

CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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MariusPetrus with Atlantic Mills



Lisa Konno and Karin Vlug with Prosperity Textile



Outkastpeople with Calik Denim



Marina van Dieren and Christina Albrecht with Advance Denim



Tess Van Zalinge with Knitdigo



EdithMarcel with Berto Industria Tessile



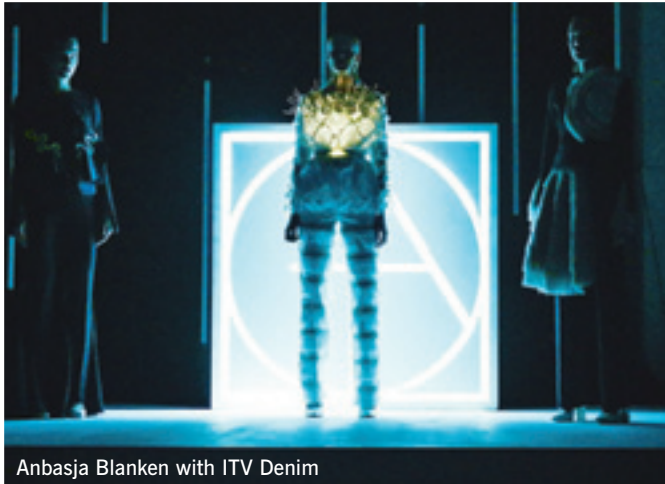
Deniz Gür with Kipas Denim



Lavinia Mustapha with Candiani Denim



Leandro Cano with Tejidos Royo



Anbasja Blanken with ITV Denim



Roosmarijn Koster with Arvind

T-SHIRTS

Orange County Sportswear Company Leases Shuttered American Apparel Dye and Finishing Plant

By Deborah Belgium Senior Editor

Months after **American Apparel** closed its dye and finishing plant in Hawthorne, Calif., it will return to operations after **AST Sportswear Inc.** announced it is leasing the building.

The 95,000-square-foot plant, which is owned by **Liberty Property** and previously was leased by American Apparel, closed earlier this year when American Apparel filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Operations are scheduled to resume early next year.

"The purchase of the Hawthorne dyeing and finishing plant [equipment] is an imperative addition to AST Sportswear Inc.'s production capacity. While AST Sportswear Inc. already

➔ **AST Sportswear** page 2

DESIGNER PROFILE

Trina Turk Marches Forward With New Store and New Looks

By Deborah Belgium Senior Editor

Trina Turk, the contemporary lifestyle designer known for her bright colors and mid-century-inspired prints evoking a resort vacation, is opening her 12th store next February in the Larchmont Village area of Los Angeles.

The new space comes nearly two years after shuttering her outpost on West Third Street, where parking had become impossible and traffic congestion was chipping away at sales of her self-named label.

"Since we are an LA-based brand, it seemed weird not to have a store in Los Angeles," said the designer, who currently has retail locations across the United States in places such as Miami, Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, New York and Newport Beach, Calif.

Turk, whose company was launched in 1995, is a true believer in retail if it provides shoppers a reason to peek beyond the front door.

"Our mantra in our own stores is that we must provide our customers with something better. Otherwise, why should they come in? They have to have fun and have a

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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DENIM ON THE CATWALK

Denim took another turn in the spotlight at the third annual Global Denim Awards in Amsterdam, where an international lineup of designers and denim mills collaborated on collections that highlighted the creative versatility of denim. For more from the show, see pages 6-7.

Designer Platform Not Just a Label Expands to LA, Plans Outreach Initiative With City of LA

Not Just a Label (NJAL), the emerging designer platform launched in London in 2008, has expanded to the United States with the opening of a Los Angeles office by NJAL founder Stefan Siegel.

Siegel, who serves as chief executive officer of the company, describes the organization as **LinkedIn** for designers. The company currently has a curated community of 24,000 designers from 150 countries and receives 600 daily requests from stylists and retailers, according to Siegel.

There's no fee for designers, who receive brand development and business support as well as promotion, education and mentorship on everything from public relations and marketing to manufacturing support and legal advice.

NJAL works with cities and government agencies on special programs, such as the strategic partnership the organization struck with the **Dubai Design District** (d3) earlier this year. NJAL will promote d3 regionally and internationally through editorial, digital

and networking projects. NJAL also provides customized data reports and access to test markets. For example, when Swedish washing-machine manufacturer **Electrolux** wanted to test a new machine that uses low water and no detergent, the company turned to NJAL. Currently the machines are being tested in the studios of 20 NJAL designers.

