

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

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ART & ARCHITECTURE

For her menswear collection, California College of the Arts design student Sara A. Ahli took inspiration from Venetian glasswork and the work of 20th-century Italian architect Carlo Scarpa. For more from the CCA annual runway show, see page 7.

STEVAN NORDSTRÖM

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Apparel Production Inches Up in Central America Due to Quick Turnaround

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala—This year's **Apparel Sourcing Show** in Guatemala opened with more foreign flavors to its vendors and a political scandal swirling on the national front.

For the first time ever, there was a pavilion of 15 textile manufacturers from India who were looking to expand their market beyond Europe and Africa. At the other end of the floor stood a new Colombian pavilion with a handful of companies such as **Coltejer**, which makes denim and twills, also searching for new markets as business dips in the company's traditional markets of Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru.

The 24th annual Apparel Sourcing Show, which ran May 19–21 at the **Grand Tikal Futura Hotel**, kicked off with a

➔ Guatemala page 8

Hot Topic to Acquire Geeknet

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Hot Topic Inc. is going geek.

On May 26, the Los Angeles-based retailer announced that it had entered into an agreement to acquire **Geeknet Inc.**, an online retailer and wholesaler of merchandise licensed from TV shows, movies and other media with science-fiction, superhero and fantasy themes. Geeknet is headquartered in Fairfax, Va.

Hot Topic, which runs more than 650 mall-based stores, said it will acquire all of the outstanding shares of Geeknet Inc. at \$17.50 per share. The total equity value of the transaction is \$122 million, which includes \$37 million in cash and cash equivalents.

Hot Topic started business in 1988 as a place to pick up music T-shirts and band merchandise in the mall. Over the years, it has devoted increasing shop-floor space to mer-

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INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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www.apparelnews.net

Band of Outsiders Shuttering After 11 Years

Band of Outsiders, a well-regarded Los Angeles label that garnered a lot of attention from New York fashion magazines and high-end stores, is going out of business, according to various reports.

An unidentified salesperson at the company's only U.S. store, located in New York, said the staff had heard they would be closing their doors at the end of June. The outpost at 70 Wooster St. in Soho opened in early September and was part of the company's New York showroom. In mid-May, a seriously discounted sample sale was held.

Calls to the company's Los Angeles offices were not returned, and emails sent to its New

York sales representative bounced back.

Reports of the brand's demise were first reported by *Fashionista*, which said the company had canceled all its Fall orders and dismissed the majority of its staff.

Signs of trouble for the label, founded in 2004 by former Hollywood talent agent Scott Sternberg, popped up last year when the company canceled its Fall 2014 show for **New York Fashion Week**, citing his occupation with opening the New York store. Then the Spring 2015 fashion show for the New York runway was canceled in February. A few months ago, Band of Outsiders' men's design director, Joseph Pickman, was hired

by **American Apparel** to head its men's design team.

Sternberg started Band of Outsiders as a line of men's buttoned-down shirts and ties made of vintage fabric. He soon expanded the line into a full menswear collection with a twist on preppy classics with a European silhouette. In 2007, Band of Outsiders added womenswear to its lineup.

The brand's understated and classy apparel was seen on various celebrities who were Sternberg's friends from his Hollywood days. Sternberg himself would photograph

each season's collection on Polaroid 600 film, using a different celebrity to model the clothes at a different Los Angeles location.

Celebrities who participated included Kirsten Dunst, Josh Brolin, Amy Adams, Dave Franco, Marisa Tomei and Michelle Williams.

In 2008, Sternberg received the **Swarovski** award for new menswear designer of the year. The following year he tied with **Calvin Klein's** Italo Zucchelli as the **Council of Fashion Designers of America's** menswear designer of the year.—*Deborah Belugum*

Burlington to Open in DTLA

Burlington Stores, which has more than 60 outposts in California, is opening a new retail center in the heart of downtown Los Angeles.

The company announced the store, located at 309 W. Seventh St., will open sometime this fall. A banner out front noted that the company was starting to hire 50 to 100 employees for the new location, which is in the basement of the **St. Vincent Jewelry Center**.

The 56,565-square-foot space, once occupied by a **Big Lots**, will have room for discounted apparel for women, men, juniors and children as well as a corner for furniture and home accessories.

"We are thrilled to open a new Burlington in the Los Angeles community," said Tom Kingsbury, chairman and chief executive of Burlington Stores,

Burlington is joining other discount retail chains that have discovered downtown Los Angeles. **Ross Dress for Less** and a **Gap Factory Store** are located around the corner on Broadway between Seventh and Eighth streets.—*D.B.*



Parking-Lot Thefts Prompt New Security Measures at the CMC

A car was broken into and later stolen from the **California Market Center** in Los Angeles shortly after business hours on May 27.

