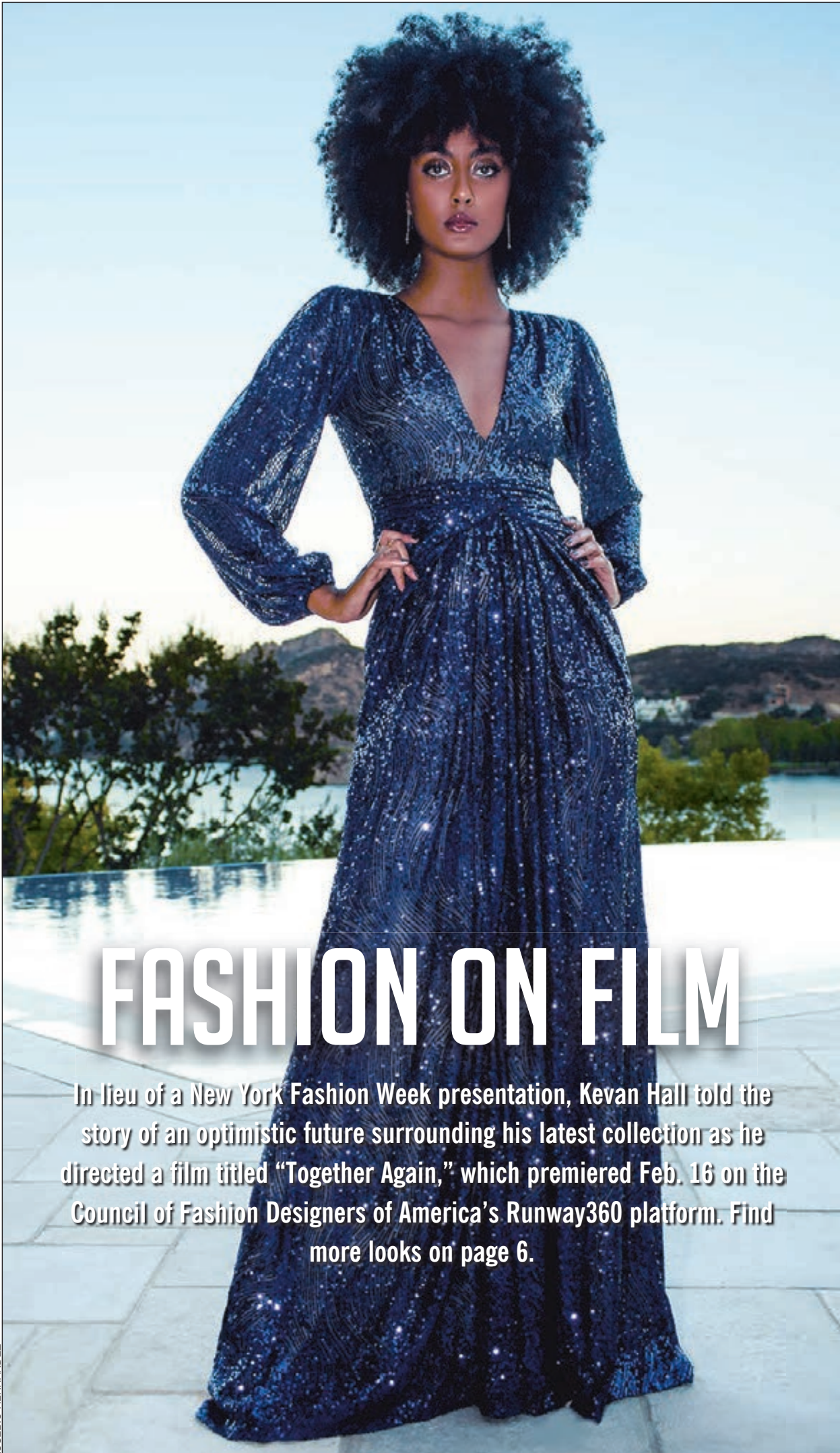


CALIFORNIA Apparel News

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 76 YEARS

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FASHION ON FILM

In lieu of a New York Fashion Week presentation, Kevan Hall told the story of an optimistic future surrounding his latest collection as he directed a film titled "Together Again," which premiered Feb. 16 on the Council of Fashion Designers of America's Runway360 platform. Find more looks on page 6.

EUSEBIO HERNANDEZ

TRADE EVENTS

LA Textile Emerges as International Destination for Sourcing Through Virtual Event

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Building on its momentum from a successful October show, **LA Textile** was hosted Feb. 24–26 on **CMC Upload-ed**, the **California Market Center's** digital platform. This edition of **LA Textile** was a testament to the virtual production's growth in only five short months. According to the CMC's senior manager of events, Matthew Mathiasen, attendance figures for the show doubled from the October edition.

"Key points that we look at, show after show, all showed great improvement," Mathiasen said. "Last October, which was our first virtual edition of **Textile**, we had between 700 and 800 attendees come through over the three days. This time we clocked in right around 1,400 over the three days."

The pool of attendees included emerging designers and
 ➔ **LA Textile** page 13

TRADE EVENTS

West Coast Trend Show Generates Solid Business at On-site L.A. Show

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

After almost a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person trade-show format is coming back to life. Last month, in-person trade shows were produced in Orlando, Fla., and at the **Dallas Market Center** in Dallas. Over Presidents Day weekend, an in-person trade show took place near the **Los Angeles International Airport** as COVID-19 cases had dipped in Los Angeles County, an area where numbers of COVID-19 cases had been high for much of the past year.

The West Coast Trend Show is a biannual trade show for better men's lines that has taken place at the **Embassy Suites** near LAX since 2008, said Ken Haruta, the trade

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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Fred Segal, Retail Innovator, 87

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Fred Segal was considered the founder of the specialty-retail approach that ushered in an influential Los Angeles and California sense of cool. He died Feb. 25 in **Providence Saint John's Health Center** in Santa Monica, Calif., after complications from a stroke, according to a statement from his family.

For decades, Fred Segal's name has graced a giant sign on the corner of Melrose Avenue and Crescent Heights Boulevard in Los Angeles, where he first set up shop in 1961. He later developed retail areas in Santa Monica, Calif., and Malibu, Calif., with his self-named **Fred Segal** stores. The specialty shops bearing his name developed a forum for new, often untested designers and cultivated a unique nightclub or salon ambiance, which at the time was unique for a store.

Fred Segal stores were famous for attracting fashion designers, style influencers and a long list of celebrities ranging from Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Diana Ross to Sophia Lauren, Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie.

Segal came to prominence when he opened a Melrose Avenue store during the early 1960s. He showcased the right product and was famous for denim just as the culture was making a big shift, said Ilse Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association** trade group.

"The time he opened, style was changing. He was offering clothing for protest. It was a protest against rigid, structured clothing. Fred Segal was very unstructured," she said.

Fred Segal stores also were a big change from the dominant shops at the time, whether high-end or family-style department stores



In addition to developing innovative retail concepts, Fred Segal was also known for helping to launch the careers of other prominent fashion influencers.

such as **JCPenney**, Metchek said. "We had **Bullock's** and **Broadway**. Everything was on a major store level, and they pretty much all had the same brands. He was the first to give a chance to smaller brands."

Segal also introduced a unique, European style of retail to Los Angeles wherein designers leased space from him. Segal stepped back from working on day-to-day retail around the mid-1970s. He later focused on managing his store's real estate and continued to develop retail concepts. In the 1990s, he proved himself to be ahead of his time by introducing a now-shuttered Santa Monica store for sustainable clothing and goods.

Retailers working with Fred Segal, such as Ron Herman and Ron Robinson, became influential in their own right. Scores of people who made names for themselves in California fashion started their careers at Fred Segal.

John Eshaya, owner and designer of the fashion brand **JET**, was one of the designers who started his career at Fred Segal. Eshaya said that the Fred Segal shops buzzed with new fashion ideas as well as fresh, new music on the shops' sound systems. "My whole thing was to keep the essence of what Fred started," Eshaya said. He started working at Fred Segal after graduating high school in 1984. He later worked as a vice president and women's buyer for **Ron Herman**. Segal recruited Eshaya to run Fred Segal Santa Monica in 2008.

Eshaya said that Segal was the consummate businessman and style influencer. "That guy always had a tan. He always looked good. He was always fit," Eshaya said. "He was always looking for his centers to be beautiful. Many landlords don't care once the bills are paid."

Segal and his family scaled back their fashion-focused businesses in recent years. In 2016, the Fred Segal compound in Santa Monica was sold to make way for a mixed-use development. In 2012, a group of entrepreneurs acquired rights to the Fred Segal name. In 2017, they opened a Fred Segal flagship in West Hollywood, Calif. Ron Herman is the only Fred Segal retailer that continues to run a store on the original site of Melrose Avenue. The brand-licensing company **Global Icons** currently has the rights to the Fred Segal name and runs Fred Segal stores.

