

# FASHION'S FANTASIA

**MARCO DE VINCENZO** CASTS HIS SPELL  
WITH BAG BUGS FOR FENDI AND FEATHERY  
COATS FROM HIS OWN LABEL



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“I LIKE IT WHEN, EVERY SIX MONTHS, A BRAND CHANGES ITS APPROACH TO FASHION”

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My story starts in Rome. Fendi was my first job,” says Sicilian-born designer Marco de Vincenzo, carefully enunciating in English, aware of his Italian-trained tongue. “I was 21 years old when I started there; now, after 15 years, it’s like [being] in a family.” While Rome may be home, de Vincenzo’s eponymous label is based in Milan.

Eight years ago, de Vincenzo became Fendi’s head designer of leather goods. Now, at the age of 38, he admits he “never loved bags”, but when fresh out of Rome’s Istituto Europeo di Design he couldn’t pass up such a promising opportunity. As the years passed, his reputation preceded him; de Vincenzo’s name became synonymous with luxury leather. Feeling typecast by accessories and eager to explore womenswear, he debuted his small Marco de Vincenzo haute couture presentation in Paris in 2009. The collection caught the eye of *Vogue Italia*’s editor-in-chief, Franca Sozzani, earning him first place in the magazine’s ‘Who is on Next?’ competition. Later that year, he positioned himself in ready-to-wear.

Expressing full creative freedom through his own brand, de Vincenzo’s womenswear collections are distinguished by their geometric patterns and surface treatments. Spring/summer 2016 was inspired by the designer’s trip to Japan, geographically contextualised by abstract cheery blossom prints and graphic red burning suns on tops. It was an unfurling of memories in the form of rainbow-ombré feathery coats, metallic pleated skirts and spellbinding patterns. He owes the experimental fabrications and three-dimensionality of his collections to his background working on handbags.

Energised by fashion’s ephemeral nature, he takes inspiration wherever he can, translating his curiosity for the world around him into fashion. It could be magic, or maybe he is simply channelling the reverie of his favourite film, Disney’s *Fantasia*.

**How did you end up at Fendi?**

I remember I graduated in July. Then, in October, the school called me; Fendi was looking for designers. Fendi said that if I wanted, I could work with them in leather goods. I wanted ready-to-wear, but I thought, “Let’s start with bags. [After] two to three years I can move.” What I didn’t know that was after three years there, you are forever branded a leather goods designer.

**Was that what made you decide to start your own label?**

Yes, that’s why, after 10 years of working at Fendi, I started the project; it was the only way to work on ready-to-wear. I said, “I want to be free to do geometry or flowers.” What I like is when, every six months, a brand changes its approach to fashion. Every collection is new and it’s a surprise.

**Do you like the quick turnover in the fashion industry?**

The fashion industry is very complicated now, because if you are a new designer, people need to find a way to define you. A big brand can change easily because it has the size and people know what it’s doing; everyone talks about its new collection. It’s easy for a young designer today to lose their identity. I remember when I started with the first collection, I showed many geometric and





technological effects. I tried to be romantic in the next collection, and people said, “Why didn’t you repeat what you did in your first collection?” So, what the fashion industry needs today is to repeat yourself to be recognisable. It takes time to [develop] a style.

***Tell me more about your creative process...***

I don’t use any mood boards. Every season, I used to travel and spend two weeks in the factories in Italy. When I come back home, in my hands is something different, then six months later I try to find harmony between the items. For example, if we talk about spring/summer it was a trip to Japan. It was the first time a trip gave me immediate inspiration and something that I wanted to translate.

***Do you draw at all?***

I like to draw very much; I am a good illustrator. It’s something that relaxes me. But every collection is different. Sometimes I draw a lot, and sometimes it is a book that has the words I was looking for. If I have time, I love to paint something not related to fashion. My dream is to work on a cartoon. I hope to have time, and to meet the right team, to work on a cartoon – you know, like a Disney one. I am sure that in the future I will find a way to be one of the creators of a cartoon.

***Do you already have a vision for the cartoon?***

Do you know *Fantasia* from Walt Disney, where objects become something else? In my mind, I have something like that. I find everything so inspiring. Sometimes I am thinking about a new collection and I am in front of an object, and I say, “Wow, it’s like a perfect skirt,” for the shape or for the colour. I would like to tell a story that talks about inspiration everywhere, and a world where everything can be something else.

***You know many inspirational women. Do you have a muse?***

I receive pictures through Instagram from real women who have bought a coat or skirt from my collection. It’s really interesting to observe reality and ask why she decided to wear my skirt with a jumper from another collection. Delfina Delettrez, a friend of mine, lives in Rome, so we spend a lot of time together. She is incredible, because she has a beautiful taste in fashion, and when she wears something from my collection it is always a new way to interpret it.

***Are you planning to expand accessories within your own line?***

Yes, accessories are the next step. In September, I started with the first collection of shoes and jewellery. In February, I presented my first bag, and it’s very important for me because my story comes from leather goods. A bag for Marco de Vincenzo is different to a bag from Fendi. It was important for me to create a shape that was recognisable. Accessories for me are the best way to define my woman.

***Can you tell me more about the accessories you have created for Fendi?***

With bags, the details are very important. It is a beautiful object, but it has to be functional. Many accessory designers have become creative directors of important brands, and I think that if you work a lot on bags you have the perfect sense of three-dimensionality and functionality. In the last 20 years, a bag [has become] the perfect desired object of the

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season, and leather goods are the most important business for many brands. Working on leather goods is to know what women want more than a dress, because a bag is for everybody.

***What have you worked on at Fendi?***

Fendi is magic for me, so, after 15 years, many bags were built. Eight years ago, I became the head designer of leather goods. It is like working with a family: you know everything about the process. When you work on a big brand, sometimes the idea is not your idea. Some bags are more close to me.

***Which Fendi bag do you feel closest to?***

Peekaboo was a beautiful moment for me. I started to feel frustrated, because I missed ready-to-wear, and when Fendi accepted to let me work on my own project I was happy and free. After two months, Peekaboo was born. It was a very important moment, because Peekaboo today is a bag that changes the story of Fendi. Of course, I wasn’t the only one to work on Peekaboo, but it was beautiful to be there, especially after the decision to create the Marco de Vincenzo line.

***It must be fun working with all the Bag Bugs...***

Bag Bugs is another beautiful moment, because we said, “OK, let’s try to be fun.” We needed to subtly find a way to make [fur] colourful and playful. It was an experiment, really. I remember we thought about little animals, but we thought that it wasn’t good to play with animals in real fur. So, if an animal becomes more a monster than an animal, what is the result? We worked on many different little objects. I remember talking with Silvia [Venturini Fendi, creative director of accessories], who was looking for something fun. She said, “We need to talk a new language in fur. I want to be more close to young people. I want to create an object that is close to a younger universe.” Sometimes you work a lot on something, focusing on the price, the perfect communication and the launch, but the object just doesn’t work. Sometimes the unexpected becomes a big success. In the case of Bag Bugs, we were simply playing. We play a lot at Fendi today.

***What’s next for Marco de Vincenzo?***

We are talking about the best way to open my third [Marco de Vincenzo] store. It’s a beautiful moment for me, like a dream sometimes. I am lucky, because I can express who I am every day.

All looks MARCO DE VINCENZO SS16  
Hair RYUTA SAIGA  
Make-up ISOBEL KENNEDY  
Models ESME HAM @ The Hive Management, LILLY @ The Squad