

# CALIFORNIA ApparelINews

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## FALL FLAUNT

Designer Scott Rich was the featured designer at Fashion Week San Diego's annual Flaunt Fashion Series. For more from the event, see page 12.

### FINANCE

## Finding the Secret Formula to Luring In Cautious Consumers

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

In the last year, gas prices in California have fallen 26 percent and the state's unemployment rate has shrunk 1.3 percent, but skittish shoppers are still acting like there is a recession.

Retail sales in the United States dropped for three consecutive months until March, when shoppers helped nudge sales up 0.9 percent from February and 1.3 percent from last year, the U.S. Commerce Department reported.

That is a big improvement from when retail sales decreased 0.6 percent in February, declined 0.8 percent in January and dipped 0.9 percent in December.

"I think retailers are finding ongoing challenges, and consumers are looking for value and price," said Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist for the **National Retail Federation**. "We have been seeing some very competitive pricing."

That was clearly evident when **Gap Inc.** reported its same-

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### SUPPLY CHAIN

## More Uncertainty Over the 'Made in USA' Label

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

A second federal judge's ruling is making California apparel makers think twice about how they use their "Made in USA" labels.

On April 8, U.S. District Court Judge Janis Sammartino in San Diego ruled a trial can move forward in a case filed by Louise Clark against **Citizens of Humanity**, a denim label, and **Macy's**.

At the center of the lawsuit is whether apparel makers should adhere to a more stringent California law when labeling their garments as "Made in USA" or refer to more-liberal federal regulations. The judge ruled that the two regulations can co-exist and denied the defendants' request to have the case be dismissed.

Attorney Peter Ross of Los Angeles law firm **Browne George Ross LLP**, which represented Citizens of Humanity and Macy's, said he hasn't determined what the next step

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Where fashion gets down to business<sup>SM</sup>



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# Fred Segal Bows in Tokyo

**Fred Segal**, a boutique compound best known for infusing a luxe sensibility in Los Angeles' casual lifestyle, opened its first international location on April 17 in Tokyo—and it will be different from anything that the pioneering boutique concept has done, said Paul Blum, Fred Segal's chief executive officer.

Blum and his executives are placing a Japanese aesthetic on a retail destination that has been identified with Los Angeles fashion since the Kennedy administration.

"We want the focus to be on the local consumer," Blum said at a reporters' luncheon on April 13 at **Hinoki & the Bird**, an eatery that mixes Japanese ingredients with American food in Los Angeles' Century City neighborhood. "It has to be relevant to the people who live there," Blum said.

Located in Tokyo's Daikanyama section, a district of luxe boutiques, Fred Segal is offering some brands not sold at Fred Segal compounds on Los Angeles' Melrose Avenue, Santa Monica or the group of Fred Segal boutiques that debuted at the **SLS Hotel**,

which opened on the Las Vegas Strip last August.

The Los Angeles-area Fred Segal compounds have no business relationship with the Las Vegas and Tokyo boutiques, which were developed, owned and operated by **Sandow**, a New York-headquartered company that acquired the worldwide rights to the Fred Segal name. Blum works for Sandow and has the job of opening Fred Segal compounds around the world and in the United States.

The Tokyo Fred Segal does not look like any other Fred Segal or anything in its posh neighborhood. The store was built on



**TO TOKYO:** Paul Blum of Fred Segal, pictured right, at a Los Angeles-area luncheon for Fred Segal's Tokyo store. Alice Ann Wilson of Creative Artists Agency is pictured left. CAA collaborated with Fred Segal on the development of creative marketing content.

the grounds of a disused railway. It will offer a Fred Segal shop, a **Fred Segal Man** shop and a new concept called **Fred Segal Mart**. It will offer a restaurant compound, which will offer new American foods to the novelty-crazed Tokyo consumer.

One of the mart's new food concepts will be **Blue Star Donuts**, a Portland, Ore., gourmet donut restaurant.

Fred Segal Mart also will offer cold brewed coffees and something very Los Angeles—gourmet dishes served from a parked food truck. (There are no plans to drive the food truck to different locations in Tokyo, Blum

said.) Other companies doing business in the former railway space will be a restaurant run by Japanese beer label **Kirin** and **Tartine Bakery**, which is scheduled to open in the space later this year. They will operate independently of Fred Segal.

While the boutique compound houses an antique surfboard, Blum said the architects did not want stereotypical Southern California looks to be built into the space.

The look of Fred Segal Tokyo was designed by **Aesthetic Movement**, a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based company that specializes in retail spaces. The exteriors are lined with wood slats, Blum said. "It doesn't look like other buildings in Tokyo," Blum said. "Each room will look like a different shop."

In a concession to Tokyo sensibilities, the Fred Segal boutique will stay open later than the Los Angeles store does. Blum also found that Tokyo consumers are impressed by Fred Segal's decades-long luxe/casual heritage and studied up on the brand. "A lot of them knew more about Fred Segal than some Americans," Blum said.—*Andrew Asch*

## EVENT

# Wolk Morais' California Dreaming Debut

The California dream of tearing down convention and crafting an independent ethos is a serious goal and inspiration for designers Brian Wolk and Claude Morais.

Best known for their critically praised New York-born line, **Ruffians**, they moved to Los Angeles in 2014 and continued to

work on **Ruffians** and also started a new line, **Wolk Morais**. It made its debut with a runway show on April 13 at **Kohn Gallery**, an art space in Los Angeles' Hollywood neighborhood. The line was intended to provide an alternative by concentrating on off-seasons such as Resort and Pre-fall, Morais said.

"We want to be different," he said. "We want to explode the calendar."

But this debut took inspiration from art iconoclasts from California's past—the "Cool School" of mid-20th-century Los Angeles, when artists such as Ed Ruscha strived to make new art. Styling the runway show was Elizabeth Stewart, a celebrity stylist with A-list clients such as Cate Blanchett, Jessica Chastain and Julia Roberts. *The Hollywood Reporter* listed her in its ranking of Power Stylists 2014.

The 25 looks for Wolk Morais' Resort 2016 collection were mostly composed of dresses, some with a 1960s-inspired A-line silhouette. The designers used mixed media in some looks. One dress featured neoprene, a typical wet-suit

material, along with a luxurious silk. Another dress featured a print of the notorious multi-color-bar logo for the Emergency Broadcast System.

Wolk said that the label was intended to be a day-to-evening line in which the silhouettes are simple, the fabrications luxurious, and the colors minimalist and monochromatic. Every piece in the runway show had a California stamp. "Everything was designed, sourced and sewn in California," Wolk said. The list includes hats, eyewear and sandals used in the show.

The next runway show for Wolk Morais is a Pre-fall show scheduled for October in Los Angeles, Wolk said.—*A.A.*

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Quarterly Report *Continued from page 1*

store-sales results for March. The mid-tier Gap stores saw same-store sales off by 7 percent. The more career-oriented **Banana Republic** experienced a 3 percent decline while the value-oriented **Old Navy** retail chain saw same-store sales mushroom 14 percent.