Segal is survived by his five children, 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, his wife, Tina, and her two children and grandson. To honor Fred Segal's legacy, the family requested donating to the **Segal Family-United World Foundation** at 10960 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1100, Los Angeles, CA 90024. ●

Inside the Industry

Elevate Textiles, which includes American & Efird, Burlington, Cone Denim, Gütermann and Safety Components, announced that it has joined the Sustainable Apparel Coalition. Through its membership, the global group is committing to supply-chain sustainability within the apparel, footwear and textile industries through providing data and resources to support the Higg Index. "Elevate and its brands share a longstanding commitment to being a leader in the development of sustainable products," said Jimmy Summers, chief sustainability officer. "We work with many partners to continuously identify and lead various initiatives, and we are pleased to add the Sustainable Apparel Coalition to the industry initiatives in which we take part."

Pakistan denim company Soorty revealed its achievement of one GOLD certification and a core certification status from the Alliance for Water Stewardship, the global organization that seeks to create greater water security around the world. Pakistan is one of 17 countries listed under high-water stress. Nations that appear on this list are susceptible to water scarcity, with more than 80 percent of a country's water available for agricultural, domestic and industrial use withdrawn annually. The Alliance for Water Stewardship's standards include good water governance, sustainable water balance, good water-quality status, healthy status of important water-related areas, and safe water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

The Taubman Company LLC announced the promotion of William S. Taubman to president. William S. Taubman will retain his chief operating officer position for the outlet-mall management company, which he has held since 2005, and continue to report to Robert S. Taubman, the firm's chairman and chief executive officer. "Billy grew up in our business and is a creative, extremely well-respected thought leader within the retail-real-estate industry," Robert S. Taubman said. "He has deep and productive relationships throughout retailing and particularly with our luxury tenants."

Mastercard SpendingPulse, a research division of the Mastercard payments network, released U.S. retail numbers for sales spent on its network in February. It found that U.S. retail sales increased 4.6 percent in a year-over-year comparison, excluding automotive and gasoline sales. Apparel sales made on digital platforms increased 47.3 percent in a year-over-year comparison. However, overall apparel sales were down 5.3 percent. Valentine's Day spurred jewelry sales to increase 5.9 percent during the month.

The DJM private-equity real-estate and development firm announced that it has hired Chief Financial Officer Charlie O'Connell and a promotion of the company's creative director, Chad Cress, to the role of chief creative officer. O'Connell is responsible for overseeing DJM's investor relations and capital transactions in addition to other financial activities. In the role of chief creative officer, Cress will lead the creative vision for DJM's properties, as he has done since 2018, and is now responsible for the retail strategy of DJM's experiential and mixed-use projects. DJM also announced the departure of its chief retail officer, Stenn Parton, who will consult with the company.

NEWS



A 93,000-square-foot Valencia, Calif., facility (shown above) will open this fall to house on-demand-printing and drop-shipping-fulfillment business Printful.

On-Demand Printer and Drop-shipper Printful to Open Larger L.A. Facility

On-demand-printing and drop-shipping-fulfillment business **Printful** will open a 93,000-square-foot Valencia, Calif., facility this fall, said Dairis Zarins, the company's director of operations.

"We manufacture product and ship it on your behalf," Zarins said.

The company anticipates adding more than 100 people at the new facility, located approximately 35 miles north of downtown Los Angeles. More than 220 people will work in production development, fulfillment, machine operations and sewing.

Printful offers on-demand printing on T-shirts from companies including **Bella + Canvas**, **Gildan** and **Champion**. More than 260 products such as posters, biodegradable phone cases, flip-flops and towels can be printed on-demand. Some products are cut and sewn in-house, Zarins said.—A.A.

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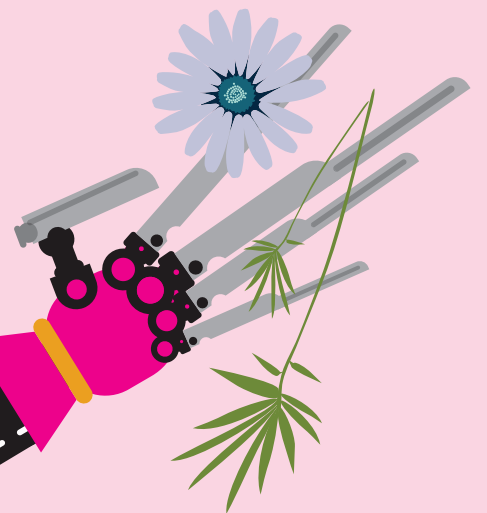


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Atlanta Apparel shines a spotlight on innovation and integrity in these five lines

Navigating the troubled waters of 2020 required some fancy marketing footwork by these intrepid brands, along with a solid focus on essentials to keep their businesses vital.

Brodie Cashmere

The luscious hand and brilliant and forward prints and colorations of Brodie Cashmere are a testament to a skillful partnership between this family-owned English business and its Mongolian counterpart. It is no wonder that these 100 percent long-fiber, pure cashmere and cotton-silk creations continued to sell well during 2020, with 2021 sales “well ahead” of last year. Using virtual marketing with look books and video, Brodie offers a range of hand-finished styles—all washable, except those with foil embellishment—from updated luxe modern to novelty to loungewear that are designed in Yorkshire and produced in Mongolia. As a “proud member” of the Sustainable Fiber Alliance, sustainability and improving conditions for its Mongolian partners are key for Brodie. What excites them this season? “The color and the fun.”



Dixie

“Staying positive and optimistic” and building an online presence has helped Italian fast-fashion brand Dixie successfully steer its way through the difficulties of 2020. Based in Florence, the company is renowned for refined and retro-inspired garments that made it a global presence in specialty boutiques everywhere but here. With new representation in the U.S. through the Uncommon Fashion Showroom, that has changed, to “great feedback.” Dixie was among the first in Europe, and now the U.S., to develop a fast-fashion immediate resource of made-in-Italy goods with weekly capsule collections. Dixie’s Fall 2021 collection is “deep and warm” with pops of fuchsia and chartreuse combined with earth tones “to make them pop.” Anticipated bestsellers are its “effortless and timeless” dresses, which pair exquisitely with Dixie’s coats.



enewton design

2020 was a “year of reflection” for jewelry maker enewton design. “We are making better decisions on the importance of quality and meaning over quantity,” the founders say. Designing elegant necklaces, bracelets, rings, and earrings for women, young adults, and children that support busy lifestyles and



can be worn through every activity, from swim to sleep, was just part of it. The company’s philanthropic initiatives, including Share Her Story about front-line workers and Shop Local, returning 20 percent of customers’ purchases to a local boutique of their choosing, not only served their community but built a stronger customer base, resulting in a “staggering online growth in 2020.” Currently showing Immediates, enewton design believes that bestsellers will be “meaningful pieces that represent personal stories, experiences, and reminders of what is truly important.”

Fanco

A brand dedicated to stylish young women, Fanco found that the best way to adjust to 2020’s changed circumstances was to “cater to our [retail] clients with key essential pieces that will keep their businesses going. Showing videos and different views of styling a piece really helped the clients understand and order our styles.” With a full-range “classic and modern” collection from top to bottom, Fanco “is excited to bring essential pieces that all young women need, but with unique fabrics plus vibrant colors.” Fanco currently is showing Immediates and samples for Fall/Winter. Known for its wovens, Fanco is bringing in a new knit line, complementing bestselling knit sweaters and dresses, as well as bodysuits, two-piece sets, and mini dresses. Hot picks include romantic prints and tropical pieces.



Musse&Cloud

The Spanish purveyor of exceptional leather footwear, Musse&Cloud is optimistic about a return to pre-pandemic shopping habits. “We think that more people will see value in higher-quality purchases.” Embracing the digital space, Musse&Cloud is reopening its direct-to-consumer sales channel and looking to spur business through drop-ship and open-stock offerings in addition to eliminating order minimums and case-pack requirements. New to Musse&Cloud for Spring/Summer are classic sneakers, usually the territory of its Emmshu line, but these use a rich, genuine nappa leather and suede. Fall/Winter will include boots in “fresh yet subtle” tones of expected bestseller cream plus bone and military green, some with robust lug soles and new custom tread patterns—“our fresh spin on this hot trend.”



See these brands and many more at Atlanta Apparel April 13–17, 2021. Visit Atlanta-Apparel.com/April for more information.



T-SHIRTS



KINETIX CASUAL LUXURY

Known for its luxurious long- and short-sleeved designs in classic and fresh colorways and dye applications, Kinetix Casual Luxury is also known for its graphics.

A Sweet Anniversary of Making Luxurious T-shirts as Kinetix Turns 16

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

Looking back on his 16 years in business, Blayne Siegel, president and founder of **Kinetix Casual Luxury**, is grateful for his long journey to veteran status in the space of creating luxurious T-shirts and other relaxed styles. Beginning his career in production with brands including **L.e.i.** and **Fox Racing**, Siegel received a comprehensive education in making clothing before starting Kinetix in 2005, but reaching the top was no easy feat.

