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INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Italian-born Ingrid Laghi was one of several international students in Santa Monica College's fashion department whose designs were featured in the school's recent LA Mode 2017 runway show in Santa Monica. For more from the show, see page 6.

NABAVI MANOOSH

Bankruptcy Court Approves Stalking Horse Bid for BCBG Max Azria

By Deborah Belgum Senior Editor

Weeks after an offer was made to take **BCBG Max Azria** out of bankruptcy as a shell of its former self, a U.S. bankruptcy court has approved the \$165 million offer.

On June 23, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in New York gave the go-ahead for **Marquee Brands** and **Global Brands Group Holding** to take over the intellectual property of BCBG Max Azria as well as operate about 20 stores in the Los Angeles company's retail fleet.

A final approval to confirm the reorganization plan for the women's contemporary clothing label is expected to be made by the court no later than July 31.

The winning bid for BCBG was placed on June 9, with Marquee Brands offering to pay \$106 million for the label's intellectual property and Global Brands coming up with \$23 million for inventory and the right to keep as

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MADE IN CALIFORNIA

B.James Tells LA Story With Emerging Label

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

In Brandon James' tough South Los Angeles neighborhood in the 1990s, the people who dressed well and had money were known as hustlers according to James, now a designer.

"If someone hustles, that defines everything. They can sell drugs, cars, anything to pay bills. It wasn't always the 9-to-5. People would say, he is a hustler, he has ambition, and fashion is the way I do it."

Out of 40 of the boys in his group of neighborhood friends, four are still alive and avoided lengthy jail sentences, according to James. It was easy for the boys to get swept up into violence and troubles with the law.

James remembered that the dealers in his neighborhood also would tell kids to beware of their life paths. "When you're broke, everything looks good. But once you get it, the value depreciates," James remembers them saying. "I started focus-

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APM Terminal at Los Angeles Port Shut Down Following Maersk Cyber Attack

It was the cyber shot heard around the world.

A global cyber attack that affected hundreds of companies and their computer systems crippled operations at **A.P. Moller-Maersk**, the world's largest container carrier, headquartered in Denmark.

Following the cyber invasion on June 27, worldwide operations at Maersk's 76 port terminals were hamstrung. Two days later, operations were finally gearing back to normal, but the Maersk-owned **APM Terminal** at the **Port of Los Angeles** was one of the last to remain out of service.

"We are still closed today [June 29], and we are working on the system," said Peter Fierro, a customer-service manager at the APM Terminal in Los Angeles.

At first, due to limited access to their computers, **Maersk Lines** had problems processing orders taken right before the cyber-ware

break in and was unable to process new orders.

By Wednesday, Maersk had developed some alternatives to take cargo orders through the electronic transaction platform INTTRA and EDI, or Electronic Data Interchange.

By June 29, many of Maersk's port terminals were operating at near normal speed with a few larger port terminals in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Los Angeles lagging behind. "Los Angeles is one of our biggest port terminals," said APM Terminals spokesman Tom Boyd. "We have 76 port terminals and 55 are working normally and 15 to 20 we have had to use manual processes to operate. Los Angeles is one of the ports where we want to make sure things are right when we hire our labor."

Port of Los Angeles spokeswoman Rachel Campbell said she had not seen any cargo back-up yet at the APM Terminal and the port was waiting for an update on when the terminal—one of the largest at the LA port—

would open.

Boyd said cargo-container ships were scheduled to arrive the evening of June 29 at the Port of Los Angeles and that they would be unloaded. "The imports are the easy part for us. It is a matter of taking them off the ships. Then we work something out with the customs department where we get the cargo released from them and then it is working with the truckers," he said. "For us, it is more on the export side, which doesn't affect apparel as much."

He said if there was a backlog of cargo containers, the APM Terminal gates would be kept open during the weekend and later in the evening. "I think we will be very flexible with the customers to make sure we get their cargo them," Boyd said.

However, it was unclear whether the APM Terminal gates would be open on July 4, a national holiday, and July 5, known as Bloody Thursday, named for the 1934 West Coast

longshore strike that led to the birth of the **International Longshore and Warehouse Union**. It is a national holiday for ILWU workers. "We have not had that discussion yet," Boyd said.