The car, which belonged to an employee of the *California Apparel News*, was discovered missing at 6:30 p.m. from its regular spot on the third-floor "B" wing of the underground garage. After a search of the garage, the car was found at 6:55 p.m., unlocked and ransacked in a dark corner of the same floor and wing. Observers said the front passenger window was down several inches and one side of the back seat had been folded down.

The car's owner alerted building security and called the police. While she waited in the building's lobby for the police to arrive, the car was taken. The auto burglar or burglars used the owner's parking key card, which had been left in the car. Security confirmed the key card was used to exit the garage at 7:40 p.m.

This was the second theft incident in the CMC on the same day. At about 5 p.m., an employee of an accessories showroom on the building's 10th floor had her purse snatched in the underground garage. The woman was headed to her car on the second-floor B wing when, she said, she was grabbed from behind by a young man. "He grabbed my purse and ran," she said. The woman described the robber as a Hispanic male who was about 5 feet 6 inches tall and wore a gray snap-back cap.

The incident prompted the CMC to begin implementing new security initiatives. Beginning on May 28, additional security was added to patrol the three floors of the garage. Building management also suggested any tenant who wants a security guard to escort them to their car can ask for one at the security desk in the lobby. Additional security measures are also currently being evaluated.

The building also prepared a memo to all tenants alerting them about the incidents and noting, "We assure you that we are taking this situation extremely seriously and will do whatever we can to deter such thefts from taking place again."

The memo recommended tenants make sure their cars are locked and secured, all windows are fully up, and no valuables are left in plain sight. The memo further urges tenants to keep their parking card with them at all times and asks tenants to report suspicious people or

behavior in the building to security, which can be reached at (213) 630-3700.

CMC President Jaime Lee noted that the thefts on May 27 were unusual for the building. "We have not had similar incidents in quite some time," she said. "That being said, our security team makes extraordinary efforts to always be on alert, and we are committed to ensuring the CMC is a safe environment for all tenants and visitors. We are responding to yesterday's incident by increasing parking foot patrols and monitoring all traffic through the building."

Kent Smith, executive director of the **Los Angeles Fashion District**, said there has been a rise in property crime in every neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles but noted that this comes after many years of relatively low crime in the LA Fashion District.

"Criminal activity was down to such an extent that we maybe all got a little complacent," he said. "We've had it so easy for so long that even veteran downtown people are making some pretty basic mistakes. There are basic precautions that all of us as people living in a big diverse place like Los Angeles need to recognize. This goes for tourists as well as residents."

Smith said people should observe safety precautions such locking doors and making sure valuables are not left unattended. For example, retail owners who typically leave their smartphones by the cash register might have them stolen while they help customers.

"We've had a number of ATMs stolen in our district over that last couple of months," Smith said, adding that standalone ATMs have been stolen from inside locked stores after hours.

"People put their roll-down doors down in the evening, but they have a little sign that projects out that says 'ATM.' Guys are driving up, ripping off the lock, rolling up the doors and grabbing the ATM, which, of course, is right at the front of the store."

Smith and his team have been alerting business owners to remove the ATM sign and move the machine to the back of the store.

"Generally speaking, we are an incredibly safe district," Smith said. "But in any place in the world, you've got to take some basic precautions."—*Alison A. Nieder*

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Hot Topic *Continued from page 1*

chandise for pop-culture fans. In 2008, Hot Topic was one of the first retailers to serve as a go-to store for merchandise from the film "Twilight." Supporting the film franchise kicked Hot Topic out of four years of doldrums. At the end of 2008, it reported positive same-store sales after 17 quarters of negative same-store sales. Hot Topic has been a private company since 2013, when **Sycamore Partners Management LLC** acquired the company. The deal was valued at \$600 million.

Lisa Harper, chief executive officer of Hot

Topic, said Geeknet will fit in with Hot Topic, which continues a music-based business.

"Geeknet's unique concept and approach to the online retail community is a strong fit with our business strategy, which is focused on delivering great products for avid fans of various licensed properties, and we are excited about the opportunity to help drive profitable growth and further enhance value for Geeknet's customers," she said in a statement.

Geeknet is a public company. In its last quarter, it reported \$19 million in net revenue for the quarter compared with \$22.6 million in net revenue in the same time the previous year. ●

Daniel Patrick's Denim Goes Beyond the Five-Pocket

After four years of not wearing jeans, Daniel Patrick Jarvis, the founder of downtown Los Angeles-based brand **Daniel Patrick**, found himself wanting to put on a pair of denim earlier this year.

