"CORPORATE MUSEUM AS A PILLAR FOR BRAND AUTHENTICITY IN LUXURY COMPANIES. THE CASE OF SALVATORE FERRAGAMO"

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ABSTRACT
Nowadays the relationship between art and fashion has become more and more recurrent. Frequently the companies operating in the luxury and fashion system try to build this combination in different ways. Among them, the corporate museum seems to play an important role in strengthening the brand and the company historical heritage. Actually the appreciation of the past and tradition - considered a hallmark of postmodernity - and the search for authenticity by consumers, have certainly contributed to the rise of such museums.

This paper will analyze the authenticity associated with the Salvatore Ferragamo brand, enhanced also by the company museum, which is perceived as a "tool of authentication" both inside (family and management) and outside the company (opinion leader and visitors).

Keywords
Brand authenticity, Corporate museum, Brand heritage, Luxury brand.

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INTRODUCTION
The concept of luxury has been defined within the scope of socio-psychology as a result of its connection to culture, state of being and lifestyle, whether it is personal or collective.

Authenticity is important for luxury brands considering that a wealthy brand history with a strong identity (Balmer, 2011b; Kapferer, Bastien, 2009) and heritage (Lane, 1993; Brown, 2001) has to be known in-depth in order to become an effective legitimizing agent of authentication (Brown et al., 2003; Beverland, Farrelly, 2009). Increasingly marketers are turning to brand histories and historical associations as sources of market value (Penaloza, 2000) and a 'cultural marker of legitimacy and authenticity' (Brown et al., 2003): authenticity is often a core component of successful brands because it is part of a unique brand identity (Kapferer, 2001). The deliberate creation and management of authenticity presents several difficulties for brand managers. Creating authenticity involves a number of paradoxes because brands must remain true to an authentic core while remaining relevant (Aaker, 2011) and desirable (Keller, 2003). Additionally, consumers are also seeking out authentic brands (Gilmore, Pine, 2007) and experiences (Thompson, Tambyah, 1999). This is why some authors

(Brown et al., 2003: 21) state that "the search for authenticity" is "one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing".

In order to strengthen its authenticity, a brand can use different tools, among which the corporate museum play an important role. Corporate museums (Danilov, 1991) have been studied regarding their ability to enhance the heritage (Lane, 1993) and the tradition of the brand (Balmer, 2011a; Leigh et al. 2006), to celebrate the brand (Hede, Thyne, 2010; Lehman, Byrom, 2007) and to increase the value of the organization behind it (McLean, 1995).

The aim of this research is to explore the capabilities of a corporate museum (Brydon, 1998; Nissley, Casey, 2002) in transferring brand identity and consistent brand associations. Indeed, considering the role, the position, the experience the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum offers its customers and visitors as well as the investment that it requires, we found it very interesting to investigate the reasons and the modes to develop and support brand authenticity by this important strategic tool (Griffiths, 1999).
The main findings of our research highlight the consistency of brand identity thought by the family

and management and the authenticity as perceived by the customer; furthermore we want to analyze the role of the Corporate Museum as a vehicle of brand authenticity, able to enrich the Salvatore Ferragamo brand image by the storytelling and the visiting experience (Carù, Cova 2003).