Retailers are wondering where the consumers are hiding because all indicators point to an economy that is marching steadily forward. The U.S. gross domestic product is predicted to rise 3 percent this year compared with 2.4 percent last year. Gas prices should remain low for the next few years, and the unemployment rate keeps dropping.

But economists observed that wages still are not on par with pre-recession levels, and consumers are paying more money in rising fees, taxes and other expenditures.

"A long trend in place is that consumers have less income to be spending. A lot of that job creation we are seeing is part-time work, temporary work or low-wage hiring and hasn't translated into upward pressure on wages," said Lindsey Piegza, chief economist for the financial-services firm **Sterne Agee**.

Piegza added that in 2014, a four-person family was spending on average \$3,000 more a year on health-insurance premiums while at the same time paying down debt and boosting savings accounts. That translates into people either shopping less or cutting their clothing budget. "We do see more of a shift in activity to more discounted offerings and more price-conscious shoppers," the Sterne Agee economist said.

**Missing merchandise**

Retailers have been battling on another front. Since last September, many stores saw their merchandise sitting on cargo-container ships anchored off the breakwater of the **Port of Los Angeles** and the **Port of Long Beach** while the ports resolved a shortage of chassis and the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union** members negotiated a new five-year contract.

Work slowdowns at the port contributed to as many as 28 cargo-container vessels stuck at anchor in February while they waited for a vacant berth. After a tentative labor contract was

reached Feb. 20, the congestion eased up but has not disappeared completely. As of April 15, there were four cargo containers still anchored beyond the breakwater at the Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex.

Major retailers have complained that their spring selling season was dampened by a lack of merchandise. "We think the longshoreman [issue] had a significant impact on retailers," said the NRF's Kleinhenz. "They couldn't get product in time, especially spring merchandise. We are already beginning the

Textile and Apparel Employment		
California	Feb. 2015	Feb. 2014
Apparel manufacturing	56,800	56,300
Textile mills	8,300	8,500
Wholesaling	37,400	37,000
Los Angeles County	Feb. 2015	Feb. 2014
Apparel manufacturing	45,400	45,500
Textile mills	6,300	6,700
Wholesaling	26,100	25,300
Source: California Employment Development Department		

summer season."

Getting the right product mix is essential for going forward. Retail analyst Britt Beemer, who surveys 1,200 consumers weekly, said having the right merchandise mix is key.

**Levi Strauss & Co.** is redoing its selection of women's merchandise, which will debut in stores in late July to early August. In a first-quarter earnings call on April 14 with analysts, Levi's President and Chief Executive Chip Bergh said the company's ability to execute this new women's relaunch will have a "strong determining factor on how our women's [category] performs for the full year." Womenswear accounts for 25 percent of the San Francisco company's overall sales.

Executives at the company would not detail how the new

women's merchandise would be different from the old merchandise, noting they will raise the curtain on that new look in July.

Bergh admitted the company recently missed a few trends, such as brightly colored denim pants, but he noted the company is in sync with the distressed denim look and the boyfriend jean.

Levi's first-quarter earnings saw revenues shrink 7 percent to \$1 billion from \$1.13 billion during the same period last year, and net income declined 23 percent in the most recent quarter to \$38 million from \$50 million last year. However, there was a shift in the company's financial calendar year with the first quarter of 2015 ending on March 1, which did not include Black Friday, compared with last year, when the first quarter ended on Feb. 23.

Also, currency fluctuations and the strong dollar meant that net revenues from Europe were off by \$46 million in the first quarter. "It's still a tough environment out there," Bergh said.

**California's growing economy**

Economic indicators for California portend a strong year of growth. The state has seen a 3.1 percent growth in jobs in the last year compared with the nation's 2.4 percent increase in employment. "Just about every segment in the state added jobs," said Robert Kleinhenz, the chief economist for the **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.** (and the brother of economist Jack Kleinhenz).

In February, California's unemployment rate hit 6.7 percent, down from 8 percent during the same month last year. "We are finally at the point where we have gone past the point of calling this a recovery," Robert Kleinhenz said. "Last June we shifted from recovery to expansion."

Job growth was most active in the areas of leisure and hospitality, which includes restaurants, hotels and bars; scientific and technical services, which includes lawyers, architects, accountants and engineers; and healthcare and social assistance.

The **UCLA Anderson Forecast**, released in March, calls for continued steady gains in California's employment numbers through 2017 with the unemployment rate hovering around 6.5 percent this year, averaging 5.5 percent in 2016 and dipping to 5.1 percent in 2017. ●



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## Wet Seal Goes Private

An affiliate of Philadelphia-headquartered **Versa Capital Management LLC** announced April 15 that it completed its acquisition of troubled retailer **The Wet Seal Inc.** The deal was approved by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware on April 1.

The formerly public Wet Seal will be taken private and will operate under a new name, **The Wet Seal LLC**. The new company's operations will be supported by a \$15 million senior credit facility provided by **Crystal Financial LLC**, which is headquartered in Boston and maintains a Los Angeles office.

In many ways, the new Wet Seal will look like the old Wet Seal. It will keep the same headquarters in Foothill Ranch, Calif. It will continue to run a fleet of 173 Wet Seal stores and an e-commerce site ([www.wetseal.com](http://www.wetseal.com)). It will be guided by the same executives who helmed the company immediately before the bankruptcy.

The leadership includes Ed Thomas, chief executive officer; Tom Hillebrandt, chief financial officer; Christine Lee, executive vice president and chief merchandising officer; Jon Kubo, executive vice president and chief digital officer; Kim Bajrech, senior vice president and general merchandise manager; and Rachel Page, Wet Seal's vice president of stores and operations.

Thomas, who joined Wet Seal in September

2014 after serving as its president and CEO from October 2007 to February 2011, said that Versa would give Wet Seal the best support.

"We're glad to be in business with a strong partner in Versa Capital," Thomas said in a statement. "Our goal now is to further implement the strategies we developed when I returned to the business last September. Those plans call for optimizing the legacy of the Wet Seal brand and strengthening e-commerce as an important source of new customers and sales. We are focused on providing our growing customer base with fashionable merchandise that appeals to young women everywhere."

Gregory L. Segall, Versa's CEO and the new chairman of Wet Seal, said that the company had a distinguished past and a future full of opportunity. "The Wet Seal brand is more than 50 years old and, as such, carries a lifespan that few retailers can match. We believe the new strategy that Ed and his team have created will produce a bright future for this iconic retailer," he said in a statement. Versa owns retailers such as **Sports Chalet**, restaurants such as **Black Angus** and community newspapers group **Civitas Media**. Versa's investment strategy keep a focus on complex and distressed companies.

Wet Seal set up an entity called **Seal 123** to wrap up pending legal matters and resolve creditor claims.—*Andrew Asch*

## Two True Religion Apparel Subcontractors Arrested for Fraud Scheme

Two sisters who ran separate garment factories working for **True Religion** were arrested with their accountant on April 15 for allegedly trying to defraud the state workers' compensation insurance funds.

Sung Hyun Kim, head of **Meriko Inc.**; her sister, Caroline Choi, who ran **SF Apparel Inc.**, both in Vernon, Calif.; and their accountant, Jae Kim, were arrested on 18 felony counts of workers' compensation insurance fraud that totaled more than \$11 million in losses.

