

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## Arts District Shops Hit Roadblock as Construction Escalates

*Guerilla Atelier, Apolis and Poketo are among the retailers who have closed or relocated recently.*

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Construction is booming in downtown Los Angeles' Arts District, which is currently home to numerous sites for future offices and residences as well as crowds of people lining up for restaurants such as the critically lauded **Manuela** and popular beer and food hall **Wurstküche**. Retailers have been scouting the once-blighted district, and high-end boutiques such as **Dover Street Market** are scheduled to move into the enclave in 2018, according to media reports. But the pace of construction has delivered setbacks to some of the area's pioneering retailers.

Renovations to the building housing **Apolis: Common Gallery** caused the 6-year-old boutique to shutter its location for a year, said Raan Parton, Apolis' creative director.

➔ Arts District page 3

## Artisan Cloth's New LA HQ Showcases International Mix of Premium Denim

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

Brad Alden Mowry and Danielle Lee are putting the finishing touches on the new 2,600-square-foot showroom space in downtown Los Angeles for their denim textile company, **Artisan Cloth**.

The husband-and-wife team will officially host a grand-opening party in December in partnership with **Invista**, the maker of **Lycra**, and **Tavex**, the Mexican denim mill that was acquired two years ago by **Ropa Siete Leguas**.

Four years ago, Mowry opened Artisan Cloth to showcase new developments from Japanese denim mill **Kurabo**. The longtime denim-industry executive provides development and marketing for the Japanese denim mill as well as the company's wovens division, which is made in Japan and Thailand, and premium denim made in China through a joint venture between Kurabo and Hong Kong-based

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## 'RUNWAY' STAR

FCI Fashion School recently showcased the work of its latest crop of students alongside the work of several designers from the current season of "Project Runway." In addition to Kentaro Kameyama, an FCI alumnus and current FCI instructor, other designers from the current season of the fashion reality show included Batani-Khalfani, Margarita Alvarez and ChaCha. For highlights from the show, see page 7.

Kentaro Kameyama

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# True Religion Exits Bankruptcy With Smaller Footprint

**True Religion**, the Los Angeles company whose jeans were constantly being knocked off by Chinese counterfeiters when the label was a must-have brand, exited Chapter 11 bankruptcy with a smaller retail footprint and cash to move forward.

The exit was announced on Oct. 27. The company said it shed about \$357 million in debt by converting loans into equity. It reduced its term loans from \$471 million to \$113.5 million and extended its debt maturities to 2022. That means the LA company's debt service will decline every year, clearing the way for growth.

When it filed for bankruptcy on July 5 in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, some of True Religion's major creditors were **LYA Group**, a Los Angeles denim manufacturer, which was owed \$826,520; **OA S.A.**, a Salvadoran knit-wear maker, which was owed \$766,762; **North American Trading**, which was owed \$277,035; and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which was owed \$90,000.

True Religion was also \$192,000 behind on rent for its new 72,000-square-foot office headquarters in Manhattan Beach, Calif., which is leased from **Continental Rosecrans Aviation**, a large commercial real estate developer in the South Bay region of Los Angeles.

**Citizens Bank**, which provided a \$60 million loan for the company to keep operating while it reorganized, is also providing an exit loan of \$60 million, ensuring that the company continues to have ample cash to execute its growth plan.

"We would like to thank our consumers, our employees, vendors and suppliers for their unwavering support and continued dedication to the True Religion brand," said

John Ermatinger, True Religion's chief executive officer. "With substantial debt burden removed, we are eager to turn our full attention to implementing our forward-thinking strategy, including improving our retail operations, new partnerships and growing the brand's digital presence."

At the time it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, True Religion said it wanted to close at least 27 of its approximately 140 stores. One of its creditors was **Malibu Village**, a shopping center in Malibu, Calif., owed nearly \$107,000 at the time of the bankruptcy filing. Other malls owed between \$54,000 and \$58,000 included the **Fashion Show Mall** in Minneapolis and the **Park Meadows Mall** in Chicago.

For years, much of True Religion's expansion came from its own stores. At the time of its bankruptcy filing, True Religion had 128 U.S. stores—73 are full-price stores, 53 are outlet locations and two are **Last Stitch** stores. Another 11 stores are outside the United States. Its collections are also sold at nearly 500 locations in the United States, Mexico and South America, including **Nordstrom**, **Bloomingdale's**, **Saks Fifth Avenue** and on e-commerce sites.

For its fiscal year ending Jan. 28, 2017, the company's direct-to-consumer sales netted \$273 million, or nearly 74 percent of revenues. Its wholesale business in the Americas brought in \$54 million, or nearly 15 percent of revenues. For that year, the company lost \$78.5 million on \$369.5 million in revenues.

True Religion is just one of the latest apparel and retail ventures struggling to make it in a world where shoppers are perusing the Internet for clothing rather than hitting the shopping malls.