Europe was hard hit by the cyber attack, but it was particularly aggressive in Ukraine, where the country's banks, government offices, postal service and Kiev's metro system were experiencing problems.

Big companies that were affected include Russian oil and gas giant **Rosneft**, U.S.-based pharmaceutical company **Merck**, French retailer **Auchan Group**, and the real estate division of **BNP Paribas**.

Some believe the cyber attack originated in Ukraine. A Ukrainian company called **M.E.Doc** sent out a compromised update to its tax software that contained malware, infecting computers that were running it.

—Deborah Belgium

Handcrafted LA to Open at The Bloc

After a career of producing outdoor markets and festivals, the husband-and-wife team of Phillip and Shelly Dane will be opening their first permanent boutique in downtown Los Angeles.

The Danes' upcoming shop, **Handcrafted LA**, will open in a 3,600-square-foot space at **The Bloc**, a downtown Los Angeles retail center undergoing a \$180 million renovation that included tearing a roof off of the more-than-30-year-old enclosed mall.

Handcrafted LA is scheduled to take a bow on Aug. 15. It will feature Los Angeles-headquartered artisans and designers selling limited-run and one-of-a-kind goods at separate

booths lining the store. Handcrafted LA will house 15 booths, including a mix of 10x10 and 10x8-foot spaces. In the back of the store, there will be a DJ booth. There will also be counter space and table space available for rent.

Designers can rent booths for 30 days, then make space for a new tenant. The vendors will be charged a fee of \$295 to \$525 and 20 percent of their sales, Phillip Dane said. Vendors will not be required to staff their booths. Sales will be handled by Handcrafted LA staff. The first tenant will be leather goods and furniture designer **Dean Leather**, which runs a boutique in the Sunset Junction area of Los Angeles' Silver Lake

neighborhood.

"It will constantly be revolving with new tenants," Dane said. Handcrafted LA will feature white walls to give the space a gallery look. "It's an open space. I want it clean," he said. Some of the wall space might be devoted to work of local artists.

Renovation has been a long process for The Bloc, which is owned by **The Ratkovich Co.** It announced the start of the renovation in 2013. One of its anchor tenants, high-end cinema and eatery **Alamo Drafthouse Cinema**, is scheduled to take a bow in 2018. New tenants include a **Starbucks** with a newly minted craft coffee counter.

Long-running Bloc tenants include a **Macy's** and an **LA Fitness** gym. Part of the sprawling compound includes a **Sheraton Grand Los Angeles** hotel and a 722,000-square-foot office tower.

Dane forecasts that his new boutique will attract shoppers from the hotel, the office tower, as well as people lounging in the

Bloc's open-air courtyard area and commuters from the Seventh Street/Metro Center light-rail station across the street. A tunnel connects the retail center and the light-rail station.

"It will be a unique destination," Dane forecasted about the Bloc. "It will be one of the things to do in downtown Los Angeles."

The Bloc's office tower also is the address to **Nordstrom's HauteLook** division. It was also recently announced that London-headquartered e-tailer **Farfetch** will open its West Coast offices on the 30th floor of The Bloc. It will

take 25,000 square feet of office space to house the e-commerce site's design and tech offices, said Jeffery Fowler, Farfetch president for North America.

"Farfetch has called Downtown LA 'home' for its U.S. operations since we entered the market eight years ago, and we are proud to continue to invest in the community with our new office at The Bloc as we look to the future growth of our business," Fowler said.

—Andrew Asch



Phillip Dane

TenOverSix to Move to Miami

After a nine-year run in Southern California, the **TenOverSix** boutique will be closing its multi-brand, independent Melrose Avenue store and reopening in Miami, said Kristen Lee, the boutique's co-owner and creative director. Lee and business partner Brady Cunningham also run a TenOverSix boutique in Dallas. The boutique is scheduled to unveil an expansion this year.

The West Hollywood, Calif., boutique, located at 8425 Melrose Ave., was doing well, Lee said. But it was time to look for new opportunities. "I love being there. There's great foot traffic. But it felt like the right time to move on," she said. "The bottom line for us is it feels like a crowded market. I'd rather put my resources into an emerging market."

The Florida store will be located in Miami's Little River district, which is a five-minute drive from the town's Design District, which has distinguished itself for bou-

tiques, restaurants and galleries as well as being a center point of the annual **Art Basel** art fair.