The three are accused of conspiring to underreport \$78.5 million in payroll to multiple insurers, including the State Compensation Insurance Fund and two insurance companies owned by **Berkshire Hathaway**, to avoid paying workers' compensa-

tion insurance premiums.

The alleged fraud was committed by fabricating payroll records provided to insurance carrier auditors. **State Fund** notified detectives from the California Department of Insurance when they discovered payroll reports showed significantly fewer total payroll numbers than similar reports given to the California Employment Development Department. Evidence allegedly showed that many employees were paid under the table. True Religion is not suspected of any wrongdoing, investigators said.

The two sisters were booked into the Los Angeles County Jail, and Jae Kim was booked into the Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles. The trio was tentatively scheduled to be arraigned in Los Angeles County Superior Court on April 17.—*Deborah Belgium*

## Calendar

### April 19

**NW Trend Show**  
Pacific Market Center  
Seattle  
Through April 21

### April 21

**"3-D Body Scanning and Fit Seminar" by Fashion Business Inc.**  
California Market Center, A792  
Los Angeles

### April 24

**Moda 360**

The New Mart  
Los Angeles  
Through April 25

### April 27

**Accessories The Show Fame**  
**Moda Manhattan**  
Jacob K. Javits Convention Center  
New York  
Through April 29

### Circuit

**Intermezzo Collections**  
Jacob K. Javits Convention Center  
New York

Through April 29

### April 29

**"How to Use Social Media to Grow Your Business," presented by FAB Counsel**  
1450 Second St.  
Santa Monica, Calif.

There's more  
on [ApparelNews.net](http://ApparelNews.net)

For calendar details and contact information, visit [ApparelNews.net/calendar](http://ApparelNews.net/calendar).

Submissions to the calendar should be faxed to the Calendar Editor at (213) 623-5707. Please include the event's name, date, time, location, admission price and contact information. The deadline for calendar submissions is the Tuesday prior to Friday publication. Inclusion in the calendar is subject to available space and the judgment of the editorial staff.

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# All-Star Offensive: Converse Turns to the ITC to Protect Its Chucks Brand

By Nicholas Rozansky *Contributing Writer*

Late last year, Nike's **Converse Inc.** went on the offensive against 31 companies—including **Walmart**, **Skechers USA** and **Ralph Lauren**—claiming that the companies are infringing upon a configuration of elements Converse claims are protected by trademark law—a rubber “bumper” running around the front of the shoe, a “toe cap” on the top of the shoe above the bumper, and lines or stripes running around the sides. These, Converse claims, are signature elements of its signature **Chuck Taylor All Star**.

Converse, which was acquired by Nike in 2003, wants the shoes off the shelves, along with monetary damages, and is pursuing an additional complaint with the International Trade Commission (ITC), which has the power to prevent any shoe it considers to be counterfeit from entering the country. The unusual move of pursuing a separate complaint with the ITC shows that Nike is dead-set on protecting the \$1.7 billion of Nike's roughly \$28 billion in sales that Converse represents.

After Converse's filing, the ITC “voted to institute an investigation of certain footwear products. The products at issue ... are shoes that allegedly infringe or dilute registered and common-law trademarks used in connection with certain Converse shoes, such as the Chuck Taylor All Star Shoe. The complaint, as amended, alleges violations of section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930 in the importation into the United States and sale of certain footwear products that infringe or dilute registered and common-law trademarks asserted with Converse. The complainant requests that the ITC issue a general exclusion order, or in the alternative a limited exclusion order, and a cease-and-desist order.”

Trademark cases rarely make it to the ITC, an underutilized venue for brands aiming to fight infringement, and the defendants are asking for a stay in the federal litigation until the ITC makes its determination.

Converse's aggressive stance seems to be working. All

but a few companies, including **Aldo** and **Fila**, have since settled. Ralph Lauren Corp. capitulated in January after the ITC determined that Ralph Lauren infringed on Converse's trademarks, including “washed canvas, Western leather, camouflage shoes and bleached-denim shoes.” Ralph Lauren then had 20 days to scrap all of its 36 copycat sneakers and related “molds, parts, tools, marketing, packaging and promotional materials” and paid Converse an undisclosed amount. The ITC went wider than the “bumpers,” “caps” and “stripes.” And in February, Converse filed notice it was dismissing its case against **Zulily** “in view of an agreement” reached between the two parties. Converse also notified the federal court in Brooklyn, N.Y., that it was dismissing its suits against **H&M** and **Tory Burch**.



Nicholas Rozansky

Walmart, the most famous holdout, is taking an aggressive stance, filing a claim of its own and saying it “will fight Converse's anti-competitive actions to preserve ‘Everyday Low Prices’ for Walmart customers, claiming that “Converse is using the suit to extort monetary settlements.” In its filing, Walmart, citing Converse ads, argues that the toe caps, bumpers and stripes are “actually or aesthetically functional” and therefore “they are not subject to trademark protection.” Trademark law does not allow companies to protect aspects of their designs that are functional, and companies must also prove that consumers associate the specific design with the manufacturer. Other unyielding defendants say Converse waited so long to sue that widespread copying has made this sneaker design generic while others are arguing that the collection of elements lacks sufficient distinctiveness to function as a “source designator” to make the shoe unique and protectable.

**New Balance**, not named in Converse's initial lawsuit, took preemptive action by filing a federal lawsuit denouncing Converse's “aggressive efforts” to protect its Chuck Taylor All Star sneakers from “imitators.” New Balance first contacted Converse to ensure that New Balance's **PF Flyers** shoe would be excluded from Converse's aggressive legal cam-

paign. In return, Converse threatened to add New Balance to the list of alleged infringers it submitted to the ITC.

Shortly thereafter, Converse issued a statement saying it “brought its case to the International Trade Commission to prevent consumer confusion, to protect its legitimate intellectual-property rights and to stop the sale of knockoff Chucks, all of which remain unchanged. We are committed to protecting our rights and will respond to [New Balance's] filing accordingly.”

It's important to note two other high-profile cases, *Apple v. Samsung* and *Christian Louboutin v. Yves Saint Laurent*, which recently pushed courts to look at protection issues. Most relevant to the Converse cases is the *Louboutin* case, where the court found that Louboutin's signature red shoe sole was a “distinctive symbol” that represented the brand and deserved trademark status. The court stated, “The lacquered red outsole, as applied to a shoe with an ‘upper’ of a different color, has ‘come to identify and distinguish’ the Louboutin brand and is therefore a distinctive symbol that qualifies for trademark protection.” Determining factors include advertising expenditures, consumer studies linking the mark to a source, unsolicited media coverage, sales success, attempts to plagiarize the mark, and length and exclusivity of the mark's use.

This holding narrowed Louboutin's trademark to circumstances where the red shoe sole is matched with a contrasting upper. The court relied on evidence that the red sole mark's ability to stand out from competitors depended on the color contrast between the red sole and a non-red upper of the shoe. Conversely, the court determined that shoes employing the same red color on the sole and upper were not a use of the red sole mark. This conclusion led to the court dismissing Louboutin's trademark claims because YSL's shoe was entirely red and thus not a use of the red sole mark.