In court documents, True Religion said things were going fine until 2013, the year revenues hit \$490 million. The company began experiencing declining sales caused by the general trend of consumers veering away from traditional retail to online shopping.

"The volume of retailers either going out of business, over-inventoried or closing a significant number of physical locations has created a highly competitive promotional environment," causing the denim company to resort to big sales to drive traffic, bankruptcy filings said.

Also, denim entered a down cycle in 2013, the company said, caused in part by the growth of the "athleisure" trend.

Competition also increased from emerging and established fast-fashion and low-priced apparel retailers, which put pressure on blue-jeans prices. When the company was at its peak several years ago, its blue jeans were selling for \$150 to \$250.

In 2015, the company hired several new executives. True Religion brought in Er-

matinger to take over as CEO and president. The company also brought in a new chief marketing officer and a new vice president of sourcing, who shifted more production from the United States to offshore locations.

A big push was made to reduce costs by cutting back on travel expenses, sample spending and other measures. But in 2016, True Religion saw another reduction in customer traffic and business, which prompted it to close 20 unprofitable True Religion stores. The company reduced by 25 percent the number of employees who work at the company's corporate headquarters and has worked to streamline and reduce the time between design and product arriving on store shelves.

True Religion was cofounded in 2002 by Jeff Lubell, who aggressively grew the company. In 2013, he sold True Religion to **TowerBrook Capital Partners** for \$835 million. TowerBrook has made investments in companies such as **Jimmy Choo**, **Odlo**, **BevMo!** and **Phase Eight**.—*Deborah Belgium*

## Make-A-Wish Young Legends Event Returns With Celebrities—On and Off the Runway

Designer Christian Cowan—who has created iconic looks for Miley Cyrus, Lady Gaga and Cardi B—was the featured designer at the Oct. 24 **Make-A-Wish Young Legends** fund-raiser at the **Taglyan Complex** in Hollywood.

*Paper* magazine Chief Creative Officer and "America's Next Top Model" judge Drew Elliot served as emcee for the event, which featured a cocktail hour, dinner, silent auction and live art installation by Alec Monopoly. **Wen by Chaz Dean**, the hair- and body-care brand by hair stylist Chaz Dean, served as the event's sponsor. On the turntable: Samantha Ronson. On the runway: Paris Hilton, Lele Pons, Jaime King, Jenna Ortega and Mikaela Hoover were joined by a handful of Make-A-Wish recipients. Another Make-A-Wish recipient, named Neal, appeared onstage with his mother to convey his thanks to the nonprofit organization, which raised funds to send Neal and his family to the **Atlantis Paradise Island Resort** in the Bahamas.



Paris Hilton



Jaime King



Drew Elliot



Designer Christian Cowan



Chaz Dean

"My trip to the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas started with my first-ever ride in a limo. Our hotel room was so high up, we could see the whole island," he said. "After three years of chemotherapy, the 200-foot water slide was just what I needed to remind me what fun was all about."

Before inviting the guests to donate funds to Make-A-Wish, Elliot reminded the group that "the average cost of a wish in Los Angeles is \$10,000."

That cost could fund a trip like Neal's or pay for a backyard renovation for children who are not mobile, he said. Further, \$7,500 can fund an education program for kids with special needs, \$5,000 can pay for a room makeover to make sure a child's room is a safe and fun place to be.

"Since we were founded in 1983, we've created over 9,000 wishes—that's almost a wish a day—and we want to do more," said Frances Mojica, vice president, development, for Make-A-Wish Los Angeles.

—*Alison A. Nieder*

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# Vimmia Opens First Shop

Featuring mannequins cast in yoga poses, the first boutique for the activewear brand **Vimmia** recently opened in Los Angeles' exclusive Brentwood neighborhood.

Ardy Raminfar, the founder of Vimmia, said that the new store would be the first in a rollout of boutiques for the 4-year-old brand. In upcoming years, Raminfar said, he would like to open shops in Denver, Dallas and New York City—and possibly more shops in Los Angeles County.

"It's a huge opportunity to be independent and grow a brand direct-to-consumer," he said of the new 1,400-square-foot shop in the **Brentwood Gardens** retail center, located on the 11600 block of San Vicente Boulevard. Neighbors include boutiques for **Ron Herman** and **Madison**.

The brand uses fabric with thermoregulation proper-

ties, Raminfar said. The properties help the body keep a core temperature even when working out in a hot studio or running on a cold day, Raminfar said. He hopes that the contemporary designs and styles of his brand's activewear will influence people to wear Vimmia post-exercise.

Vimmia makes leggings, tops, pants and jackets for women. Retail price points range from \$58 for bras to \$124 for some leggings. Raminfar declined to give wholesale prices. However, the company will continue to wholesale its product.