But the designer, who prefers to go by the moniker Daniel Patrick, had no desire to wear traditional five-pocket denim pants. After all, he made a reputation as a designer who wore sweats with a drop crotch and shirts with an elongated waist. The Sydney-born designer was not a tight-jeans kind of guy.

He resolved to make men's jeans that would fit into a Daniel Patrick collection. He will introduce the denim pants, which are part of his basics line, **Knomadik by Daniel Patrick**, June 4 at his atelier at 1039 S. Broadway in downtown Los Angeles.

"It's hard to make denim different," Jarvis said. He also did not want to make something that was so far out that he'd



lose the five-pocket crowd.

When designing the pants, he opted not to exaggerate the drop-crotch feature. The back pockets will have the Daniel Patrick vertical-line logo, not a typical stitch. Embracing his line's military and post-apocalyptic inspirations, the slim-legged pants have zippers around the ankles and come in olive, black and burgundy. The pants are made out of a Korean denim with some stretch fabric and manufactured by **Sync Denim** in downtown Los Angeles. Jarvis said that they will retail for \$250.

Jarvis hopes for his collection to develop into a lifestyle brand. Daniel Patrick started out as a men's line, but it also makes dresses for women, sweats and T-shirts with an urban look for kids and jewelry. Daniel Patrick has been carried in upscale Los Angeles-area boutiques such as **H. Lorenzo**, **Traffic** and **MRKT**.—*Andrew Asch*



Daniel Patrick

TECHNOLOGY

From Real-World Wearables to Targeted Messaging, Challenging Assumptions at West LA Tech Conference

By Rhea Cortado Contributing Writer

Retailers and brands put their heads together at the **Fashion Digital Conference**, held at the **Olympic Collection and Banquet Center** in West Los Angeles on May 19 to dig deeper for answers of how to improve their apparel businesses with technology. As one moderator at the conference explained, it was the chance to probe experts with specific questions that couldn't be answered by **Google**.

The topics ranged from specific how-to's such as optimizing email marketing to general trends in retail technology and digital marketing. A few big takeaways in digital trends were the consumer's increasing demand for immediacy and responding to customers "in the moment." For example, the "magic mirror" by **eBay** that is being tested in select **Nordstrom** stores interacts with customers "in the moment" that they are in the dressing room. Shoppers can request different sizes or be offered different items from a touch screen on the mirror. "These millennials are not going to wait for the sales associate for the other size," said Jeremy Swift, founder and chief executive officer of the marketing data and messaging platform **Cordial**, of the new generation.

New wearable technology further echoed the theme of "in-the-moment" information. **Bellabeat** is a piece of jewelry that monitors health, activity, stress, sleep and menstrual cycles for women who are trying to conceive. The new **Via-wear** bracelet connects to the wearer's phone and sends push notifications via different levels of vibration or a color emitted from the bracelet. The product was designed with working parents in mind so that even when a phone is turned

onto mute during an important meeting, users can receive notifications in case of an emergency.

Customer segmentation and targeted messaging was another hot topic. For example, in the most basic applications, the website can recognize if a user is a male or female and

gather information from shoppers is to provide free Wi-Fi in a bricks-and-mortar store by entering an email address.

However, when it comes to fashion, data can't bear all the weight. Andy Soloman, CEO of **Sole Society**, said that the company is "rigorous about data, but we're also in fashion. We understand what's trending and working in the marketplace."

Spokespeople from **O'Neill**, **Skullcandy** and the luxury sneaker brand **Buscemi** discussed the best strategies for influencer marketing. "The key to talent is to figure out if they are authentic," said Shauna Keller of **Skullcandy**. Brands concurred that it was better to create lasting relationships with a higher quantity of emerging, authentic influencers than to purchase exposure with one high-profile blogger or celebrity. Rob Hepler, founder of **Buscemi** sneakers, said that Justin Bieber purchased his sneakers at a retail store and posted himself wearing the shoes. The brand gained 50,000 Justin Bieber devotees to its follower count—"but no sales," Hepler said.