AUTHENTICITY

The word "authentic" comes from the Greek word *authentikós* (OED 1989, 1996), meaning: *genuine, entitled to acceptance or belief as being reliable, entitled to acceptance or belief, as being in accordance with fact, or as stating fact; reliable, trustworthy, of established credit*. Untill now the term authenticity remains problematic and "has grown ambiguous from varied usages and contexts" (Golomb 1995:7), as many authors stated (Holt 1997, Postrel 2003).
The literature posits that authenticity can be inherent in an object, which comes from the relation between an object and/or a historical period, an organization form, nature, or being given to an object by marketers and consumers. Researchers explain authenticity as original and staged (MacCannell 1973), iconic, indexical, and hypothetical (Grayson, Martinec 2004), self-referential hyperauthenticity (Rose, Wood 2005), existential (Wang 1999), literal or objective (Beverland et al., 2008), sincere (Beverland 2006), approximate and moral (Leigh et al., 2006), and emergent (Cohen 1988). Differences also emerge as to the nature of the objects (or cues) that can convey authenticity. Consumers actively seek authenticity to find meaning in their lives, and prefer brands and experiences that reinforce their desired identity (or identities) in line with associated personal goals (Cova, 2003). Arnould and Price (2000) establish that the loss of traditional sources of meaning and self-identity associated with postmodern market characteristics have encouraged consumers to become active and adept in appropriating authenticity. Often described in terms of a "search" or "quest," the desire for authenticity is also seen as a response to standardization and homogenization in the marketplace (Thompson et al., 2006).
The word "authentic" is often used to describe something that is thought not to be a copy or an imitation (Grayson, Martinec, 2004); an object is authentic when it is believed to be "the original" or "the real thing", promoting "indexical authenticity" even by a sincere spatiotemporal connection with something else. When the same word is used to describe something whose physical manifestation resembles something that is indexically authentic, it usually refers to "authentic reproduction" (Peterson, 1997), thereby promoting "iconic authenticity".
Three brand attributes are relevant for consumer judgments of authenticity (Beverland et al., 2010): quality leadership, heritage and sincerity; authenticity presents different form: pure or literal, approximate, and moral (Beverland et al., 2008). According to Wang (2009), authenticity is in the eyes of the beholder and influenced by one's own beliefs, expectations and stereotyped images. Significantly, despite the multiplicity of terms and interpretations applied to authenticity, ultimately what is consistent across the literature is that authenticity encapsulates what is genuine, real, and/or true. And, as others have highlighted, consumers do not find authenticity in what is fake but rather are able to find elements of what is genuine, real, or true through experiences in which consumers immerse themselves (Gilmore, Pine, 2007) or objects that others may deem to be altogether unreal or false (Rose, Wood, 2005).

CORPORATE MUSEUMS AND AUTHENTICITY

The museums of today serve increasingly complex institutional missions and diverse audiences through their programs (Suarez, Tsutui 2004). This approach can be succinctly expressed in the code of ethics developed by the American Museum Association (AAM) which states that the today's museum - committed in service to the public –in its mission "include collecting and preserving as well as exhibiting and educating with materials not only owned but also borrowed and fabricated for these ends" (AMM 2006: code of ethics, paragraph1).
Until the seventies, the underlying premise of the core museum ideology was collection care and preservation (Brandon, Wilson 2005), while recently an ideological shift has taken place transforming the museum's focus from being "product driven" to being "visitor driven". The shift for each museum is not homogeneous because "all museums are products of their particular cultural and historical experiences" (MacDonald, Alsford 1995:24). In this sense, authenticity has been considered to be at the heart of museum's values (Counts, 2009), and while there has been some discussions as to whether museums ever really present the authentic (Bal, 1996), authenticity has been considered a measure of a museum's distinctiveness (Baudrillard, 1983). Even though today's museums act in a context of reduced funding and increased competition (Rentschler, Gilmore, 2002), they are challenged with the task of sourcing, preserving, and presenting the authentic.
Prentice (2001) noted that "imaginings" are an important part of the museum visitor experience, and while he viewed the visitor experience as being consumer defined (Waller and Lea, 1999), he concluded that it is the museum management's role to

shape how authenticity is interpreted and construed by visitors. That's why authenticity occupies a central theme in the midst of meaning attributions, and curators and museum management play a significant role in positioning this theme within the contemporary dynamics. Distinguished features such as authenticity, selectivity, and ownership have become the marketing emblems of museum repositories, and among these authenticity serves as an important criterion for allocating museum's resources.

CONTEXT, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The context

Our research focuses on Salvatore Ferragamo, one of the most important Italian players in the fashion and luxury system, a leader in the national market and a well-known brand worldwide. The company was founded in Florence, the Italian city perceived as an "Open-air Museum" because of its artistic and cultural magnificence appreciated by people all over the world. Based on the exceptional creativity of his founder, well recognized in the world (Fig. 1), Ferragamo focuses on the creation, manufacture and sale of footwear, leather goods, clothing, silk products, other accessories and perfumes for men and women (developed and distributed through its subsidiary Ferragamo Parfums), all "Made in Italy". The Group's products are distinguished by the unique and exclusive design obtained combining style, creativity and innovation with the quality and craftsmanship typical of Italian-made goods The story of the brand is the story of a family, a legend continued by the wife of the founder (who died in 1960) and by his six sons who have been able to develop the brand further, turning it into a real luxury empire. The company was listed on the Milan Stock Exchange in 2011 and immediately became one of the best performers.

In 1995 the company opened the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, a corporate museum focusing principally on the history of the Ferragamo company and the life of its founder (Fig. 2 and 3). At the time of this research, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum pays homage to Marilyn Monroe with a major exhibition dedicated to her, a half century after her death.