Earlier this year, Vimmia introduced a men's line. It also produces the plus-size line **CurV** and maternity activewear clothes.—*Andrew Asch*



COURTESY VIMMIA

## NEWS

### Santa Monica Place Being Refinanced by Owner

As the mall world continues to spin with winners and losers, **The Macerich Co.** reported solid financial results for the third quarter and said it is refinancing its high-end **Santa Monica Place**.

The Southern California real-estate investment trust said it is replacing its current \$215 million loan for the Santa Monica, Calif., shopping center—whose top stores include **Bloomingdale's**, **Nordstrom**, **Barneys New York** and **Coach**—with a new five-year floating-rate loan for \$300 million, which should close some time in December.

The refinancing news was revealed during the announcement of The Macerich Co.'s third-quarter results, which showed that net income for the period ending Sept. 30, 2017, totaled \$17.5 million versus \$13.7 million during the same period in 2016. But profits for the nine months ending Sept. 30 dove to \$113.3 million, compared to \$480 million last year.

Funds from operations during the most recent third quarter totaled \$145 million, down from \$160.3 million during last year's third quarter. Funds from operations for the first nine months of this year were \$427.2 million, compared to \$460 million for the same period in 2016.

While third-quarter profits were up, occupancy rates at Macerich's more than 45 malls shrunk 1 percent to 94.3 percent,

but lease rates rose 4.8 percent to \$56.88 a square foot compared to last year's \$54.27.

Mall tenant annual sales were up to \$659 per square foot this third quarter from \$626 at the end of last year's third quarter while same-center net operating income grew around 3.1 percent from the prior-year period.

"Macerich achieved solid releasing spreads and tenant sales growth. This demonstrates the health of those retailers who are evolving along with the changing shopping habits of consumers and the importance to these brands of our well-located, high-quality real estate," said Macerich Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Arthur Coppola.

Earlier this year, The Macerich Co. sold its **Northgate Mall** in San Rafael, Calif., and its **Cascade Mall** in Burlington, Wash., to **Merlone Geider Partners** for \$170 million. The transaction netted Macerich approximately \$100 million after paying off its floating-rate note on the Northgate property.

As of Sept. 30, 2016, Cascade and Northgate generated sales per square foot of \$319 and \$421, respectively, and had occupancy rates of 86.5 percent and 94.9 percent. That is less than Macerich's portfolio averages of \$626 per square foot in sales and 95.3 percent occupancy during the same period.—*Deborah Belgium*

## RETAIL SALES

### October Sales Strong

Cash registers were ringing during October, and retailers reported good sales.

**L Brands Inc.**—the parent company of **Victoria's Secret**, **Pink** and **Bath & Body Works**—posted its first positive same-store sales since November 2016. Same-store sales increased 2 percent during October. The company noted that Victoria's Secret's April 2016 exit from swim and clothing categories was still having a negative impact on its sales performance. In October, it cost the company 1 percentage point in its same-store sales. However, the good performance gave L Brands confidence. On Nov. 1, L Brands updated its forecast of its third-quarter earnings to be at the high end of its previous guidance of \$0.25 to \$0.30.

**Zumiez Inc.**, a mall-based action-sportswear retailer, posted comparable-store sales of 6.6 percent for October.

Retailers going through turbulent times also announced relatively better sales performances than in the past. Mall-based denim retailer **The Buckle** posted a 3.7 percent same-store decline. It's one of the retailer's lowest comp declines in more than a year.

**Cato Corp.**, an off-price retailer, posted a decline of 7 percent. John Cato, the retailer's president and chief executive officer, said better business did not keep some of the market's challenges at bay.

"Although October same-store sales are better than the current year trend, our two-year, same-store-sales comparisons remain

below expectations. Consequently we expect our full-year earnings to be significantly below last year," he said in a prepared statement.

A strong October was no guarantee of a robust holiday season, said Jeff Van Sinderen, a retail analyst for **B. Riley & Co.** "October is more of a transitional/clearance month. So it does not tell you that much

#### October Retail Sales

	\$Sales (in millions)	% Change from yr. ago	Same-store sales % change
<b>The Buckle</b>	\$66.10	-4.3%	-3.7%
<b>Cato Corp.</b>	\$62.30	-10.0%	-7.0%
<b>L Brands Inc.</b>	\$794.10	+5.0%	+2.0%
<b>Zumiez Inc.</b>	\$61.50	+10.0%	+6.6%

Information from company reports

about how holiday will go," he wrote in an email. "However, I do think there are some early themes brewing: colder-weather merchandise is off to a slow start and that could turn into a fire-sale promotional debacle of sorts. It's already really promotional out there, especially in department stores, and that is concerning from a broader perspective. The companies with differentiated, in-demand merchandise are increasingly likely to outperform for holiday."

The U.S. economy has been showing strength in the past month. Human-resources group **ADP** reported that nonfarm jobs increased 235,000 from September to October. —A.A.