"We bring people together," Siegel said.

Two recent events held last year in the U.S. convinced Siegel to open a U.S. branch.

NJAL and the **Council of Fashion Designers of America** called a meeting last fall in Los Angeles where local designers discussed ways to support the local industry. Shortly after, Siegel's organization hosted the **NJAL | Made in NY** pop-up at the **Waldorf Astoria** in New York in partnership with the **New York City Economic Development Corporation's** Made in NY initiative. The pop-up featured 100 New York-based emerging designers as well as a series of workshops and panels.

Siegel decided to open in Los Angeles be-

cause of the city's position as a manufacturing center.

"Designers and garment manufacturers grow up in one world," he said. "California brands' identities are attached to that."

Siegel wants to promote Los Angeles as a hub for sustainable manufacturing, not just for the domestic designer but for the international design community as well.

"The U.S. is now the strongest market for NJAL, and establishing a permanent presence within the American fashion system was a clear next step," Siegel said in an NJAL statement. "Fashion remains the most under-appreciated industry in LA despite the fact it is a field with global reach and potential. With a thriving art scene, a powerhouse of retail momentum and a GDP of more than \$825 billion, LA is a growing force in the global fashion network. We will aim to challenge the existing structure of the system through education and strategy to solve hurdles emerging talents face, forging designs of innovation and sustainability, and

connecting local American fashion industries with our global community."

NJAL has been meeting with Mayor Eric Garcetti's office, which launched the "Make It in LA" initiative in June. The initiative seeks to connect the manufacturing "ecosystem," including designers, suppliers and manufacturers working together to create products using local resources.

"The city of Los Angeles always embraces efforts to increase the potential of its fashion and apparel-industry ecosystem," said Garcetti in a statement. "Not Just a Label will play an important role in the effort to shift from fast fashion to sustainability; it will be an excellent destination for people to experience fashion and its impact through its workshops led by industry leaders, educators and influencers."

NJAL plans to next host an event in December in Los Angeles to connect designers and manufacturers. For more information about NJAL, visit www.notjustalabel.com.

—Alison A. Nieder

ACTIVEWEAR

Lisa Kraynak Joins Carbon38 as CMO

Carbon38, the Los Angeles-based luxury activewear e-commerce retailer, has hired Lisa Kraynak as chief marketing officer.

Kraynak, who will be based in LA, will work closely with Carbon38 founders Katie Warner Johnson and Caroline Gogolak on growth initiatives for the 3-year-old company.

Kraynak's career has included working with large companies and entities as well as early-stage businesses, including **NBC Universal**, **Viacom**, **iVillage**, **Intuit**, **Demand**

Media and the city of New York. At Demand Media, Kraynak launched the Santa Monica, Calif.-based company's fashion and beauty divisions. She has served in leadership roles in companies—Demand Media and iVillage—as they launched their initial public offerings.

"Carbon38 is at an inflection point and adding a team member at Lisa's level gives us a rare competitive advantage," said Warner Johnson, chief executive at Carbon38,

in a company statement. "Lisa's experience, imagination, energy and, most importantly, competitive spirit manifests as the ideal engine for scale. She has a proven track record for delivering results through digital and brand marketing, and her operational expertise punts us into world-class territory."

Gogolak, president at Carbon38, said she and Warner Johnson look forward to Kraynak's assistance in driving the company's future growth.

"With her extensive digital and brand-marketing experience, we are thrilled to have her as a key senior leader as we transform the wardrobe of the modern American woman and show activewear as a leading category within the fashion space," Gogolak said.

Later this month Carbon38 will open a

pop-up retail shop on Los Angeles' Robertson Boulevard. The company is also working on two designer collaborations, one with artist Curtis Kulig and another with designer and **CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund** winner Jonathan Simkhai.

Warner Johnson and Gogolak founded Carbon38 in 2013, building on their experience in finance, high-end fashion and celebrity fitness. The site offers a curated selection of fashion-forward, high-performance apparel from an international mix of labels as well as its own in-house label Carbon38. Fashions carried on Carbon38 take the consumer from "the gym, the boardroom and beyond," the company said.

For more information, visit www.carbon38.com.—A.A.N.

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Hot Topic Acquires Her Universe

Hot Topic Inc., the mall retailer known as a purveyor of music and pop-culture clothes and gifts, announced that it acquired **Her Universe**, a brand specializing in fashion and accessories for female science fiction and fantasy fans.