“I suffered for about two to three years just selling to anyone that would take the goods and shipped C.O.D.s that would bounce back to me and not get paid. Then I switched gears,” Siegel explained. “I started to make a higher-end, quality product. I started to use a lot of Pima, bamboo, high-end and super-soft French terries, and I got into stores that were very prestigious—**Fred Segal**, **Lisa Kline**, **M.Fredric** and **H.Lorenzo**.”

The shift paid off as Siegel discovered that having the appropriate wholesale partners made all the difference in his brand. To reach a luxury consumer he had to offer a luxurious product.

“Luxury is a mindset. When you feel something that is high quality and you put it on, it elicits a great feeling inside of you and you don’t want to take it off. When I say ‘casual luxury,’ which is the brand’s name—Kinetix Casual Luxury—it’s clothes that are timeless,” Siegel said. “Casual is more relevant than ever, and we’ve been doing this a long time.”

In addition to sourcing materials that make his customer feel good wearing his brand, Siegel remains committed to domestic production. For full transparency, he will say that 99 percent of the brand is made in the United States. Remaining dedicated to producing most of his goods in Los Angeles, Siegel enjoys the accessibility of domestic production and also feels the city’s apparel-making heritage is an excellent fit for his mission.

“You have a lot of fabric right here that

you can choose from that is well made. The skilled laborers, the people that are cutting and sewing and in the dye houses,” Siegel said, “it’s been going on here forever. Why not tap into the knowledge of all these different resources?”

There is also an element of style for which Kinetix is known that applies to its T-shirts, which include core elements such as long- and short-sleeved designs in classic and fresh colorways and dye applications. The brand is also known for its graphics with relevant messaging such as a design from the recent New Dawn collection that reads “Good Trouble” and another with an image of a regal lion and the words “Lions Don’t Lose Sleep over the Opinions of Sheep.” For Siegel, one particular collection from 2012 stands out from the others as his favorite project.

“I had a really cool, nostalgic run with **Warner Bros.** where we were doing collections around the Christopher Nolan movie ‘The Dark Knight Rises.’ I loved working with the studio and doing movie memorabilia. We did windows at the Santa Monica mall with **Kitson** using the actual Bane villain mask,” Siegel recalled. “That was a really cool time. It felt like we really put a flag in the ground and were respected as a brand.”

As Kinetix observes its 16th anniversary and while the memories of the journey can become a bit fuzzy, Siegel keeps fresh in his mind important words of advice he was given long ago by a denim maker. “He told me, ‘Stay true to who you are. If you’re known for one item, and people are going to pull you in different directions to work on different items, always stay true to what you do well,’” Siegel explained. “That is great advice I got early on and it’s never been more relevant than now.”

Available through select retailers and at kxclothing.com, Kinetix Casual Luxury T-shirts retail from \$42 for a graphic to \$69 for the Cantana long sleeve. Sizing ranges from XS through XXL. ●

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Tee Styled Brings Its Formula for Success Into a New Era

When difficulties arise—such as the times we’re all living through—there are those who see terrifying obstacles and those who see challenges. The former group tends to wither under the circumstances while the latter gets stronger. Tee Styled has weathered the storm of 2020 and begun the new year with fortitude and optimism. “It’s been a difficult year for everyone,” says Damir Gajiani, the company’s president, “but we’ve been holding strong, supporting our employees and customers, and are looking forward to a better 2021.”

T-shirts may be a ubiquitous commodity, but not all suppliers are created the same. In a crowded and fickle industry, only a few players stand out, and Tee Styled is committed to becoming the local Southern California source for high quality T-shirts and hoodies, headed by a team whose experience goes back to 1996. “When you come to Tee Styled, you’re dealing with the wholesaler and manufacturer directly,” says Gajiani, “so you get better service, pricing, and quality. Our slogan is ‘Perfecting the art of manufacturing.’”

Tee Styled has perfected a lot of other things, too. Its website portal at teestyled.com allows new customers to easily open a wholesale account, with discounts applied by the dozen. Delivery is expedited in just one or two days. And in an environment where competitors are coming up short when it comes to reliable inventory, Tee Styled is ensuring it has more than enough to meet demand.

A prime example is its best-selling 6-ounce heavyweight T-shirt. “This will be our focus for 2021,” says Gajiani. “We’re going to be having a million-plus inventory on hand at any given time. The demand is growing, and as the market opens we want to have the inventory to support our customers so they can get back into their retail stores, increase their sales, and get healthy again. We are definitely here to help them meet their deadlines.”

Tee Styled’s TS6000 6-ounce classic heavyweight T-shirt comes in long-sleeve and tank-top versions. It is made of USA cotton, is certified by WRAP and the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, and is available in 33 colors from sizes S to 6XL. The heavyweight model ideal for the urban market, the TS7000 7-ounce super pro heavyweight T-shirt, comes in five colors and sizes S–5XL, with half a million in inventory at any given time.

When it comes to expanding

categories, Tee Styled is pleased to announce its new fleece collection for 2021. This new category was not entered into lightly but was the result of years of product development and customer requests. The fabric is 3END fleece, 9.5 ounces, with a fine and soft finish that is flat with less fuzz, making it easier for screen printing. Highlights include heavyweight joggers with elastic-band bottoms, fully cover stitched at the waist, and true preshrunk. A long draw cord makes for fashion-forward styling, as does a drop crotch and slim fit. Styling on the kangaroo-pouch hoodie features side seams, nickel eyelets, and a flat draw cord and slightly oversized fit. And for all the fleece items, shrinkage is guaranteed at under 5 percent. That’s yet another reason why Tee Styled can help you make 2021 a year of growth far in excess of a retailer’s dreams.

Damir Gajiani grew up in the apparel industry and recalls as a child doing his homework on the factory floor of Alstyle, the apparel blanks company his father started in 1975. He knew even then that his future was in the family business and went on to attend the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in downtown Los Angeles, graduating in 2014. When Alstyle was acquired by new owners, Gajiani founded Tee Styled, which operates its 200,000-square-foot manufacturing and dye facility out of Vernon. Tee Styled has decided to invest locally and not move overseas and employs more than 150 people in the U.S. It employs the latest machinery on the global market and underwent a \$2 million upgrade in 2017. The company also operates four sewing facilities in Mexico, accounting for some 2 million units for clients including such heavyweights as Target, Walmart, and Kohl’s. “Tee Styled is your local source for high quality blank t-shirts and hoodies,” says Gajiani.



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FASHION



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Kevan Hall Directs His First Fashion Film, ‘Together Again’

Veteran Los Angeles designer Kevan Hall released his first fashion film, “Together Again,” on Runway360, a website produced by the **Council of Fashion Designers of America**.

The 7-minute, 30-second film was produced in place of Hall’s in-person runway show during **New York Fashion Week**. It debuted Feb. 16 and could be used on several different platforms ranging from Runway360, where it continues to be webcast, to his own brand’s social media.

“Taking a look at what was going on in the world, I was thinking of how I could present my collection without going to New York Fashion Week and doing trunk shows,” Hall said.

Hall filmed “Together Again” at a friend’s Tuscan-style villa in Westlake Village, Calif. Models of various ages and ethnic backgrounds were hired to tell a story of how a gathering of friends might appear when pandemic restrictions are eased. “It’s a look forward to a more-optimistic time,” Hall said.

In the film, a group of friends play a game of hide-and-seek and stumble upon a closet filled with styles from the **Kevan Hall Signature** line and the capsule collection Luxe

Leisure. The models try on the clothing and produce an impromptu runway show by the poolside, later reviewing footage in the villa’s screening room.

Twenty-five looks were shown, including tunics, caftans, maxi dresses and gowns. Retail price points range from \$325 to \$1,400 for the Luxe Leisure capsule collection and \$700 to \$4,000 for the Kevan Hall Signature pieces on the designer’s direct-to-consumer channel, kevanhalldesigns.com, and at select independent retailers.

Hall’s family comprises a number of creatives. His brother Vondie Curtis-Hall acted in films including the 2019 epic “Harriet” and “Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo + Juliet” and on television programs such as “ER.” His sister-in-law Kasi Lemmons is a director who has led projects including “Eve’s Bayou” and “Harriet.”

Hall screened the film for his family and asked for frank feedback. He was pleased when the constructive critiques covered only sound mixing, which he said gave him the confidence to try again.

“I feel like I got the directorial bug,” Hall said. “I want to do it every season.”

—Andrew Asch



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Novoloop Founders Achieve Plastics-Upcycling Breakthrough

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Founded during the college years of friends Miranda Wang and Jeanny Yao, the Menlo Park, Calif., **BioCollection** formed with a goal of developing processes to transform traditionally unrecyclable plastics into materials that could be upcycled into new products. While they originally created a patented Accelerated Thermal Oxidative Decomposition (ATOD) chemical-recycling process, which turned plastics such as shopping bags and wrap into chemicals to make materials such as polyurethane and nylon to create apparel, Wang and Yao realized their true eco vision and rebranded the company as **Novoloop**.