## REAL ESTATE

### Arts District *Continued from page 1*

Formerly housed at 806 E. Third St., it opened a pop-up at the **Alchemy Works** boutique, a couple of storefronts down at 826 E. Third St. After renovations are completed, Apolis will reopen in its former space.

**Guerilla Atelier**, located at 912 E. Third St., a half block north of Apolis, also went on a hiatus. The shop cultivated a reputation for selling high-end designers and luxe homewares. Guerilla founder Carl Louisville said that construction of the **Aliso Apartments**, adjacent to Guerilla Atelier, drove away retail traffic.

Problems started in March, Louisville said. Street closures caused by ongoing construction of the 400,000-square-foot compound regularly stopped retail traffic from going into the 6,000-square-foot emporium, where revenue from weekend business could often go over \$20,000.

Louisville said that he made verbal and written requests to the site's developer, San Diego-headquartered **Fairfield Residential**, to improve its control of traffic. Louisville also

made requests for the company to stop blocking traffic into his store with heavy equipment and to clean up trash from the construction site. Louisville said that his requests were ignored.

Louisville said that he is seeking legal counsel to remedy the situation. Fairfield did not return an email requesting comment by press time.

**Poketo**, an arts lifestyle boutique that has been in the dis-

changing. "It is one of those areas that is arriving," Vadakan said. "It is going through a second phase." Times are changing for long-term residents. On Nov. 4, an "Eviction Parade" is scheduled to end at the Arts District. It is being organized by a group of artists protesting evictions of artists living in the enclave.

The neighborhood remains a popular destination, and other businesses continue to do well in the area. Most of

the retail foot traffic in the area remains solid, said Colin T. McCarthy, vice president and creative director of **The Rogue Collective** at 305 Hewitt St., which is a short walk away from East Third Street.

"The Arts District is going through some growing pains, but there is no reason to worry about the long term," McCarthy forecast.

The boutiques that shuttered or moved were located on the east side of East Third. But on the west side of the street, high-end boutiques continue to do business.

These shops include a **Shinola** brand boutique and the **H. Lorenzo Archive** shop, which is a project from the **H. Lorenzo** boutiques in West Hollywood, Calif. ●



ARTS DISTRICT SCENES: Crowds outside Salt & Straw, left; Guerilla Atelier, center; and placards for rent protests, right

trict for five years, recently moved to a slightly bigger space a two-minute walk away in downtown's Little Tokyo district. Ted Vadakan, cofounder of Poketo, said that the place is





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## CFDA Hosts Event With DHL, Accenture in Los Angeles

About 25 manufacturers, suppliers and designers discussed collaboration, transparency and supply-chain efficiency at an Oct. 26 event hosted by the **Council of Fashion Designers of America**.

Held at the **Neuehouse** in Hollywood, the event introduced the results of a recent survey conducted by **Accenture** and sponsored by international shipper **DHL**. Titled "The Human-Centered Supply Chain—Delivered by DHL," the report advocates a "human-centered" supply-chain model in which "siloed operations" are replaced by "a flexible network of participants and partnerships that will enable agile and adaptable supply-chain operations."

In this model, the designer plays a central role, said Claudia Gorelick, head of business design for **Fjord**, Accenture's design and innovation arm.

John Fox, vice president, Western region, for DHL, agreed that business has changed as consumers develop new expectations about convenience, speed and transparency.

DHL provides cross-border shipping from its hub in Cincinnati as well as key centers in Los Angeles, New York and Miami. As e-commerce grows—online shopping is poised to become a \$900 billion business by 2020—DHL's focus has changed, Fox said.

"Sixty percent of our deliveries go to individuals," he said. "We're not in B2B anymore; we're B2C."

Gorelick said designers should view suppliers as partners and should view the supply chain as a key part of the company's brand-building strategy.

"The supply chain is not sexy. The fashion is the sexy part," Gorelick said. "The supply chain is what allows you to be successful and grow."

Companies are looking for new ways to be innovative and "disruptive," Gorelick said. For some, this might be technology such as RFID and drones. For others, it means ad-

ressing new consumer expectations such as the fast and free delivery **Amazon.com** offers its **Amazon Prime** members.

Gorelick pointed to **Airbnb** as a company that looked at changes in consumer expectations of the travel industry and offered a service that made it more personalized. But although Airbnb has disrupted and changed the travel market, Gorelick pointed out it did so while only holding a small part of overall travel-industry revenue.

The DHL report includes a Designer's Playbook, which provides a blueprint for building a design business using the "human-centered" model. To address industry changes driven by digitalization and e-commerce, the report suggests several areas of opportunity.

Companies should develop a supply-chain process that is "well-defined—but flexible" and encourages "clear communication channels across partners." Further, the process should include "a dedicated step to integrate learnings from season to season."

