

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR **70** YEARS

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DERDERIA



LA FASHION WEEK:
IT'S A WRAP!

The events of Los Angeles Fashion Week concluded with five nights of shows at The Reef organized by Style Fashion Week. Vicken Derderian was one of several Los Angeles-based designers who showed in a lineup that also included national and international collections. For more Los Angeles Fashion Week shows, see pages 6 and 7.

Overcoming the Challenges to Cotton

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Cotton is crucial for the development of much of the world's clothing, but a handful of groups have been warning apparel companies that a number of issues challenge the global cotton supply, and major apparel companies have been listening.

The cotton supply chain faces challenges such as the drought in California, farmers' focus on higher-dollar crops and the increasing popularity of athleisure apparel made from synthetic materials. Some groups, such as the **Better Cotton Initiative** (BCI), are seeking ways to have brands work with farmers to ensure there's an abundant amount of good cotton for manufacturers.

Last month, BCI held a seminar at the stylish boutique **Ace Hotel** in downtown Los Angeles. In attendance at the red-curtained conference room were representatives from some of California's top action-sports labels, including **Vans Inc.** and **Volcom**, as well as **Guess? Inc.** and **Deckers Outdoor Corp.**, according to Daren Abney, the North American mem-

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The Ins and Outs of Brand Building With Licensing, Investment and Social Media

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

Nearly 200 apparel-industry executives turned out to discuss brand-building strategies that ranged from social-media practices and licensing opportunities to gauging when to seek outside investment.

Titled "Take Your Brand to the Next Level," the Oct. 21 event at the **Omni Los Angeles Hotel** in downtown Los Angeles was organized by **CIT** and the **California Fashion Association**.

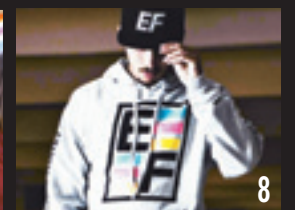
Mitchell Cohen, Western regional manager for **CIT Commercial Services**, and Ilse Metchek, president of the California Fashion Association, served as moderators of the panel, which included Jessica Blue, vice president of **UBM Advanstar's Licensing Expo**; Marvin Padilla, managing director at **Intrepid Investment Bankers LLC**; Dana Telsey, chief executive officer and chief research officer of **Telsey Advisory Group**; Mitesh Solanki, principal

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM

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Obituary

Sam Sarpong, Model and Actor, 40

Sam Sarpong, a model for the **Tommy Hilfiger** brand, a musician and an actor, committed suicide on Oct. 26 by jumping off the Colorado Street Bridge in Pasadena, Calif.

Los Angeles Fashion Week audiences saw him last March when he acted as the master of ceremonies at the gala **Boy London** runway show at **Style Fashion Week**.

Sarpong's death was confirmed by the Pasadena Police Department. On Oct. 26, social-media alerts warned the public to avoid the bridge area in the late morning due to police activity in the area.

It has not been confirmed whether Sarpong, 40, left a suicide note.

Sarpong was born in London to a Ghanaian father and grew up in the Los Angeles area. In addition to modeling, Sarpong was a musician and an actor. He co-hosted the **MTV** reality show "Yo Momma," which ran from 2006 to 2007. He occasion-



JACK FLEMING

Sam Sarpong

ally appeared on major TV shows such as "ER," according to the Internet Movie Database.

At last March's runway show for **Boy London**, Sarpong sang and directed models around the runway as the master of ceremonies.

Sarpong also designed a line called **Future Stars**, and he cultivated a reputation for being a solid model who would embrace assignments no matter how different and unique the fashion.

Leisa Balfour, a stylist and Sarpong's friend, said he was always busy. "He personified the word 'hustle' in this industry," she said. "There was always something he was lending himself to. He was someone who every designer wanted in their show."

Among Sarpong's survivors is his sister June Sarpong, who is a popular TV host in Britain.—*Andrew Asch*

Caruso's Carlsbad Shopping Center Project Delayed

The plan to build a **Caruso Affiliated** retail center on the banks of a lagoon in Carlsbad, Calif., has hit a snag.