Overall, the measure of success and innovation is different for every brand. Roy Erez, founder of the e-gifting platform **Loop Commerce**, said that innovation means to "challenge your own fixations and assumptions." He offered, for example, the assumption that most consumers are women. If a brand or service can change the shopping experience that inhibits men from buying, it can open up 50 percent of the market. ●

Editor's note: There are two competing Fashion Digital Los Angeles conferences run by separate individuals, Sandy Hussain and Ryan Slack, who are currently disputing ownership of the name and content. Slack's Fashion Digital Los Angeles conference was held on May 7.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Shauna Keller from **Skullcandy**; Daniel Neukomm from **O'Neill**; Rob Hepler from **Buscemi**; and moderator Dennis O'Malley from **ReadyPulse**, a social ambassador marketing platform.

where he or she is located. To be able to properly speak to customers based on their previous purchases or browsing history, the brand must have reliable data. Dominique Levin of **AgilOne**, a company that uses big data and predictive analytics to deliver personalized experiences, cautioned that triggering in real time means that "you need to make sure [data is] clean everyday." Lindsay Freeman, director of operations for the Web-design agency **One Rockwell**, added that connecting bricks-and-mortar retail and e-commerce databases is one way to reduce contact redundancies. A clever way to

Onyx Creative Looks for New Brands Around the World

After graduating from the **University of California, Irvine**, Angela Afifi's primary job was working as a booking agent for her boyfriend, David Khanjian, who deejays club dates around the world under the moniker **Davi**.

Between gigs in New Caledonia (an island in the Southwest Pacific), Beirut, Tel Aviv, London and downtown Los Angeles, Afifi shopped clothes, jewelry and homewares by local artisans. It became an avocation for her. In early May, she turned the avocation into another job. She debuted **Onyx Creative**, which is headquartered in the Los Angeles area.

The site (www.onyx-creative.com) curates fashion, jewelry and homeware brands from around the world. Some brands are **Nüera**, a

California swim brand; **Handsome Me**, an Australian men's brand; and **Pulse**, a Romanian womenswear brand.

Afifi promoted the brands on **Facebook** and **Google**. When a sale is made, the brands handle the fulfillment. Afifi later gets a cut of the sale.

In the first week of business, **Onyx Creative** got 5,000 unique visits, according to Afifi. Retail price points range from \$4 for stationery to \$1,600 for a shelving unit.

Another point of difference for the site is that Afifi vows not to overwhelm her customers with choices—each category on **Onyx** will feature a limited number of brands. However, Afifi does plan to add more brands. Next up, Afifi plans to add categories for kids, pets and exotic foods.—*A.A.*



www.onyx-creative.com

COMING SOON

**June 5**

Cover: Street Scene Fashion
Real Estate Charts
Technology
Retail Report
New Lines & Showrooms

Activewear Special Section
Finance Advertorial
Fashion District Advertorial

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Shape 6/8-10
L.A. Fashion Market 6/8-11
Active Collective 6/23-24
CALA 6/16-17

June 12

Cover: LA Market Wrap
Surf Report
Retail Notes

Tech Focus
Education in Focus

BONUS DISTRIBUTION
Fashion Market Northern
California 6/21-23

June 19

Cover: Retail
Technology
Finance Notes
T-Shirt Report

Fashion Faces
T-Shirt Advertorial
Findings & Trimmings
Special Section

BONUS DISTRIBUTION
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**Seafolly to Open in La Jolla**

Australian swimwear brand **Seafolly** is increasing its bid for the U.S. market.

It is scheduled to open its second American store on May 30. It will be located at **Westfield UTC** retail center in La Jolla, Calif. The brand's first U.S. store opened at the **Fashion Island** retail center in Newport Beach, Calif., in 2013. The line also sells at Nordstrom's e-tail site (www.nordstrom.com).

Seafolly's second store will open five months after Seafolly partnered with **L Capital Asia**, a private-equity fund headquartered in Singapore. A December 2014 statement from L Capital Asia said that the company took a controlling interest in Seafolly, but it declined to state how much it invested.

Anthony Halas, Seafolly's chief executive officer, said that the investment will take the swimwear brand around the world.

"Our partnership with L Capital cements plans for international expansion and the development of Seafolly into a full lifestyle brand," Halas said in a statement.

Seafolly offers swimwear, clothing and accessories for women, juniors and kids. The brand made a marketing splash with ad campaigns featuring supermodels such as Behati Prinsloo and Gigi Hadid.

The La Jolla store will be the 16th Seafolly boutique, according to a company statement. Seafolly is sold in 1,500 stores across 46 countries.—*Andrew Asch*

Columbia Promotes Four

Columbia Sportswear Co. recently promoted four executives at the Portland, Ore.-based outdoor and activewear company.

Lisa Kulok was promoted to senior vice president of global supply chain operations, and will oversee the company's global inventory planning, transportation logistics, distribution and account operations. She has been with the company since 2008, most recently serving as vice president of global marketplace planning and customer operations.

Steve Woodside was promoted to senior vice president of global sourcing and manufacturing, overseeing global apparel, footwear, accessories and equipment sourcing and contract manufacturing operations. He was previously Columbia's vice president of global manufacturing.

A Columbia executive since 2005, Joe Boyle was promoted to senior vice president of Columbia brand merchandising and design.