FIG. 1 - SALVATORE FERRAGAMO WITH CHRISTIAN DIOR RECEIVING THE NEIMAN MARCUS AWARD, "THE OSCAR OF FASHION", IN 1947

FIG. 2 - PALAZZO SPINI FERONI, COMPANY HEADQUARTERS AND HOME TO THE SALVATORE FERRAGAMO MUSEUM IN FLORENCE

FIG. 3 - THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE SALVATORE FERRAGAMO MUSEUM IN FLORENCE CHOSEN BY THE FAMILY

THE OBJECTIVES

This paper analyzes the role of the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum in enhancing the Salvatore Ferragamo brand identity and its capability to convey authenticity and support the brand evolution.
The aim is to confirm the consistency between the brand identity as guarded by the family and the management, and the customers' perception with a focus on brand authenticity. Furthermore, we investigated on the role and the impact of the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum on strengthening and transmitting the brand authenticity inside and outside the company and its relevance as an important tool of authentication in supporting the brand, even in the future.

METHODOLOGY

The literature recommends qualitative methods (Russell W.B., 2008) when studying a social phenomenon, such as authenticity; "...the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, Bell, 2007: 402).

The first phase of the study was based on qualitative research focused on different actors who directly contribute to the Salvatore Ferragamo brand identity (Annex 1).

This phase included 18 in-depth semi-structured interviews (McCracken, Grants, 1988), indirect qualitative research procedures by projective techniques as ZMET (Zaltman, Higie, 1993) and associative tests designed to investigate the cognitive structures of each informant and to pinpoint the meaning given to authenticity and inauthenticity through the variation of the construct across three dimensions: brand, product and experience.

The second phase of the study was focused on the visitors of the Salvatore Ferragamo museum. Before the visit, qualitative questionnaires were used to investigate the relevance of authenticity and its meaning for the informants, the Salvatore Ferragamo brand knowledge and its authenticity and the expected value of the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum in terms of contents and message. After the visit, an introspective analysis (Gould S.J., 2012) double-checked with qualitative questionnaires helped us to discover the emotions and feelings associated with authenticity, the Salvatore Ferragamo brand and their experience in the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum (Carù, Cova, 2008), the effective role of the museum in promoting the brand authenticity. The sample was made up of 25 visitors (Annex 2); at present, we still have to complete the data collection.

The data analysis was based on the introspections and interviews but also come from data triangulation in order to reliably mix and analyze the various in-depth answers given from the same informant in different contexts and by means of different techniques.

Finally, we also analyzed publications, articles, videography and photography linked to the Salvatore Ferragamo brand and the autobiography of the founder.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: A) THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SALVATORE FERRAGAMO BRAND

In this part of the paper we will present the main themes that arise from the perception of authenticity of the Salvatore Ferragamo brand by the family, the management and the visitors.

The founder
The authenticity proves the genius of the founder Salvatore Ferragamo, driven by a deep vocation and dedication from a young age. This means the material dimension of the product to reach a deeper and more moral dimension that we can define as authentic intention, which still distinguishes the company and who runs it today.

"The company today stems from the determination, sacrifice, will and passion of the founder. Aspects carried out by Wanda who has been in the company every day for 53 years. The founder has built

everything from scratch with his own stubbornness and dedication." *(Michele Norsa)*

"What is fascinating is the genius of the founder. He was a forerunner of fashion and a person who has been able to leverage his passion and turn it into a successful business." *(Stefania)*

"Salvatore Ferragamo is an authentic brand because it comes from the story, from the study and the genius of its founder. This still makes the products of the founder extremely topical and authentic." *(Sara)*

The artisan and artistic town: Florence
Florence - the Italian "Open-air Museum", esteemed by everyone all over the world for its artistic and cultural magnificence - plays a relevant role in promoting brand associations such as art, Italian culture and lifestyle, craftsmanship, skilled labor and savoir-faire, the finest raw material and leather, all regarding the country of origin. The strong link between the company and the territory reinforces the brand heritage and ensures a strong commitment in terms of Made in Italy and Italian craftsmanship that deeply characterize Salvatore Ferragamo's luxury offering. Representing the second driver, Florence promotes and reinforces the brand authenticity as it is a relevant element of the brand heritage.