On Oct. 27, opponents of the project gathered enough signatures to put the project up for a vote by Carlsbad's residents after the signatures were verified by San Diego County's Registrar of Voters.

The Carlsbad City Council will discuss the matter during its Nov. 3 meeting with the idea of deciding whether Caruso's project should be voted on next year during the next scheduled Nov. 8 election or whether it should be scheduled for a special election.

Residents' opposition to the project comes after the Carlsbad City Council in August approved zoning changes to allow construction of a mall on the Agua Hedionda Lagoon. Caruso Affiliated lobbied for the zoning change in a campaign called the 85/15 Plan.

Caruso owns a parcel of land on the lagoon where he hopes to build a retail center that

will include a **Nordstrom** department store.

Opponents of the Caruso mall are called the **Citizens for North County**. In comments released by the group, they maintain that Caruso Affiliated mounted a multi-million-dollar campaign to influence Carlsbad voters to embrace the lagoon's zoning change.

On Sept. 24, the citizens group formally submitted its petition to put the matter to a vote. They needed to gather signatures from at least 10 percent of Carlsbad's registered voters. The county's Registrar of Voters verified there were 8,052 signatures collected, which was enough to put the matter on the ballot.

Caruso Affiliated did not return requests for comment after the mall opponents' petition was approved. However, Rick Caruso, the company's founder and the developer of **The Grove** shopping center in Los Angeles, released this statement:

"We began reaching out to the community nearly four years ago and have met with

thousands of Carlsbad residents. Even after we gathered 20,000 signatures in support of the 85/15 Plan, and the City Council (5-0) unanimously adopted the plan, our outreach continued. We are extraordinarily grateful to an overwhelming number of Carlsbad residents who have contributed to the plan, embraced it and will support it as we move forward."

The 85/15 Plan to change the zoning calls for some development on 48 acres east of Interstate 5 on Canon Road in Carlsbad. Some

of the land would remain open space for public use with hiking trails. The plan also calls for 155 acres east of that land to be designated as permanent open space.

The Carlsbad project is only one of Caruso's current real estate developments. His company is working on **Palisades Village** to upgrade the downtown retail area of Pacific Palisades, an upscale Los Angeles neighborhood. Also in development is a hotel in the beachside community of Montecito near Santa Barbara, Calif.—*A.A.*



PHOTOS BY DONATO SARDELLA/GETTY IMAGES

Revolve Clothing Stands Up to Cancer

Fashion for a good cause was at the forefront at the **Revolve Clothing Stand Up to Cancer** benefit at the Paramour Mansion in Los Angeles.

Revolve Clothing teamed up with **Stand Up to Cancer**, an organization that generates awareness about cancer and raises money for scientific cancer research, for a fundraiser. The Oct. 22 charity event celebrated Revolve's partnership with its exclusive 61-piece capsule collection.

"This has been such a passionate project for everyone at Revolve, and tonight is a chance to raise even greater awareness for a cause. Not only has our world-class team spotlighted Stand Up to Cancer amongst our millennial audience but together, with our brands, they've created an amazing collection that the Revolve girl across the globe wants to wear," said Mike Karanikolas, Revolve's co-founder and co-chief executive.

The party had an exotic air with the venue decorated in a rustic Moroccan theme that took place in the Silver Lake hills, set among rich green foliage and a generous view of the city.

The fashion show itself featured 1970s-inspired Fall/Winter 2015 styles designed by 33 of Revolve's top-selling brands. Within the **Revolve x SU2C** collection, there were

shimmy-fringed disco dresses, denim flares, multicolored lamb-fur jackets, gypsy-printed jumpsuits and graphic T-shirts designed from the likes of **Lovers + Friends**, **Eaves**, **Wildfox Couture**, **House of Harlow**, **Mara Hoffman** and many more.