“Novoloop is made up of two parts—*novo* and *loop*. *Novo* means ‘good as brand new.’ It’s our belief that real recycling, where sustainable materials need to be headed, is that when we take a material at the end of its life and we say, we’re going to recycle it or process it, it really needs to be good as new. It can’t be downcycled,” Wang explained. “In terms of ‘loop,’ that speaks to the fact that we strongly believe in creating materials that fit into a circular economy.”

Wang, with a background in engineering entrepreneurship and molecular biology, and Yao, a biochemist and environmental scientist, announced on Feb. 23 the introduction of their achievement, a material named XIRC. Created as a material that is up to 50 percent post-consumer polyethylene waste, which is made through Novoloop’s ATOD process, XIRC is a customizable thermoplastic polyurethane that has met or exceeded the capabilities of virgin plastics when studied in third-party testing. It is also more sustainable and higher performing than synthetic rubber or silicone. XIRC is currently used to create footwear soles and waterproofing elements for clothing such as seam tape and membranes that are used in thermoregulating waterproof apparel.

“All of these critical components that enable the products are made with this thermoplastic polyurethane,” Wang said. “We were comparing our product with virgin ones,



Menlo Park, Calif.’s Novoloop announced on Feb. 23 that it had developed XIRC, a customizable thermoplastic polyurethane material comprising up to 50 percent post-consumer polyethylene waste, which aids in the reduction of trash from single-use plastics.

and we have seen with aspects such as abrasion and also elongation that our material has outstanding performance, also in terms of dry and wet grip, which are very important properties for keeping a shoe from sliding off a surface.”

To sustain its program, Novoloop maintains partnerships with the City of San Jose in California and waste processor **GreenWaste Recovery Inc.**, while it also counts a Southern California organization among its sources for carbon-rich polyethylene. XIRC provides a solution to a plastics problem that has only worsened over the course of a year.

“The extra packaging we’re getting with our takeout, all of that is single-use plastic, and the majority of that is the type of plastic that we target, which is polyethylene,” Wang said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, polyethylene use has increased as delivery services rely on products comprising this material including shopping bags, package wrapping and shipping supplies. While the increase is a setback in

the sustainable space, it provides resources for the materials necessary to create XIRC, affording an opportunity for Novoloop to illustrate its capabilities.

“The number went up from around 350 million metric tons a year before the pandemic to now around 380 million metric tons [of plastic waste]. It’s a pretty substantial increase,” Wang said. “Polyethylene makes up over 100 million metric tons of that 350 million to 380 million. It’s a substantial amount, and we target that group of plastics.”

Third-party testing that compares traditional thermoplastic-polyurethane production with ATOD revealed that the Novoloop technology reduces up to 45 percent of carbon emissions. The company projects that it will eventually reduce the impact of 685 million metric tons of CO₂ annually.

“For the first time ever, through what we are doing with our technology and our products, we are delivering both sustainability and performance hand-in-hand. People can have the products that they love. Brands can drop in replacement material for the products that everybody loves,” Wang said. “It’s the product that everybody has been waiting for.”

XIRC’s potential includes limitless possibilities for use in the apparel space outside of footwear and beyond. Novoloop is currently in discussions for a XIRC partnership with an unnamed activewear and outerwear brand. Wang notes that 58 percent of Millennials and members of Generation Z are demanding recycled content in their goods and about 80 percent of brands are on schedule to meet these demands.

“Footwear sales are skyrocketing because so many people are working from home but still trying to stay healthy,” Wang said. “We believe what we are creating here is not only a cool material or sustainable material but also really solving a problem that the plastics industry has not been able to respond to yet. The way that we’ve been making these performance materials today from virgin resources is outdated. People need sustainability today. That is the future for materials.” ●

SUSTAINABILITY

Culprit Underwear Approaches Sustainability With a Touch of Humor

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Using sustainable fabrics for jeans, T-shirts and underwear is usually serious business, but the Los Angeles–headquartered brand **Culprit Underwear** has developed a niche using humorous graphics to sell its ecologically sound, made-in-Los Angeles products.

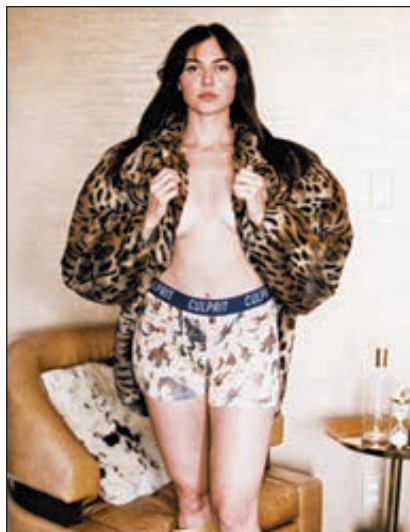
Filmmakers Dylan Trussell and David Dinetz started working on the underwear brand in 2019 as a side hustle. They continued to develop Culprit, even as their scripted comedy project, “Florida Man,” was going into production. However, the project went into hiatus when the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered film and television productions. Trussell and Dinetz found that they suddenly had a lot of time for their hobby project, which they believe has some similarities to filmmaking.

Culprit is the first apparel venture for the duo, which they currently sell on their direct-to-consumer channel, culpritunderwear.com. “Underwear is the perfect canvas for creativity. You can shoot an action movie in your underwear,” Dinetz said.

Trussell further described their creative process. “We ask, ‘Could this pattern be a TV show? Does it tell a story?’”

Humor is the main message they want to deliver. One graphic, called Get It Kraken, shows a woman scuba diver hunting a Kraken sea monster. Another, called Lizard King, shows a giant lizard fighting samurai warriors. A design released on Feb. 25, called The Pig Short, shows graphics that purport to tell the story of the **GameStop** retailer’s roller-coaster ride on the stock market that shook Wall Street this year. Proceeds from sales will be used to acquire Game Stop shares. Trussell and Dinetz will then consult a **Reddit** forum dedicated to the market regarding how to handle the stock later this year.

Producing the line in Los Angeles gives Trussell and Dinetz an opportunity to address timely topics. Dinetz said they could release underwear with prints such as the GameStop story while memories of the news are still fresh in the consumer consciousness. They also didn’t have to go through the long wait time endured by some brands that produce goods overseas.



What began as an underwear line for men, Culprit Underwear founders quickly realized that women also liked the comfort, fit and fun of the ecologically sound and made-in-L.A. brand.

“American-made is something we are very passionate about,” Dinetz said. “Creating as many U.S. jobs and bringing back skilled labor is awesome.”

About 95 percent of the fabrics used in Culprit garments are Modal, a sustainable-fabric option because its fibers are created from beech-tree pulp. Modal is also a lightweight fabric that is breathable, which fits into another feature the filmmakers wanted for an underwear line—comfort. Trussell and Dinetz started their underwear brand with the belief that there was less competition for the men’s underwear market than other categories.

To start work on the brand, they collaborated with a patternmaker, while Trussell served as a fit model. In 2019, they released a beta product of black underwear with the Culprit logo on the waistband. Inventory of the beta pieces sold out in a month, Dinetz said.

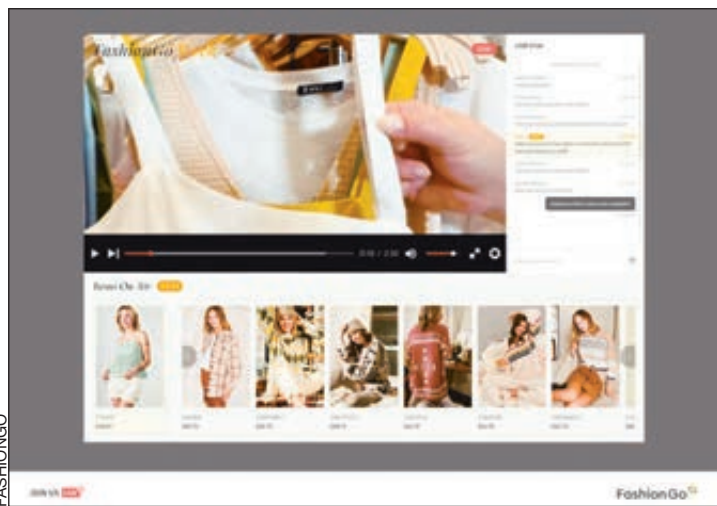
When they started selling Culprit, Dinetz and Trussell estimated that their clientele comprised 95 percent men. Currently, they estimate that 70 percent of their customers are

women. Through conversations with the women who buy their products, Dinetz and Trussell found that these customers were buying boxers to enjoy comfort during the day and to wear while sleeping. The duo later worked with female designers to make Lady Boxers, which offer a boxer silhouette with a woman’s curves in mind.