Steve Vranes, chief executive officer for the City of Industry, Calif.-based Hot Topic, said that the acquisition will fortify Hot Topic's merchandise mix and strengthen its position as a pop-culture retailer. Hot Topic will also operate the Her Universe brand's e-commerce and wholesale businesses as a division of Hot Topic. The announcement

did not divulge how much Hot Topic spent to acquire the 6-year-old Her Universe.

In a letter to Her Universe fans, Ashley Eckstein, the brand's founder, wrote that she will continue to oversee her company. It will continue to be wholesaled to retailers such as **Kohl's Inc.** The brand also is sold at **Disney Parks** and retailers such as **BoxLunch**. She wrote that the Hot Topic purchase will allow her company to offer more plus sizes, expand business to Europe, design styles for men, and add more licenses and relaunch the **Her Universe Press**.

—Andrew Asch

T-SHIRTS

AST Sportswear *Continued from page 1*

operates knitting, cutting and sewing operations, this procurement will further reduce our reliance on contract dye facilities," said Abdul Rashid, AST's chief operating officer. "This will allow us to expand our product offering, streamline our supply chain, lower costs and ensure better quality control. In acquiring these assets and the additional investments planned at this facility for the future, the company believes it will be able to bring virtually all of its dyeing volume in-house."

AST Sportswear said it plans to create more than 120 new manufacturing jobs as a result of the lease. The purchase includes machinery and equipment related to fabric dyeing and finishing, along with industrial

dyeing, compressors and boilers.

AST Sportswear, which was founded in 1995 in Orange County, Calif., is a vertically integrated manufacturer and distributor of **Bayside**, an American-made brand of fashion and basic apparel that includes T-shirts and other casualwear sold to distributors and screen printers across the country.

With American Apparel up for sale, the company is reducing costs and looking for additional revenue to become more profitable.

Recently, American Apparel's chief executive officer, Paula Schneider, left the company after nearly two years to become the CEO of **7 For All Mankind**, **Ella Moss** and **Splendid**. She was replaced by Chelsea Grayson, who had been American Apparel's general counsel for two years. ●

Model Chloe Lattanzi

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Gap Inc.'s Chief Financial Officer Is Leaving

After 15 years working at **Gap Inc.**, Sabrina Simmons is stepping down from her job as executive vice president and chief financial officer.

A search is underway to replace her while she stays on until the end of fiscal 2016 to ensure a seamless transition over the next months.

Since joining Gap Inc. in 2001, Simmons has held several jobs of increasing responsibility—going from vice president and treasurer to executive vice president. Simmons has served as the company's CFO since late 2007.

Most recently, her responsibilities have included all global financial functions, including corporate and brand financial planning and analysis, treasury, risk management, tax, investor relations, controllership, corporate shared service centers, and internal audit, in addition to real estate, loss prevention and corporate facilities.

"I feel very fortunate to have spent a meaningful part of my career at Gap Inc.,

and I'll always be grateful to the Fisher family [founders], to my colleagues and to my team for the opportunities I've had with the company," Simmons said in a statement.

Gap Chief Executive Art Peck, who joined the company two years ago, said Simmons had been critical in establishing Gap Inc.'s capital-structure framework and maintaining operating discipline across the enterprise.

"Since I assumed the CEO role two years ago, Sabrina has been an instrumental partner in helping the company transition to a new leadership team," Peck said. "With that period of transition behind us, Sabrina and I agreed that this was an appropriate time for a change in the organization and for her to pursue the next chapter in her career. Sabrina and I will work together to ensure an orderly transition in the coming months. Most of all, I am grateful for her partnership and for all that Sabrina has contributed to Gap Inc."

—Deborah Belgun

RETAIL SALES

Zumiez Sales Jump in October

A month before shopping officially starts for the winter holidays, some retailers reported that their sales jumped in October.

Zumiez Inc., the mall-based retailer of action-sports and lifestyle looks, reported a same-store-sales increase of 10 percent in October. It beat the Wall Street consensus, which expected sales to show a modest 2.6 percent increase. It was Zumiez's biggest monthly same-store-sales increase since January 2015, wrote Ken Perkins, president of market-research firm **Retail Metrics**. Following the report of the sales increase, Zumiez raised its guidance for its fiscal 2016 third quarter. It is \$0.35 to \$0.36 of net income per diluted share compared to the previous guidance of \$0.29 to \$0.30 of net income per diluted share.

L Brands Inc.—the parent company of **Victoria's Secret**, **Bath & Body Works**, and **Henri Bendel**—also reported a solid October. Its same-store sales increased 1 percent during the month. **Gap Inc.**, the largest specialty retailer in the world, is scheduled to report its October sales on Nov. 7.

