategically lit in the cavernous space at the Arsenale, a storied complex of former shipyards and armories.



Artisans at work at the Tod's exhibition.

Della Valle said the exhibition was in line with the company's own strategy for brands and products, touting "the same focus on quality, on handmade craft, and on the life of the artisans as well as Italian lifestyle."

"They are incredible people, fantastic minds, and you want to understand who is the Italian artisan."

Della Valle admitted it was the first time he saw some of the skills on display. "They want to do this incredible, special work. The message for the new generations is that to be an artisan is a very noble profession, not a second-level choice."





Diego Della Valle at the Tod's exhibition. ALFONSO CATALANO

He said Tod's artisans work with "the same mentality and same attitude" to create the best products that will last for a "super-long-term, what can be more sustainable than that? We live under the Made in **Italy** cap – a fantastic trademark – so for a company such as ours to support it is the least we can do and it helps us to explain our philosophy and promote the younger generations."

The entrepreneur said the products that were on display in Venice will be exhibited at the company's headquarter's museum in the Marche region, "where employees enjoy them and see that it is possible to combine work and culture today."

The entrepreneur has over the years funded several initiatives to support local communities but also larger scale national and artistic heritage sites in **Italy** – **restoring the Colosseum** perhaps being his most famous effort. In 2011 Della Valle said he was pledging 25 million euros for the restoration of the Roman amphitheater. Tod's is also sponsoring the **restoration works of Milan's city hall**, which began earlier this month, among other initiatives.

On Thursday evening, Tod's held a dinner at the storied Scuola Grande di San Rocco, housing beautiful frescoes by Tintoretto.

“It's a fantastic building I saw for the first time, and not many tourists know this palace. It was another occasion to promote our Italian fantastic jewels,” said Della Valle.

Andrea Bocelli performed for the guests, who included Adrien Brody, British actress Hayley Atwell and Zhang Ziyi, among others.





Adrien Brody at the Tod's exhibition. STEFANO TROVATI

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