"The founder chose Florence for raw materials and skilled labor." *(Benoit De Crane)*

"The founder chose Florence because it is the cradle of Italian culture and lifestyle which inspired him and enhanced his knowledge." *(Stefania Ricci)*
"Florence is the expression of history, tradition and elegance." *(Caterina)*

Palazzo Spini Feroni: sacrifice and magnificence
Palazzo Spini Feroni (XIII century) as the company's headquarters and an expression of art itself, is a brand element that shows and tells the history and the values behind the Salvatore Ferragamo brand. It also represents a tool of indexical authenticity offering a perceived connection with the past. People outside the company feel transported to the context to which the location is authentically linked and thus they feel more connected with the context and the brand itself, dreaming of the history of the company. Historical sites market this direct connection as an opportunity to travel back into the past and to participate in a "time travel".

"Palazzo Feroni represents the will, the passion and the efforts of my father." *(Ferruccio Ferragamo)*

"Palazzo Feroni promotes sensory involvement and supports the immersion in the experience even before entering the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, stimulating brand associations of elegance and class." *(Cristina B.)*

"Palazzo Feroni takes you on a journey, you immediately feel in another world as soon as you walk in." *(Tiziana)*

The Ferragamo family: continuity of values and vocation
The enthusiasm of the founder lives nowadays in the family at the head of the company, thereby keeping his values alive. The family in the company governance nowadays is seen as the guardian of the brand authenticity. The generational continuity strengthens the brand identity and the corporate image.

"The family is the guardian of codes and brand values and presides over the forms and expressions in which the brand is manifested." *(Massimiliano Giornetti)*

"The family is seen as the brand guardian." *(Michele Norsa)*

"Salvatore Ferragamo is an authentic brand because it is patronymic and still managed by the family despite the financial quotation. The family ensures continuity of tradition and brand values ." *(Veronica)*

Salvatore Ferragamo is an authentic brand for its tradition of elegance and luxury, but mostly because it still remains tied to the family." (*Caterina)*

Craftsmanship, tradition and Made in Italy
The use of noble materials and traditional production methods even today ensures the highest standards of quality and product excellence not only by promoting a natural authenticity, but also by showing an active commitment to the study and search of comfort and by defending the craftsmanship and the Made in Italy of the products, which even increases costs and sacrificing profits. The tradition, the link with a glorious past, the history and the original brand values enhance and convey the brand heritage.

"I believe that Salvatore Ferragamo is undoubtedly the most authentic brand among the biggest players in the fashion industry. This is due to products strictly linked to the territory, craftsmanship and a 100% Italian production. Undoubtedly the presence of the family and the descendants of the founder contribute authenticity to the brand." (*Lorenzo)*

"Salvatore Ferragamo is an authentic brand because of not only history and tradition but also Made in Italy with high quality raw materials and skilled labor." *(Simona R.)*

"The Salvatore Ferragamo brand is not based on marketing tactics but on truthfulness, craftsmanship and know-how. It does not arise from something planned at the table for mere commercial purposes and profit but by vocation and skill." *(Sofia Ciucchi)*

Art and handcraft
The deep passion of the founder for art and creation drove the opinion leaders to define him as an *"artifex"* emphasizing his extraordinary intuition and his artistic and handcrafted work. The brand revokes the passionate artisan using the finest materials and manual labour to mix craftsmanship and art in a unique objet d'art preserving one of the attributes on which the customers base their opinion about the brand authenticity.

"Salvatore Ferragamo is the genius of Italian culture, he created works of art as an artifex. He was passionate about research, drawing inspiration from different eras and places...The founder was true because of his mind-set and his constant reflection and curiosity." *(Sergio Risaliti)*

"The founder was an artist and not just a shoemaker. He had intuition and an extraordinary talent in artistic craftsmanship." (*Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti)*

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: B) THE ROLE OF THE CORPORATE MUSEUM ON THE BRAND AUTHENTICITY

The living memory
The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, managed by a director who directly reports to the family, is a repository of memory and tells the myth behind the brand and joins the values and the passion of the founder who represent the brand essence and its moral authenticity.

"The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum is the historical memory of who was the founder and what he has done. It is an instrument of communication internally (stimulus for innovation and improvement) and externally (presentation of the creative work of the founder)." *(Ferruccio Ferragamo)*

"The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum collects the DNA of the brand and its value, it tells the myth still present in our company unlike our competitors." *(Stefania Ricci)*

"The museum is the guardian of the genius of the founder. It serves to preserve the brand roots and let the world remember, the fans know and the designers create." *(Sara)*

Art joins fashion
The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum communicates the link between brand and art thanks to the temporary exhibitions it hosts periodically and the contents it exposes. The museum itself becomes a witness and demonstration of how the fashion product becomes an extraordinary work of art and cultural expression of a period and a territory, as well as of the interest of the company in safeguarding the Italian artistic heritage.

