



BIANCA E BLU
MONICA BOLZONI
MODA DESIGNER

In 1970, a very young **Monica Bolzoni** started out on her training experience in Parisian prêt-à-porter, where she was in charge of Franck Olivier's product and image.

1975-80 –She was fashion coordinator for Fiorucci, first in Italy, then in Los Angeles and New York, where she experienced the artistic avant-garde sparked off by Andy Warhol's Factory, and absorbed the spontaneous cross-contaminations between art, new ideas and fashions.

1981 – Back in Italy, enriched by the experience of American freedom, Monica Bolzoni felt the need for uniqueness, which was to become the template for the production of her ideas. The first "shop", BIANCA E BLU, the name inherited from the previous owners, was as small as a department store corner, but alive as an important tool for creative freedom; "... *with a direct relationship with the "street"*", it acquired immediate visibility with an international clientele, also thanks to the recognition of leading reviews of fashion and current affairs (*Vogue, Panorama, L'Espresso*, etc.).

Through the designing of her garments, achieved from an inner modelling department, the essential component in the new production structure Monica Bolzoni carried out an attentive study of the body/garment relationship, with



The BB1 shop - 1982
Milan Via De Amicis 53

an in-depth search for forms enhancing the female body in its typical beauty.

The departure point was feeling, memory, innovative materials, the body, but not fashion: *“I feel the need for personalisation and the rediscovery of a different, free, colourful and simple femininity, with great wearability and real proportions, the opposite of the fashion of the day”*.

1984 – The new space (BB2), financed by the little BIANCA E BLU shop, became an atelier for the research, experimentation and processing of new fabrics for the creation of unique garments and accessories.

Major emphasis was laid on sartorial garments, created in a magic atmosphere with great impact on the public. With the opening of the second shop, the first (BB1) specialised in knitwear and a type of whole-range jersey (lingerie, garments, accessories, etc.), personalised in colours and prints. Produced industrially with a *modular* concept, jersey became a basic with a popular target, but had a sophisticated image.

In BB1 and BB2, each model was born with its own name, evoking the feminine imaginary (cinema, literature, comic strips, mythology, space, characters); *“in the shop we played at characters”*: Albertine, Brigitte, Phaedra, Scheherazade, Justine.

1985 – Monica Bolzoni opened her Sartoria in a well-hidden, abandoned part of Milan, retrieving the space-time atmosphere of a charming but dilapidated palazzo which she transformed into an atelier. Here research experimented on: blending traditional with innovative materials, such as metallic, resin-coated fabrics, nylon and jersey; the study and design of prints, painting, colours, precious details. *Experimentation* became the *place of marvels*.

1989 – Her journey to Japan on the invitation of her partner Mitsubishi led to a further investigation into the use of technological methods and a greater essentiality. Her commitment adapted to the demands of industrial production.

The BIANCA E BLU shop with adjoining offices opened at Aoyama-Tokyo.

Her Japanese experience ended in 1991.



The BB2 shop - 1984
Milan Via De Amicis 53



The BB2 shop, Inauguration -1984
Milan Via De Amicis 53



La Sartoria -1985
Milan Via C. Correnti 14

1995 – Monica Bolzoni created a new image for the art design of Vanessa Beecroft.

With personalised wardrobes – dresses, costumes and lingerie, conceived as modular entities in unprecedented, de-contextualised materials – she contributed to the staging of numerous performances.

For *VB 15* (Fondation Cartier, Paris 1995) she created little coats in beige fine felt cloth, characterised by a new design interpretation: refined tailoring was flanked by bias cut details – this workmanship was to become a technical must for her jersey collections. For *VB 16* (Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, N.Y. 1996), the garments already created for the first performance were completed with invisible lingerie obtained from the de-composition of nylon pantyhose. The lingerie module was developed in continual variations in the following performances: *VB 17* (“The Factory”, Athens School of Fine Arts, Athens 1996), *VB 18* (Capc Musée d’Art Contemporain, Bordeaux 1996), *VB 19* (The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago 1996). For the *VB 20* performance (Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 1996) bikinis were created, and a lacquered techno jersey in the colours of the American flag.

With the *VB 21* performance (Galleria de Carlo, Milan 1996) the modular project of colours and garments, progressively added and overlapping, created a complete wardrobe composed of garments and trench coats for men and women for a “family group in an interior”.

2001 – She worked for the review *Case Da Abitare* (*Abitare*, architectural magazine) for which she edited the following columns: “Casa Di Bambola”, “Casa Bianca Casa Blue” and “La Casa Bianca e La Casa Blu”. The articles offered suggestions for dressing space in art, fashion and design.