Culprit also makes thongs, bootie shorts and boxers that feature graphics made in collaboration with artists and other brands. Retail price points range from \$29 for men’s boxers and \$24 to \$26 for women’s underwear. Collaboration garments cost \$39. The website also offers subscriptions that allow shoppers to receive discounts.

An important design feature is that the underwear doesn’t ride up the wearer’s body, Trussell said. The underwear was designed to wear on a first date, to give an edge during a business meeting or to send good vibes to a favorite sports team during a game.

“Everyone has their lucky pair of underwear,” Dinetz said. “We set out to make a lucky pair of underwear for everyday.” ●



1,400 vendors exhibited and 756,000 retailers registered for the FashionGo platform, which offers tools for businesses to make more-informed decisions with real-time data and secure payment processes.

FashionGo Week strives to be the perfect complement to on-site trade shows, according to Paul Lee, CEO of the show's parent company.

FashionGo Week to Become Biannual Digital Trade Show

After a second run of **FashionGo Week**, which ran Feb. 8–12 on the **FashionGo** business-to-business wholesale online-market platform, the digital trade show anticipates becoming a regular feature on the trade-show calendar. According to Paul Lee, chief executive officer of **NHN Global**, FashionGo's Los Angeles–headquartered parent company, this second edition of the show sees the event as an offering that will complement the existing trade-event roster, especially during a time when physical expositions are beginning to return to on-site productions.

FashionGo Week will be produced biannually. The next FashionGo Week probably will run in fall 2021, Lee said. While it is a digitally native trade show, FashionGo produced a branded in-person activation at the **WWD MAGIC** trade show in Las Vegas during the period from 2018 to 2020. The **WWD MAGIC** contract for live activations ended last year, and, while FashionGo does not plan to return to in-person shows, Lee believed that it would work hand-in-hand with in-person shows and provide crucial support.

"Digital shows will coexist with physical shows," Lee said. "Digital trade shows can offer more tools for businesses to make more-informed decisions with real-time data and with secure payment processes." FashionGo had been planning to produce a digital trade show during the past couple of years, and the COVID-19 pandemic propelled the company into producing a digital trade show in late 2020, he said.

An inaugural run for FashionGo Week was produced Aug. 24–Sept. 6, 2020. For the sophomore run, Lee said 1,400 vendors exhibited and 756,000 retailers registered for the platform. Most of the retailers were from the United States and Canada and included independent bricks-and-mortar shops, digital retailers and entrepreneurs working in social media. Access was complimentary for retailers to register for the FashionGo platform and browse retailers' goods.

Categories exhibiting comprised young contemporary and contemporary misses women's clothing as well as styles for men's, kids', footwear, accessories, handbags and beauty. Lee

estimated that 95 percent of FashionGo vendors have offices or do business in downtown Los Angeles' Fashion District.

One point of difference for FashionGo Week is that it has the open feel of an in-person trade show for discovery and connection between brands and retailers, Lee said. The FashionGo Week platform gives opportunities to retailers to view and to shop products without having to get vendor approval. He added that this platform is secure for vendors and that attendees and vendors are screened during registration onto the platform and that participants must produce documents to confirm that they are legitimate businesspeople. Also, if vendors would prefer not to do business with a particular retailer, they can choose to not fulfill a specific retailer's orders, he said.

During the digital trade show's second edition, new features were unveiled. There was a Join Us Live vendor live-streaming experience. Attendees were also able to watch daily live shows of vendors exhibiting new styles and could live-chat with vendors and shop.—*Andrew Asch*



The novelty of doing a live show attracted some first-time exhibitors including Gil Gomez of the Black Circle Agency.



For veteran exhibitor Mario Pasillas of the 7 Diamonds brand, WCTS was a way to show a vote of confidence in the business.



Kate Wilson and Skylar Harmon showed the Remo Tulliani brand of accessories dedicated to protecting the environment.



Buyers and vendors alike were pleased with WCTS: from left, Arman Ariane and Michelle Goodson join show owner Ken Haruta for a photo op.

West Coast Trend *Continued from page 1*

show's owner. WCTS never canceled a show through the crisis. Its last show took place in August 2020 after the Los Angeles County Department of Health allowed for some limited in-person interactions, which included small, hotel suite-style meetings, which WCTS has traditionally produced.

However, COVID-19 did hurt the trade show's vendor and retailer attendance, Haruta said. He estimated that vendor attendance was down more than 50 percent compared to the show's zenith in August 2019, when WCTS occupied six hotel floors, four for exhibitor rooms and two for retailers who flew in for the show.

Since WCTS's beginning, the better men's trade show has been pitched as a no-frills regional show. Exhibition prices are kept relatively low, with \$850 for a hotel room to exhibit and \$750 for an early-bird rate. Retailers shopping at the show often stay at the Embassy Suites and pay only \$99 for a room, Haruta said.

While the show's affordable cost has always attracted exhibitors, it was the novelty of doing a live show that attracted some first-time exhibitors this year including Gil Gomez of the **Black Circle Agency**.

"Since there are no trade shows going on this season, we decided to do it this weekend," Gomez said. "We secured

a couple of new accounts, and we managed to make a few appointments. At this point in time, with all of the stuff that has happened with COVID and how the wholesale industry is a little different due to the pandemic, we'll take what we can get."

Gomez exhibited the footwear line **Clae**, the fashion line **Bowie & Co.**, as well as **Commonwealth Provisions**, a candles, incense and accessories company.

For veteran exhibitor Mario Pasillas of the **7 Diamonds** brand, headquartered in Tustin, Calif., the show was a good place to show a vote of confidence in the business.

"It's been beneficial for us to be in the presence of people, just to let them know that we are here and to let them know that we are supportive," Pasillas said. 7 Diamonds exhibited its Spring 2021 collection as well as Summer and some Fall goods. "Business was steady. People have been writing a lot of at-once business," he said.

WCTS also represented an opportunity to introduce brands. The Danish brand **No Nationality** made its first West Coast trade-show appearance at WCTS. Its trade-show debut was in Dallas recently, said Jonathan Bernal, a sales representative working with the brand. The show was the right place to show the brand's relaxed yet stylish looks.

"Customers are more value-minded. They want to be more comfortable and relaxed but still be dressed well," Bernal said.

Los Angeles–headquartered Georg Roth also exhibited his self-named **Georg Roth Los Angeles** brand's Pima-cotton T-shirts, Henleys and polos and four-way-stretch shorts and pants.

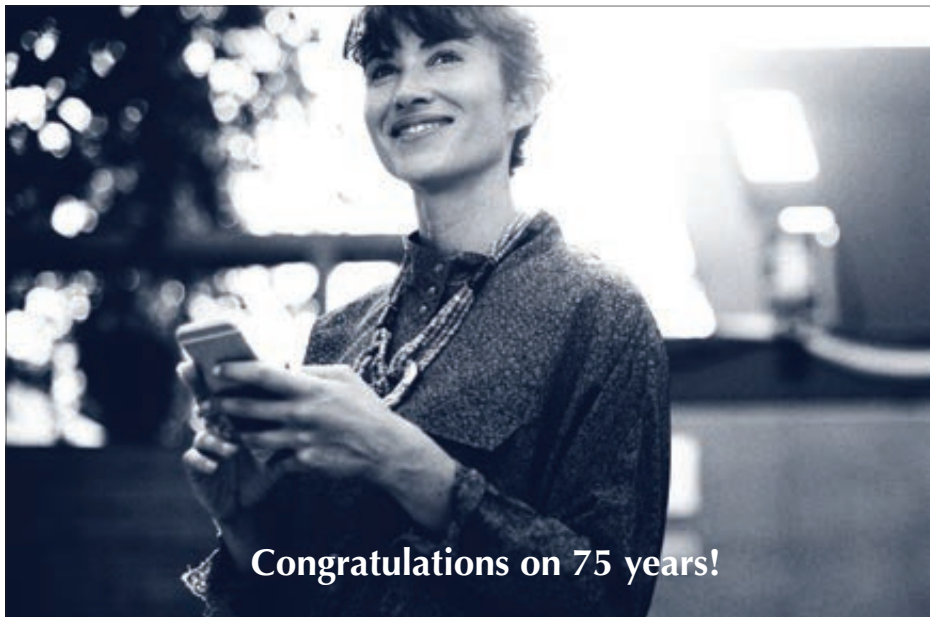
"Comfort is king," Roth said. "People are working from home. They don't wear suits. They wear casual."

Roth said that the pandemic, as well as retailer hardships from firestorms in Northern California in the past few years, have taken a bite out of business, resulting in fewer independent Northern California retailers. "This is a quiet show, but people are coming in and buying," Roth said.