Lee's husband, Joe Cole, will be developing a café adjacent to the new TenOverSix. He also is scheduled to open a cocktail bar down the street as well as a hotel in the neighborhood. The duo's new businesses are scheduled to open in early December, just as Art Basel opens.

The 2,000-square-foot Miami TenOverSix will sell a similar mix of apparel, gifts, accessories and homewares. Fashion brands sold at the store include **Maryam Nasir Zadeh**, **Nomia** and **A Piece Apart**.

The Miami shop also will focus more on collaborations with artists, industrial designers and ceramicists, Lee said.

The West Hollywood store is scheduled to close in late July. The store will hold a sale offering 80 percent off apparel, accessories, printed matter and homewares.—A.A.

COURTESY OF TENOVERSIX



Kristen Lee, TenOverSix co-owner and creative director

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Retailers Revamp Inventory at Fashion Market Northern California

Retailers, stuck with cold-weather inventory during a soggy winter, were sticking their heads out of their doors and filling in orders for a better season brought on by fairer weather.

The last eight weeks have been drier in Northern California and temperatures are rising, prompting shoppers to frequent stores to buy lighter-weight goods.

"I found a lot of stores were looking for Immediate merchandise lately because business is better and they are filling in," said Lisa Lenchner, whose **Lisa Lenchner Sales** showroom is in the **California Market Center** in Los Angeles.

Also, small local stores are getting a business boost as big retail chains have gone under or are carrying merchandise that isn't as risky as in the past. "I think there is a regeneration of specialty stores since the majors are faltering. The consumers who actually shop bricks-and-mortar have no place to go."

Lenchner was one of the scores of exhibitors who participated in **Fashion Market Northern California**, the apparel and accessories trade show held June 25–27 at the **San Mateo County Event Center**, which was billed as a Fall II show.

Lenchner—who represents such lines as **Krazy Larry** pull-on pants, **Adore**, **Benares** and **JOH Apparel**—said novelty items were selling well. "They don't want anything plain," she said. "It is all about embroidery, rhinestones and prints."

The June show in San Mateo is often a quiet show. Many salespeople who represent European lines don't attend because the deadline for placing Fall orders has come and gone. "As far as the June show goes, I had a better June show last year," said John

Walter, a salesman from Danville, Calif., who represents lines such as **Samuel Dong**, **Tricotto**, **Alison Sheri**, **Scapa** and **Elena Wang**. "I wasn't unhappy, but the traffic was light.

Jesse Liu, whose **Jesse Liu Collection** is based in San Mateo, Calif., agreed that the show was not as vibrant as other shows in the past. "I think it is basically because it is in-between seasons," she said. "The buyers have already bought Fall, and it is summer and some people are out of town."

Walter said about 30 percent of his clients were still interested in purchasing Spring inventory. "Because I had a 20-foot booth, I had Spring lines with me," he said. Other clients were coming in to add a few additional Fall items they didn't pick up during the April show.

These days, Fashion Market Northern California has been drawing in more and more retailers from Oregon and Washington who are attracted by a number of things, including the wide aisles, easy parking and open exhibit space.

"We are starting to see more Oregon and Washington stores coming to the Northern California market to find lines that are a little unique and that they can't find up there," said Kathy Franz, a sales representative based in Greenbrae, Calif. Her lines include **Mary Frances Accessories**, **Paisley Road**, **Rising Tide** and **Samoe Handbags**. "Our **Sydney Love** reversible handbags in gorgeous colors were a big hit and wholesale for only \$41. And the **Mary Frances** [uniquely embroidered] handbag line was a show stopper."

Franz noticed that retailers are feeling better after a wet winter and were buying more inventory and adding new items to boost business.

Price points were another buzz word for retailers, who are still being conscious about how much they spend. "They just love to be out the door for under a retail price of \$100," said Janice Farinella, whose **Farinella Showroom** is located in the CMC. Her lines include **3 Potato**, **Fashion Concepts**, **Margaret Winters** and **Parsley & Sage**. "They stop and think if it is over \$100."