Los Angeles-based fashion label **Jen's Pirate Booty** debuted a bohemian mini tunic, "Wildflower," in black with exaggerated bell sleeves and an embroidered skirt ruffle detail. Owner Jenny Rossi said it was important to participate in this project because of the number of people, including a family member, affected by cancer.

Celebrities including former Miss Universe Olivia Culpo, actress Jamie Chung, fashion journalist Louise Roe and singer Sophie Tweed-Simmons (daughter of Gene Simmons) showed their support and strutted the catwalk on a glass-constructed runway set up over a pool. A slew of notable figures were also in attendance, including actresses Jaime King, Italia Ricci and Sarah Hyland.

The Revolve x SU2C collection is available through Dec. 31 with 30 percent of the purchase price of every item, which sells from \$44 to \$550, going to SU2C. Revolve guarantees a minimum donation of \$200,000.—*Sarah Wolfson*

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Corrections and Clarifications

In an Oct. 23 pictorial review of Los Angeles Fashion Week runway shows, the name of designer Malan Breton was misspelled. On Oct. 14, Breton produced a 29-look runway show for his Spring Summer 2016 collection at Style Fashion Week.

CIT *Continued from page 1*

partner with **Creative Intellectuals**; and Josh LeVine, chief executive officer of **Frame Denim**.

Metchek led a discussion of the history of the apparel industry from 1994—the year before the CFA was founded and when production was largely domestic—to the advent of the **North American Free Trade Agreement**, when quotas ended and imports surged, to today, with Internet sales of apparel amounting to \$75 billion annually.

“In 2015, we’re talking about branding and licensing,” Metchek said, ticking off a list of labels—including **Juicy Couture**, **Tommy Hilfiger**, **Liz Claiborne**, **Rock & Republic**, **Chorus Line**, **St. Tropez** and **Laundry**—that were acquired. In some cases, the brands have become licensed labels run by retailers as exclusive in-house brands.

“Do we care about a brand’s sustainability or do you just want to sell it?” Metchek asked.

Holiday forecast

Telsey took a look at the holiday retail season and made a few predictions.

“It’s been a very tough year,” she said. “We had the West Coast port delays creating havoc with what sold at full price. And then we had the [late] Labor Day on Sept. 8, which wreaked havoc with the selling season.”

Telsey forecast a continuation of the athleisure trend, noting that in the past “there used to be four reasons for women to buy: work, gym, weekend and parties. Today, work, weekend and gym is all integrated.”

This holiday season, she also sees denim beginning to rebound, and there is a strong interest in jewelry as well as cosmetics.

Telsey recommended the audience keep an eye on Irish fast-fashion retailer **Primark**, which recently opened a store in Boston and has an aggressive rollout plan for the United States. “If you have seen the new Primark in Boston, you’ve never seen prices like these,” she said, explaining that jeans are priced at \$10 and T-shirts are selling for \$3.50.

Some new shopping trends Telsey sees for holiday 2015 include customers buying more online and picking up in stores. She also believes there will be an increase in mobile shopping and consumers requesting to ship from stores.

“We’re going to see a bigger mobile season than ever before,” she said. “It gives consumers choices of when to

buy and spend.”

Telsey also pointed to social shopping giving the customer the opportunity to buy from their **Instagram** and **Twitter** feeds. It’s “the ability to buy what you want when you see it,” she said.

Social strategy

Throughout the event, Cohen polled the audience to determine its makeup and interests. Most in the audience identified themselves as either professional-services executives or branded manufacturers.

Some 57 percent said they had explored an acquisition or

sale. And 67 percent said their marketing plans include social media. Furthermore, 65 percent of the crowd said social or digital media and tech are the best ways to grow a brand.

Solanki said the “never-off syndrome” of constant information has created a “need to cut through the clutter.” He recommended companies create an email marketing program that allows people to subscribe to a specific

interest rather than a general list.

For Frame Denim, “social and digital is the way to communicate with our customers,” LeVine said, adding that the company can create a new design, cut it, take a photo, put it on Instagram “and take pre-orders.”