One retailer who shopped at WCTS was Reza Shekarchian, co-owner of the better men's store **Avedon**, which has been based in Beverly Hills, Calif., for the past 13 years. Shekarchian appreciated the regional show's user-friendliness. "I can hop in a car and go there for a couple of hours," he said.

But due to the pandemic he said that he was ordering less. He also noted that vendors were playing it safe. "It's the same concepts as last year with new colorations," Shekarchian said. "At Avedon, people are buying upbeat colors. They're not going for black and navy. It's more earth-tone colors than dark colors."

He also forecasted that customers would want to release pent-up demand for goods and go shopping in the fall when restrictions are further eased. ●



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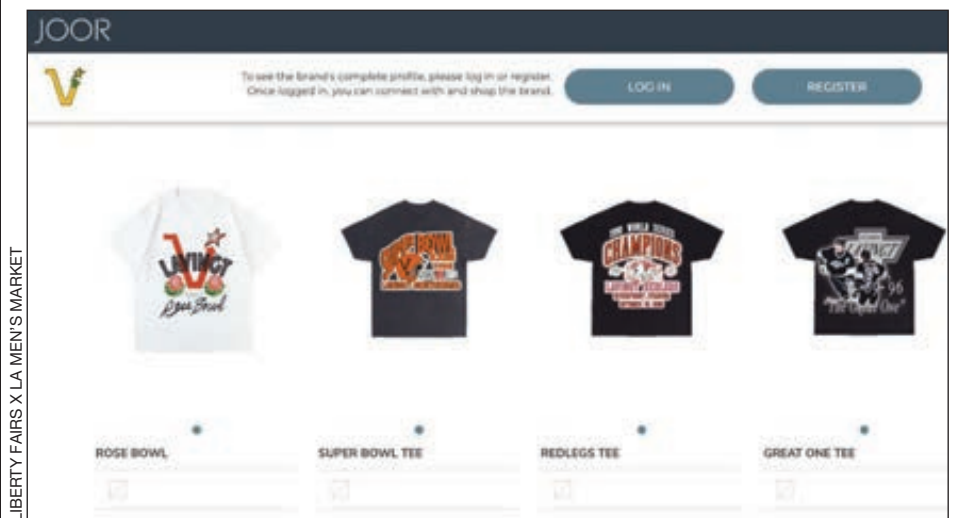
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TRADE EVENTS



Liberty Fairs x LAMM was a virtual joint venture between the Liberty Fairs and LA Men's Market trade shows to afford a platform where goods could be exhibited by brands such as LaVingt (above) and Thrills (below).

Liberty Fairs, LA Men's Market Find Strength in Numbers

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

After seven years of running solo in-person trade shows in downtown Los Angeles, the **LA Men's Market** and **Liberty Fairs** tried out their first partnership by co-producing the virtual trade show **Liberty Fairs x LA Men's Market**, which will wrap up March 9 after a month of doing business.

It was a partnership forged by seeking opportunity after a year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Sannia Shahid, LAMM's sales director, said that the collaboration was a success. "We wanted to give buyers and brands both shows at once. We wanted to make things as easy as possible. The solution was one digital show. There was strength in numbers," Shahid said.

The shows have a similar focus on high-end men's fashion and lifestyle; however, they have different strengths. LAMM serves brands selling off-season collections such as Summer and Holiday, while Liberty focuses on Fall and Spring. With their technology partner, **Joor**, the collaboration hosted a digital trade show for 81 vendors. Attendance was calculated according to page visits on the platform. There were an estimated 7,000 event- and profile-page visits, said Edwina Kulego, Liberty Fairs' vice president.

Vendors were divided into eight categories or Style Stories, as the show directors named separate sections for the event. They included streetwear, new-to-show, women's athleisure, accessories, contemporary, apothecary/grooming and tailored. Attendees could view vendors by neighborhood or look for a specific brand in the search engine. Vendors exhibiting at the show included **Levi's**, eye-wear line **Garrett Leight**, European brand **Le Bonnet**, Los Angeles streetwear brand **LaVingt** and shoe-care brand **Reshoeven8**.

Kulego said that show attendance increased compared to Liberty's first digital show in August 2020, and the caliber of retailers also increased. Those making big orders were prominent retailers **Neiman Marcus**, **Shoptop** and **East Dane**, **Saks Fifth Avenue**, **Urban Outfitters**, **Brooklyn Tailors**, and **American Rag**. Other retailers shopping the show included **Fred Segal** and **South Moon Under**.

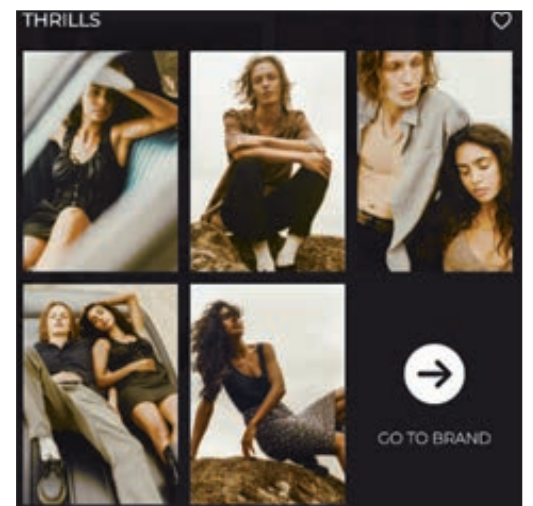
Mark Werts, the founder of **American Rag**, said that working a digital show was necessary for doing business during the pandemic.

"If you have one choice, you take it. You participate digitally or you don't participate," Werts said.

Making a brand statement during the pandemic is important for vendors, said Grant

Bloodworth, founder of **Bloodworth & Company**, a Los Angeles-headquartered wholesale and public-relations company. "I want to know that buyers will remember me and also know where I'll be once we get back to in-person events."

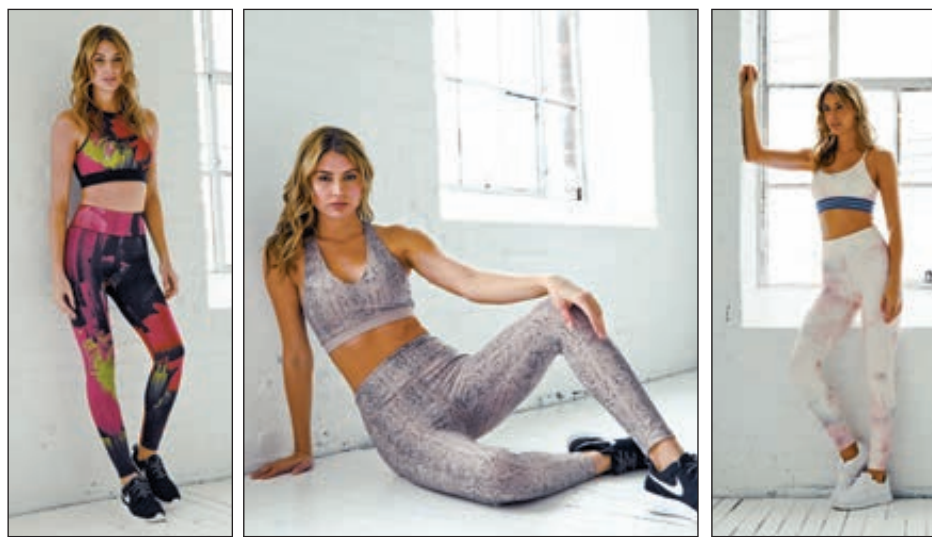
Bloodworth represented the knits brand **Velva Sheen** as well as **Arvin Goods**, which makes socks out of recycled cotton and hemp bio fiber. Bloodworth said that business was solid. "Orders are good. Customers are placing good-size orders. No one is limping in. No one is coming in with small orders," he said. Another advantage to doing a show online is that a trade show can turn into a global forum. He noted that he did business with retailers from New York, Seattle and Salt Lake City and also received orders from retailers headquartered in Scotland, Germany, Sweden and Paris.



Kulego said that another milestone for the digital trade show was increasing participation from global retailers from East Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

While both trade shows are eager to return to producing in-person events, future collaborations between the shows are being discussed, Kulego said.

"It's been such a great experience working with Sannia and her team. There always has been synergy with the brands that attend LAMM and Liberty in Vegas. There's a lot of brands that do both of our shows. Because we exhibited at different times, our brands have been able to do each show," Kulego said. "The best reaction is to not have various retailers look for brands on various platforms. That was one of the intentions of the collaboration. Look, it's been a really tough year. Everyone is having a really hard time. Let's not make anything harder for our community. Let's support the community and work together, and it's been wonderful." ●



Made in the U.S.A. and dedicated to its clients through a direct-to-consumer business, Noli Yoga also is committed to color, comfort and performance excellence.