Companies should encourage relationship building with its partners throughout the supply chain. The report suggests focusing on "a relationship-first rather than transaction-based approach that identifies partners to collaborate with—to fill gaps in expertise, leverage passion points (such as sustainability), and create opportunities for sharing and collaboration."

Companies should "make the supply chain part of their brand story." By "establishing clear operations and avoiding continual reinvention of the brand," companies can cut costs and avoid customer and supplier confusion.

Lastly, the report recommends providing "actionable" feedback to suppliers, designers and consumers to "enable operational improvements and greater collaboration."

—Alison A. Nieder

## Calendar

### Nov. 5

#### NW Trend Show

The Pier 91, Smith Cove Terminal  
Seattle  
Through Nov. 6

### Nov. 7

#### CALA

Fort Mason Center  
San Francisco  
Through Nov. 8

#### Atlanta Fall Immediate Delivery Show

AmericasMart  
Atlanta  
Through Nov. 9

### Nov. 9

#### Palm Springs Fashion Week

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

### Nov. 13

#### CALA

Denver Mart  
Denver  
Through Nov. 14

#### "Future of Trend Forecasting"

LA Trade-Tech  
Los Angeles

### Nov. 16

#### Chicago Apparel and Accessories Market

Merchandise Mart  
Chicago  
Through Nov. 17

### Nov. 18

#### Amaio Swim Sample Sale

1042 Gerhart Ave.  
Los Angeles

### Nov. 19

#### DG Expo Fabric and Trim Show

San Francisco Hilton

San Francisco  
Through Nov. 20

### Nov. 29

#### Kingpins

Westergasfabriek  
Amsterdam  
Through Nov. 30

### Nov. 30

#### Shop for Success, VIP Night

1101 Westwood Blvd.  
Los Angeles  
(Open to the public Dec. 1–4)

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

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

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

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# Cotton Citizen to Bring Burst of Color to Jeans

Since 2012, the Los Angeles-based **Cotton Citizen** brand has made a business of dyeing T-shirts and other high-end basics in bright and unique colors. Now the company will extend that color palette to jeans.

Cotton Citizen recently introduced a denim program, said Adam Vanunu, the brand's founder and creative director. "These are colors people are not used to having on bottoms—burgundies, ruby reds, military greens, oranges, bright yellows," he said.

The brand had been selling its tops for men and women in high-end boutiques such as **Ron Robinson** and its own store, which it opened on West Hollywood's Melrose Place in 2016. Vanunu said that the brand had developed a unique look in styles completed by other brands' jeans. He forecast that Cotton Citizen patrons will be open to the brand's specific take on jeans. "It's not a color conversation. It's a brand conversation," he said.

For the debut Holiday 2017 line, Cotton Citizen offered a jacket and two jean silhouettes for women and one jean for

men. The bottoms have an updated vintage style. Along with the wide range of colors, Cotton Citizen also will offer classic black colorways for jeans and a light-blue vintage wash. Retail price points are \$295 for bottoms and \$325 for jackets. The Cotton Citizen denim collection of blue and black jeans is currently available. Yellow and cobalt-blue jeans are available for pre-order and will be released around Thanksgiving.

Vanunu guaranteed that the brand is no novice when it comes to denim. Vanunu also runs **American Dyehouse**, which has worked with premium-denim brands such as **J Brand**, **Hudson** and **Paige**. Cotton Citizen's jeans are made in Los Angeles.



While the denim business has given the fashion world a myriad of nuanced indigo colors for the past 60 years, brightly colored is still something of a novelty. Los Angeles' **Cross Colours** brand designed brightly colored denim in the 1990s. Other brands such as **Current/Elliott**, **Kate Spade** and juniors line **Celebrity Pink** have also worked with color.

The denim consumer is open to bright color, said Vince Gonzales, a career denim salesman and currently brand manager USA for **Edwin**, a Japanese denim brand that has ex-

perimented with bright colors.

"People like anything that is different and new. That's what buyers are looking for—not just for color but for detail and wash," he said.—*Andrew Asch*

## DENIM

### Artisan Cloth *Continued from page 1*

**H.W. Textiles Co. Ltd.** Mowry represents Kurabo and its partners nationwide through Artisan Cloth's showrooms in Los Angeles and New York.

The newest development for Artisan Cloth is the addition of Tavex to the showroom.

"While we weren't looking to add any new mills, Tavex approached me in July about a new partnership," Mowry said.

Tavex has invested in new equipment and staffing for the company and is looking to expand globally, Mowry said. The Mexican denim mill saw Mowry's existing representation of Kurabo as complementary rather than a conflict. Mowry is representing Tavex on the West Coast.

"Whether a brand is working out of Asia or the USA, we have great products to offer that logistically make sense," Mowry said.