Measuring the return on investment for social media can be complicated. Solanki recommended brands look at influence and monetary gain separately. He suggested companies set benchmarking goals for a campaign and then look at the “lift” provided by social-media efforts.

Social media has also changed the licensing industry, Blue said, pointing to the rise of Internet properties such as **Grumpy Cat**, which has become a licensed brand. “Digital media is really rocking our world right now,” she said. “People can build a fan base. There are more opportunities [for licensing] than ever before.”

Blue said negotiating the licensing agreement is key. “The licensor wants the highest royalty rate, and the licensee wants to pay as little as possible. If the licensing agreement isn’t right, the whole thing could go away. At the end of the day, the licensor just wants to protect the brand—and their other relationships [with retailers].”

LIMA, the **Licensing Industry Merchandisers’ Association**, can help with licensing agreement templates and



THE PANEL: Left to right: Ilse Metchek, Mitchell Cohen, Josh LeVine, Dana Telsey, Mitesh Solanki, Jessica Blue and Marvin Padilla

legal advice. Attending the **Licensing Expo** is also a good idea, Blue said. “It’s such a competitive market right now,” she noted. “We have 500 booths showing 5,000 brands and 16,000 attendees. Luckily, it works more than it doesn’t.”

Cohen advised taking a cautious approach when negotiating a licensing agreement. “As two partners come together, everyone’s really excited about getting their documents signed. But take a step back first,” he said.

Money partners

When the conversation turned to strategies for seeking outside investment, Padilla recommended looking beyond the financial commitment.

“If you find the right partner, not just money, they have to be able to experience and guide,” he said.

LeVine agreed, saying, “A good partner versus a bad partner makes all the difference.”

Last year, Frame Denim received investment from Andrew Rosen and John Howard. (Rosen, chief executive officer of **Theory**, and Howard have invested in several fashion brands, including **Proenza Schouler**, **Rag & Bone** and **Allice + Olivia**.) “They’re in sort of a godfather role,” LeVine said. “You have all this access to guys who have been there and done it before.”

Padilla recommended that companies thinking about seeking outside investment “start planning early. Even if it’s early in the lifecycle.”

“The most important thing is to run a thorough process as you meet different investors,” he said. “It’s kind of like dating and choosing a wife. You want to make sure you sample the universe.”

Q&A and made in LA

The panel fielded several questions from the audience regarding finding management candidates, investment in technology and protecting a brand’s intellectual property internationally.

One question concerned whether domestic-made fashion should be branded as made in U.S.A., made in California or made in LA.

“I’d go with made in LA,” LeVine said. “To me, it really resonates.”

Made in LA is especially effective with millennial consumers, LeVine said. “But at the end of the day, what they’re looking for is authenticity. We have to tell a true story of who we are; otherwise they’ll call bulls--t.”

Blue agreed, saying, “Millennials live in a bespoke world. They want something tailored to them.”

CIT and the CFA are currently working on a new Los Angeles-area Fashion Industry Profile, which will be released in February and include updated information since the last Fashion Industry Profile was released in 2011. ●

Cotton *Continued from page 1*

bership-engagement manager for BCI. BCI is headquartered in Geneva but also maintains staff in the United States.

Also in attendance at the Ace Hotel seminar were suppliers including **Buhler Quality Yarns Corp.** and **Tuscarora Yarns Inc.**

BCI counts as members **Nike Inc.** and **Levi Strauss & Co.** Levi’s set a goal for itself that by 2020 it will use 75 percent of the “better cotton” that BCI certifies. Natalie Hubbard, a sustainability specialist at Levi Strauss & Co., spoke at the BCI seminar. BCI’s better cotton is different from organic cotton, which is grown without pesticides or genetically modified seeds.

“We’re trying to get conventional farmers who use heavy pesticides to reduce harmful inputs such as herbicides and insecticides. It has an environmental benefit,” Abney said, adding that BCI also had a goal to make farms more productive.

