

Maria Garzia Chiuri: The Woman Who made DioRevolution

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Maria Garzia Chiuri was born and raised in the capital of Italy, Rome, in 1964 by her working-class family, including her seamstress mother and her father who was in the military (Daniel, n.d.; Cartner-Morely, 2023). Since Chiuri's father was in the military, she was raised mainly by her mother for most of her childhood. Chiuri's mother would bring up the topic to the dinner table about women's rights especially having the right to make choices and having the right to divorce, equality in opportunity, equality between men and women due to the dominance of men at the time, empowering women, and learn to love herself (Daniel, n.d.). Chiuri's mother is transparent with her daughter at an early age speaking and advocating for women's rights and that is wholesome in a way because there are other people who would jeopardize other's success from their jealousy and insecurities. There are mothers who are powerful women who have experienced enough to share and help their child for the future such as Chiuri's mother. Chiuri's mother's beliefs plays a significant role by influencing and inspiring Chiuri's career.

Chiuri remained in Rome, Italy, and studied at *Istituto Europeo di Design* (Moss, 2016). After graduating, Chiuri met Peirpaolo Piccioli and had been colleagues for a decade at Fendi and later in 1999 they were picked by Italian fashion designer, Valentino Garavani, to construct accessories for his self-titled house (Mccarthy, 2016; Moss, 2016). Having a loyal colleague in the same profession and workplace keeps each other in check and motivated to keep working harder and in this case Chiuri and Piccioli were given the opportunity to work for a well known designer in the fashion industry. There are not a lot of people out there who are loyal or maybe because people change overtime and their path changes for the good or the worse. During Chiuri's time working at Fendi, she created a staple piece of accessories for the brand in the 1990s (Jennings, 2022). In *Figure 1*, the baguette bag opening top is flapped there are two

options to style the bag, one short shoulder strap that can be worn over the shoulders and one long strap to be worn as a crossbody.



Figure 1. Fendi Baguette small shoulder bag

After the duo, Chiuri and Piccioli worked for a decade for Fendi and was hand picked by the Italian Fashion designer Valentino, they both worked as an accessory designer. Chiuri and Piccioli both debuted their first couture collection in Fall 2008 (Cusumano, 2016). Chiuri and Piccioli recreated at Valentino's, the design and silhouette were romantic but not in a revealing way where people can overly sexualize the models with exposed skins. The silhouette designs were modest, simple, light pigmentation, unique, simple, and elegant. Born in Rome, Italy, one can see Chiuri and Piccioli added a touch of their own identity and heritage to the designs which shows that they are not losing their identity, morals, and values for the fashion industry. When others get known by the world and get pressured, sometimes they lose themselves and lose their touch by trying to establish their followers' expectations. Their original ideas and creations make them where they are. However, in this case, with the given opportunity to debut their first couture collection for Valentino, Chiuri and Piccioli's values and identity remain and were used in their work not only for others to see but also as a reminder of where they came from. One can also see that Chiuri's mother's morals of women's rights and empowerment was kind of implemented in the designs where one can see the models wearing the garments were modest and wore the garment with high status.



Figure 2. Model walking for Valentino in the 2015/2016 collection



Figure 3. Models wearing Valentino Spring-Summer 2015 collection

In *Figure 2*, one can see the model wearing a sleeveless long slit drape dress with Roman designs consisting of colors red and gold. The dress does not reveal too much skin making the model look modest and modern in the Roman era. In *Figure 3*, the models wore long flowy dresses covering their legs and shoulders. The model on the right looks to be wearing a long mesh floral embroidered patterns cape while on the left, the model's dress has a long v-neck, a short drape over the shoulder with large floral embroidery. The color of the dress is subtle and looks vintage giving a pure and romantic aura. With Chiuri's and Piccioli's recognition and hard work, the duo became co-creative directors in the year of 2008 after the retirement of Valentino Garavani and a small duration of occupation of Alessandra Facchinetti (Maria Grazia Chiuri, n.d.). After Valentino retired, the well-known brand name started to grapple to hold its position as it once had, however, with Chiuri and Piccioli as co-creative directors, the duo pushed the brand forward by bringing new energy and ideas for menswear and accessories in businesses (Maria Grazia Chiuri, n.d.). Chiuri and Piccioli saved the Valentino brand and still kept the Valentino brand position amongst other well-known brands in place by quick thinking and their creativity by bringing new innovative looks for menswear and accessories.