The range of offerings at Artisan Cloth also allows brands to shift production according to price point and production volume. For example, a company might do a limited-edition capsule collection using Kurabo fabric from Japan. If the capsule expands for a second season in larger volumes, the company might source fabric from H.W. The largest-volume orders are sourced from Kurabo's wovens facility in Thailand.

"They might develop a Japanese twill, and then as the program grows they will ask us to counter-develop it when the volume increases," Mowry said.

This also allows companies to access different price tiers. Kurabo's Japanese fabrics are priced at about \$7 to \$9 per yard. There's a Kurabo Global option, which uses Japanese greige goods, which are finished in China. Those fabrics are priced at approximately \$5.50 to \$7 per yard. For H.W.'s Chinese-made goods, prices range from about \$2.50 to \$5.

While Kurabo's Japanese-made goods exhibit the same level of quality buyers expect from Japanese denim, Mowry

said the quality of the Kurabo Global and H.W. fabrics is also very good.

"The innovation out of China is unbelievable. It's really forward," he said.

Adding Tavex to Artisan Cloth's offerings gives companies looking to produce under NAFTA—or locally in LA—a sourcing option in this hemisphere.

Artisan Cloth works with a range of brands from large customers such as **H&M** and **Uniqlo** to premium brands such as **Frame**, **AG** and **Paige**.

### Decades of denim

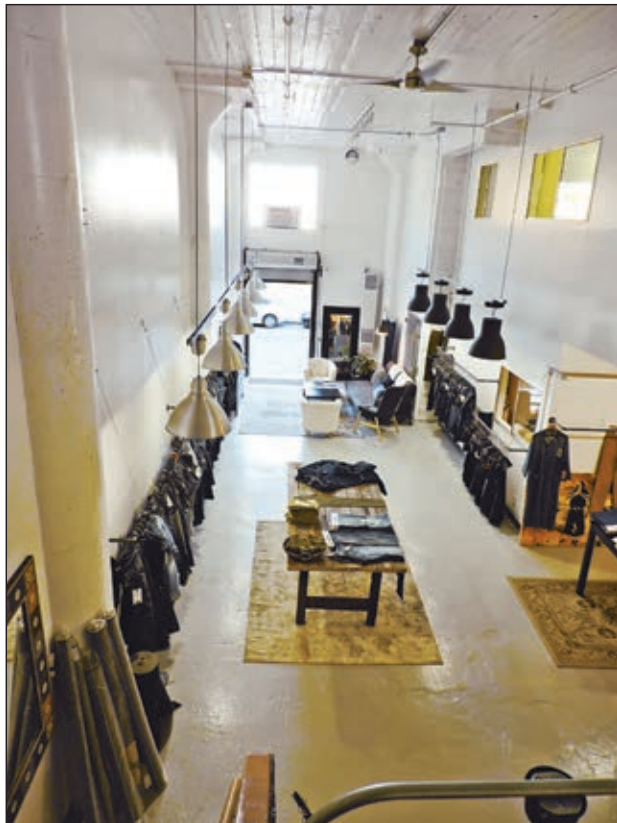
In addition to denim sourcing, Mowry provides technical and creative consulting for denim makers. This could be traveling with designers to the factory or it could be setting up development systems for a company to realize efficiencies in fabrics, washes and costing.

"We're not really salespeople," Mowry said. "We're product people."

Mowry got his start working with LA's wash houses before relocating to New York, where he spent seven years at **Jones Apparel** as a vice president. (Mowry described his time at Jones as "grad school for fabric and wash.") He returned to Los Angeles to run the West Coast office for **Olah Inc.**, the denim sourcing company that runs the **Kingpins** trade show. He remained with Olah for nine years until he left to open Artisan Cloth.

### Jeans neighborhood

Artisan Cloth has been located in the same downtown neighborhood for three years, first in a space across the street from the current location at 1308 Factory Place. The company then moved to a space in its current building on an upper floor. The new showroom is located on the ground level of the building with a dedicated customer parking space out front.



Artisan Cloth



Tavex denim



Danielle Lee and Brad Alden Mowry

"Usually clients will swing by because it's so easy," Lee said.

There are several denim brands located nearby, including **J Brand**, **7 For All Mankind** and **Lucky Brand**. The Artisan Cloth building also houses the **Factory Kitchen** restaurant, which will be providing food for the opening party next month.

For more information, visit [artisancloth.com](http://artisancloth.com). ●

## Passion Project

The **Artisan Cloth** space in downtown Los Angeles also houses **The Jeans Project**, a philanthropic denim brand launched in August by Brad Alden Mowry and Danielle Lee in partnership with Japanese denim mill **Kurabo**. The direct-to-consumer brand is sold at pop-up events and online. Proceeds benefit the **Dream Center** and other charities.

The Los Angeles-based Dream Center is a faith-based charitable organization that helps individuals and families in need across the country. The charity provides assistance such as food and clothing as well as longer-term services such as addiction-recovery programs and adult education.