"The Salvatore Ferragamo commitment to art is very strong. The next step is surely to preserve and dedicate our attention to classical Italian art. We are not a company that is associated with contemporary art, this is not our vocation." *(Michele Norsa)*

"I think it is the only museum in Florence that can prove how it is possible to keep art and fashion together extraordinarily." *(Cristina)*
"The Museum presents a perfect combination of culture and art in fashion." *(Patrizia)*

A dive into an aesthetic experience
Living an educational experience, the visitors increase their brand knowledge thanks to new positive associations related to the brand's heritage.

"Thanks to the explanation of the audio guide, I am now aware of elements of the story of the founder that I absolutely ignored, such as the invention of the wedge or the heel cork. I was pleasantly surprised by that, it was very interesting to connect the brand to innovation and know-how that I did not think it had." *(Leonardo)*

"I did not know that the master Ferragamo had taken courses in anatomy to study the movements of the foot. In my mind, that guarantees authenticity." *(Antonella)*

"The museum enhanced my esteem of the brand as a symbol of Made in Italy. Undoubtedly I felt grateful for what Salvatore Ferragamo and the family have done to the Italian economy and the image of Florence all over the world." *(Patrizia)*

The visitors' perception highlights on the brand authenticity as a result of product attributes such as uniqueness, manufacturing excellence, originality and craftsmanship. These elements characterize the work of the founder and rule the relationship between the brand and the visitors.

"In the Museum you feel as if you are surrounded by authentic objects as they are original, the result of the research, handcrafted and locally made artworks. Everything seemed to me full of authenticity: original

and unique models made for famous people, the history of the founder told by his wife in a video, the manufacturing, the embroidery handmade near Florence. Everything revealed the persistence of authenticity in this brand." *(Tiziana)*

"The Museum conveys the Salvatore Ferragamo brand authenticity: inventive, experimental shapes and materials, attention to details, strong stylistic identity, uniqueness of each product." *(Sonia)*

"The visit has changed the image I had regarding the brand, restoring the authenticity it deserves." *(Rosita)*

Furthermore, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum conveys the brand authenticity through the experience: it promotes a reintegration with the past and a spatiotemporal connection with a time and a culture still present in the mind of visitors.

""Once upon a time..", that was my first impression upon entering the museum. " *(Silvia* O.B.)

"I have to admit that I felt catapulted into another time zone..I felt as if I was in a time machine, due to the atmosphere and the past period related to the shoes made by the founder. Additionally, the part dedicated to Marilyn Monroe was very successful in making me feel a bit "Marilyn". The visit was a journey." (*Cristina)*

Lights and shadows of the temporary exhibitions
The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum involves the visitors immersing them in an aesthetic experience by means of which the museum increases the degree of authenticity. Nevertheless, some inputs contaminate the context and authenticity itself. On the one hand, this contrasts with the flow experience; on the other it shows the desire of customers for pure authenticity. The current Marilyn Monroe exhibition, through which the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum pays homage to the actress, astonishes the visitors for its extraordinary content and the intimate tale of the life of one of the most important Hollywood stars. Nevertheless, the excessive focus on the temporary exhibition does not allow the museum to be effectively used as a tool of authentication to accurately show and communicate the brand's heritage.

"The exhibition of Marilyn Monroe was interesting and engaging but it has no significance for the brand." *(Silvia C.)*

"As I finished listening to the audio guide I wondered if that was it. I saw so much of Marilyn Monroe but very little regarding Salvatore Ferragamo. I would have liked a company museum not a museum so related to the life of Marilyn Monroe." *(Cristina)*

"I had the impression I was in the museum of Marilyn Monroe sponsored by Salvatore Ferragamo, rather than in an actual museum related to the Florentine brand. I was looking forward to learning more about the brand by visiting the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum such as production methods and materials that are the major elements for the brand authenticity. Unfortunately, once walked out I could only remember a few things." *(Leonardo)*

The choice of the exhibition object/subject keeps the potential young target away from positive associations, undermining the brand desirability.