She designed and created the design of the shopping bag used in the campaign for the re-launch of the magazine.

2002 – The *Herald Tribune* devoted an article to Monica Bolzoni, recognising her as an “independent designer”.

2002/4 – The design-art fashion experience continued with the artist Letizia Cariello. For the *Le opere e i giorni* event



The Bianca E Blu shop , Aoyama
Tokyo, Japan - 1989



The Bianca e blu shop and Vanessa
Beecroft – 1995
Milan Via De Amicis 53

(Certosa di San Lorenzo, Padula 2002), the BIANCA E BLU “*Le cresime*” dress is transformed into art: the artist wears the dress with inscriptions and calendars.

In *My sister is always with me*, as part of the exhibition *Moltitudini-Solitudini* (Museion, Museo d’Arte Contemporaneo, Bolzano, 2003), seven garments in jersey and the accessories of BIANCA E BLU were transformed into art. The garments created for the artist’s wardrobe – shirt, skirt, trousers, trench coat matched with gloves, bags and cloche hat – bore the Bolzoni-Cariello label. For *Hallenberg Project* (Centro per l’Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato 2004), she created swimsuits in lacquered techno jersey.

2004 – Monica Bolzoni met the artist Cesare Viel. For the *La Donna Difficile* exhibition (Rimini 2-18 October 2004), she created the costumes for the performance *To the Lighthouse Cesare Viel as Virginia Woolf*. The performance was repeated at the Milan PAC during the *Aperto per lavori in corso* show in October 2005.

2005 – Monica Bolzoni was appointed to direct the Introductory Workshop to Dress Design for the Degree Course in Fashion Design, Faculty of Design and Arts, University IUAV in Venice.

She inaugurated a teaching method which involved the students in design experiences very similar to those of actual production activities in the professional field.

Through the construction of an “identity card” founded on the value of ideas and personal feeling, the student was invited to look for his/her own approach to expression which, while taking into account the fundamental rules of the classical sartorial art, is set free from the fashion of the moment and its communication.

The training course was based on the following points:

- learning a working method;
- carrying out research aimed at a project;
- having fun in choosing an icon;
- learning to look for, recognise and carry out an idea;
- developing critical capacities;
- looking for a style of one’s own;
- perceiving the difference between “stilismo” and fashion design;
- applying geometric shapes (body geometry);



The BB2 shop - 2004
Milan Via De Amicis 53



Lab. IUAV 2007/08 “*The theatre game*”,
class work

- getting to know the proportions of the body;
- reflecting on the concept of modularity;
- pursuing simplicity.



lab. iuav 2007/08 “the theatre game”, the students’ projects



Fanny & Alexander, *There’s no place like home*, Dorothy - 2009

2007 – She started the design of clothes for the avant-garde theatre of Fanny & Alexander with the creation of costumes for *Amore* (in 2 acts) at the Ravenna Festival.

2007/08 – She created the costumes for Fanny & Alexander’s *K. 313*, a show of strong emotional impact based on Tommaso Landolfi’s *Breve canzoniere*. With the achievement of the stage garments for *K. 313*, at the Department of Performing Arts and Sciences – Faculty of Humanities of the University of Rome La Sapienza – the seminar *Theatre and fashion design in K.313: terror goes on stage and runs on the thread of the metamorphic dress* was held. The encounter led to debate on the specificity of expressive and performing systems which have characterised the successful collaboration between the dramatic arts and fashion design.

2009- She created the stage clothes for Fanny & Alexander’s *O-Z There’s no place like home*, inspired by Dorothy, the character in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*



Monica Bolzoni is currently working on the new BIANCA E BLU project, BBland, a multi-functional atelier for new ideas and new events, in which she continues experimentation and sartorial work for the personalisation of unique garments.



The BB shop - 2008
Milan Via De Amicis 53



The BB shop window - 2008
Milan Via De Amicis 53

www.biancaebly.com

Publications

Caterina Marrone, *La poetica del semplice*, Il Vicolo, Cesena 2008

Fanny & Alexander, *Amore(2 atti) 2007*, Ravenna Festival.

Monica Bolzoni Fanny & Alexander-, *6 settembre 2007*, Il Vicolo, Cesena 2009.

Monica Bolzoni, Fanny & Alexander- *There is no place like home*, Il Vicolo, Cesena 2009.



BBland - 2009, il nuovo atelier
Milano Alzaia Naviglio Grande 192

Links

<http://www.vanessabeecroft.com/>

<http://www.letiziacariello.com/>

<http://www.portfolioonline.it/cgi-bin/portfolio/portfolio.pl?action=view&id=1258031887>

<http://www.fannyalexander.org/>

<http://www.iuav.it/homepage/>