Kurabo provides stock fabrics for The Jeans Project collection, which has the motto "looking good, doing good."

The line features three women's styles, including two skinny silhouettes and one slim crop style. For men, there are five styles: two selvedge-denim jeans, two slim cuts and one skinny.

"It's all made in America," Lee said. "We're using only Japanese denim, and every purchase goes back to charity."

Prices are \$149 for all styles, except the selvedge style, which is \$169. For more information, visit [thejeansproject.com](http://thejeansproject.com).

—A.A.N.



## FCI Highlights Students' Work and Guest Designers From 'Project Runway'

Munkh-Of  
Dulamragchaa

Sandra Ling

Olawanle  
Orgunmola

Simay Belur

Kentaro Kameyama

FCI Fashion School hosted its most recent runway show on Oct. 5 at a studio space in the Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles. Several hundred guests turned out to see the show, which featured designs by seven FCI students and four designers competing in the current season of fashion reality show "Project Runway."

"This group is amazing, so dedicated, so hardworking," said Joe Farrell, FCI's fashion merchandising chair.

FCI offers a three-month, intensive fashion design program, Farrell explained. "After three months, they have studio time to put their collections together," he said.

The runway show featured the work of FCI students Karon Yasmin, Erica Duque, Munkh-Of Dulamragchaa, Sandra Ling, Olawanle Orgunmola, Simay Belur and Natalie Salvador.

Yasmin showed a crisp, color-blocked collection of shift dresses as well as a dramatic high-low gown in red. A jacket featured an interesting twisted-fabric detail on the back.

Duque's opening look was a plunging-neck dress in a painterly floral print that led to a collection of jewel-toned dresses and gowns.

Dulamragchaa's collection included an ivory trench coat-style dress with lace sleeves and a silver lace gown.

Ling opened her collection with a two-piece pink dress with corset piping and topped a backless sheath dress with a lace jacket.

Orgunmola topped a royal-blue maxi dress with a fishnet cape and showed an easy dress in an engineered tie-dye print.

Belur went somber and moody with a nearly all-black collection that included a sweeping priest's coat, cocoon-like caftan styles and draped ensembles that paired matte and sheer knits.

Salvador's collection featured recycled garments that were reworked with inspiration from Henri Matisse's paper-cutout designs. The collection included a sheer black dress with silver appliques and a babydoll-style dress in an ombré-dyed fabric.



Karon Yasmin

Erica Duque

Natalie Salvador



Batani-Khalfani

Margarita  
Alvarez

ChaCha

The event's guest designers included Kentaro Kameyama, an FCI alumnus who is currently an instructor at FCI. Kameyama was joined by his fellow "Project Runway" contestants Batani-Khalfani, Margarita Alvarez and ChaCha.

Kameyama opened with architectural pieces in white before mixing in pops of chartreuse, cocoa and a fuchsia finale gown. The architectural theme continued in boxy sweatshirt styles over second-skin leggings and a swirl of mesh over a black sheath dress.

Batani-Khalfani's collection ranged from an intricately constructed dress in a geometric pattern to a dramatic wrapped and draped gown and a high-low fishnet maxi-dress.

Alvarez showed a wide-ranging collection that included minimalist sheath dresses and wraps, dip-dyed separates and fun pieces trimmed with delicate silver and gold fringe.

ChaCha's collection was filled with over-the-top embellishment and cheeky details. A sequined cape dress segued from turquoise to fuchsia, a velvet gown was trimmed with blue lamé and gold tulle, and the finale piece was a cape made from piles of stuffed plush toys.—Alison A. Nieder

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# Fashion Industries Guild Celebrates 60 Years of Stylish Service

Members of the Los Angeles fashion community turned out to honor Sabrina Kay and Anine Bing on Oct. 14 at the **Fashion Industries Guild of Cedars-Sinai** at the **Montage Beverly Hills** hotel in Beverly Hills. The black-tie affair featured cocktails, dinner and an awards ceremony that recognized this year's honorees and celebrated the organization's 60th anniversary.

Public-radio host Rico Gagliano served as emcee of the evening's events, welcoming "the movers and shakers of the fashion industry" and their "absolute commitment to pediatric care."

"If you keep this up for another 60 years you may erase the stigma of acid-wash jeans," Gagliano quipped.

Joey Brooks, president of the Fashion Industries Guild, thanked the group for their generosity over the years before welcoming Dr. Charles Simmons to the stage.

Simmons also thanked the FIG board for their hard work as well as the guests "who have contributed so profoundly to our success."

"The future has never been more promising than it is today," he said.

Longtime FIG board member Eileen Ellis took the stage to honor the work of fellow board member Howard Leeds, who was celebrating his 82nd birthday at the gala.