The Buckle Inc., the mall-based retailer of denim and lifestyle fashions, reported a

15 percent decline for its same-store sales in October. **Cato Corp.**, a specialty retailer of value-priced fashions headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., posted a decline of 6 percent in its same-store sales in October.

Bebe Stores Inc. announced results for the first quarter of its fiscal 2017 year on Nov. 3. Net sales were \$87.2 million, which was a decrease of 9.4 percent in a year-over-year comparison. Same-store sales for the quarter declined 3.2 percent. Manny Mashouf, Bebe's chief executive officer, said that his company saw strong sales in denim and leggings. However, the promotional angle of retail has been cutting into margins.

"While it is important to consistently get the fashion right we are also finding it a challenge to offset the extremely high levels of markdowns and promotions realized in the prior year. We are committed to protecting the brand image, reducing markdowns and improving inventory turns, and believe both our short-term and long-term success depend on our ability to execute our strategic plan," Mashouf said in a statement.

—Andrew Asch

Calendar

Nov. 5

ReveLation
Siren Studios
Los Angeles
Through Nov. 6

ComplexCon
Long Beach Convention Center
Long Beach, Calif.
Through Nov. 6

Nov. 8

CALA
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
Through Nov. 9

Nov. 9

Style Fashion Week

Palm Springs Convention Center
Palm Springs, Calif.
Through Nov. 12

Nov. 14

CALA
Denver Mart
Denver
Through Nov. 15

Nov. 17

Shop for Success
8767 Wilshire Blvd.
Beverly Hills, Calif.
Through Nov. 20

Nov. 20

DG Expo Fabric & Trim Show
San Francisco Hilton

San Francisco
Through Nov. 21

Dec. 1

Chicago Apparel and Accessories Market
Merchandise Mart
Chicago
Through Dec. 4

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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Green Light for The Reef's Expansion

The Reef Project, formerly known as the **LA Mart** showroom building, plans on a major expansion.

On Nov. 1, a key Los Angeles City Council body, the planning and land use management (PLUM) committee, gave a green light to plans for a \$1 billion development on a parcel adjacent to the showroom building at 1933 S. Broadway, which is a mile south from downtown Los Angeles.



The new development will eventually go to the LA City Council for approval, but no date has been scheduled yet, according to Sharon Dickinson, assistant to the PLUM committee. No changes are scheduled for The Reef showroom building, and it will continue to operate as a place for wholesale furniture and gift business, said Brian Lewis, a spokes-

man for the project.

Both showroom building and the parcels, located around 1900 S. Broadway, are owned by investor group **PHR LA Mart LLC**, which is led by Dr. Ara Tavitian, a Glendale, Calif.-based medical doctor. In 2012, The Reef showroom building was acquired by PHR LA Mart for \$55 million, according to media reports.

The proposed development will include new housing, including 549 apartments, 895 condominiums and 21 work/live units, with 5 percent of living units reserved for those with low incomes; a 208-room hotel; 104,000 square feet of retail space, including a grocery store, restaurants, a gym and a public art gallery; and 140,000 square feet of open space. It has not been discussed if fashion retail will go into the development, Lewis said.

A project description said it will be spread across two city blocks. Its boundaries are Washington Boulevard to the north, 21st Street to the south, Hill Street to the west and Main to the east.

The Reef, which is well known for a giant statue of a chair placed outside of it, has served as a furniture and gifts showroom building for decades. The giant chair will be moved to another space in the project, according to the project's website (www.reefprojectla.com).

Recently, the building has experienced a fashion turn. Over the past two years **Los Angeles Fashion Week** runway events have been held in the building as well as in tented areas outside the building. **Maker City LA**, a creative workspace that includes a photo studio and a sewing studio, has

been located in the building since 2013.

The project has come with controversy. A community group called **UNIDAD** argued that the development will increase market rates for rents and displace economically challenged people living in the neighborhood. The area around The Reef is considered South Los Angeles and has been deemed an economically challenged neighborhood, despite close proximity to the **University of Southern California** and **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College**.

LA Councilmember Curren Price has been an avid supporter of the development, which is located in his 9th council district. In a letter dated Oct. 28, he wrote that The Reef will create more than 2,700 temporary and 750 permanent jobs and infuse \$5.5 million annually into the city of Los Angeles' general fund.

The neighborhood features a couple of light-rail stations, including the Grand/LATTC stop at 331½ W. Washington Blvd. The presence of light rail has not sparked development, Price wrote.