In the Evolving D2C World, Noli Yoga Is a Pioneer in the Active Space

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Built on customer trust and forging relationships directly with consumers, **Noli Yoga** was founded according to a mission that afforded a fashion-driven activewear product through connections with the brand's clients. What started as a side project for Chief Executive Officer and Creative Director Slava Furman, who was working in a corporate role when the label launched in 2015, Noli Yoga began as a labor of passion. Working with bright colors for the collections, Furman recognized the connection between striking hues and success selling through social media.

"From the start I had a vision to create superior-quality pieces that combined luxe style with topnotch comfort and performance," Furman said. "Ensuring the line was front and center, we were one of the pioneers in the direct-to-consumer model on social media. We saw that people were drawn to bold and bright designs when shopping online, so we continued to push the boundaries on our pieces while making sure they remained cutting edge and on-trend."

The dedication to the Noli Yoga customer also led Furman to create product in California as the popularity rose for domestically made products from the United States. The brand also incorporates a sustainable angle in its fabrications through the use of bamboo, recycled polyester, modal and cupro. While the aesthetics of Noli Yoga are aimed at making customers feel good, Furman believes that the foundation of the brand's domestic production is another factor that allows her clients to remain positive when buying the label.

"Every day we see a growing demand for ethically made products, especially products made in the U.S. It is important that our consumers feel proud of their spending and are as-

sured that their purchasing power is going toward ethical wages, sustainable fabrics and is in support of the local economy," Furman said. "Our customers know that since our products are made in California they come with a high level of craftsmanship and quality."

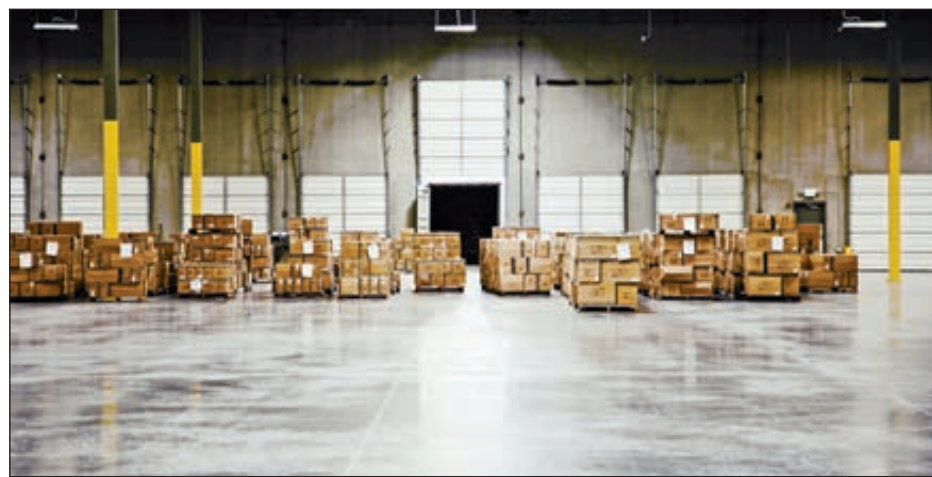
When designing its Spring 2021 collection, Noli Yoga's focus was to remain true to its brand yet speak to trends in fashion. The result was a collection of uplifting pieces in bright colors that, in addition to being comfortable, perform well for the active customer.

"For Spring 2021, we wanted to stay on the pulse of fashion and trends without compromising our core vision," Furman said. "Our collection draws from the popularity of classic Noli staples—bold prints and ultra-flattering silhouettes—while incorporating current trends like monochromatic sets and pastels. Specifically, we are working with bonded garments for the ultimate second-skin fit and feel."

The vision Furman has for Noli Yoga is to become the industry's No. 1 activewear brand through a constantly evolving design focus and relying on technological innovations. While Furman looks toward a successful future with Noli Yoga, the focus remains on where the brand has been in addition to where it wants to go.

"At Noli, we are always progressing and elevating our standards. The fashion industry can be brutal—you have to be ever-evolving, pushing boundaries and taking risks. With every collection, we look back and think about how we can improve to deliver the best possible product. Dedication and attention are the heart of Noli and what our brand represents."

Available at noliyoga.com, retail price points range from \$20 for masks to \$138 for leggings. The brand is available in sizes XS–XL. ●



Three Financing Must-Dos to Navigate Supply-Chain Disruptions

By Gino N. Clark *Contributing Writer*

As global supply-chain disruptions continue to impact the bottom line of businesses across the U.S., the need for apparel companies to be creative, resourceful, and nimble carries unprecedented weight. The industry needs to be diligent in maintaining its customer base and business partnerships while sustaining longer payment terms, a shortage of available materials, and higher costs.

COVID-19 industry impacts

Today's supply-chain struggles were exacerbated last spring when the pandemic caused a precipitous drop in manufacturing orders that quickly rebounded in response to strong consumer demand, which continues to this day.

Shortly thereafter, the law of supply and demand took center stage as manufacturers repurposed their operations for highly profitable PPE. When raw and finished materials became scarce and coupled with the global incoordination of shipping containers and backlogs at U.S. ports, a perfect storm occurred. But what today's crisis has most glaringly exposed is our over-reliance on sourcing from a single country, namely China.

Financing best practices

While the thought of making material changes to your business during a time of volatility may seem daunting, we believe these three financing must-dos will help you to navigate—and evolve with—what looks to be the new normal in disrupted supply chains:

1. Diversify your suppliers.
2. Maintain a strong balance sheet.
3. Arrange flexible financing that can adjust to meet your company's short- and long-term goals.

Diversify Your Suppliers

We suggest not having concentrations of over 30 percent in any single supplier. Furthermore, we recommend not limiting sourcing to any single country. This variation will help to reduce the impact of future disruptions. Many businesses have already begun expanding their networks by manufacturer and region to include Southeast-Asian countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Thailand, as well as the Americas, including Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico. It is important to note that changing suppliers and countries can be a long process that requires

significant upfront efforts and costs to generate future returns, including in-person visits to those manufacturers to establish relationships critical to your success.

Maintain a Strong Balance Sheet

This allows you the flexibility to control your own destiny. Ample working capital enables you to overcome almost any obstacle and take advantage of opportunities. This can be achieved by strictly monitoring your asset performance and maintaining a solid capitalization structure. Staying fully apprised of your liquidity, accounts receivable, and inventories will help you make well-informed decisions on funding your operations and investing in growth.

Arrange Flexible Financing With Your Lender

Market disturbances are as certain to happen as they are unpredictable, and knowing that you have access to fast and reliable capital is essential to making confident business decisions. Use your lender as a sounding board for important initiatives you are considering, especially one who takes the time to understand your business model and industry and explore the



Gino N. Clark, managing director of White Oak Commercial Finance

suitable financing options for your situation. For example, if you communicate that you are diversifying your supplier network, a credible and established lender will be able to provide functional guidance based on its industry expertise and trends it sees with like borrowers. In the end, your lender should view your success as its own, so engage with your lender as you would a trusted business partner.

As a lender with extensive apparel-industry experience, we have confidence in the future of the industry based on the accomplishments of the dedicated and resilient entrepreneurs with whom we partner. We hope this short-but-important list of financing must-dos will serve your company well and act as a cornerstone for long-term success. ●

Gino N. Clark, managing director of White Oak Commercial Finance, oversees origination, underwriting and servicing for White Oak Commercial Finance on the West Coast. He has worked in the commercial financing industry since 1993 and is active in professional trade groups including the International Factoring Association, the California Fashion Association and The Professional Club. He earned his MBA from Pepperdine University and his bachelors in Business Finance from California State University, Long Beach.

Curve Connect Sets Its Sights Beyond a Virtual Event, Seeks Status as a Social Medium

The **Comexposium Group**'s virtual trade event **Curve Connect** was hosted Feb. 16–28 as the second edition of this digital production. The platform, which is powered by **Grip**, will be available for the remainder of the year as Curve Connect organizers seek to transform the trade show into a permanent online destination for its clients. Curve Connect's visitor promotion director, Kirsten Griffin, compared it to a social network for the lingerie and foundationwear market.

"We want it to be a really important resource for buyers and brands to network, meet each other and make connections," Griffin said. "Our intention is to keep the platform open all year-round and then we'll have specific market weeks. We'll have another market week in May, which follows the traditional lingerie schedule when we had physical events and traditional market weeks."

Due to the necessity of the categories served by Curve Connect, the brand is positioned to achieve its goal. From loungewear to lingerie, Curve Chief Executive Officer Raphael Camp noted that the market remains strong and will continue to perform.

"People stay home and stay in their PJs all day long, or they're out walking and wearing support bras, or Millennials and skateboarders in California are wearing bralettes to complement their hoodies," Camp said. "It's a very versatile industry, and this time shows it. People are going to continue to wear bras and bralettes. It's not going anywhere."

While the industry has been waiting to return to on-site events, which Griffin and Camp have planned for Aug. 1–3 in New York and yet-to-be-determined August dates in Los Angeles, the Curve Connect platform can serve as an alternative for industry professionals who are reluctant to travel. The Curve Connect producers have been listening to their customers, which has resonated with attendees such as Judy Masucci of Wexford, Penn.'s **Levana Bra-**



Jessica Krupa of Panty Promise, who won Curve Connect's Brand Pitch Up in October, shared her line sheets in an effort to meet with potential partners.