Kay, chancellor and chief executive officer of **Fremont College** and **Fremont Private Investments**, received the visionary award. The educator and "serial entrepreneur" is best known in the industry as the founder of **California Design College** (now called the **Art Institute of California—Hollywood**).

In accepting her award, Kay offered her "heartfelt thanks to the [FIG] team and President Joey Brooks," adding that she was "honored to be on the same stage with [Bing]."

Kay told the crowd about her personal connection to **Cedars-Sinai Medical Center**, which is where her daughter was treated after contracting an intestinal parasite while traveling in Peru. The experience caused her daughter to drop down to 85 pounds, Kay said.

"As a mom going through that agony tore my heart," Kay said. "I am happy to tell you my daughter is brilliant and healthy again. For that reason, I will always have Cedars in



Howard Leeds and Eileen Ellis



Vlady Cornateanu, Sabrina Kay and Joey Brooks



Joey Brooks and Rico Gagliano



Sabrina Kay and Anine Bing



Jessica Lewensztain and Ilse Metchek

our heart. The doctors, nurses and hospital staff are the heroes of this world."

Bing is the founder and creative director of **Anine Bing**, the contemporary collection launched by the former model in 2012. Today, the collection is sold in more than 300 boutiques around the world, and the company operates eight bricks-and-mortar stores in Los Angeles, New York, Paris, London, Berlin, Barcelona, Madrid and Antwerp.

Bing also said Cedars-Sinai had a special place in her heart because her two children were born in the hospital.

"I am so inspired by the research and hard work you do," she said.

The Fashion Industries Guild has been raising money to support Cedars-Sinai for six decades. The group—which includes manufacturers, professional-services executives, buying offices and sales representatives—has raised more than \$23 million for Cedars-Sinai projects such as the Diana and Steve Marienhoff Fashion Industries Guild Endowed Fellowship in Pediatric Neuromuscular Diseases, the Kenneth Weinbaum Fashion Industries Guild Pediatric Acute Care Unit, the Pediatric Neurology and Neurological Development Program in the Ruth Bregman Children's Health Clin-



Jeffrey and Betsy Kapor with Bea and Richard Clareman



Jordan, Gabriella and Moshe Tsabag

ic, the Fashion Industries Guild Congenital Heart Laboratory and Hal Kaltman Fashion Industries Guild Congenital Heart Research Endowment, the new Neonatal Intensive Care unit in Cedars-Sinai's Maxine Dunitz Children's Health Center, the GUESS? Chair for Community Child Health Care, the Ruth Bregman Special Children's Program, the Florence and Duke Becker Building, the Harvey Morse Conference Center and the Barney Morse Rehabilitation Center.

Proceeds from the Oct. 14 gala will benefit the Diana and Steve Marienhoff Fashion Industries Guild Endowed Fellowship in Pediatric Neuromuscular Diseases as well as the Pediatric Undiagnosed Diseases Program.—Alison A. Nieder

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## CFF and TALA Gear Up for Annual Christmas Party for Local Children

For 70 years, Los Angeles apparel and textile executives have been hosting a Christmas party for local children funded by donations from apparel manufacturers and related businesses.

The **California Fashion Foundation** and the **Textile Association of Los Angeles**, both part of the **California Fashion Association**, are currently gathering donations for the party, which is planned for Dec. 6 at the **Cooper Design Space** penthouse.

Sponsors to date include *California Apparel News*, **Market Café**, **AIMS360**, **CIT Commercial Services**, Ann Davis, the **Ben B. & Joyce E. Eisenberg Foundation**, the Cooper Design Space, **The New Mart**, **Fineman West & Co.**, **Karen Kane**, **KWDZ Manu-**

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Children from **Para Los Niños**, the **Boys & Girls Club of Los Angeles** and **Alexandria House Elementary School** are among those invited to attend. The party will feature lunch and dessert as well as games, carols and a visit from Santa Claus, who will distribute gifts to the children.

For more information, visit [www.calfashion.org](http://www.calfashion.org) or call (213) 688-6288.

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### DENIM

#### Calik Denim

[www.calikdenim.com](http://www.calikdenim.com)

**Products and Services:** Calik Denim takes technology to a new level each season. Launching as part of the company's 30th anniversary celebrations, The Next Legacy, Calik Denim's new SS '19 Collection, redefines denim by blending new fabrics with innovative new concepts. Shot on location in Cape Town by Eric Kvatek, the SS '19 Collection launched at the Kingpins Show in Amsterdam in October. In this collection Calik Denim breathes new life into the industry with updated takes on Red Carpet, Oxygene, D'enovated, and two brand new concepts—Smart Stretch and Fly Jean. First revealed in the AW 18/19 Collection, Red Carpet is a new fabric family that has now been given a soft, silky texture for a more comfortable feel, 50 percent more elasticity and a new finishing technology, which provides a silver coated luxury vintage look with every wash.

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