Although the weather has improved in Northern California, retail buyers were still worried about the general direction of the economy and the political situation in the United States. "The world is an unsure place is how retailers feel right now. It has nothing to do with clothing. It is a general uneasiness about what is going on," Farinella said. "People have to feel like there is a future and they don't have to conserve their money. All this infighting between the parties is to the detriment of everyone."—*Deborah Belgum*



The Hobo handbag and accessories booth



The Hom Venice booth



Fall clothing inside the space for Papillon



Handmade women's apparel is part of the Scandal Italy collection.

NEWS

BCBG *Continued from page 1*

many as 22 stores running as well as operate the BCBG e-commerce site.

Liquidators **Hilco Global** and **Gordon Brothers** are also members of the bidding consortium.

No other offers to beat the Marquee and Global Brands deal were made by the June 20 deadline.

Meanwhile, Lubov Azria, who was fired from the company in March as BCBG's chief creative director, filed a proof of claim earlier this month maintaining the bankrupt company owes her \$6.7 million for lost wages and severance pay. This comes after she filed a labor contract lawsuit against BCBG insisting she was illegally dismissed and was owed \$7 million for wages and a golden-parachute payout. That lawsuit was rejected by the bankruptcy court.

On June 24, BCBG's bankruptcy lawyers filed a formal objection to Azria's proof of claim, asking that the claim be reduced to an unsecured claim for \$1.7 million. In bankruptcy cases, unsecured claims receive pennies on the dollar of the full amount owed. A

hearing on the matter is scheduled for July 25.

Since filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Feb. 28—with more than \$460 million in debt—BCBG Max Azria has shuttered 120 U.S. stores that racked up \$10 million in losses in fiscal 2016. Most of the closed BCBG Max Azria stores were stand-alone locations and premium-outlet stores, but a handful were **Hervé Leger** stores, a French brand acquired years ago by BCBG Max Azria. Some 71 stand-alone BCBG locations remain open.

The company's 276 in-store shops—at outposts such as **Bloomingdale's**, **Dillard's**, **Lord & Taylor** and **Macy's**—have been profitable and continue to operate.

BCBG Max Azria also had a presence in Asia, Europe and Canada. BCBG shut down its 51 stores in Canada, but Global Brands Group hopes to continue to operate the stores-within-stores at the various **Hudson's Bay Co.** emporiums.

In Japan, there are 13 BCBG stores that the company would like to see someone take over. If no one steps forward, they will be closed.

And in Europe, most of the BCBG stores are concentrated in France, with about 34

locations. The bankrupt company, again, would like a third party to come in and run the stores.

As BCBG has been trying to emerge from bankruptcy, it has also been trying to wrap up a lawsuit against two companies licensed to make BCBG-branded intimate apparel and swimwear.

In a complaint filed last year in Los Angeles County Superior Court, BCBG maintained it was not paid royalties for licensed clothing made for the 2015 season by **UBI Apparel**, **Gottex Swimwear Brands** and **Gottex Models USA**.

According to court documents, the lawsuit has been resolved with the defendants agreeing to pay BCBG \$825,000.

Retail woes

At one time, BCBG, which stands for Bon Chic, Bon Genre—or good style, good attitude—employed 1,300 full-time workers and 1,400 part-time workers, with headquarters in Vernon, an industrial area adjacent to Los Angeles.

The women's contemporary label was started in 1989 by Max Azria, who was born in Tunisia, moved to France and later to the

United States. The brand's clothing has a sophisticated feel and higher prices, with dresses going for \$250 to \$750 and tops and bottoms selling for \$150 to \$250.

As the company grew, so did the brand's headquarters, which encompassed 265,000 square feet. The building is owned by Max Azria and leased to the company he started. He also owns the company's warehouse, which was leased to BCBG.

BCBG's fate follows the same struggles that other retailers and manufacturers are facing—with increasing competition from online sites that make it easier to buy clothing and fast-fashion stores that offer cheaper alternatives. As BCBG Max Azria tried to maintain its unprofitable stores, its debt grew. **Guggenheim Partners** and affiliates now carry more than \$324.4 million in BCBG loans and own 80 percent of the apparel company's common equity.