Jim Swanson, who has been with the company since 2003, was promoted to vice president of finance from her previous position as director of finance. She will oversee the company's strategic planning and financial planning and analysis functions.

"Each of these leaders has proven their ability to drive change necessary to support rapid global growth and the increasing complexity of our business," Columbia Sportswear Company Chief Executive Officer Tim Boyle said in a company statement. "I'm highly confident in the leadership abilities of these four teammates and in their commitment to continuing to drive sustainable, profitable growth through the company's portfolio of brands for active people."

Founded in 1938, Columbia's brand portfolio includes the **Columbia Sportswear**, **Mountain Hardwear**, **Sorel**, **prAna**, **Montreal** and **OutDry** brands.—*Alison A. Nieder*

Calendar**June 2**

"Fashion PR 101" webinar by
Fashion Business Inc.
online

June 3

"Costume Design Meets the
**Fashion Business: Designers,
Deals and Dynamics,**"
presented by **FGILA** and the
**David C. Copley Center for
Costume Design, UCLA**
Pacific Design Center
West Hollywood, Calif.

**Dallas Apparel & Accessories
Market**
Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through June 6

FIG
Fashion Industry Gallery
Dallas
Through June 5

"Selling Made in America
Apparel and Accessories online"
webinar by **Fashion Business
Inc.**
online

June 4

"Take It to the Next Level,"
presented by **One Step Retail
Solutions**
Old Ranch Country Club
Seal Beach, Calif.

June 5

**NAWBO-LA's 29th Leadership &
Legacy Awards Luncheon**
JW Marriott (LA Live)
Los Angeles

June 6

**Black & White Ball, presented by
National Jewish Health**
Skirball Cultural Center
Los Angeles

June 8

Los Angeles Fashion Market
California Market Center
Cooper Design Space
The New Mart
Gerry Building
824 Building
Lady Liberty Building
Primrose Design Building
Academy Awards Building
Los Angeles
Through June 11

Designers and Agents

The New Mart
Los Angeles
Through June 10

Select

Transit
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through June 11

LA Kids' Market
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through June 11

Brand Assembly
Cooper Design Space
Los Angeles
Through June 10

Shape
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through June 10

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

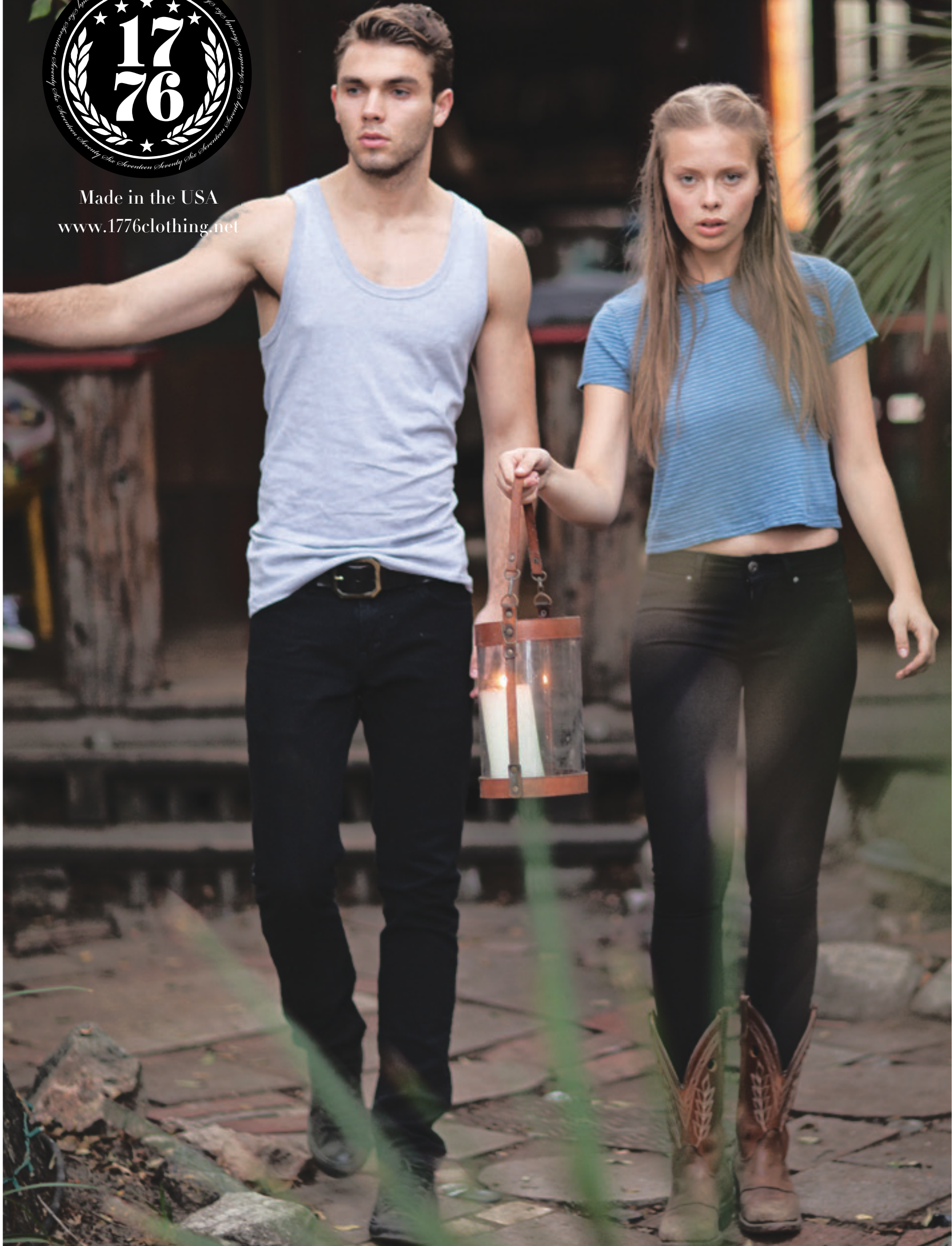
For calendar details and contact
information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