"The Reef project is a pioneering transit-oriented development that will bring a much-needed infusion of investment, with wide sidewalks and inviting landscaping."

Another major South Los Angeles development is making its way to completion. **University Village**, located across the street from USC, is 75 percent completed and scheduled to debut in summer 2017, according to a USC spokesman. It will feature housing for 2,700 students and 100,000 square feet of retail around McClintock Avenue and Jefferson Boulevard. A **Trader Joe's** and a **City Target** have already signed University Village leases, the spokesman said.—*Andrew Asch*

INDUSTRY VOICES

Five Things to Look for in a Global Freight-Tracking System

By Stephen Dedola

The days of calling your ocean freight forwarder every time you need information about your cargo should be long gone. A good global freight-tracking system can save you hours on the phone and help boost your business's productivity.

But what features should a good freight-tracking system have? Here are five things to look for when considering an ocean freight-tracking system:

1. Notification System

If there's a change or delay to your ocean freight shipment, shouldn't you know right away? Look for a tracking system that sends you notifications via email to inform you of any changes that might require your immediate attention.

2. Detailed Order Information

Some ocean freight forwarders only provide you with a tracking number and an ETA for your cargo, and that's it. You may have no clue what's in the shipment, which can make keeping track of when certain goods will arrive very difficult. A good tracking system not only gives you an ETA and a tracking number, it should also list purchase orders (POs) down to the item/SKU level. This can be especially helpful when your salespeople call asking when a particular item will be in. All you have to do then is look it up in the tracking system, and you can give them an answer right away.

Another feature your tracking system should provide is the ability for you to store documents in the system such as a

commercial invoice, packing list or bill of lading. That way, if you ever need to look up a past shipment, you have every document related to that order at-hand.

3. Customization and Flexibility

Multiple team members often access the ocean freight-tracking system, such as a manager, warehouse staff or an accountant. They are often looking for particular information and don't need to see all the available data. A good tracking system is customizable so each user has a unique login and only sees the information he or she needs to see.

A good tracking system should also allow you to generate reports and filter shipments based on specific data points, like the purchase order number or the SKU. That way you're not generating reports that have information you don't need, saving you the time of manually removing that information in a program like **Excel**.

The ocean freight-tracking system should also be PC- and mobile/tablet-friendly, so wherever you are, you can easily log in and see the status of your shipments.

4. Data Integration

A good ocean freight-tracking system can be integrated with other software, such as your business's ERP system. That way you don't have to enter information about your

shipments either manually or through a third-party system. The tracking system can seamlessly push the information to your software, keeping your own system up to date at all times.

5. Support System and Automatic Updates

Some tracking systems provide customer support, but if you ever have a question, you may find yourself spending hours on the phone trying to get an answer from your ocean freight services partner. Look for a tracking system that provides a way for you to contact your freight forwarder within the system itself via a message box or internal support system.

An ocean freight forwarder should also be looking for ways to improve its tracking system. Look for a provider that takes your needs into account for future development of the system. Also, ask how often it makes updates or adds new features.

You'll want a system that can grow with your needs rather than remain static.



Stephen Dedola

*Stephen Dedola is the chief operating officer and chief financial officer at **Dedola Global Logistics**, a freight forwarder and logistics provider since 1976. Stephen is the architect of Dedola's internal workflow applications and Web-based customer-facing tracking system **TrakIt**.*

IMPORT/EXPORT

Longshore Workers and Employers Meet for Early Talks on Contract Extension

After a disastrous holiday season two years ago when many ships couldn't unload their cargo on time at West Coast ports, longshore workers and their employers are trying to head off any similar disaster.

On Nov. 1, the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union**, which represents some 20,000 port workers, and the **Pacific Maritime Association**, which represents the shipping lines and port terminal operators that employ them, met in San Francisco to talk about extending the current contract. The current agreement, covering 29 West Coast ports, expires on July 1, 2019.

After the one-day meeting, the two sides agreed to resume

talks at a future date.

Importers and exporters are trying to avoid a repeat of a tumultuous peak shipping season when contract talks to hammer out a new agreement bogged down for 10 months, resulting in work slowdowns that began on Oct. 31, 2014, and ended on Feb. 20, 2015, when a new contract was ratified.

The protracted labor negotiations—the longest in recent longshore history—led to cargo-container vessels being anchored for days and weeks beyond the breakwater off the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles while waiting for berths to free up.

Clothing importers and retailers lost millions of dollars as merchandise slated for the holiday season did not make it to store shelves in time.

