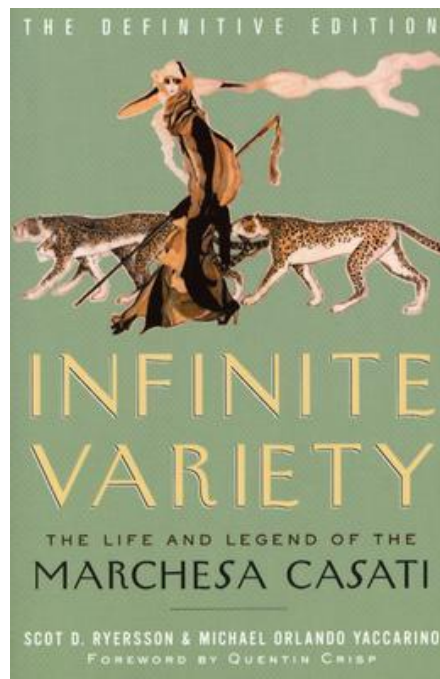




Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati

Scot D. Ryersson , Quentin Crisp (Foreword by) , Michael Orlando Yaccarino (Contributor)

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For the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Marchesa Casati astounded Europe: nude servants gilded in gold leaf attended her; bizarre wax mannequins sat as guests at her dining table; and she was infamous for her evening strolls, naked beneath her furs, parading cheetahs on diamond-studded leashes. Artists painted, sculpted, and photographed her; poets praised her strange beauty. Among them were Gabriele D'Annunzio, Man Ray, Jean Cocteau, Cecil Beaton, and American writers Tennessee Williams, Jack Kerouac, and Ezra Pound. Couturiers Fortuny, Poiret, and Erté dressed her. Some became lovers, others awestruck admirers, but all were influenced by this extraordinary muse. The extravagance ended in 1930 when Casati was more than twenty-five million dollars in debt. Fleeing to London, she spent her final flamboyant years there until her death in 1957. Now nearly a half-century later, Casati's fashion legacy continues to inspire such designers as John Galiano, Karl Lagerfeld, and Tom Ford. Fully authorized and accurate, this is the fantastic story of the Marchesa Luisa Casati. Scot D. Ryersson is an award-winning freelance writer, illustrator, and graphic designer. He lives in New Jersey. Michael Orlando Yaccarino is a freelance writer specializing in international genre film, fashion, music, and unconventional historical figures. He lives in New Jersey.

Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati Details

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From Reader Review Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati for online ebook

Kime says

I have always been fascinated (like most fashion people) with the Marchesa Casati. This book was one of the first to take a look at one of the most replicated faces in art and fashion. Although the Marchesa herself was a woman of wonder and strange practices, this book on her seems a bit dry. I had hoped that more would be revealed about her love life, her secrets, her style. This seemed to only scratch the surface. Still good for those just taking a peek into her world, some fab quotes on her.

Tosh says

Anyone who was a 'muse' to a lot of artists and would wear incredible outfits and on top of that - have a pet leopard on a leash is ok with me. Why isn't there rich people like that anymore?

Annie says

Here's link to my review:

<http://www.poeticandchic.com/home/200...>

Lissa says

Utterly fascinating biography of the Marchesa, one of the true originals of the 20th or any century. Originally a timid aristocrat trapped in a dull marriage, she became a thrower of wild masked balls, subject of hundreds of artworks, keeper of exotic pets, resident of glorious mansions and the ultimate glamorous eccentric.

Catherine Corman says

Despite the squalor, she played, to the last notes, this ghostly echo of the D'Annunzian heroine. "Bring in the drinks!" she would call, and a bent Italian servant would shuffle forward with a half-empty bottle of beer.

-Michael Holroyd in Infinite Variety

Mellisande says

Loved it, loved it, loved it! Not only an account of the Divine Marchesa's extraordinary life and eccentric personality – but a history of the fantastic art she inspired. A must-read for anyone interested in the turn of the century and/or people living their lives with no regards to the conventions of petty minds; following a

path by their own choosing as if they were writing a poem rather than living the day-to-day of a life.

Barbara says

This one was amazing. Her bio is excellent and very gothy. It's stuff you can't make up. I think there should be a movie based on her life. Christina Ricci could play her. Or someone taller, but gothy.

?oincidental Dandy says

She was disparaged by respectable society for the same qualities that some of the greatest artists, sculptors, photographers & poets of the 20th Century made the Marchesa Casati their muse & the object of their adoration: she simply refused to live by the norms of 'respectable' society; she refused to live an ordinary life hemmed-in by mundane conventions.