"I discovered that the creations of the founder were loved by one of the most beautiful and fascinating women of all time and this confirms that anyway Salvatore Ferragamo is a classic brand and suitable for mature women and those of advanced years. I walked into the museum with the idea that for me the Salvatore Ferragamo brand is not authentic and after the visit I did not change my mind. I did not find anything inside the museum that convinced me about the brand authenticity." *(Cristina)*

The past, the present and the future
Some people underline the focus on the past of the Museum and the need to create a bridge with the present:

"The Museum has to go beyond the story of what the founder has created and highlight not always the same aspects but the style and the production processes that continue today. The museum should be not only a showcase for the past but also expose what was done after the death of the founder, communicating the brand. This could also support the brand evolution in the future." *(Stefano Salvatici)*

"The brand heritage should support the brand evolution. It should be shown in a better way because it could be a relevant tool for the future." *(Benoit De Crane)*

"The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum tells the story of the founder and his personality, but communicates a style and a brand image far removed from what it is today. It seems there are two different worlds. The museum should explain the timeless and unchanged processes and not only the products of the founder." *(Massimiliano Giornetti)*

"The real value of the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum derives from the new things the company does." *(Sofia Ciucchi)*

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The authentic intention and the genius of the founder are expressed by his deep vocation and dedication to art and fashion as the result of handcrafted work. As one of the major drivers for the brand authenticity, the original and exceptional authenticity of the founder makes the visitors' perceptions consistent with the brand identity. The diligence and the values of the founder are still present in the family at the head of the company, strongly united by a common passion and an inherited vocation, who are the guardian of the brand authenticity. The strong commitment of the company in terms of 100% Made in Italy and Italian craftsmanship shows its link with the territory and the natural authenticity the family and the current management tend to preserve rigorously.
The analysis of the visitors' mindset and perception, highlights on the brand authenticity and how much it rests on product attributes such as quality, use of noble materials, manufacturing excellence, originality, craftsmanship, timelessness. These elements not only characterize the work of the founder, but are perceived as present in the Salvatore Ferragamo brand DNA.

According to the modernist approach that promotes authenticity as a characteristic of an object, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum contributes in inspiring the perception of authenticity regarding the products it shows. Additionally, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum promotes the brand authenticity by the experience it offers as a connector to the past. It emerges that the legal ownership of corporate brands such as Salvatore Ferragamo resides with organizations, emotional ownership (and thereby its real value) is owned by customers, employees and other stakeholder groups. Indeed, the emotive experience the museum offers by the stimulation of imagination, the magic and the atmosphere that captivate the visitors, promotes an intra-personal existential authenticity with feelings of surprise, wonder and charm. Therefore, authenticity is not only a detached aspect related to the objects but it has to become a strong element of interconnection and intimate relationship between the brand and the visitors, supporting the brand evolution even in the future.

The idea to create a link between the brand Salvatore Ferragamo and the art is coherent with the story of the founder and the company. Furthermore, the way the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum is run today shows some gaps in this perspective; some aspects contaminate the context and the authenticity communicated inside. Indeed, the temporary exhibitions should change periodically to attract new visitors but they should always keep a focus on the brand in order to strengthen its sources of value and convey its heritage, thereby drawing attention to the brand authenticity as one of the key customer values.
The current excessive focus on the temporary exhibition that visitors perceived far from the brand distract attention from the permanent show and do not allow the brand heritage to be accurately communicated. Furthermore, the exhibitions should be designed considering the target audience that the brand aims to strategically reach. The knowledge and the significance of the theme in terms of value generated for the brand should always be analyzed, taking into account that the visitors' perception will be transferred to the brand itself.
Thanks to the temporary exhibitions, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum enlarges the experience it offers innovating the contents related to its "temporary soul" and attracting new visitors. At the same time, the museum should deepen the experience for brand loyal customers innovating the contents and the story it tells about the brand and always transmitting its essence and authenticity.

The museum should manage both temporary arts exhibitions and the permanent exhibition looking for a fit between them. The travelling exhibitions would help the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum act not just locally but globally and strengthen the consumer's perceptions worldwide, regarding brand authenticity. According to the visitors, a corporate museum acts as an authentication tool when it exposes not only the past brand offering, even partially, but also the myth, the family, the tradition and craftsmanship in the remained unchanged over the years production methods and in the use of noble materials, the link with the territory, the development and the changes to the offer, explaining the company evolution and the brand management over the time. The Corporate museum should be used as a connecting lead and a bridge between the brand, the company and the market improving the brand authenticity, not merely incubating art and showing it to the market.
In branding terms, importance is not only given to the past and present, but also to the perspective future. Corporate heritage brands are simultaneously concerned not only with the present, but also with reflections, and, more importantly, directions. There is a requirement to marry brand archaeology (a concern with a brand's provenience and historic attractiveness) with brand strategy (marshalling the brand heritage in order to maintain its brand saliency and competitive advantage for the future). The Salvatore Ferragamo Museum should be a value generator supporting the company in the future in a synergistic way and highlighting the brand's evolution in respect to its essence. In order to enhance and convey the brand's

authenticity, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum should not only show some objects of the past in the permanent exhibition, but should also tell a story based on the brand heritage and the brand essence.