Depending on the outcome, the Converse cases may prove to be a harbinger of similar cases in years to come. ●

*Nicholas Rozansky, as a partner with Ezra Brutzkus Gubner LLP in Los Angeles, litigates cases for clients in the apparel and fashion industry.*

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# Open Style Lab: Making Apparel Accessible to All

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

After competitive cyclist Ryan DeRoche suffered a spinal-cord injury and lost mobility in his arms and legs, he wanted to remain active, but his limited mobility made taking a jacket on and off difficult. And because his nerves are in the process of regenerating, he found stimuli such as raindrops extremely painful.

“He couldn’t find a rain jacket that would protect his lap,” said Alice Tin, co-founder and director of the **Open Style Lab** at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** in Cambridge, Mass. DeRoche worked with a team of designers, engineers and physical therapists at Open Style Lab to develop the **Rayn Jacket**, a rain jacket with a deployable waterproof flap in the front that is attached with magnets. When closed, the flap looks like a hoodie pouch. When open, it covers the wearer’s lap.

The Open Style Lab team soon realized the Rayn Jacket could be useful in other applications as well, such as bike riding, commuting, attending sporting events and camping.

“If you think about it, anyone who’s outside in a sitting position, you have a lot of surface area on your lap that’s not protected,” Tin said.

An Open Style Lab team member got in touch with San Francisco-based **Betabrand**, the apparel and accessories maker that invites its customers and fans to vote on and help fund pitched designs.

“We pitched and they really liked the concept and the prod-

uct that we had to offer,” Tin said.

The Rayn Jacket is currently in the voting stage in Beta-brand’s think tank. If it garners enough votes, the jacket will move to the crowd-funding stage on its way to production.

The Rayn Jacket was one of eight projects developed last year at Open Style Lab’s **OSL Summer Program**, a 10-week workshop at **MIT**. The program pairs teams of designers, engineers, and occupational and physical therapists with eight



**ACCESSIBLE BY DESIGN:** Open Style Lab’s “Rayn Jacket” features a deployable waterproof flap in the front that is attached with magnets. When closed, the flap looks like a hoodie pouch. When open, it covers the wearer’s lap. The jacket was developed for a competitive cyclist who is currently in a wheelchair following a spinal injury. The cyclist worked with designers, engineers and physical therapists at Open Style Lab’s summer program at MIT.

clients who need help with specific apparel-related issues that present an “independent dressing challenge.”

Grace Teo, the organization’s executive director and co-founder, came up with the idea for Open Style Lab when she was working in a Boston hospital while studying for her Ph.D. She met two women with multiple sclerosis who had lost motor skills in their fingers. The women explained to Teo that they had difficulty using things such as buttons and zippers. Teo, who earned her Ph.D in health sciences and technology from MIT, teamed up with Tin, who has a master’s degree in public health and is currently studying medicine at **Brown University**, to launch Open Style

Lab in 2014. The two wanted to create a network of designers, engineers, clinicians and clients to problem-solve apparel issues for people with a range of disabilities and to “help all people to find clothing suitable for their conditions, whatever that may be.”

With a mission “to make style accessible to people of all

abilities,” the interdisciplinary research and development project seeks to find ways of “creating innovative wearable solutions for people with disabilities.”

The organization also creates education programs to “equip the community with the skills to create clothing that is accessible for people with disabilities.”

In addition to the Rayn Jacket, Open Style Lab is currently working on another project that was developed through the OSL Summer Program. **Neoclosure** is a “magnetically infused seam” featuring “cylindrical magnets that are sewn into seams so that they can open and close very smoothly and without having to apply a lot of force,” Tin said. The Open Style Lab team got a provisional patent for technology, which was developed for a professor at **Tufts University** with Guillain-Barre syndrome. The wheelchair-bound educator needed a pair of pants that “would allow him to use the bathroom in a seated position but would still be strong enough to hold his pants together,” Tin said.

The Open Style Lab team found a secondary use for Neoclosure when one of its own team members had a health issue that required her to have a feeding tube.

“It was difficult for her to find dresses that would accommodate her feeding tube,” Tin said. “We applied Neoclosure to make a very subtle and easily concealed seam that would allow the tube to pass through the dress instead of having tubes that would kink up everywhere and look awkward.”

Initially, the Open Style Lab team found its clients by word-of-mouth from the occupational therapists who serve as mentors for the program as well as from a social worker who runs a support group for amputees. Since the launch of the program, other clients have approached the Open Style Lab team with their own ideas for new products. One of those was a 3-year-old girl named Annabelle, who wears a leg brace that made it difficult to find shoes that fit over the brace.

“Her mother was very smart in sending us an adorable picture of her in her pitch. We couldn’t resist taking on this project,” Tin said. “As a little girl, she really liked sparkles, anything

➔ **Open Style Lab** page 8

# PLM's Next Step: Can Maturing Tech Foster Fashion Innovation?

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

High-profile fashion brands and apparel companies such as **VF Corp.**, **Billabong International Limited**, **Jerry Leigh** and **Stony Apparel Corp.** all use product lifecycle management software to design clothes and bring them to market, but PLM vendors hope to make their software do even more.

They hope that PLM will become a platform that will serve as the center for information and systems in a business enterprise such as planning and forecasting systems, supply chain management, and ERP (enterprise resource planning) software.

It's part of the discussion going on at fashion tech and PLM conferences, according to PLM vendors and some bloggers who focus on PLM such as Oleg Shilovitsky, who is based in Newton, Mass. On his blog site, **PLM Think Tank**, he wrote earlier this month that a maturing technology such as PLM might change the way companies develop products.

"PLM today is strongly associated with change. The value proposition of PLM was

built on company transformation and improvement," Shilovitsky wrote in a blog titled "PLM Implementations and Organizational Change," which said, "PLM software vendors will have to innovate by making their products more flexible, smarter and adaptable to data and processes."

For Mark Burstein, PLM is changing in the fashion business because it has developed into a tool that every fashion worker can use. Burstein is the president of sales, marketing, research and development for **NGC Software**, which is headquartered in Miami and maintains an office in Los Angeles.

PLM has grown far beyond its origins as a tool for mechanical engineers when it was introduced as a product-development tool for the automotive and aerospace industries years ago. It's a platform that many kinds of software can be plugged into. It's not just for tech people. It's for salespeople. It's for logistics people. It's for designers, Burstein said. He plans to spread that message in fashion circles because he and many other tech executives maintain that fashion is lagging behind other businesses in adopting technol-

ogy—even in an age when most people have a smartphone and personal computer.

"[PLM] is how people communicate internally and externally," Burstein said. "When people look at PLM as a platform, it has the feeling of a social network. All data is shared—in one place. It is Web-based. It is collaborative. It is designed to have people work together in groups."

He maintains that PLM will save companies a lot of money because the software can put a company's entire staff on the same page.

"The key is making sure that product is made properly and produced and delivered on time," Burstein said. "It eliminates unanticipated costs." A majority of chargebacks from big retailers are a consequence of late deliveries and poor quality, he said.

