

Le forme della libertà

ITALIAN WOMEN MOVING TOWARDS THE SHAPE OF FREEDOM #STILELIBERO #SHAPEDIVERSITY

Milan, March 7th 2018 - Does a woman necessarily have to be slim to be beautiful? For Italians - women and men alike - **the ideal woman is a size 44, followed by a 46 with 40-42 only in third place**. This - and much more besides - is what emerges from research conducted by GfK Italia for Fiorella Rubino. The results of the study on a sample of 1000 women and 200 men have been presented and commented on by industry specialists including sociologist **Francesco Morace**, model and presenter **Elisa D'Ospina**, philosopher **Laura Campanello**, Fiorella Rubino brand director **Anne van Merkensteijn** and fashion journalist **Cinzia Malvini**.

The survey plots an evolution in the relationship every woman has with her physique and weight, in the canons of beauty, and above-all in fashion, taking history as an objective starting point. As a matter of fact, the company has a **decade of unique experience** in researching the world of women, which is added to by the new study carried out with GfK Italia. Here's a foretaste:

- ✓ **The ideal woman? In the unanimous opinion of both men and women, she is a size 44 – among the men, 70% would go out with her for dinner, 67% would marry her, and 66% would spend a night with her. In second place is size 46, and 40-42 only comes third.**
- ✓ **Curvy women are: bubbly (83% of men and 86% of women), beautiful (78% of men and 85% of women), maternal (77% of men and 91% of women).**
- ✓ **Those responsible for the equation “skinny equals beautiful” are the media and fashion (83% of women and 73% of men).**
- ✓ **The most uncompromising judge? For 47% of women it is themselves.**

What emerges is the portrait of a woman who is learning how to live her shape freely, and rediscovering her own **«joie de vivre»** notwithstanding the stereotypes that still exist. Indeed, compared to 17 years ago the difficulty of relating to one's body is ever-present. In certain respects, the bar has been raised: there is more desire to comply with the demands of being in good “physical shape”, which on the one hand demonstrates greater, more positive attention to health, but on the other represents a comparison with aesthetic stereotypes that can generate a sense of inadequacy and a fear of being judged negatively by oneself and others.

All this is happening rapidly at a time of **social change** in which many barriers and clichés still exist, but at the same time there are increasingly evident and real signs of evolution coming, for example, from the catwalks and communication campaigns of leading stylists.

Fiorella Rubino is acting as an interpreter and expression of this process that aims to establish real **“shape diversity”** in the conviction that much can change with greater commitment on the part of fashion houses and the media: to rediscover beauty in every shape and in the unique personality of every woman.

With this in mind, from March 8th Fiorella Rubino is launching its **new communication campaign** dedicated to all women and celebrating the possibility they have of playing and finding expression with fashion, whatever their size and shape, in order to express themselves through their own “free style”.

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Some points which emerged from the research:

THE IDEAL SHAPE? – For everyone - women and men - the “perfect female size” is **44, followed by 46, and in third place 40-42**. It is with a size 44 woman that men would like to go out for a romantic dinner, get married and even enjoy a night of wild sex. In practice, the physique of models seems to be appreciated more on the runway than in everyday life, although while men are decidedly more wary when it comes to a size 40-42, women give a more positive opinion, judging her to be beautiful, popular and self-confident.

CURVY IS BEAUTIFUL! – Positive, fun, maternal, confident, sensual, cultured: **curvy women are liked by both men and women**. And how! The term «curvy» itself is now widely-known, accepted and associated with positive characteristics. Women are a little more critical than men though when it comes to identifying any negative connotations associated with curvy women, who can be deemed overweight (71% of women vs 53% of men) or sedentary (66% vs 51%).

WHAT HAS CHANGED COMPARED TO 17 YEARS AGO? – A comparison with a survey carried out in 2001 on size 48 women shows that having a difficult relationship with your body is a constant, and in certain respects has intensified in that:

- they diet much more than in 2001 (almost 20% never diet compared to 40% 17 years ago)
- they are more critical of their own physical shape (from excellent to fair for 35.5% compared to 59% in 2001)

AESTHETIC STEREOTYPES: SKINNINESS EQUALS BEAUTY? – On the one hand, women seem to long to overcome certain stereotypes - 77% say they are convinced that for a woman beauty is not just being slim - but on the other for them slimness continues to be an important aesthetic standard. «For me, a perfect woman is skinny». You might think it is the men saying that, but quite the opposite is true. It is 41% of women who think that is right, and just 33% of men. As a matter of fact, 73% of women are aware of (and probably suffer from) the existence in the collective imagination of the assumption that «a physically perfect woman = a skinny woman». A stereotype that only 60% of men go along with. This is because for men being skinny does not mean being beautiful. On the contrary, only 4.5% of their preferences are associated with slimness (while for the women it is nearly 22%). Women are on a par with men in watching their weight and checking it regularly on the scales, but they diet much more than men (42% vs 29%), who focus above-all on their muscles to make them feel good-looking.