Since Max Azria was pushed aside last year to make way for interim chief executive officer Marty Staff, the BCBG founder has found a new career. He is the CEO of **Zapp-Light**, a venture he invested in that makes LED lightbulbs that zap and kill bugs. The company has offices in Los Angeles and Shanghai. ●

The Hundreds.com's Revamp With Shopify Plus

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Bobby Kim built a community with blogs featuring a running commentary on the state of streetwear, hip-hop, rock, politics, travel, food and whatever else grabbed his attention.

Starting with the 2003 launch of the project, which featured an online magazine and a clothing brand called **The Hundreds**, a growing number of people visited <http://thehundreds.com> to read blogs posted by Kim and his friends. People would stick around the site long enough to buy a T-shirt or a hoodie.

The community and the commerce helped build the Los Angeles-based company into a leading streetwear brand that runs boutiques in Los Angeles' Fairfax District and in San Francisco. The brand also had a wholesale division that had sold apparel to specialty chains such as **Zumiez** and **Pacific Sunwear** and leading boutiques such as **Wish ATL**, **Sneaker Politics**, **Ps and Qs**, **Colette**, **Wolf's Head** and **Social Status**. Then social media turned the Internet upside down, Kim said.

"People are not visiting home pages," he said. "They go to links through their social-media pages, then they leave the site. People are coming to blogs less and less," he said.

This website, focused on youth, was in danger of being bypassed by rapidly changing media and technology trends. Kim and

The Hundreds cofounder Ben Shenassafar knew they needed to change their e-commerce, but they didn't want to give up their online magazine, which they regarded as a key ingredient to the brand's success.

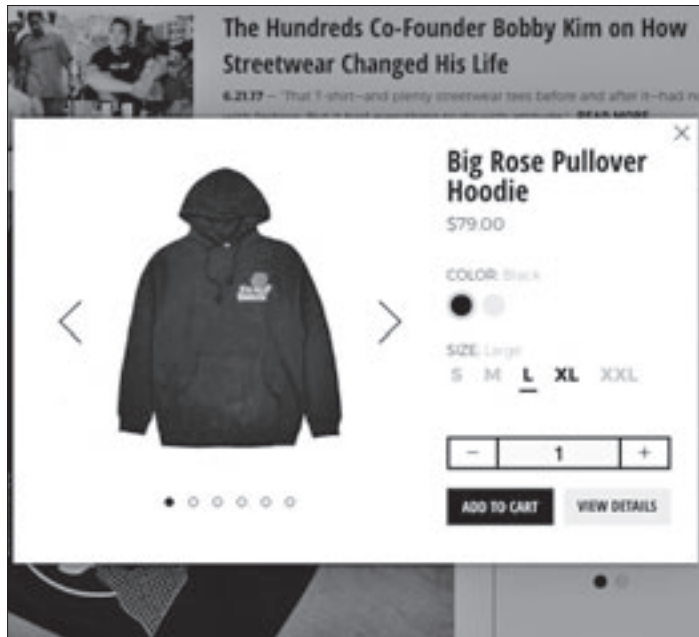
They reviewed several pitches to revamp The Hundreds website. The Hundreds chose **Lucid Fusion**, an Irvine, Calif.-based partner of **Shopify**, the Ottawa, Canada-headquartered, cloud-based, multi-channel commerce platform.

Lucid Fusion planned to find a way to link The Hundreds' online magazine and boost e-commerce, said Zubin Mowlavi, the tech agency's chief executive officer.

"We wanted to create seamless integration between content and commerce that wasn't forced.

It's not about forcing content onto commerce," Mowlavi said. "If there is a genuine opportunity we'll take it. It doesn't make sense for every blog to be shoppable."

The site is specifically working with **Shopify Plus**, Shopify's e-commerce platform for large companies with high-volume traffic. The



On a revamped website for The Hundreds, e-commerce and editorial are given a more meaningful mix, brand owners said.

site averages 500,000 clicks per month.

But since The Hundreds' editors still work in the **WordPress** program, Lucid put together a WordPress-to-Shopify app that allows brands to create content in WordPress and have it appear on their Shopify Plus site.

With the tech remodel, The Hundreds

can integrate shopping into any of its blog posts.

The new Hundreds home page soft launched in April and officially went live in May. Before the revamp, the website's home page was 100 percent editorial. The brand's fans had to click on links embedded in the site to get to an e-commerce page. Mowlavi said that his company's programs allow the website a lot of flexibility.