Heath Wells of Los Angeles-based B2B e-commerce software provider **NuOrder**, which works with PLM, said many fashion companies try to organize their operations around spreadsheet programs. Working with 1990s-era technology might save some money in the short term, but these companies will

lose big in the long run.

"Apparel companies are so busy putting out fires and chasing their tails that they often don't have the luxury to plan forward. As hard as it is, they need to take a moment and look at the ROI new technology will bring," Wells said.

The cost of a PLM system can range from less than \$50,000 to more than \$1 million, Burstein said. "A rule of thumb is that if a company has less than five designers and less than 10 suppliers, PLM will become a burden to a multi-functional staff that does not have many layers of communication or decision making," Burstein said. "Once there's more than five designers, it's almost impossible to keep everyone on the same page with a variety of spreadsheets and emails."

The communication functions offered by PLM can provide order and clarity for bigger companies, Burstein said. "Internal teams, design development, suppliers—they know what fabrics are being used, what colors were approved, the status of production and the exact location of containers that are in shipment." ●

## Open Style Lab *Continued from page 7*

**Hello Kitty.** It was impossible to find anything that was cute but would accommodate her physical needs."

The Open Style Lab team considered making a special shoe but ultimately decided all that was needed was a special **Velcro** strip that adds some width to the shoe to accommodate the brace.

The OSL Summer Program will return for its second season on June 12 with a schedule

that will include mentorship by faculty advisers from MIT, **Boston University**, Tufts, **Parsons The New School for Design** and **Massachusetts College of Art and Design** as well as industry speakers discussing everything from fashion and product design to prosthetic engineering and assistive wearable design.

The summer program will be held in the **MIT International Design Center**, a shared workspace stocked with equipment such as laser cutters, 3-D printers and soldering stations.

When Open Style Lab was getting ready to

take the Rayn Jacket beyond the concept stage, Tin said, the team began looking into pattern-making technology.

"We needed a system that would allow us to do 3-D prototyping of our designs," Tin said.

Through the team's designer, Open Style Lab connected with Los Angeles-based **Tukatech**. After an initial discussion of what Tin and her colleagues needed and the mission behind Open Style Lab, Tukatech donated the software to the program.

"They made a very generous donation of **TukaCAD** so we could use it to develop the Rayn Jacket and other projects we may have in the future," Tin said.

Tukatech Chief Executive Officer Ram Sareen called Open Style Lab's mission a "noble initiative."

"TukaCAD enables them to improve their product development, allowing them to quickly create beautiful and functional clothing, ultimately helping more people," he said.

For now, TukaCAD is Open Style Lab's only tech acquisition. "I can imagine as our organization grows and our needs change, we

would consider other technology as well," Tin said. "We're definitely all about assistive technology and how to apply existing technologies to do the work that we're doing—because we believe in not reinventing the wheel and broadening the application for existing products."

In addition to the OSL Summer Program, Open Style Lab considers other activities that help the team achieve their mission. Teo was recently in Slovenia working on a similar assistive clothing project. Members of the team have also spoken at conferences such as **Hacking Arts** at MIT, the **Artists and Scientists as Partners** symposium at Brown and the recent **DisArt Festival** in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"We're very interested in any opportunities that are interdisciplinary and [provide an opportunity for] learning from other organizations that are doing similar work," Tin said. "We often look to our mission statement and evaluate whether [an opportunity] would drive the mission forward. If there is a connection, we're always very happy to pursue them." ●

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## Supply Chain *Continued from page 1*

will be in the case. "We appreciate the judge's carefully reasoned decision, but we think she reached the wrong conclusion," he noted.

Calls to attorney John Donboli, whose **Del Mar Law Group** represented Clark, were not returned.

On May 31, Clark, a La Jolla schoolteacher, said she purchased a pair of Citizens of Humanity jeans at a Macy's store in San Diego. She maintains in court documents that she suffered an "injury in fact" because her money was taken by the blue-jeans company as a result of the false "Made in USA" claims even though the garment was cut and sewn in California out of imported fabric and components. She also suffered because she genuinely believed the blue jeans were manufactured in the United States when they were not, court documents said.

This is the second time a federal judge has said the federal and state regulations can co-exist. On Oct. 27, U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego denied a motion to dismiss a similar lawsuit filed against the denim company **AG**, formerly called **AG Adriano Goldschmied**, and **Nordstrom** over a pair of AG jeans sold at Nordstrom with a "Made in USA" label.

The plaintiff in the AG case, filed June 4 by

David Paz, maintained the AG label improperly described the jeans as "Made in USA" when the fabric and components such as zippers and rivets were imported even though the jeans were cut and sewn in Los Angeles.

Many apparel makers have maintained the federal regulation preempts the California regulation. Manufacturers have relied on the more liberal Federal Trade Commission Act and the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act, which permits a "Made in the USA" label if the product and the fabric are made in the United States. However, if the fabric is imported, the federal regulation states the label should read "Made in the USA of Imported Fabric." If the minor trims or components are imported, they do not have to be included on the label because they do not make up a major portion of the product and are "de minimus" in relation to the value of the fabric and garment production.

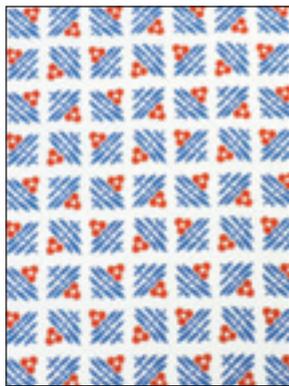
But California's more stringent "Made in USA" rules stipulate that if any fabric, trim or component in the garment is substantially made outside the USA, no matter how small that component, then the label must identify all imported components, such as, "Made in the USA of Imported Fabric and Components."

Citizens of Humanity and AG were targeted with lawsuits, but six to seven other denim companies, including **Current/Elliott**, received pending-litigation letters that threatened to bring class-action lawsuits. ●

TEXTILE TRENDS

# Check Mate

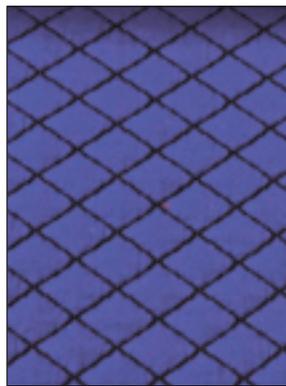
Checked patterns from traditional plaid, houndstooth and gingham to abstract variations ranging from sophisticated suiting and shirting styles to whimsical prints and metallic mesh.