David Sasso, vice president of international sales for Buhler, confirmed that his high-end yarn company is in the process of having its membership reviewed by BCI. “You have some very large retailers that move markets,” he said of BCI members. “That makes a big difference if they are behind it.”

The support from major companies makes a point of difference for BCI, Sasso said. He noted that there are a number of groups looking to build programs that certify good cotton production practices. But certification is just part of the strategy for success, Sasso said. “A certificate is not worth much if there is no profitability,” he said. “If their supply chain is not profitable, it won’t be worth the effort.”

The point of BCI’s meeting was to gain the support of large apparel companies to support BCI’s efforts to get farmers in India and regions in sub-Saharan Africa to grow sustainable cotton. It means improving the labor conditions of the people growing the cotton. The group’s colleagues also will help in

training the laborers in agricultural methods that are deemed less harmful to the environment.

BCI also hopes to build a supply chain that will consistently offer the better cotton that top brands demand. If the farmers cultivate cotton in the way deemed sustainable, they will be given access to markets where Nike and Levi’s shop. The group also has been working with American farmers. Abney said that it is not BCI’s mission to teach them how to grow cotton better. However, his organization will be able to give them a standard where they can prove to the world that their crop is grown in a sustainable way.

Retailers and major labels also have paid attention to groups such as **Sustainable Cotton Inc.**, which is headquartered north of Sacramento, Calif. The group is hoping to develop what it calls a “cleaner cotton” supply chain in California’s Central Valley.

Sustainable Cotton is funded by California’s State Water Resources Control Board, said Marcia Gibbs, the executive director of the group. The group gives advice to farmers looking to stop water-sourced pollution, she said. The group’s mission is also to help market the cotton grown by farmers working with Sustainable Cotton.

“It is important for us to keep farmers farming,” Gibbs said. “We think it is important to continue to grow cotton in California. We grow some of the best crops in the world. We want to let people know that there are farmers who are good stewards of the land.”

The group has trademarked its cotton as “cleaner cotton.” Its cotton puts a premium of 10 cents per pound of cotton. San

Francisco label **California Cloth Foundry** uses cleaner cotton in its product. Mountaineering label **The North Face** used the cotton in its “Backyard Hoodie” sweater from its “Backyard” capsule collection in late 2014.

Cotton and performance

Cotton is also challenged by the rise in fabrics made from other fibers. In the past five years, worldwide consumption for synthetic fabrics has jumped from 70 million tons a year to 80 million tons. For cotton, worldwide consumption for the fiber has remained flat, below 20 million tons each year, according to the **International Cotton Advisory Committee**, a Washington, D.C.-based association of cotton-producing countries.

One reason has been the popularity of athleisure clothes, said Jeff Shafer, a denim manufacturer and designer for brands **Bluer** and **Agave**.

“It is marketed as technology,” he said of non-cotton fabrics used in athleisure lines. “It has antimicrobial and wicking properties, and companies have customers wanting it.”

Buhler’s Sasso said that cotton is getting more heavily involved in the research-and-development game. “Cotton is still the preferred fiber for comfort,” he said. “What cotton will be doing is looking at how we can improve performance and still be natural. I see a lot of new innovation in design in yarn and fiber combinations that will pull cotton through in a performance area that is so large. A lot of new things are coming down the pike. It will take time.” ●



Natalie Hubbard of Levi’s

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

Indian Summer Tempers Buyers at Fashion Market Northern California

By Deborah Belgum and Alison A. Nieder

Stephanie Harris, a Santa Rosa, Calif.-based rep for **Habitat Clothing, Pure Handknit,**

SAN MATEO, Calif.—Buyers were literally taking the temperature outside to see how much merchandise they needed as they visited the three-day **Fashion Market Northern California** show to browse Spring 2016 fashions.

Many specialty-store retailers walking the aisles inside the **San Mateo Event Center** were hesitant to go all out for Spring merchandise because the unusually warm weather in Northern California has kept shoppers away from stocking up on Fall merchandise. Slow Fall sales affect Spring purchases down the road.