One week it can be 75 percent commerce with 25 percent content and the week after it can be 75 percent content with 25 percent commerce, he said.

In a case study video posted by Lucid on **YouTube**, Ceilidh MacLeod, The Hundreds' digital marketing chief, said that the revamp would give the website stronger ties to social-media sites and bring visitors in. Brands can sell on **Facebook**, **Pinterest**, **Houzz** and **Amazon.com**. The site remodel also made thehundreds.com friendlier

to m-commerce, or shopping from mobile phones, Kim said.

Cultural commentary will continue to be a touchstone for the company. It recently screened a documentary on the history of streetwear called "Built to Fail." It was shown at the 2017 **LA Film Festival**. ●

DENIM

Cone's S Gene Tech Turns 10

Greensboro, N.C.-based denim mill **Cone Denim** is celebrating the 10-year anniversary of its **S Gene** dual-core technology.

First introduced by Cone in 2007, S Gene brought stretch and improved recovery properties to denim fabrics with its dual core of filament polyester and spandex, which is then wrapped in a spun-cotton covering, giving the yarn the soft hand and natural appearance of cotton with the stretch performance of a man-made yarn.

"Our S Gene technology continues to revolutionize stretch denims," said Kara Nicholas, vice president product design and marketing. "Using innovative stretch technology hidden within the yarn, we virtually eliminated 'bagging knee' syndrome and created a new standard for superior shape retention and recovery performance."

Cone has continued to advance its S Gene offerings, first in 2015 with the introduction of **Level II S Gene**, which features 25 percent increased stretch power. This year, the company introduced high-strength **S Gene +** yarns, which feature the stretch and recovery of traditional S Gene yarns with the added benefit of increased strength. The polyester core in S Gene + is also made from 100 percent recycled polyester, adding a sustainable benefit to the yarn.



"Level II S Gene technology elevated the performance of stretch to the next level and unleashed denim fabrics that conform, slim and shape but with unbelievable power and comfort," Nicholas said. "This year we are launching S Gene+ in celebration of the technology's 10-year anniversary. This newest stretch innovation brings sustainability to stretch. We are committed to developing S Gene denims using 100 percent recycled polyester content, offering a new level of eco-conscious denim to the marketplace."

Cone has also recently introduced **Coneflex** denim with S Gene technology. Coneflex denims feature 360-degree, four-way advanced stretch thanks to stretch yarns in the warp and the weft. Coneflex fabrics have the authentic look of traditional 100 percent denim but feature low shrinkage, good recovery and better shape retention across multiple fits.

For more than 125 years, Cone Denim has been developing advanced denim capabilities for the global market. In addition to performance denims and new technology such as S Gene, Cone also produces traditional denim such as **Cone Deeptone Denim**, vintage recreations of early 1900s fabrics. In addition to stretch and performance denim, the mill also has a collection of selvedge denims made on

vintage looms. The company's **Natural Indigo** denims are dyed with 100 percent natural indigo rather than the synthetic indigo typically used in the apparel industry. Cone Denim is part of the **International Textile**

Group Inc., with manufacturing capabilities in China and Mexico as well as the company's **White Oak** mill in Greensboro.

For more information, visit www.conedenim.com.—Alison A. Nieder

Calendar

July 10

Hong Kong Fashion Week
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
Hong Kong
Through July 13

July 11

Swim Collective
Hyatt Regency
Huntington Beach, Calif.
Through July 12

July 11

Milano Unica
Shirt Avenue
Milan, Italy
Through July 13

July 13

Agenda
Long Beach Convention Center
Long Beach, Calif.
Through July 14

July 16

Project The Tents
Project Sole
Vanguard Gallery
Javits Center
New York
Through July 18

July 17

Texworld USA
Apparel Sourcing
Hometextiles Sourcing
Avanprint
Javits Center

New York
Through July 19

Active Collective
Hyatt Resort & Spa
Huntington Beach, Calif.
Through July 18

Liberty Fairs
Javits Center
New York
Through July 19

Capsule
Javits Center
New York
Through July 18

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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TRI-BLENDS

SMC Hosts LA Mode Runway Show

Students in the fashion design program at **Santa Monica College** showcased their latest work in **LA Mode 2017**, the program's annual runway show, on June 15 at **Santa Monica High School** in Santa Monica, Calif.