After the duo, Chiuri and Piccioli, had been working and gaining new experience together at Valentino for 17 years, Chiuri decided to leave Valentino and join Dior to get new and different experience, while her duo, Piccioli stayed at Valentino and became a creative director (Zargani, 2016). Over the years, as people gain new experiences and change over time, new opportunities and directions open for them, they would want to pursue and try something different. There is a saying that it is not best to befriend your colleagues because some can be fake where they bring others down at the same level to be as miserable as them and do not like others succeeding, but in this case Chiuri and Piccioli are one of a kind duos in the fashion

industry who worked hard together and are motivational to each other going through obstacles. After Chiuri decided to join Dior for a new beginning, one may see it to be heart wrenching but Chiuri and Piccioli both continue to move on and support each other along the way.

Throughout the years in the fashion industry in Dior, only men have led the creative side but Chiuri changed that aspect by becoming the first woman to lead in Dior after Raf Simons's departure (Friedman, 2016). This announcement can inspire, motivate, and empower women all over the world who are passionate about haute couture and want to be a creative director or designer for well known brands. Chiuri showed that with hard work, consistency, discipline, and creativity it is possible no matter the gender or in any profession. Right after Chiuri's celebratory achievement in becoming a creative director as the first woman for Dior, she made her first debut presenting her first collection focusing on women's empowerment (Fisher, 2016). Chiuri took this opportunity as the first woman to lead and become the creative director of a well known French fashion house, Dior, to implement women's empowerment into her collection without hesitation making the audience know that she advocates for the power of women. One may also do the same if they were in her shoes because it is such an achievement that had not been done for years in Dior. For instance, in Chiuri's first collection, in *Figure 4*, one can see one of the models wearing a plain white shirt printed with a statement in a bold black color suggesting everyone should become a feminist pairing with white shorts attached to an elastic band and on top of the shorts is a mesh maxi skirt with sewn rhinestones. The garment is simple but Chiuri was trying to convey a message letting it voice for morals and letting others know she is going to change Dior because it was run prominently by men. People may be proud of her achievements and her first collection but there will be critics of her work because Chiuri aims for a full audience of women. In *Figure 5*, one can see that Chiuri implemented Christian Dior's A-Line

silhouette, the one of her collection keeping Dior's touch but also in her own style. The model wore a flowy black calf-length dress in the color black pairing it with a cinched wrapped ruffled hem jacket, black feather black headband, and black mesh ruffle flats.

Chiuri and Piccioli started working for Fendi as an accessory designer creating the baguette bag and was later picked by Valentino Garavani for his brand also working as accessories designers and later paved their way up becoming co-creative directors. Later, Chiuri wanted to get more experience by joining Dior while Piccioli remained in Valentino and was appointed to a creative director position for the brand. Chiuri being the first Italian fashion designer and the first woman to become the creative director for Dior that was once prominent by men changed the fashion industry. Throughout Chiuri's career, she always made her designs feminine in her collection because morally she advocated for women's empowerment just like her mother. Chiuri's achievements and work may not only inspire women in the fashion industry but can also inspire other women in other professions. Chiuri changed Dior by bringing not only femininity but a youthful and modern touch.



Figure 4. A model walking for Chiuri's first ready-to-wear collection for Dior



Figure 5. A model walking in all a black garment

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Figure 1. [A brief history of the 'It' bag - Haute History](#)

Figure 2. [Valentino | Valentino par Maria Grazia Chiuri et Pierpaolo Piccioli \(2015-2016\) | Artsy](#)

Figure 3. [Valentino Haute Couture SS15 | Dazed \(dazeddigital.com\)](#)

Figure 4. [Chiuri raises banner of feminism in first Dior show \(fashionnetwork.com\)](#)

Figure 5. [Maria Grazia Chiuri's First Dior Couture Collection Is a Woodland Fairy Wonderland \(elle.com\)](#)

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