“In Northern California, we still had Indian summer. The weather here has been hot. In San Francisco, people were walking around without jackets. A lot of inventory is not moving,” said Jacqueline Stone, a Fairfax, Calif.-based representative for **Mycra Pac, Escape From Paris, Italca** scarves and **Pantropic Hats**.

She said buyers basically wanted to see how clothing and accessories performed for the holidays before committing dollars to Spring goods. “Because department stores bring in Fall merchandise for 7/30 or 8/30, some specialty stores brought in Fall merchandise sooner, and they’re still sitting on it,” Stone said. “Department stores are moving it out, and it goes on sale. That impacts the cycle of things. It forces specialty stores to follow suit, and it’s not working for either.”

Sheryl Draper is a regular exhibitor, based in San Rafael, Calif., who represents several accessories lines. She said accessories were getting a boost at the show because many stores were freshening up their slow-moving Fall merchandise with year-round goods. “I got more orders for Immediates than Spring,” Draper said, saying the show was good. “They don’t have money yet for Spring.”

Draper represents jewelry collections **Zina Kao, Lotta, Anna Sukardi, Anne Koplik** and **Pom**; handbag lines **Ellington** and **Silo**; and **Fil de Joie**, a collection of socks and gloves. She recently picked up boho accessories collection **Leatherock**, which didn’t have a Northern California representative.

Having lighter-weight goods was a plus for



Neon Buddha, Caite and **Kyla Seo**. The result was an incredible show for Harris. “This was a cleanup because of the way my lines break. I saw 28 stores. I’m done for the season. I’m wrapping up Spring,” she said, noting that it seemed business was improving for retailers.

Wait and see

Fern Liberson, whose **Fern Liberson & Co.** showroom is located in the **California Market Center** in Los Angeles, wasn’t quite as positive. She felt her sales were down from last year’s October show.

“All in all, it was a little quiet,” she said. Many of her regular buyers said they were planning to wait until January to place Spring 2016 orders. “Usually they would write more Spring, but they were waiting until January. They were hesitant.”

But Liberson saw a few exceptions to that sentiment. The **Magdalena** line she carries was on fire. “If you have a great line, they are going to do business,” Liberson said. “The line was very well priced and very summery. People didn’t want their competitors to get that line. I wrote for 3/30 and 4/30 deliveries.”

The highest wholesale price point for the **Magdalena** line made out of gauze was \$28. Oversized shirts were wholesaling for \$20, and dresses were wholesale priced between \$25 and \$28. Other lines Liberson carries include **Chalet, Inside Out, Joseph Walker** and **Orange**.

Judy Kurgan, who shares the **L on 5** showroom at the California Market Center, didn’t start attending the San Mateo show until 2013 and has been building business ever since. This time she opened an account with a longtime store in Truckee, Calif. “Every time I go there I open a new account. I am still in the building phase of my business up there,” she said.

But she noted that business was down a bit due to the unusually warm California weather, which was causing fall and winter merchandise to stack up on the shelves. “Who wants to try on a heavy sweater and a heavy jacket when it is 100 degrees outside?” she asked. “I saw five of my best stores, and they said they would write with me in January.” ●

Calendar

Oct. 30

CMC Sample Sales
California Market Center
(participating showrooms)
Los Angeles

Nov. 3

CALA
Westin St. Francis
San Francisco
Through Nov. 4

Kingpins

Pier 36 NYC/Basketball City
New York
Through Nov. 4

“Dissecting the Market to Find Your Niche” webinar by Fashion Business Inc.
online

Nov. 10

CALA
Denver Mart
Denver
Through Nov. 12

Nov. 18

Denim Première Vision
Fira Montjuic
Barcelona
Through Nov. 19

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

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

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Spring 2016 Collections

The runway shows of **Los Angeles Fashion Week** stretched across two weeks running Oct. 5–18 and showcased collections from across town, across the country and around the world. Shows were organized by several groups, including **Style Fashion Week**, **Art Hearts Fashion**, **Metropolitan Fashion Week**, **LA Fashion Week** and **Fashion Week Los Angeles**. Additional coverage can be found at ApparelNews.net.