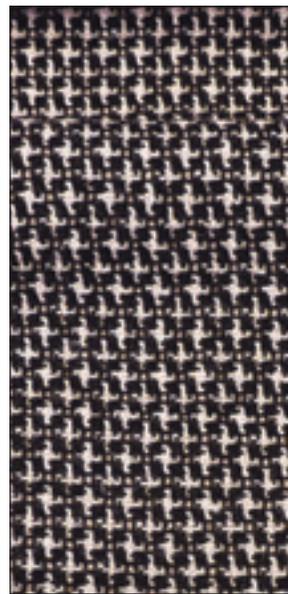
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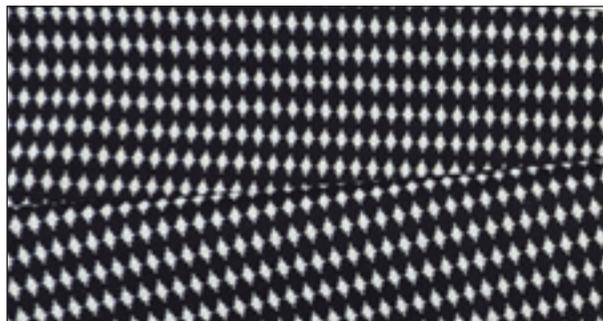
Cinergy Textiles Inc. #Quilt-1311



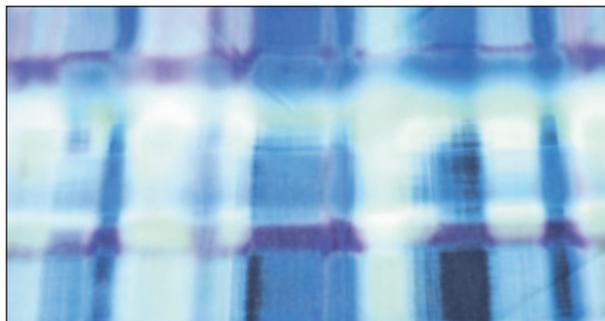
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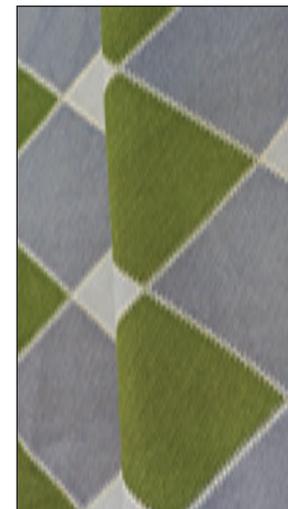
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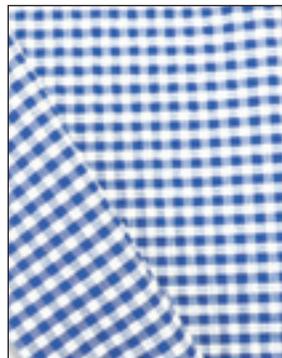
Geotex #57329/001 "Meltdown"



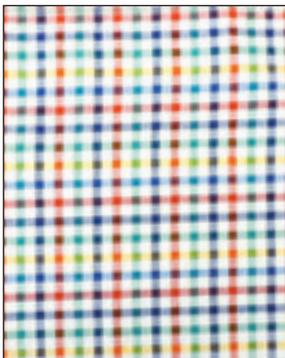
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TEXTILE TRENDS

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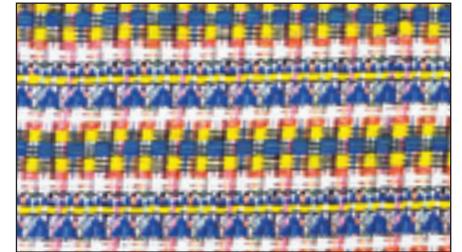
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Textile Secrets International Inc. "Ikat Box"



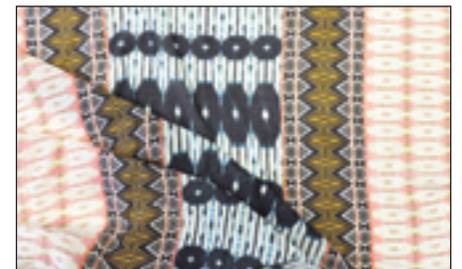
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TEXTILE TRENDS

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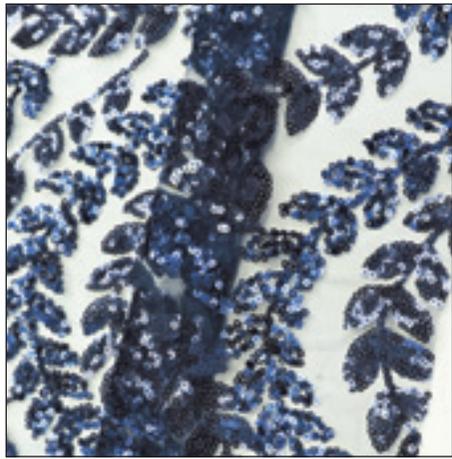
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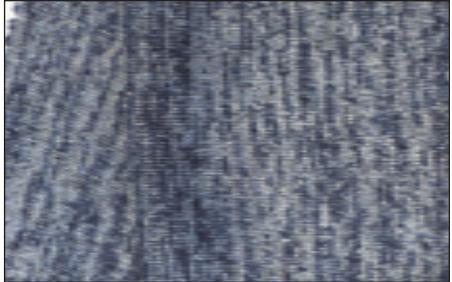
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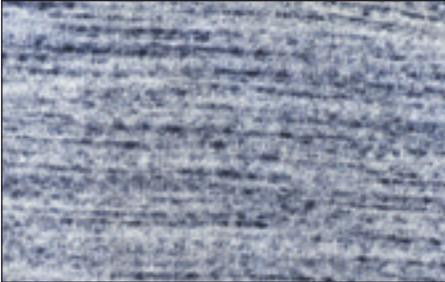
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## Fashion Week San Diego Flaunts Fall

The San Diego skyline provided a sophisticated metropolitan backdrop for Scott Rich's runway show, held April 9 on the rooftop deck of the **W Hotel** in downtown San Diego. The event was **The Flaunt Fashion Series**, hosted by the organizers of **Fashion Week San Diego**, the biannual event launched in 2012 by Allison Andrews.



FWSD founder and director Allison Andrews, pictured center, with blogger Jenna Pilant and Elliott Canter

For his collection, Rich used dye-sublimation printing to incorporate original art and photography in his made-in-America designs. The Flaunt Fashion Series is

one of several annual events hosted by FWSD, which is getting ready to host its next Fashion Week event Sept. 28–Oct. 4 in La Jolla, Calif. FWSD is a launching pad for emerging designers, as well as an opportunity to connect retailers and designers with consumers. For more information, visit [www.fashionweeksd.com](http://www.fashionweeksd.com).—Alison A. Nieder



The Scott Rich collection



Scott Rich with models wearing his collection

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**Products and Services:** Progressive Label is dedicated to helping companies develop and showcase their brand identity. From logo labels and hangtags to care/content labels and price tickets, we will develop, produce, and distribute your trim items worldwide. We specialize in producing custom products that will meet your design and merchandising needs. Our mission

is to deliver high-quality products at competitive prices, wherever they are needed for production. We understand the rush nature of this industry and strive to meet the tight deadlines facing our customers. Another important part of our business is FLASHTRAK, our online ordering system for price tickets. It's a great tool for placing and tracking price ticket orders and will soon be expanded to include custom products and care labels.

## S & J USA, Inc.

843 E. 31st St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90011  
(323) 231-0811  
Fax: (323) 231-3820  
snjusa@snjusa.com

**Products and Services:** S & J USA, Inc. has been a major, authorized distributor of YKK zippers for over 25 years. We carry a vast array of zippers, and we have an in-house factory that allows us to complete orders quicker than our competitors. S & J USA, Inc. also specializes in snaps, tack buttons, eyelets, and elastics, among other trims. Our customers range from the U.S. to Asia, and we hope to expand even further in the future. We are known for great customer service and quality materials.