WHOSE OPINION? – The opinion of others on one's physical appearance is important for both sexes, but women feel judged more often than men for their physical shape (51% vs 43%). And they are also more self-critical, so much so that **they are their own number one judges** (47% compared to 39% of the men), followed - at a considerable distance - by their partners (17% compared to 27% of the men).

EXPRESSING YOURSELF THROUGH FASHION: A FREEDOM WHICH IS (STILL) NOT FOR EVERYONE – The range of clothing on offer for those with a few extra kilos is seen by 77% of women as limited. In particular, women believe that those who are overweight find it harder to express themselves with clothing than those with a more slender figure. The difficulty in finding trendy garments increases considerably, in fact, with size, as part of a **general perception that fashion is something for skinny women alone**.

Data Source GfK Italia – Research conducted for Fiorella Rubino during the period 1-15 December 2017 – CAWI (Computer Aided Web) interviews carried out on a representative national sample of 1000 women and 200 men aged 25-60.

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Summary of contributions by speakers

«Besides being good news, the result of the research that places **size 44** as the ideal body shape **followed by size 46** must be cause for reflection for everyone. We are well aware that these are the best-selling sizes in Italy, and have always followed them with the utmost attention» said **Anne van Merkensteijn, Brand Director at Fiorella Rubino**. «This is why we have chosen to talk about “**shape diversity**”, so as to give proper consideration to the needs of women of every shape and size. For us, “diversity” represents normality, in that it is already a widely assimilated concept when it comes to gender equality or sexual identity. Rather than establishing counter-stereotypes, the aim is to accompany women on this journey of theirs towards new freedoms: freedom from aesthetic stereotypes, freedom from introjected opinions as your own and from the opinions of others, freedom of expression through fashion, whatever the shape of your physique may be».

Sociologist Francesco Morace stresses: «Over the last 10 years, the consumer world in general has won a series of freedoms: today consumers are “consumAuthors”, protagonists of their own choices despite imposed models. Female body “shapes” and their right to exist in a variety of forms seems, on the other hand, to be a taboo subject. Fashion has begun to call its models into question, but there is still a long way to go. Normality is made up of lots of singularities, and the real strength each one of us has lies in our character and personality, and not in massification or aesthetic perception, which is itself stereotyped. The media has to focus on character and not on weight. We are loved for what we are able to express».

«Being free means learning to accept ourselves for what we are, with all our fragilities and difficulty in justifying our imperfections, and learning how to choose what is best for us: what accepts us and comforts us, allowing us to express our shape, and our ability and struggle to care for ourselves. We have to feel free to show our bodies just like our entire being: strong and fragile at the same time, empowering us to be what we are, in our shape, without forsaking the pleasure of fashion, of food, of a taste for what we love and of serene relations. Because equilibrium and harmony are as individual and unique as each and every person» added **philosopher Laura Campanello**.

And bringing her own experience was **curvy model and presenter Elisa D'Ospina**: «I have shown the importance of authenticity in person: I have never accepted change in order to make myself different from what I am, and have managed to convey a personal, non type-approved concept of beauty. In order to reach this degree of awareness, I have had to overcome a number of hurdles: I have learnt not to give importance to the comments of others, and to highlight what is beautiful about me and the uniqueness of my imperfections. I therefore endorse the importance of asserting the value of the uniqueness of every woman, and of freedom from at times impossible models».

As emerges from the comparison with research we have commissioned over time –concluded **Fiorella Rubino Brand Director Anne van Merkensteijn** – women continue to live their relationship with their bodies and weight in a somewhat troubled way. In the last few years, this unease seems to have been exacerbated: for example, only 20% of women never go on a diet, compared to 40% almost 20 years ago, and only 35.5% define their physical shape as between excellent and fair, compared to 59% in the past. This is a clear sign of still being caught in the trap of misleading outdated messages in spite of the greater awareness and openness all women have towards certain issues. This is another reason why we have decided to present Fiorella Rubino's new communication campaign here today. The March 8th launch date was not chosen at random. Ours, in fact, is a campaign that celebrates the possibility for every size and shape to play with and find expression through fashion, so that each and every one of us can portray our own unique “free style”».

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Fiorella Rubino

Fiorella Rubino is the first Italian fast fashion brand dedicated to women united by a desire to feel fashionable and to dress with style. Women who love their own physique with naturalness, wearing garments that are trendy and lively, and at the same time glamorous.

A brand which expresses an optimistic, sociable, feminine personality that is self-confident and free-spirited.

Launched in Italy in 2004, today it is distributed through 220 branded stores in Europe. The main countries: Italy, Spain, Germany and Russia.

Fiorella Rubino is one of the 12 brands by Miroglio Fashion, the number three company on the Italian womenswear market, and part of the leading textile and fashion Miroglio Group founded in 1947.

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