Andre Soriano



Miguel Badiola



Style Fashion Week

Nikki Lund



Aroshna Makanojia



Bentley and Lace



A'Qua Swimwear



Christina Milian



Civil Society



Cheri Elizabeth



Vicken Derderian



Cristina Nitopi



Clubwear



Ferocious Fashion



First Nations Fashion Design



Edison Richards



Foxbait



House of Perna



LOS ANGELES FASHION WEEK

Kinsman Swim



KEN ALCAZAR

Seize&Desist



KEN ALCAZAR

Lisa's Lacies



KEN ALCAZAR

Mila Fargo



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Temraza



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Soul Star Clothing



KEN ALCAZAR

Sun & Seeds



KEN ALCAZAR

Nina B. Roze



KEN ALCAZAR

Uwi Twins



KEN ALCAZAR

**LA Fashion Week
Flora Miranda**



AVI LOUD

Sanchez-Kane



AVI LOUD

Reese



AVI LOUD

**Art Hearts Fashion
Mister Triple X One Rose**



JEFF LINETT

Mister Triple X Vortex



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Shalemar Sharbatty



JEFF LINETT

Electric Family Apparel Has a Do-gooder's Edge

By Sarah Wolfson *Contributing Writer*

Graphic tees—specifically, street, skate and athletic wear—have had an impact on the apparel industry. Whether T-shirts are mass-produced as part of the fast-fashion trend or cut from quality fabrics, there always seems to be a place for them in the market.

Los Angeles-based clothing and accessories line **Electric Family** was conceived during a trip three years ago to Miami when a group of friends visited the **Winter Music Conference**. They set out to create an apparel company—specifically, tees and bracelets—that could positively affect communities worldwide by bridging their passion between fashion and music.

With a philanthropic edge, the collective launched Electric Family online in September 2012. Since then, Matt Dronkers, Andrew Nilon and Steve Brudzewski have been the masterminds behind the e-commerce site, leading with their incentive to establish a socially responsible lifestyle brand.

Co-owner Nilon did not have a seasoned apparel background, but he did have a desire to learn. Brudzewski handles artist relations, and Dronkers, whose title is creative director, previously owned **Thriving Ink**, an apparel brand that existed a few years before Electric Family was launched.

Their collection features street-inspired, graphic-heavy hoodies, tanks, T-shirts, bracelets and snapbacks. Design inspiration is culled from electronic music and the community, which makes for a futuristic, clean style with hints of neon colorways. The T-shirts and hoodies are cut from cotton fabrics sourced locally. Custom pieces are manufactured in Los Angeles. Wholesale price points vary between \$16 for a T-shirt, \$27 for a crew neck and \$32 for a hoodie.

“Electric Family is the first street-style brand to be born



from within the electronic-music community,” Nilon said. “One of our primary objectives in growing this brand has been to harness the positivity present in the dance music scene and use it to do good on a larger scale. Our apparel, bracelets and accessories act as the vehicle for executing this strategy.”

Through company-held events, Electric Family has worked heavily on artist-collaborative bracelet designs to raise funds for specific charities and volunteer activities. They have received a lot of support from the artist and concert circuit with successful selling ventures at music festivals as well.

The company has also used social media as a forum to reach out to its fans and customers. “We grew up during the rise of the technology era, and that has definitely shaped our view of the world. We can now connect with people worldwide in a matter of seconds through our phones,” Nilon said. “We can see the struggles many people face all around the world. We have adopted this mindset that profits and revenue growth are not the only important metrics to consider in business. Our team feels that we have a duty to help others and so we made it part of our company culture. A business can be wildly profitable and still positively impact the lives of others. It doesn’t have to be one or the other.”

The collection is sold primarily on the Electric Family e-commerce site, but within the last few months the company has branched out and partnered with three retail boutiques in California and six in the United Kingdom.