Students hailed from across California and the country as well as internationally from Italy, Sweden, China, Japan and Mexico. The SMC fashion program is part of the SMC photography/fashion department and offers associate degrees and certificates in fashion design and fashion merchandising.

The students' work was evaluated by a panel of judges from across the apparel industry who presented awards based on marketability, creativity and technical achievement. Winners received prizes donated by SMC fashion department advisory board members Joe Vecchiarelli of **Fashion Supplies Inc.** and Henry Cherner of **AIMS360** as well as **Blick Art Materials**.

SMC also presented the second annual Style and Substance Award to Marta Miller, owner and chief executive officer of **Lefty Production Co.**, a garment development house and apparel factory in downtown Los Angeles.—*Alison A. Nieder*



Martina Harris



Julia Perez



Karen Rodriguez



Kenta Tanaka



Nozomi Nagahasu

ALIN BLOUR, NABAVI MANOOSH, MARTHA CABRERA, SARA PETERSON

Alexandra
Terrencedotter

Ashley Ostendorf



Ayaka Takai



Catherine Freimann



Ingrid Laghi

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Engleberg

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Model wears Asher Fabric CJ26- Vintage Cotton Linen Jersey



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July 26 - 29, 2017 • Salt Palace Convention Center

B.James *Continued from page 1*

ing my mind on things that are not so materialistic, like my health and my education.”

Charlene Wade, James’ grandmother, taught him how to sew. Through making custom clothes and working as a waiter, James earned a degree in fashion design at **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College** near downtown Los Angeles. Shortly after graduation, his **B.James** custom fashion label, which is manufactured in Los Angeles, is making a splash.

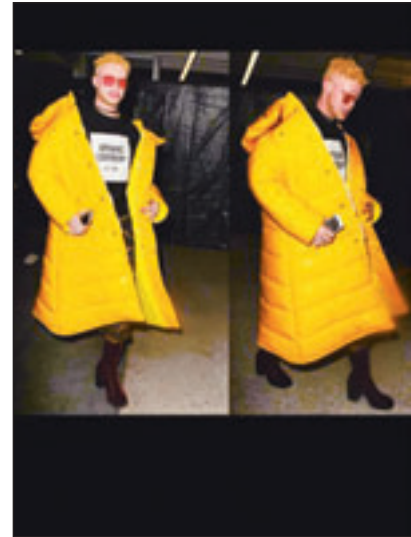
Several of James’ looks were on the red carpet at the **BET Fashion and Beauty Experience** June 24 at the **Los Angeles Convention Center**. The same day, music star DJ Khaled hosted a fashion event featuring bags made by the B.James experience. Also in June, prominent model Shaun Ross posted pictures of himself wearing a B.James full-length, puffy-leather bomber jacket on his personal **Instagram** profile (@shaundross).

James is an emerging designer making a splash, said Jamar Hart, the stylist who pulled B.James looks

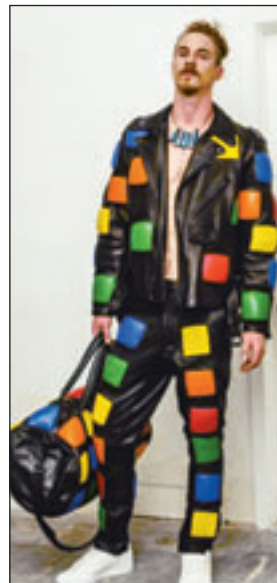
placed into a sneaker. Laces in the front of the dress tie up like a sneaker. The dress’s suede tongue goes up to the wearer’s neck.

B. James also focuses on high-end streetwear. Some have a costume edge. There’s a “**Rubik’s Cube**” dress as well as jacket and pants. The foundation of the pieces is black leather. But they are covered by brightly colored leather squares, reminiscent of the Rubik’s Cube puzzle game popular in the 1980s. One B.James leather jacket features art-deco pop-outs that look like crayons. There’s the lamp dresses, shaped like art-deco lamps James remembers from his grandmother’s house. Other looks include an ankle-length suede vest topped off by a fur collar. There’s a bustier/miniskirt combo inspired by the 1980s “Soul Train” shows.