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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Fernando's: Long Career Based on a Small Machine

In a world where retailers are increasingly relying on multi-media screens and complex technology to make their stores stand out, Fernando Adames believes that a simple, mid-20th-century machine is all that is needed to give a boutique an added edge.

The machine is a more-than-40-year-old **Juki** Industrial sewing machine, said Fernando, who prefers to go only by his first name. If you walk into the boutique **Fernando's** in the **Riviera Village** shopping district in Redondo Beach, Calif., located a few blocks away from the Pacific Ocean, you might see him sitting behind the sewing machine. He creates custom-made clothing and accessories for the people of Redondo Beach and beyond. The Fernando's boutique has been in business for 35 years.



A MAN & HIS SEWING MACHINE: From left, Fernando, the namesake of the Fernando's boutique in Redondo Beach's Riviera Village, behind his Juki sewing machine; two of Fernando's customized jackets.

"No one has a store with a sewing machine on the premises anymore," said Fernando, who grew up in Bogotá, Colombia. While designers use boutiques as ateliers to make red-carpet and special looks for patrons, Fernando said that his sewing machine is reserved for giving simple clothes some extra panache. He uses his sewing machine to put appliqués on jackets and make accessories such as belts, bracelets, scarves and homewares such as blankets and pillows.

Fernando finds some of his appliqués and exotic fabrics at the **LA Textile Show**, and other one-of-a-kind vintage fabrics are found around the world. Retail price points range from \$100 to \$200 for a repurposed jacket, \$50 to \$100 for belts and \$30 to \$75 for bracelets.

Fernando and his wife, Renessa, opened the first Fernando's shop in 1980 in Hermosa Beach, Calif. He sold men's and women's clothing, and the boutique served as a neighborhood fashion store. In the late 1990s, he developed an interest in the Juki sewing machine at his shop. He taught himself how to sew.

Word spread on his abilities. In Hermosa Beach, he made costumes for people attending **Burning Man**, the festival in the Nevada desert that places an emphasis on science-fiction and fantasy costumes.

Fernando's moved a few miles south to Redondo Beach in 2012 after his boutique's building was sold.

Redondo Beach's clientele is more settled than Hermosa Beach, and they are typically more keen on homewares than Burning Man costumes. But Fernando also sees a more varied demographic there. Tourists staying at the **Terranea Resort** in Rancho Palos Verdes often drop by Riviera Village, and they pick up something crafted on Fernando's machine, he said. "If it's something that they can't find, we try to find it," he said.—*Andrew Asch*

PacSun Reports Decline For First Qtr of 2015

Pacific Sunwear of California, the casualwear retailer whose customers are teenagers and young adults, reported its first decline in quarterly sales in more than three years, said Gary Schoenfeld, the chief executive officer of the mall-based retailer, headquartered in Anaheim, Calif.

For its first quarter of 2015, same-store sales declined 2 percent. PacSun reported that net sales in the first quarter ending May 2 were \$166.5 million, compared with \$171.1 million for the same quarter last year. The company had a net loss of \$3.5 million versus \$10.4 million last year.

Schoenfeld forecast that sales would increase later this year. "As we look ahead to the back half of this year, we believe the strength of several key brand initiatives, coupled with anticipated growth in long bottoms, will get us back to positive comp-store sales along with further increases in margins," he said in a statement.