## Texworld USA

www.texworldusa.com

**Products and Services:** Register now for North America's largest apparel fabrics show! TexworldUSA is a key resource for fabric buyers, R&D, product development, designers, merchandisers, and sourcing executives. This is a must attend event for professionals in every facet of the industry — ready to be inspired by fabrics, influenced by the latest trends and introduced to a host of reliable, cutting-edge apparel textile companies. Join us for three days of sourcing, seminars, and networking July 21-23, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York, N.Y.

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## Bibby Financial Services

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www.bibbyusa.com  
sales@bibbyusa.com

**Products and Services:** With offices in 7 North American cities and 15 countries around the world, Bibby Financial Services is a worldwide market leader in business cash-flow solutions. BFS is a subsidiary of The Bibby Line Group, a privately held company established

in the United Kingdom in 1807. Bibby Financial Services supports businesses of all sizes with flexible, customized financing solutions. With Asset Based Lending and factoring products, BFS gives clients access to the working capital they need to grow and support their businesses. Bibby Financial Services is proud to have helped more than 8,900 clients grow their businesses by providing nearly \$1B in funding across the globe.

## Goodman Factors

3010 LBJ Freeway, Suite 140  
Dallas, TX 75234

Contact: Joan Linxwiler (818) 448-9875 or Bret Schuch (972) 241-3297  
Fax: (972) 243-6285  
Toll-free (877) 4-GOODMAN  
www.goodmanfactors.com

**Products and Services:** As the oldest privately held factoring company in the Southwest, Goodman Factors provides recourse and nonrecourse invoice factoring for businesses with monthly sales volumes of \$10,000 to \$4 million. Services include invoice and cash posting, credit and collection service, and cash advances on invoices upon shipment. Due to its relatively small size and centralized-management philosophy, Goodman's clients often deal directly with company management/ownership. Its size also enables it to provide flexible arrangements and quick decisions. Goodman Factors now

operates as a division of Independent Bank (Memphis, TN), which has routinely been recognized as one of the Southeast's highest-rated independent banks in terms of customer approval ratings and in terms of capital soundness.

## Milberg Factors, Inc.

Main Office:  
99 Park Ave., 21st Fl., New York, NY 10016  
Western Regional Office:  
655 N. Central Ave., 17th Fl.  
Glendale, CA 91203  
(818) 649-8662 Fax: (818) 649-7501  
www.milbergfactors.com  
dreza@milfac.com  
Contact: David M. Reza, SVP Western

Region

**Products and Services:** Milberg Factors offers a competitive menu of factoring, financing, and receivables-management products for entrepreneurial and middle-market companies with more personalized attention than larger institutional firms. A partner of our firm manages every client relationship. Our 70-year track record in the core factoring industry assures our clients that they will enjoy a stable relationship supported by a mature and experienced staff.

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## Jobs Available



### PATTERN MAKER

Karen Kane is seeking a 1st thru production pattern maker for its established better sportswear division and emerging contemporary divisions. Strong communication skills, attention to detail, great organization skills, self-motivated, energetic. Computer literacy a must, knowledge of Gerber system is beneficial. Bilingual a plus. Min 2 yrs experience. Fax resume with salary history to 323-277-6830 or email in PDF or Word format only to: [resumes@karene.com](mailto:resumes@karene.com)

### PATTERNMAKER

We are currently looking for a Patternmaker with Sportswear or Activewear experience. Ability to organize work, manage time and schedule projects to meet deadlines. 1st through production patternmaking for the creation and execution of Sportswear product. Expertise at garment fit, construction, textiles, shrinkage. Qualification Requirements  Knowledge of garment wash, dye wash  Experience in Sportswear or Active wear  Knowledge and experience with Gerber and Illustrator. We offer a competitive compensation and benefit package including health, dental, 401K, paid vacation, and product discount. Please submit your resume and salary history to [hrdept@mbwswim.com](mailto:hrdept@mbwswim.com)



### LOS ANGELES TECHNICAL DESIGNER

NYDJ Apparel is seeking an experienced Technical Designer. Creation and updating of all First to Production Technical Packages for Missy, Petite and Women Divisions. Lead fit sessions and send pattern corrections to the overseas factories. Track sample submissions. Excellent benefits & work environment. No phone calls please. Send resume and salary history to: [eric.ueno@nydj.com](mailto:eric.ueno@nydj.com)

### PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR AND MERCHANDISING COORDINATOR

Santa Monica based company seeks: •PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR• 5+ yrs exp. in evaluating material performance & communicating across multiple product categories. Organized. Detail-oriented. Strong time mgmt. skills. Excl. written & verbal comm. skills. Computer literate. •MERCHANDISING COORDINATOR• 5+ yrs exp. in Merchandising & Product Development. Excel, Illustrator, Photoshop w/ strong collaboration, analytical, organizational and prioritizing skills. Fashion Merchandising degree preferred. GREAT BENEFITS. BOTH F/T Fax resumes to (310)828-0091 or email [koirecruiter@koihappiness.com](mailto:koirecruiter@koihappiness.com)

### ASSISTANT DESIGNER

Assisting Head Designer for design, trim, & fabric sourcing for the junior/young missy market for an LA Import Garment Manufacturer. Minimum 2 years experience. Good computer & graphic skills on Photoshop. E-mail Resume [sammy@majorapparelgroup.com](mailto:sammy@majorapparelgroup.com)

## Jobs Available

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### TRIM ASSISTANT

Karen Kane is seeking to fill a trim assistant position. The person will be responsible for filling trim orders for cuts •Data entry of cut tickets, POs, receipts •Prior experience in a Trim dept. and/or minimum of 2 years' experience. in the industry •Strong communication skills, oral & written •Strong MS Office skills, especially Excel •AS400/VPS software knowledge a plus •Bilingual English/Spanish a plus Fax resume with salary history to 323-277-6830 or email in PDF or Word format only to [resumes@karene.com](mailto:resumes@karene.com)



### SPEC WRITER

Immediate opportunity for a detail oriented and well organized individual who will be responsible for writing spec sheets and sending sample approvals to buyer. Must be computer literate in excel, illustrator/Photoshop and be able to work well under pressure. Fax resumes (323) 887-8484

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• Minimum 3-5 years experience • Illustrator, photoshop, Excel • Create tech packs for overseas & domestic vendors • Experienced in conducting fittings, generating fit comments... • Pattern making knowledge a plus • Excellent communication skills - written & verbal • Team player and works well with others. Send resume to [vitaet101@gmail.com](mailto:vitaet101@gmail.com)

### SALES REPRESENTATIVE - MISSY (LOS ANGELES OR NY)

New misses and plus size knitwear line seeking talented Sales Representative to be located either in Los Angeles, CA or NY. Must have an active department store, major retail or specialty store relationships to bring to the table. Please email resume to: [liz@lunajai.com](mailto:liz@lunajai.com)