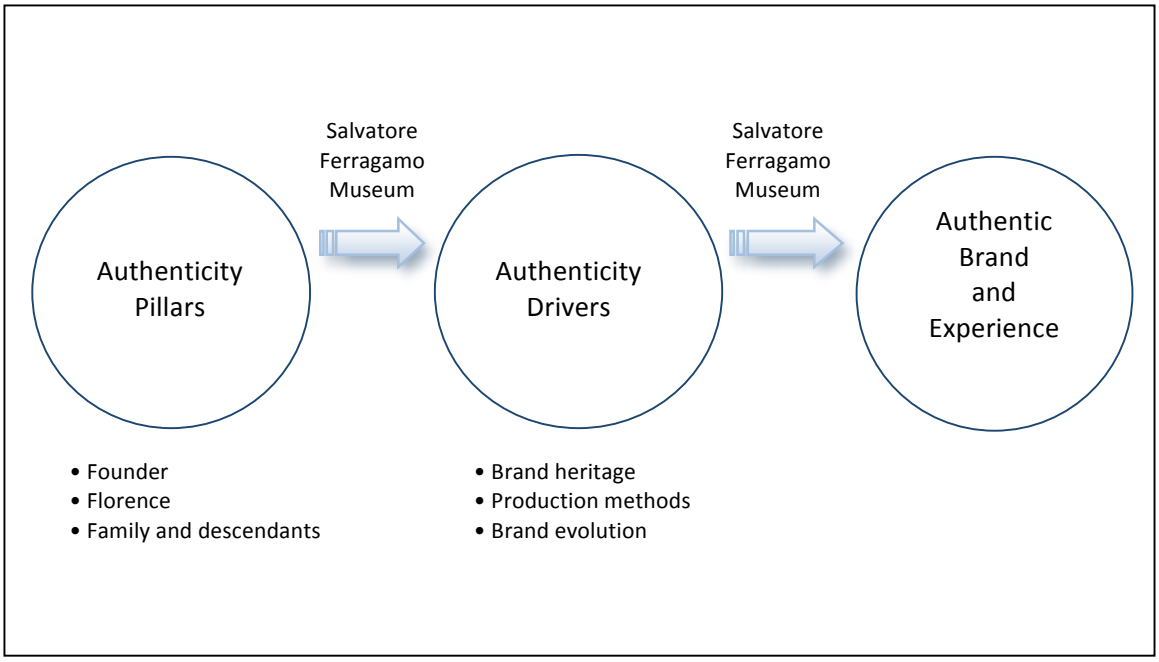
CONCLUSIONS

The findings of our research may be interesting for management of the company's museums in general. The role of the museum may support and reinforce the brand authenticity; moreover there are some fundamental rules to follow in this perspective as the case of Salvatore Ferragamo shows.

First, the museum has to consider not only products but also stories and practices that beyond to the company identity: these are essential pillars to nurture the authenticity of the brand.
The example of Salvatore Ferragamo Museum is relevant: at present it provides the visitors with a promise that is the journey to discover the brand, its values and the entire Salvatore Ferragamo universe. It supports the company in the present and legitimizes its future evolution in accordance with the brand's roots and heritage. Moreover, by showing a link between the company's past and present and the brand's evolution, the museum should promote the continuity and consistency of the company and express the authenticity as a relevant and distinctive characteristic still present in the offering system (Beverland et al., 2010).

The museum communicates a message of original authenticity to the visitors (Gilmore, Pine, 2007). According to the visitors, for acting as a tool for brand authenticity, the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum should expose not just the creations of the founder but highlight and tell the 100% Made in Italy craftsmanship, the tradition and the uniqueness that lie behind the products, accompanying the visitors in a memorable experience by which showing the evolution of the brand and the company over the years. Brand heritage, unchanged production methods underlining tradition and craftsmanship, and evolution are the drivers for supporting the authentic brand and experience by the Corporate museum. The Corporate museum can itself become a pillar for the brand: it can tie in a synergistic connection between the past (brand heritage) and the present (global luxury brand), showing the perfect combination of dynamism (brand evolution) and invariance (craftsmanship and traditional production methods). Therefore, the Corporate museum is nourished by brand authenticity and, at the same tome, feeds it through the story it tells and the experience it gives to the visitors (Fig. 4).