For its second quarter, PacSun forecast that same-store sales would range from negative 4 percent to flat and that net sales would range from \$201 million to \$209 million.—*A.A.*



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CCA Hosts Annual Fashion Show in SF

California College of the Arts hosted its annual fashion show on May 15 at CCA's San Francisco campus, where 13 senior design students showcased their final collections for a crowd of about 750 guests.

Among the runway looks was Sara A. Ahli's menswear collection, which was inspired by Venetian glasswork and the work of Italian architect Carlo Scarpa.

Contemporary American painter Cy Twombly inspired Nina Sturmfel's womenswear collection, which explored the "notion of handwriting as a metaphor for how artists learn to communicate."

Sirens, the beautiful women who lured sailors to their deaths in Greek mythology, were seen as "women emerging powerful and calm from the ocean" by Sophia Jain-Embry, whose weathered fringe and fish-scale prints were inspired by "a place that is both dangerous and serene." Jain-Embry also drew inspiration from Levi Strauss & Co.'s Eureka Innovation Lab during her recent internship with the San Francisco-based denim giant.

Stephanie Bergmann's cat-embellished childrenswear was designed for the "girl who loves to twirl."

Berg Chen explored the properties and shapes of objects to create the intricately folded pieces in his collection.

Hao Dong's collection was inspired by individualism, modern urban life and pop culture.

For her collection, Farah Q. Faizi imagined a "tangled story" of an artist working in a corporate office "who questions why."

Tim Ho combined fantasy armor with streetwear for his menswear collection, featuring graphic prints that invoke the names of heroes "past, present and future."

The relaxed freedom of the beach and surfing inspired Vanina Howan's collection, designed to be both timeless and recyclable.

Emily Hundley was inspired by "the optics and rigidity of a broken mirror" for her collection of tailored dresses.

Robert Adrian Morel explored the idea of the "transformative glamor" of drag "to reveal the true foundation of performance."

Tiana Rashaé was inspired by "growth and change" for her collection, which celebrates "today's emerging voice."

Jessica Tou designed a collection for the modern woman "who is unafraid to stand out in garments that serve as both armor and clothing, fashion and protection."—Alison A. Nieder



Berg Chen

Emily Hundley

Hao Dong

Jessica Tou

Farah Q. Faizi

Nina Sturmfels



Vanina Howan

Tim Ho

Stephanie Bergmann

Robert Adrian Morel

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Guatemala *Continued from page 1*

breakfast where Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina greeted participants with a rousing speech about how his government would continue to press for the reforms the country needed in infrastructure, business investment and lowering electricity costs even though his term ends in January 2016.

After the white-haired president left, one Guatemalan sourcing agent commented, "He talked about everything but the crisis."

Western news organizations haven't been quick to write about the huge scandal enveloping the top echelons of the Guatemalan government. On May 8, the country's vice president, Roxana Baldetti, resigned after it was revealed that her private secretary is suspected of being the head of a ring that defrauded the government of millions of

A small technology corner was anchored by TC2, also known as **Textile Clothing Technology Corp.**, as well as **Polygon Software** and **Gerber Technology**.

There were German needle makers, U.S. sublimation printers, international freight forwarders and Korean sewing-machine makers.

This year, buyer traffic seemed to be down, but there were representatives from the big retail chains such as **Target** and **Walmart** walking the floor, and representatives from Hong Kong sourcing company **Li & Fung** and U.S. clothing and boot company **Timberland** were visiting booths.

Camilo Franco—the full-package director for **Mayotex**, a completely vertical operation in Guatemala City that does circular knits and makes hoodies, T-shirts, polos, Henleys and shorts—said he was seeing



VERTICAL OPERATION: Camilo Franco of Mayotex sees more business leaving China and coming to Central America because of quick turnaround times.



COLOMBIAN DENIM: Carolina Morales Gomez and Mauricio Marulanda were trying to expand the market for Coltejer products.



NEW BUSINESS: Panamericano Textil II has found a new customer by making items for the Cherokee brand, sold at Target.



COLOR RULES: Bright tops and dresses are some of the items sewn at Panamericano Textil II, which used to do primarily maternity wear.

dollars by taking bribes to lower customs duties. She has maintained her innocence.

Other top officials who resigned include four cabinet ministers. In a separate scandal, the Guatemalan central bank president was indicted for fraud as a part of an investigation into contracts issued by the Social Security Institute.

The weekend before the Apparel Sourcing Show, some 60,000 people demonstrated in the city's central square, calling for the president's resignation. The president said he will remain in office until his term expires in January.