During its Feb. 16-28 event, Curve Connect evolved, as it incorporated attendee feedback to produce a lingerie, foundationwear and loungewear show that will serve as an important social resource for the industry.

tique, a single-door store and digital shop that has been in business since 2007.

"The resources that Curve has put together are to really try and help us. Participate in as much as you can and provide feedback where you think something isn't relevant because Curve wants to be relevant to us," Masucci said. "The big difference between the first Curve Connect and this Curve Connect is dramatic. They've incorporated a lot of our feedback, so it's important to give them feedback and to participate whenever you can to benefit from it."

As an emerging brand in the underwear space, **Panty Promise** of Union City, N.J., has entered the market after founder and lingerie-design veteran Jessica Krupa launched her label in 2020 as a feminine-wellness panty

brand that relies on organic cotton. Krupa also retains the services of gynecologist Alyssa Dweck to inform her decision-making to create underwear that promotes feminine wellness. The brand won Curve Connect's Brand Pitch Up in October and returned during this edition to meet with potential partners.

"I spent the majority of my time during the show seeing who was just a good fit for Panty Promise, seeing the types of product they carry and going at them and getting to them in that way," Krupa said. "What I like that Curve is doing is that they are making it a yearlong thing versus just the two weeks. This is ongoing, so I am curious to see how it works out for myself as I continue to pitch people."

—Dorothy Crouch

CMC Uploaded Offers L.A. Market Week Preview

For the fifth run of **CMC Uploaded**, the virtual trade show produced by the **California Market Center** in downtown Los Angeles, new seminar speakers and new exhibitors were on the roster for an L.A. Market Week Preview.

Included were retail consultants from **The Boutique Hub**, a network of shop owners who offer educational opportunities as well as discounts on supplies and services for members. Ashley Alderson, Boutique Hub's founder and chief executive officer, spoke March 3 on developing customer engagement through social media and live video. Sara Burks, Boutique Hub's director of education, held a session, "Only the Strong Survive—5 Tips to Thrive in 2021!" on March 4.

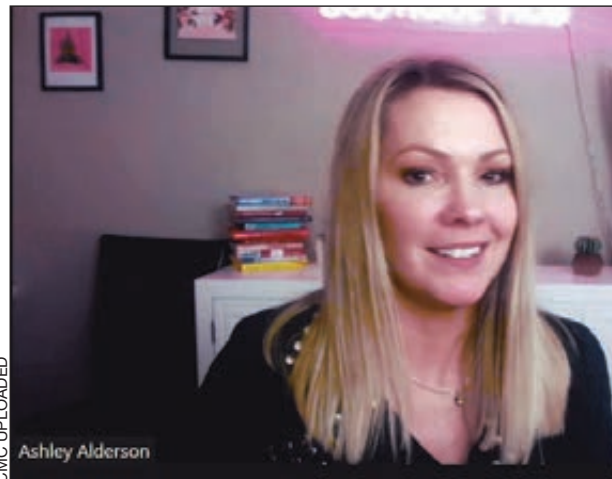
Returning speakers included Janine Mix, founder of **The Complete Boutique**, also a retailer network, presenting the seminar "How to Increase Sales and Make Up for Lost Rev-

enue in 2021" on March 5.

Dan Jablons of the **Retail Smart Guys** consultancy gave the March 3 seminar "Three Tweaks to Improve Cash Flow." "Right now we need to turn super fast while planning for great growth. I'm predicting we'll see growth in the second half of the second quarter all the way to the end of the year," he said.

Showrooms were also invited to make video presentations during the show. New exhibitors included **Chakra Girl**, an active-lifestyle brand for women and kids; **SoftShoe Co.**, a footwear brand; as well as the kids' line **Bella Bliss**.

Sharon Koshet of **Sharon Koshet Sales** made her return to CMC Uploaded with a presentation on March 5. "We go over styles and the best colors. We go over each line and tell their story. It's a great way of getting new accounts," Koshet said.—Andrew Asch



During CMC Uploaded, Boutique Hub founder Ashley Alderson advised viewers regarding developing customer engagement through the use of social media and live video.

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SEASON AFTER SEASON
Suite C395
Koi Koi
Men's casual collection
Rietveld
Men's art-driven graphic tees
Smash & Tess
Women's knit-fashion rompers/
jumpers
Stonefield
Men's and women's price-conscious
premium denim and non-denim
collection

SHARON KOSHET SALES
Suite C401
Barok Paris
Contemporary boho chic wear
Impulse
Women's sportswear

FERN LIBERSON & CO
Suite C410
Save The Faith
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One Essence
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Smita Fashions
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Mezzanine 3, Room 3

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LA Textile *Continued from page 1*

new brands as well as larger, corporate labels. This blend of designers from every career stage provided a similar composition of attendees as the on-site event.

“The attendees included everyone, from the small kids who are just starting—LA Textile has always been a home for them,” Mathiasen said. “We also saw our key big corporate brands show up. Even in an age of virtual, these corporate design firms are still showing up to our show, coming in, supporting exhibitors, meeting with them, writing orders and driving the ball forward.”

This February edition of LA Textile comprised brands from 40 states and 13 countries, which is extraordinary for a show that typically sees 70 percent of its visitors from the local area during the on-site production. This global expansion was a pleasant surprise for show organizers, who also revealed that within the mix of 28 exhibiting companies, 10 countries were represented. While LA Textile will continue to utilize a digital offering, show organizers are planning to return with an on-site show Sept. 29–Oct. 1 if local safety guidelines allow.

“Even after a year of this, talking with so many different brands, buyers and exhibitors across the board and other trade-show producers, we’re all saying that virtual isn’t going to replace live,” said CMC Events Director Moriah Robinson. “Buyers and brands have found ways to communicate better, which is great, but in-person is still everybody’s goal.”

Information sessions were organized to take attendees through the different stages of bringing a collection to life through trend reporting, sourcing through a responsible supply chain and a workshop on designing. Amid presentations from exhibitors who showcased their offerings, LA Textile also included a trend presentation from **Peclers Paris** on the first day, continued into the second day with **Fashionindex’s Sustainable Fashion Forum** and ended with a design-coaching workshop from **Perspective Design** on the final day.



CMC Senior Manager of Events Matthew Mathiasen hosted this virtual edition of LA Textile, which doubled the number of attendees over the October show.

“My goal is to get someone to show up all three days and visit all the exhibitors and really explore the entire show,” Mathiasen said. “We thought about this time with the seminars each day being a component of the full process of being a designer.”

Another milestone that the show reached during this edition was found within the event’s group of exhibitors, 100 percent of which offered a sustainable or ecologically sound product. While providing sustainable products is not a requirement to exhibit at the show, Mathiasen cited a growing adoption of eco practices by textile and notions producers.

“Somehow we ended up with 100 percent of our exhibitors with some form of an eco or sustainable offering in their collections,” Mathiasen said. “Even if it’s small, we’re seeing it grow and grow and grow in every single offering. That was my

biggest takeaway because it’s special to me.”

The demand for sustainable sourcing was also noted by Pat Tabassi, product development and marketing manager for the Los Angeles-based fabric mill **Design Knit**. As part of LA Textile’s Exhibitor Spotlight Sessions, Tabassi led viewers through **Studio DK**, a line of textiles that is offered at smaller minimums but also affords a luxurious hand and ecologically sound options.

“It’s constantly of interest and something that is important to us as well. There was a huge interest in sustainability and the offerings that we have. More so than specific fabric, it was a lot of ‘How do you work?’ ‘What is the process?’” Tabassi said. “We are happy to connect clients with the supply chain.”

While Tabassi looks forward to returning to on-site trade events, attending the virtual edition of LA Textile for the second time was an enjoyable experience. She looks forward to being offered a model that is a hybrid of on-site and virtual shows as she views digital events as an opportunity to serve multiple partners at once.

“There may be times when I can’t be in another location or it depends on what your budget is,” Tabassi said. “Even though you can’t be somewhere in person doesn’t mean that you’re limited regarding how you can contact potential clients. I like this format very much. It feels like a conversation. It’s a very friendly format. It’s relatable. It doesn’t feel intimidating, especially to a new brand.”

Searching for knit vendors in Los Angeles, **Magnus Alpha** co-founder and Creative Director Hommy Diaz felt the virtual edition was an expertly produced alternative that he would welcome as a complement to the on-site show in the future.

“The virtual edition was extremely well done in regards to allowing designers to get a better understanding of the people behind the textile brands that exhibited there before and get a good breakdown of what a vendor offers,” Diaz said. “The advantage of this is that there were certain vendors that crossed over with what they offered and there were vendors that complemented each other.” ●

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