

02.
Plan C
Milan

In 2016, when Consuelo Castiglioni and her family exited Marni (the brand she founded in 1994 and sold to Renzo Rosso's OTB holding company), a significant voice for thoughtfully eccentric, feminist-friendly fashion vanished from Milan. Yet some see hope in a new brand with a fair bit of shared DNA. Unwilling to permanently depart fashion, the Castiglioni family turned to plan B – or in their case, Plan C, as Carolina, the 37-year-old daughter of Consuelo, has christened the womenswear label she has created with her father and brother. (Her mother is enjoying a hiatus.) The first collection will hit shops this spring.

“It wasn't hard to launch,” says Carolina Castiglioni nonchalantly, reclining in a pair of giant pink trousers from Plan C's debut line. “We've already done this kind of project as a family but this time it has a smaller, more human dimension to it.” Fabric suppliers and clothing manufacturers (mostly Italian and Japanese), together with an interested sales network, were all readily available thanks to their Marni fame.

The new brand, however, is a more modest affair. At its first presentation in September, Plan C gained 100 stockists, and Castiglioni intends to keep its retail presence mostly limited to those shops. Unlike Marni – a big house raking in nearly €200m annually – Plan C has just a narrow collection of women's daywear, and a handful of accessories. Going forward, the family plans to host twice-yearly showroom presentations of new collections – eschewing elaborate runway shows, as well as the “infinite, non-stop collections” of Marni, as Castiglioni describes it, where she worked for 13 years in the commercial and then retail arm, before designing the children's collection along with various special projects.

Inside a '60s palazzo in the centre of Milan, the brand's small team works in a colourful apartment-style showroom. The space was previously the atelier of Castiglioni's great grandfather, whose fur company became Marni in the hands of Consuelo.

Today, Castiglioni's own flea market furniture – the mid-century designs sometimes spruced up



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with a bright wallpaper tabletop or furry upholstery – mirrors the contrasts and quirks of the clothing. Cappuccino-coloured vinyl curtains match a glossy trench hanging on the metal racks. Her designs are distinctive – that Marni idiosyncrasy shines through in extreme sequins, oversized and sculptural silhouettes, clashing colours, and fabrics from Japan and Italy that are memorable to the touch: crispy cotton, thickly coated canvas, papery double-face lambskin, stiff organza.

There's Marni's signature anti-bourgeois clash of masculine and feminine, as Castiglioni pairs



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menswear button-downs and sporty K-Way-style jackets with long dresses or mini-skirts – a language the designer says will remain, even as she develops the brand. “Everything's intuitive, everything's according to my own taste,” she explains, clutching a black pouch imprinted with a scrawly drawing by her four-year-old daughter. (The family legacy of design will continue, it seems.) “The Marni aesthetic is present because I spent so many years there. Maybe I have the same influences as my mother because I've always lived inside her world, but we're different ages and we're two different people.”

The ingredients are similar, but the look belongs to Carolina, as she proves when she pulls together her own outfit: a billowing, off-kilter ensemble. She combines those pink trousers with a voluminous sweatshirt and two layers of shirt collars poking out at the neck. The pedigree in Plan C is evident: Carolina is recasting the Castiglioni dynasty in her own image. — LR