Staying on course

Despite the political intrigue, the Apparel Sourcing Show remained pretty much business as usual.

Many of the 184 booths were occupied by Guatemalans or U.S. companies that supply the industry in that region. The perennial **Cotton Council International** pavilion housed exhibitors such as **Antex Knitting Mills** and **Swisstex Direct** from Los Angeles as well as other U.S. manufacturers such as **Hamrick Mills**, **Tuscarora Yarns**, **Buhler Quality Yarns**, **Carolina Cotton Works** and **Milliken**. These exhibitors were at the show for only two of the three days.

new customers but fewer people than last year.

New customers included **Timberland** and **Canaren Canada**, which are looking to source garments to be shipped to the United States.

Franco has noticed that more people are moving out of China as labor costs rise and considering Central America for quick-turn response. At the same time, they are demanding lower minimums. "Los Angeles customers coming here are looking to buy 1,500 yards of fabric or 2,000 pieces per color," he said. "They are looking more for fashion items because T-shirts they can get in Vietnam and Bangladesh."

Companies at the India pavilion were getting a mixed response. One Indian representative said he wouldn't be back, but others were more optimistic. Tarun Ahuja, a principal in **Goverdhandas & Co.** in Mumbai, said in two days he had seen about 20 people interested in his vast array of fabrics as well as the bed linens and bath linens the company produces. He plans to return to Guatemala next year. "Walmart and Target came by to see our towels and napkins. They are producing them now in Central America, but they are checking out the Indian prices. There was a uniform buyer from Guatemala."

➔ Guatemala page 9



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Former Agenda Head to Run Karmaloop

Seth Haber, a former partner with **Agenda** trade show, headquartered in Los Angeles, is heading to the retail side of the streetwear business.

On May 27, it was announced that Haber was named the chief executive officer of **Karmaloop**, the Boston-based streetwear e-commerce emporium. Karmaloop was acquired by **Comvest Partners** of West Palm Beach, Fla., and **CapX Partners** of Chicago on May 22, after Karmaloop declared a voluntary Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Haber will replace Greg Selkoe, the Karmaloop founder, said Robert O'Sullivan, a partner in Comvest. "We conducted an extensive CEO search and found a number of highly qualified candidates interested in leading Karmaloop. Throughout the process, Seth distinguished himself as our No. 1 choice. His passion for the streetwear culture, varied experience in the industry and achieve-

ment in building Agenda made him a natural fit for the position," he said in a statement. Haber left Agenda in January 2013 to "pursue other interests."

Haber said that he will use his experience in Agenda to build Karmaloop. "I have been in this business for a long time, and I have worked with most, if not all, of KL's key business partners. I know that we can continue to build on what the company has already done in order to take it to the next level," Haber said.

Karmaloop got into debt when it started four new business divisions and the development of television content between 2011 and 2013, according to a CapX statement. While those other divisions did not work out, Karmaloop's main e-commerce site continued to be well trafficked and enjoyed close to 4 million unique visitors each month.—*Andrew Asch*

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Guatemala *Continued from previous page*

All of Central America has seen a gradual rise in its apparel and textile exports to the United States in the past couple of years. In 2014, Guatemala exported \$1.35 billion in apparel and textiles to the United States, a 2 percent rise over the previous year.

Of all the countries that are part of the **Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement**, Guatemala exports the least amount of apparel and textile goods from the region. Honduras is still No. 1, with \$2.6 billion exported to the U.S. last year.

Guatemala's rah-rah years were in 2004, when there were still U.S. quotas on many Chinese-made clothing items. In 2004,

Guatemala had about 120,000 workers in the apparel and textile sector. It now has 50,000 workers.

More than 80 percent of the country's apparel production consists of cut-and-sew production, which often gives it a disadvantage when competing with China.

That strategic point hit recently at **Panamerican Textil II**, a decades-old company that for years has been making maternity wear for the U.S. market. Its main client had been **A Pea in the Pod**, whose other labels include **Motherhood** and **Oh Baby**.

But last year, A Pea in the Pod came to the garment factory with its 740 employees and said it was switching the majority of its production to Asian factories that could do

full-package work.

The factory's co-owner Carmen Maldonado said the company had to lay off about 150 workers last year and scramble to find new work. Now they are sewing tops, skirts and dresses for **Abercrombie & Fitch**, **Hollister** and **Cherokee**, which is licensed by Target. They soon will be doing women's pants for **Kellwood**.

But the sewing factory, which is the size of a large warehouse, will start experimenting soon with full-package work. "We are starting to do full-package production for women's maternity pants," Maldonado said as the sound of Latin music blasted away from the vast sewing floor. "We'll see how it goes." ●

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