Currently, Electric Family is launching a new collection on **Karmaloop** featuring some of its best-selling pieces and some exclusive tie-dye pieces. The company is also releasing a special-edition “coloration jacket” with DJ/producer duo **Adventure Club**, based out of Montreal.

The group recently showed at the **Venue Trade Show** at **Style Fashion Week** in Los Angeles. Next year, Electric Family will attend the **Agenda** trade show in Long Beach, Calif., and the **MAGIC** trade show in Las Vegas.

For the company, the message is clear: “If we unite together, we can change the world for the better,” Nilon said.

For more information, email drew@electricfamily.com. ●

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T-shirt Trends for Spring 2016

The motto for forecasting T-shirt trends for teenagers and young women might as well be “Here today, gone tomorrow,” said Barbara Fields, president of the **Barbara Fields Buying Office** in Los Angeles.

She’s been in the forecasting game for three decades now. “Every day something new is going on, especially in T-shirts,” she said.

of differentiation,” Pierce said.

She noted that T-shirts seem to be a part of everyone’s wardrobe. “For younger girls, they love characters and animation,” she said. “As they move up in age, it probably becomes less a part of their wardrobe.”

Earlier this month, Fields produced a series of forecast seminars for buyers from retailers including **Gabriel Brothers; J.C. Penney Company Inc.; Gordmans; Stitches**, which is a division of **YM Inc.**; and **Ross Stores Inc.**

For the Spring 2015 season, young women’s T-shirts embraced tropical flora prints and crochet-style fabrics. For the upcoming Spring 2016 season, trends will see the



SPRING '16: Barbara Fields’ trends for juniors T-shirts are, from left to right, Americana-style graphics, long tunic-style T-shirt, a fringe silhouette, social-media graphics and stripes.

Yet for every major season out there, Fields has made forecasts for what’s next in the market for young women’s T-shirts.

For graphics, trends typically start in Los Angeles. For silhouettes and T-shirt bodies, trends often start in Europe. Fields scouts trends by visiting shopping streets and nightclubs in major fashion cities around the world.

Trends typically last between just under 90 days up to a year, she said. If a trend continues to show up in boutiques, major retailers and nightclubs across the globe, then she earmarks the trend for her clients.

Liz Pierce, a retail and brand-licensing analyst for **Brean Capital**, has attended many of Fields’ presentations. T-shirts for young women are important to retailers, Pierce said. “It allows each retailer to flex inventory relatively quickly. It also allows them a point

boho, hippie look.

Silhouettes will feature fringe. With some categories of tops, suede will be used. Look for stripes and graphics featuring patriotic or “Americana” images as well as tie-dye graphics and baseball-style silhouettes.

Sports and athleisure influences will continue to be strong. Think of T-shirts with racer-back silhouettes or “bralette” T-shirts.

Fields also took a peek at Fall 2016 T-shirt trends. She believes T-shirts will have grommets and silhouettes will include a one-bare shoulder look. Also on the horizon are T-shirts and T-shirt dresses featuring **Missoni**-style colorful zigzag stripes.

But Fields still isn’t sure whether Missoni-style T-shirts will be a big hit with juniors. “The patterns are so small and intricate, it may not be for the masses,” she said.—*Andrew Asch*

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LA based manufacturer is looking for a graphic artist with exp. in both Girls and Juniors apparel. Must be a team player able to work quickly in a fast paced environment and able to creatively bring the designer's inspiration to life. Expertise in both Photoshop and Illustrator is essential. A strong ability to create both graphics screens as well as print and pattern is pertinent. Must have a general understanding of the apparel business. Please send your res. to Melissa.k@secretcharm.com

Monique Shuillier

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Los Angeles based manufacturer is looking for a Social Compliance Director. Applicant must have min. 2 years' exp. working with Target Corp. Candidate will be responsible for on boarding factories to Target matrix and maintaining all aspects of Social Compliance. There will be overseas travel for this position. Please send resumes to cathy.k@secretcharm.com

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