Recently, various business organizations and 128 trade groups had been urging the two sides to meet sooner rather than later to avoid another breakdown in the transportation system that is so critical for U.S. importers and exporters.

During the last contract negotiations, the **National Retail Federation** was constantly urging the two sides to sign an agreement and start clearing up the backlog of merchandise that needed to get to stores soon.—*Deborah Belgium*

Global Denim Awards Highlight Denim Innovation

Dutch designer Anbasja Blanken, working with Italian denim mill **ITV Denim**, was named Best Collection and Indian denim mill **Arvind**, featured in a collection by Roosmarijn Koster, was named Best Fabric at the third annual **Global Denim Awards**, held at **Westergasfabriek** in Amsterdam on Oct. 26.

Inspired by luminescent coral, Blanken's collection featured glow-in-the-dark denim created for her by ITV, which created yarns with luminescent properties.

"My concept was about the deep sea and, more specifically, coral, the 'flowers of the sea,'" she said. "Some coral's colors alternate when the light changes. It can even be luminescent. What if my denim pieces produced light themselves?"

The event—hosted by **HTNK Fashion** recruitment and consultancy, the **Kingpins** denim trade show, and **House of Denim** and sponsored by **e3 Cotton**—is held concurrently with the Kingpins denim trade show in Amsterdam. The winning collections are displayed at Kingpins events in New York and Hong Kong as well as at the 2017 edition of **Amsterdam Denim Days**, a city-wide denim festival featuring workshops, seminars, sales and parties. Denim Days was founded by Lucel van den Hoeven, the chief executive officer of fashion trade-show organizer **Modelfabriek**—with HTNK owner Mariett Hoitink and James Veenhoff, who together founded Amsterdam's House of Denim, an organization that promotes sustainable denim production and operates the , a three-year educational program in jeanswear, located in Amsterdam.—*Alison A. Nieder*

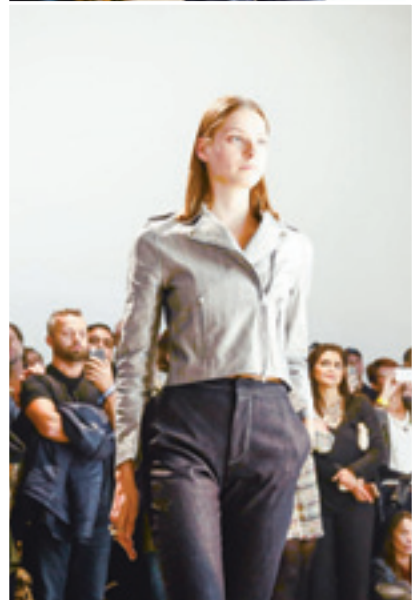
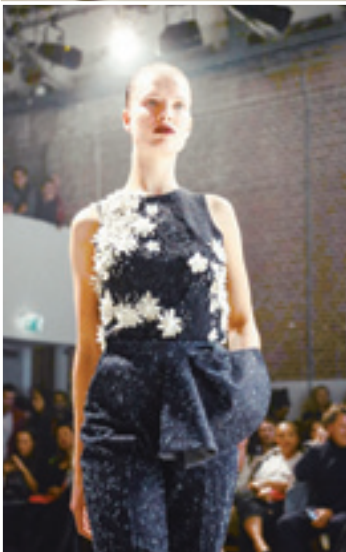


HTNK and House of Denim's Mariett Hoitink

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Lisa Konno and Karin Vlug with Prosperity Textile



Outkastpeople with Calik Denim

Trina Turk *Continued from page 1*

sales associate who knows them and understands them,” the designer told a group gathered at the **Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce** on Oct. 31 for a “Power Hour” lecture on “How to Build an Empire With Trina Turk.”

Retail has morphed drastically since the Trina Turk brand opened its first store in Palm Springs, Calif., nearly 15 years ago. Few people were shopping online and sites like **Revolv Clothing**, **Nasty Gal** and **Net-a-Porter** didn’t even exist.



Trina Turk

But that Palm Springs store has expanded twice and is the No. 1 store in the Trina Turk retail lineup. “Our brand is an optimistic brand. We are Californians, and California is an optimistic place. It is important to give off this vibe in the story of positivity,” she said. “The landscape is changing rapidly, but I still think people will come into retail stores if it is fun.”

Still, the label has its own e-commerce site as well as selling to high-end department stores and boutiques such as **Nordstrom**, **Neiman Marcus**, **Saks Fifth Avenue** and **Bloomingdale’s**, which also sell Trina Turk’s fashion on their online locations.