### DESIGNER

Fast growing contemporary company seeks Designer for womens sportswear wovens & cut & sew knits. Candidate must have flair for fashion and detail, and be proficient in Adobe Photoshop/Illustrator & Microsoft Office. Please send portfolio samples and resumes with salary history to [jobshr000@gmail.com](mailto:jobshr000@gmail.com)

## Jobs Available

### PRODUCTION ASST

Min 5 yrs experience for established, stable apparel manufacturer in business 19 years. We are looking for a responsible, detail oriented person. This multi-tasking position includes purchasing trim, fabric, issuing cutting tickets and work orders to sub-contractors for embellishment. Must be good with follow up. Computer skills such as Outlook, Excel and Word are required. Must speak and write English, Spanish speaking is considered a plus. Background check required. Please fax resume to 888-677-5579 or email to [info@kingsburyuniforms.com](mailto:info@kingsburyuniforms.com). Do NOT send your resume as an attachment, please cut & paste your resume into the body of your email. Location: Torrance/ So Gardena area.\* Compensation: \$ 15-19/hr Full Time + health benefits



### LOS ANGELES TRIM BUYER

NYDJ Apparel is seeking an experienced Trim Buyer to lead trim development and buying for the company. Interact with product teams to ensure appropriate inventory, with the goal of on-time delivery of finished goods. Continuously analyze production and calendars, while seeking cost savings or other efficiencies. Excellent benefits & work environment. No phone calls please. Send resume and salary history to: [eric.ueno@nydj.com](mailto:eric.ueno@nydj.com)



### EDI & LOGISTICS COORDINATOR

We are looking for an experienced EDI & Logistics Coordinator to join our team. Receiving and processing EDI orders. Creating UPC's. Preparing shipping documents, arranging pick up. Must have knowledge of GXS Inovis Catalog. GXS DiCentral. 3-5 years' experience. Please send resume to [careers@moda-luxe.com](mailto:careers@moda-luxe.com)

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

A premium denim LA based company is seeking for a customer service. Duties will include but not limited to data entry, shipping and invoicing. Must have strong written and verbal communication skills. Must be proficient in excel, word, outlook and PAS. Must have a minimum of 2 years in the denim industry. E-mail resume and salary requirement to: [info@blackorchildrenim.com](mailto:info@blackorchildrenim.com)

### PROD. PATTERNMAKER

EXP. DENIM PATTERNMAKER NEEDED. MIN. 5 YRS IN DENIM EXP A MUST. PREMIUM DENIM EXP PREFERRED. TUKA SYSTEM EXP A PLUS. RESUME W/SALARY HISTORY A MUST FAX: 323-488-9781 EMAIL: [heathery@bleu-la.com](mailto:heathery@bleu-la.com)

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•FABRIC PURCHASE- Min 2 yrs of exp.

•PRODUCTION ASST- Min 1 yr of exp (will train)

•EDI - Min 1 yr of exp (will train) Fax or email res. to: 323-277-3227 or hrapparel@gmail.com

## Jobs Available

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Seeking entry level design asst that is motivated, and organized. Duties include Tagging & taking pictures of line. Must be computer literate for data entry. Must be able to multi-task in a fast-paced environment. Ideal position for a recent graduate of fashion school. Send resumes to rvasquez@swatfame.com or fax (626) 934-5201

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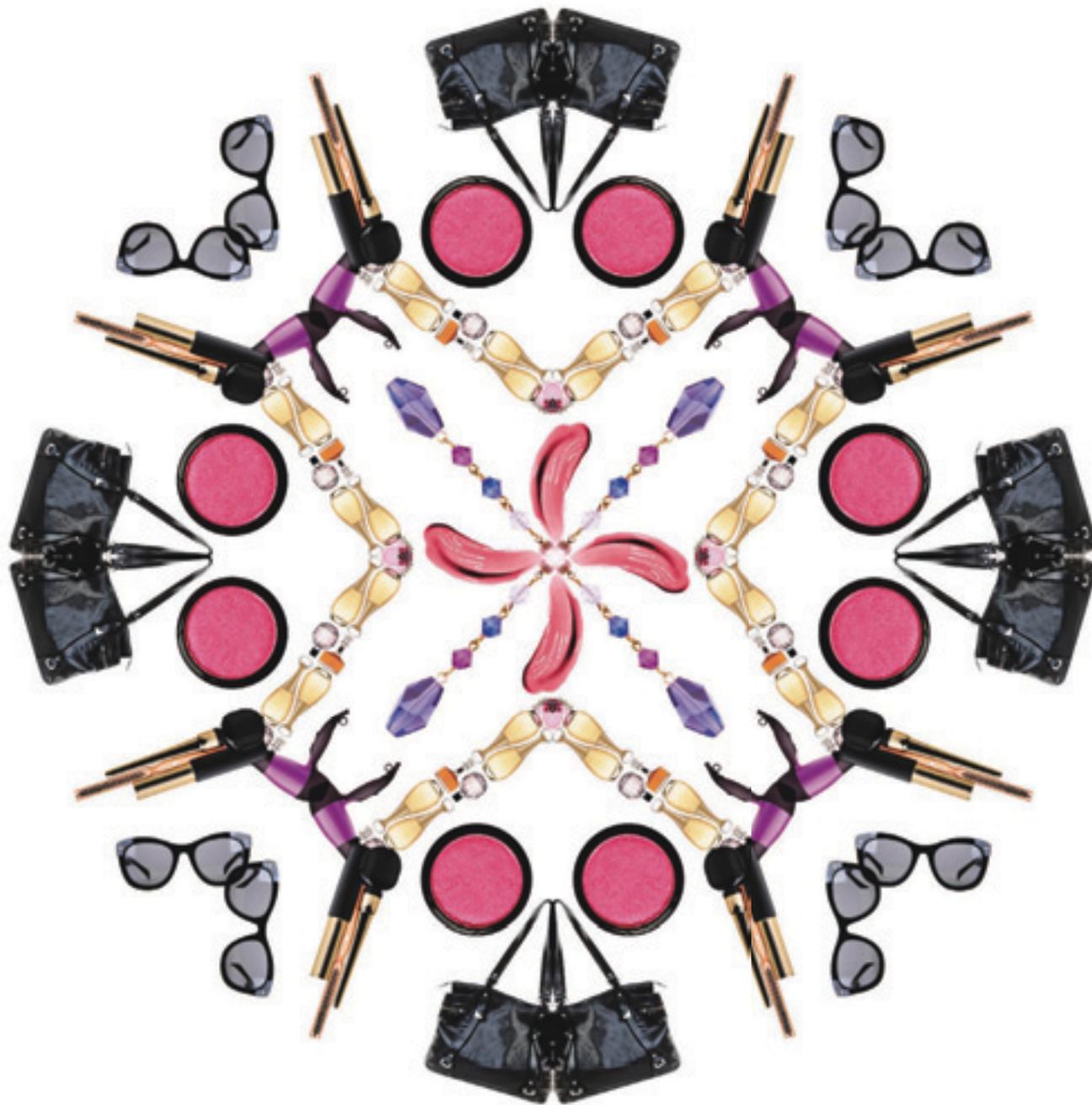
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