A significant element of B.James streetwear is the graphic of the label’s mascot, D Bear. It’s a cartoon-like character with comic facial expressions. D Bear is seen on B.James hoodies, T-shirts and caps. The mascot made an appearance at a fashion show called the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF B.JAMES



YOSHAWN SMITH

B.JAMES STYLES: From top left, model Shaun Ross with a yellow puffy jacket; a “Rubik’s Cube” jacket and pants; Brandon James and D Bear, his label’s mascot; a look from an April B.James fashion show

for the BET show. Hart also has worked with music stars such as Beyoncé and Ne-Yo and **LA Chargers** tight end Jeff Cumberland. The B.James label always is a good bet, Hart said, adding that after fashion events there’s always interest in B.James clothes. “His pieces are very flexible. They have range,” he said.

B.James is inspired by 1980s and 1990s hip-hop style, but the label’s looks don’t look dated, Hart said. Men and women both look good in the brand’s styles. There’s a costume element to the line. One of James’ goals is to work as a costume designer, along with building a lifestyle brand. Influences range from major brands, streetwear and innovative designer Dapper Dan, who helped mint the hip-hop look in the 1980s. “My goal is to be on a level with **Ralph Lauren**, be creative and bold like Jeremy Scott, to make moves like Dapper Dan, and to represent where I come from like **Cross Colours**,” James said.

The costume element can be seen in B.James’ “**Adidas Shell Toe**” dress. It was inspired by the sneakers James grew up wearing. The dress is shaped like a sneaker and constructed out of sneaker leather. It might be the ultimate dress for a female sneaker head. James wanted the wearer to slip her body into the dress like a foot being

B.James Experience. It was produced in downtown Los Angeles in April, in collaboration with **Style Barre** showroom, which represents B.James. The mascot danced around and also walked the runway.

D Bear shows up for laughs; he also offers food for thought. The mascot was inspired by the hustlers in James’ neighborhood when he was growing up. Like the mascot, they wore leather jackets, gold chains and hoodies.

He remembers the hustlers’ humor and their good sides. “They were role models,” James said. “They’d take care of you as a friend.”

The neighborhood hustlers also were family. His older brother, Bradie James, now out of prison, gave him guidance on navigating life while serving a 13-year sentence. His Uncle Rickey McKinley and his Aunt Georgette Ivy also taught him hustling and entrepreneurship.

When he was ill with sickle cell anemia as a child, his mother, Michelle McCaleb, would visit him the hospital. “No matter what the doctors say, we’re going make sure that you get out of here,” James remembered her saying.

All of these people served to clear static from his head while growing up. “They’d motivate you to do better.” ●

ThirdLove Seeks Best Bra Fit with FitFinder 2.0

Tech-enabled bra company **ThirdLove** recently introduced its Fit Finder 2.0 program, a new version of the San Francisco's company proprietary sizing program.

The announcement caps off a period of fast growth for ThirdLove. It hired 100 employees over the past 18 months, bringing its staff to 120 people, said Heidi Zak, co-founder and chief executive officer of ThirdLove. One of the most recent hires is Clare Karunawardhane, ThirdLove's director of design. She joined the company in April.

This is the latest chapter in the company story, which started in 2013, when Zak brainstormed about making a better bra after a career in marketing at **Google Inc.** and **Aeropostale**.

After a lifetime of being dissatisfied with bra fits, Zak organized focus groups that found that 40 percent of women cannot find good-fitting bras. Zak thought that bra manufacturers needed to make in-between sizes for

bras, something akin to how shoe-makers make half sizes for shoes.

With veteran lingerie designer Ra'el Cohen, now ThirdLove's head of design, Zak developed bras with soft materials such as microfiber and cups that feature lightweight memory foam. To help women find the best fit, the home sizing program FitFinder was developed. The 2.0 version of FitFinder features a more personal, conversation approach to finding the right bra size. Zak hopes that it would be like shopping with a best friend.

With this program, the user selects questions from a number of predetermined options. It's a tech-era answer to a lingerie salesperson. For example, a question about slipping bra straps might yield a suggestion to try a bra with a U-shaped back.



Ra'el Cohen, left, and Heidi Zak

Next up for ThirdLove, the company is scheduled to introduce maternity bras later this summer. In the future, Zak plans to add swim and sleepwear categories.

—Andrew Asch

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