Even in 2001 it was a gamble to take a chance on retail. Turk said she and her husband and business partner, Jonathan Skow, signed that first Palm Springs retail lease on Sept. 10, 2001, one day before the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the East Coast. “We really didn’t know much about retail, but we were okay because the rent wasn’t that expensive,” she said. “The worst-case scenario was we would create this great showcase



Resort 2017 collection

for our clothing. And then it was like, ‘Oh, that may not have been a really great idea.’ But Palm Springs in a way seemed so far removed from the events in New York.”

The store did not start with a bang but built up slowly to the point that the Trina Turk location now takes up a row of stores on Palm Canyon Drive and has been part of every news story written about the rebirth of Palm Springs, which declined considerably after luxury developments began rising in nearby Palm Desert, Calif.

Keep it moving

After 12 years working as a designer for clothing companies such as **Ocean Pacific** and **B.U.M. Equipment**, Turk felt she had enough experience to start her own line, which was launched out of the spare bedroom in her house.

The vivid prints and bright colors she had grown used to as a designer in the surfwear and sportswear industry

became the DNA of her label, whose dresses sell for \$200 to \$400 and tops go for \$100 to \$250.

“I knew about design and merchandising and a little about wholesale sales, but there was a whole back-end part of running that business I knew nothing about. Every other day, for the first year, something would come up,” she recalled.

People would ask if she had a factor, which provides financing to apparel makers using their accounts receivables as collateral. “I said, ‘Why do I need a factor?’”

Someone else would ask if she had a freight forwarder, and again she asked why. But using a network of friends she had developed over the years, she got help.

That first season, she took her Los Angeles-sewn samples to New York to find a showroom. “I schlepped the line around the garment center in New York and showed to multi-line showrooms, and at the end of the week there were three that were interested,” she recalled, saying she left the samples behind with the showrooms. Then she found a Los Angeles showroom.

Her first collection for the Holiday 1995 season had only about 20 pieces, but she got orders from **Barneys New York**, **Saks Fifth Avenue** and **Fred Segal**. She personally took the line to the **American Rag Cie** store in Los Angeles, which also placed orders.

Then the **Bebe** chain of stores placed a \$250,000 order and she was up and running. “I thought, ‘Oh my God, how am I going to make this happen?’ I was going to make everything in Los Angeles, but that was a huge order.”

With her years of experience producing clothing in China for OP and B.U.M. Equipment, she contacted her overseas factories and got her Holiday collection made in time for delivery.

“Fortunately, it was silk, which China does. The money from that order got us off the ground,” she said.

Still, Turk said she is committed to making as much as she can in Los Angeles and still manufactures 40 percent to 50 percent of her collection in Los Angeles. While her profit margins are higher than most, it is still necessary to do labor-intensive styles overseas. But Turk recently added a cut-and-sew space next to her large headquarters in Alhambra, Calif.,



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Trina Turk

Continued from previous page

to accommodate more local production.

Of course, there have been bumps along the way. Turk and her husband had a third partner, who was becoming more reticent about growing the business. They wanted to buy her share of the company, but this was more than 10 years after the label had launched, and it would take more money than they had to take over her ownership.

So Turk and Skow met with **The Sage Group**, the Los Angeles investment bank known for several big-name apparel purchases, which shopped the company around to various private-investment firms. In July 2008, **KarpReilly LLC**, based in Greenwich, Conn., bought their partner's share of the company as well as some shares owned by Turk and Skow. "So far, they have been pretty hands off," Turk said.

The timing was fortunate. Within months, the U.S. economy would be headed on a downward slope for more than a year, cre-

ating what everyone refers to as the Great Recession. It was a real game changer for the retail industry.

"The downward spiral of pricing really started in 2008," Turk remembered. "In 2008 and 2009, a lot of stores wanted us to make cheaper clothes and reduce our price points. But the whole point of our brand is that we were not fast fashion and we were not throw-away fashion. We were using fabrics like silk and not polyester. During that time, people were asking us to knock ourselves off. We decided not to do that and that has solidified us where we are as a brand today. Sticking to our quality and price points was wise and important at that time."

The recession made life challenging. It took the contemporary label nearly three years to recoup the revenues it had before the economic decline started.

Today, Turk doesn't know if she could have the same success starting a contemporary label as she did in 1995. "I think the store buyers were more open then to coming

to Los Angeles. Now things are more corporate, and I don't know if stores would be willing to take a risk on some new brand," the designer said.

