



Franca Sozzani. Photo: Giuseppe Cacace / Getty Images

#### RUNWAY

## Franca Sozzani Has Inspired a Scientific Fund—And Now a Website



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“What would Franca have done?” is the question that comes to mind as we pause at the end of this tumultuous year to mark the fourth anniversary of the death of *Vogue* Italia’s long-time editor Franca Sozzani.

Golden-haired and delicate looking, Sozzani was an editor who had the strength of her convictions. “She was fearless,” Anna Wintour has said, “imbuing Italian *Vogue* with deep, often controversial, moral purpose.” Sozzani dared to tackle important issues, like domestic abuse, plastic surgery, body positivity, and inclusivity. “Fashion isn’t really about clothes,” she once said. “It’s about life.”

Last year Sozzani's son, the photographer and filmmaker Francesco Carrozzini, established the Franca Sozzani Fund for Preventive Genomics at Harvard University's Brigham and Women's Hospital with artist and investor D.A. Wallach and Genomes2People director Dr. Robert C. Green. Today marks the launch of [thefrancafund.org](http://thefrancafund.org). Its purpose is straightforward: to explain the fund's mission, provide resources for learning, and make the connection between the editor and the growing field of genomics.

"How interesting it is that the life of a person who was a fashion icon now is becoming an avant-garde science project that tries to save people's lives," says Carrozzini, who believes in preventative rather than palliative medicine, his mother's cancer having been detected at an advanced stage. "There's very few of us who go to the doctor because they're healthy and want to stay healthy," he said on a call. "I speak out of experience and I say, go to the doctors, in general, not only for [genetic] sequencing, just to get checked constantly because it might save your life."

It's said that knowledge is power and Carrozzini's view is that preventive genomics allow a person to be proactive rather than reactive. Sozzani similarly had a take-charge approach when it came to her work. "Obviously [this is] a very personal story," notes the filmmaker. "You know," he continues, "for years, my mother was thought of as this weirdo who was making strange pictures, and then all of a sudden she became like an icon. And so what I love about what we're doing [with genomics] is that we are the underdogs. I love being an underdog, I love that my mom was an underdog, and I love underdogs in general because they are the dreamers."