Her life may have been self-absorbed, lived selfishly & lavishly to glorify (and enslaved to) her own image; she may have torn through fabulous fortunes to upkeep the only standard of living she knew (or accepted for herself to live); she may have ended her days bleakly in a one-room flat, a phantom of her old self, dressed in tattered black velvets and moth-eaten leopard skins, but to borrow a quote from the book, "Casati was the last of her kind." She was, undeniably, an original; no matter what the era, originals are a rare breed.

Lucia says

loved it! so will you if you are interested in fashion, art history, european history or eccentric personalities. dreaming about going back to venice and paris and considering getting myself a pair of greyhounds. maybe greyhound statues...

Christine says

The role that the dashing Marchesa Luisa Casati played as a muse of the avant-garde throughout the entirety of last century in the realms of fashion and art can't be underestimated. It was interesting to link so many familiar images back to her. An entire aesthetic in fashion and art.

She lived life in a vacuum, in a way completely unto herself and according to her own whims, while casting a brilliant inspiring glow. Perhaps to be truly unique is to be truly self-absorbed.

I kept imagining what a nightmare of a roommate she would make, but that's neither here nor there, and for the purposes of the story, the authors do very little to pry open the gates of her psyche. This is a biography entirely devoid of personality and personal musings. Instead, we see the Marchesa Casati through the quotes, sculptures, paintings and photographs of those she inspired, and in this way, we see her best.

Nikki says

I give the book four stars. I give the Marchesa Luisa Casati fifty. This woman was the original shocking bad ass goth girl. How had I never heard of this woman?! I once saw photos of her by Man Ray and was transfixed. She set out to make herself a living work of art.

Born to unimaginable wealth in 1881, she was a shy ugly duckling compared to her prettier older sister.

Married to the Marchese Camillo Casati in 1899, he brought the aristocratic title and she brought the wealth. It would have been a win-win except she didn't give a damn about playing the expected role of quiet, lovely arm candy the way other aristocratic wives did. She was far too wild for such a humdrum life.

From walking her pet cheetahs down the Grand Canal in Venice, to kicking King Gustav V of Sweden out of one of her legendary masquerade balls for not being in costume (he returned an hour later, appropriately attired), to being electrocuted not once - but twice - in malfunctioning electrified costumes (one designed for her by Picasso to make her look like one of his drawings), everything she did was beyond belief.

A muse, an inspiration, a selfish terror like no other. She inspired legendary designers from Patou, Poiret and Fortuny in the 1910s to Galliano and Lagerfeld today. She's immortalized in artworks by many prominent artists. She's the namesake for the Marchesa clothing line. Cartier's iconic panther jewels were inspired directly by the taxidermied animatronic panther she kept in her Palais Rose outside Paris.

Once one of the richest women in the world, she lived a life of total excess and died in squalor.

Such a fascinating woman.

Elizabeth says

interesting bio on an eccentric doomed fashionista. without much documentation on her daily life, the authors craft a pretty decent snapshot of this Italian who described herself as a "living work of art"

Ann says

This is one of those books that shows truth is stranger than fiction. I Had never heard of Luisa Casati, but apparently she is very well known in artistic and fashion circles. Coming from an extremely wealthy family, she spent extravagantly and by her 70s she was \$25 milioni in debt and died in poverty. But she lead a fantastic life, defying conformity all the way. A very interesting, fascinating story.

Michelle says

One of the most interesting women in modern history. I loved reading about her life at home and how she was so particular about what she surrounded herself with. After a while, however, it became a bit tiring. I wanted a bit more insight as to the woman herself, but I guess since no journals exist the author could only make assumptions. Still an entertaining read though.

Missy says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the life history of the Marchesa Luisa Casati. The one aspect of the book that really excited me is the mention of so many female artists, which one does not come across too often regarding the significant contributions women have provided to their art communities during their lifetime. At the same time, it was difficult to read that most of the art work by these artists did not survive their times as well as their male counterparts. The last paragraph in the book best describes and sums up the Marchesa's life "...she chose to become a living work of art..."

As I was reading the descriptions of her "living works of art," I could not help thinking that not only did her "dark" style influence the goth movement, but also the current and past female music divas of pop/rap such as Madonna, Lady Gaga, including Niki Minaj! I doubt if these women have knowledge of the Marchesa, however, they have been exposed to the fashion designers who may have knowledge of the "living art." Saying that, I'm sure each of these women would immensely enjoy meeting the Marchesa especially during the height of her creativity.

I strongly recommend this book to any art student (studying history, studio and/or fashion/interior design) for enlightenment of a movement and simply because the book is a grand resource.
