

AN/ARCHIVE EVENT TWO: blue r/evolution

A Revolutionary Narrative of Denim as an Agent of Social Change

From January 14 to February 15 in Florence

Polimoda unveils **AN/ARCHIVE EVENT TWO: blue r/evolution** at **Pitti Uomo 107**, a groundbreaking exhibition project exploring the cultural, social, and anthropological evolution of denim and the color blue. Open to the public from January 14 to February 15, 2025, at the Polimoda Manifattura Campus in Florence, this edition investigates the transformative power of workwear and denim, weaving together historical memory, artistic innovation and future vision.

Indigo blue, more than just a color, holds profound symbolic and cultural meaning. Historically associated with exclusivity and spirituality, it evolved into the defining hue of workers, communities, and social movements. Indigo embodies the intersection of opposites—aristocracy and labor, conformity and rebellion, tradition and innovation—emerging as a universal marker of personal and collective identity.

A Multidisciplinary Narrative

blue r/evolution is more than an exhibition: it is a cultural dialogue. By combining historical archives, artistic installations, photography, and garment displays, the event challenges viewers to reflect on the relationship between clothing, personal identity, and the societal transformations of our time.

blue r/evolution's exhibition pathway celebrates **the cultural evolution of blue and denim**: from a symbol of the working class to a means of expression for youth subcultures and ultimately to its status as an icon of global fashion. From punk movements to hip-hop, from counterculture to global trends, denim has been reinterpreted as a language of rebellion, innovation, and identity, becoming a cornerstone of contemporary fashion.

*"In the complex interplay between fashion and sociology, few garments tell a story as multifaceted as denim. **blue r/evolution** isn't just an exhibition about clothing—it's a deep dive into how a single piece of fabric can reflect, challenge, and redefine social narratives. Denim embodies a living paradox: simultaneously elite and accessible, traditional yet revolutionary, local and global. Its continuous evolution stands as a testament to the fluid boundaries of our society. Every thread, every shade of indigo, carries a powerful message: clothing is never just clothing. It's a mirror, a manifesto, a revolution,"* explains **Massimiliano Giornetti**, Director of Polimoda and curator of the exhibition.

Highlights of the Exhibition

Roy Roger's Archive: 150 Years of Denim and Workwear

From the private archive of **Roy Roger's** comes a selection of work garments that trace 150 years of denim history. Shades of blue, rips, stains, and signs of wear tell the stories of those who wore them, preserving narratives embedded in these lived-in pieces. From American miners' overalls to railway workers' trousers, from prison jackets to military parkas, they all share one common element: the identity of the person who wore them.

This journey explores fashion not through iconic runway pieces but through the emotion carried by garments that have lived everyday life. Authentic objects, from the late 19th century to today, transcend time and space, intertwining with people's lives, far removed from the glamour of the catwalks. These pieces represent an awareness of "being" versus just "appearing", evoking fashion as a key through which to express identity and belonging, not ostentation.

Founded in Campi Bisenzio, Tuscany, in 1952, Roy Roger's is Italy's first denim producer. Its archive, curated by Guido Biondi, the brand's creative director, houses over 6,000 pieces: from historic denim, workwear, and military garments that showcase the early uses of denim and the craftsmanship that made them unique, to modern reinterpretations celebrating denim's role in contemporary design.

Charles Fréger: *Bleus de travail*

Photographer **Charles Fréger** presents *Bleus de travail*, a collection of portraits capturing students from vocational schools posing in their uniforms, symbols of their trades, presented as a true catalog of workwear. Fréger's images highlight the contrast between the conformity of the uniforms and the personal details that reveal the young subjects' personalities. Rolled-up sleeves, gelled hair, piercings are just some of the small distinctive traits that break the established order and represent the tension between individuality and collective identity.

The exhibition resonates with the spaces of Polimoda at Manifattura Tabacchi: the photographs of factory workers from the 1970s, preserved in the archive of the structure, engage in a dialogue with the faces captured by Fréger in the 2000s, creating a timeless narrative that intertwines fashion, philosophy, and sociology of the imaginary.

Rowland e Chinami Ricketts: *Zurashi/Slipped*

Textile artists **Rowland and Chinami Ricketts** reinterpret traditional Japanese indigo-dyeing techniques through *Zurashi/Slipped*, an installation inspired by the ikat process. Through dyed and intertwined threads suspended in space, they transform weaving into a visual experience, exploring the intersection of tradition and creative innovation.

The work is inspired by a variation of the ikat method, in which threads, tied and shifted before dyeing, create staggered patterns and areas resistant to color. In the installation, the suspended warp forms patterns that evoke both the drying of freshly dyed threads and their compression on the loom. The result is a poetic metaphor that compels us to dig deeply into our own origins for a necessary reflection on the profound value of blue..

Research Tables

The **Polimoda Library** presents a curated selection of books, publications, and research materials to explore the key themes of the exhibition: blue, denim, workwear, subcultures, textile art, and photography. This collection, designed to spark curiosity and deeper understanding, offers visitors the chance to uncover unexpected connections between aesthetics, history, and innovation. The selected texts are available for on-site consultation, providing a valuable resource for enthusiasts, students, and creatives seeking inspiration.

Denim as a Mirror of Society

Denim's ability to fade and transform makes it a metaphor for authenticity and individuality. Each garment tells a story shaped by its wearer, an artifact imbued with personal and cultural meaning. **blue r/evolution** highlights how denim bridges past and present, evolving into a symbol of both luxury and identity.

The exhibition creates a space where **fashion meets collective memory and sustainability**, urging us to reimagine garments as tools of social change. Through its interdisciplinary approach, Polimoda offers a platform for engaging with fashion's role in shaping identity and reflecting societal shifts.

AN/ARCHIVE: A Platform for Fashion Studies

As part of Polimoda's AN/ARCHIVE initiative, **blue r/evolution** continues the mission to explore fashion through the lenses of sociology, anthropology, and design. This dynamic project connects historical archives with contemporary discourse, creating a cultural space for reflection and dialogue.

Polimoda invites you to experience **blue r/evolution**, an event where every thread of denim and shade of blue becomes a story of revolution, authenticity, and transformation.

All program updates are available on the [Polimoda website](#).

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January 14 – February 15, 2025

Polimoda Manifattura Campus

Via delle Cascine 35, Florence

Open daily from Monday to Saturday, 10 am – 7 pm

AN/ARCHIVE

AN/ARCHIVE is the new creative hub for fashion research presented by Polimoda. A space open to the city, designed to welcome researchers, curators, archivists, students, designers and businesses interested in studying fashion. Not a museum but a new concept fashion archive: a vibrant, dynamic and accessible place for research, but also a venue for encounters and events. A workshop in constant evolution based on the curatorship of iconic garments by great designers, encouraging contact between the various creative players in the fashion system using a universal idiom and an analytical approach to fashion. AN/ARCHIVE is designed as an innovative space that hosts exhibitions, workshops, conferences and debates on some of the most relevant issues for today's fashion industry, stimulating thought on the future of the sector and helping a new generation of researchers to emerge.

Polimoda

Polimoda represents the high training in the fashion industry in an internationally recognized center of excellence, located in the heart of one of the most important production areas of Made in Italy. Founded in 1986, over time the institute has constantly guaranteed high standards of specialization, consolidating its reputation as one of the world's leading fashion schools. Though deeply rooted in Florence, Polimoda is an international institution that has developed strong relationships with the most important businesses in the sector. Here the next generation of fashion professionals receive unique interdisciplinary training, designed to transmit the expertise and vision they need to stand out in the job's market today.

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