FIG. 4 – PILLARS AND DRIVERS FOR AUTHENTICITY



Second, companies have to pay attention to the integrity of the message expressed by the museum: the coherence of the different components of the museum has to be managed very carefully.

Considering Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, it is a cultural museum. It demonstrates the interest and the strong commitment of the company to preserving art and valuing its relationship with fashion as a cultural expression. Moreover, the choices concerning the relationship with the art should keep a focus on the brand in order to strengthen its sources of value and convey its heritage, thereby drawing attention to the brand authenticity as one of the key values. If the temporary exhibitions should change periodically to attract new visitors but they should always keep a focus on the brand in order to strengthen its sources of value and convey its heritage drawing attention to the brand authenticity as one of the key values of the brand.

This research is exploratory and it is still ongoing. However it lends itself to be the subject of further studies on a larger scale. Some interesting opportunities of new development can be related to the role of corporate museums on the perception of the brand authenticity for other companies operating in the fashion industry. Further research could also be extended to the relationship between brand, corporate museum and art: a deeper understanding of the drivers that can influence the brand authenticity may be useful for companies that are interested in their heritage valorization.

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ANNEX 1

THE INFORMANTS: FAMILY, MANAGEMENT AND OPINION LEADERS

NAME	JOB POSITION	INFORMANTS GROUP
Diego Paternò Castello di San Giuliano	Board of Directors member of Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A.	Family
Ferruccio Ferragamo	Chairman	Family
James Ferragamo	Leather goods Director	Family
Leonardo Ferragamo	Board of Directors member of Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. and CEO of Palazzo Feroni holding company	Family
Wanda Miletti Ferragamo	Honorary Chairman of Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. and Chairman of Salvatore Ferragamo Foundation	Family
Andrea Tremolada	Corporate Communication Director	Management
Benoit De Crane	Corporate Retail Marketing Manager	Management
Massimiliano Giornetti	Creative Director	Management
Michele Norsa	CEO	Management
Sofia Ciucchi	Deputy General Manager	Management
Stefania Ricci	Director of the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum and of the Salvatore Ferragamo Foundation	Management
Stefano Salvatici	Ferragamo's Creations Director	Management
Veronica Tonini	Chairman office Director	Management

SESSION B2
BRANDING

Strategic Marketing

NAME	JOB POSITION	INFORMANTS GROUP
Elio Di Franco	Architect	Opinion Leader
Giulio Bonsanti	Ministery of Cultural Heritage, President of Firenze Mostre S.p.A	Opinion Leader
Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti	Stibbert Museum Director	Opinion Leader
Lapo Cianchi	Communication and Events Director at Pitti Immagine	Opinion Leader
Sergio Risaliti	Art Critic and Salvatore Ferragamo Museum exhibitions Curator	Opinion Leader

ANNEX 2
THE INFORMANTS: VISITORS

NAME	AGE	EDUCATION	JOB
Antonella	47	Diploma in Internal Design	Employer
Ashya	26	Degree in Teology	Graphic Designer
Caterina	36	Degree in Architecture	Architect
Cristina B.	21	Diploma of college of science	Undergraduate student
Cristina C.	38	Conservatory	Teacher and musician
Cristina S.	42	Secondary school diploma with specialisation in teacher training	Employer in Fashion agency
Elisa	33	Degree in Economics	Employer
Jill	28	Master in Traslation	English Teacher
Leonardo	24	Bachelor's Degree in Economics	Graduate student in Management
Lorenzo	38	Degree in Economics	Employerin Import/Export company
Marina	54	Degree in Law	Lawyer
Nicola	39	Degree in Economics	Bank Consultant
Patrizia	61	Degree in Pedagogy	Teacher
Rosangela	50	secondary school diploma with specialisation in teacher training	Housewife
Rosita	46	Diploma in Accounting	Public employer
Sara	38	Degree in Economics	Accountant
Silvia C.	40	Diploma in Turism	Employer in a Sportswear Company
Silvia D.P.	33	Degree in Law	Employer in home-building indistry
Silvia O.B.	45	Diploma of college of science	Events and PR
Simona	38	Degree in Economics	Employer
Sonia	38	School of Fine Arts	Employer in a Communication Agency
Stefania	38	Diploma of foreign languages high school	Employer
Tiziana	54	Degree in Foreign Languages	Housewife
Veronica	38	Degree in Economics	Consultant
Vilma	52	Degree in Political Science	Freelance Professional