She has grown her label, whose revenues were predicted to reach \$100 million in 2014, by keeping the brand alive with new fabrics, prints and colors that keep changing as do the silhouettes. "Fabric technology is always evolving," she said. "The fabric tells you what it wants to be and it is easy to update the brand and keep it going."

In recent years, the company has added **Mr. Turk**, a menswear collection designed by Skow, who is also a photographer and stylist, and signed several licenses to make handbags, jewelry, swimwear, shoes and, most recently, sunglasses and prescription eyeglass frames.

This year, Turk and her husband partnered with **Disney Pixar** and developed ready-to-wear and swimwear collections to coincide with the release of the animated film "Finding Dory." ●

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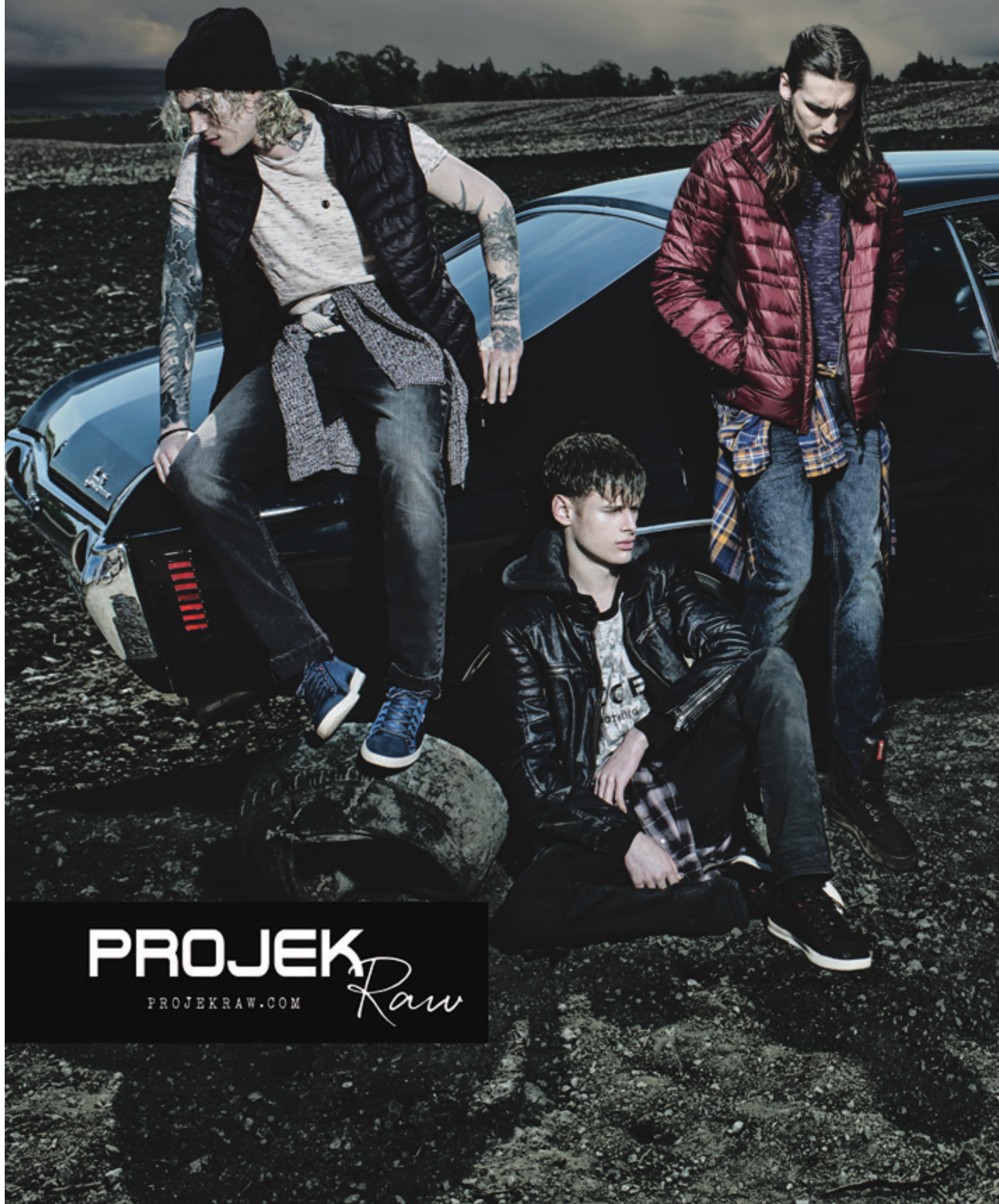
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