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GAMEGERSHON This ethnic look created by Los Angeles designer Nathalia Gaviria was seen at Art **Hearts Fashion during Los Angeles Fashion** Week. For more looks, see page 8.

TRADE SHOW REPORT

LA Market Sees Showrooms and Stores Adjusting to the 'New Normal' in Retail

By Andrew Asch, Deborah Belgum and Dorothy Crouch

Buyers fanned out to the various showroom buildings in the Los Angeles Fashion District for the March 12–14 run of Los Angeles Fashion Market, which was highlighting the fashions for Fall/Winter 2018.

The market's three days of activity were punctuated by the arrival of President Donald Trump, whose entourage stayed at the InterContinental Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, creating a constant traffic jam that started Tuesday afternoon and ended Wednesday morning.

At this market, many showroom owners felt buyers were only visiting the brands they felt comfortable with and not exploring untested labels. Attendee traffic throughout the district was hit and miss, depending on the building and the showrooms as e-commerce takes a chunk out of sales that had once been allocated only to boutiques and stores.

At the California Market Center, traffic was slower than LA Market page 6

Making Tall Women Comfortable in Their Own Skinny Jeans

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

When women who measure at least 5 feet 9 inches tall shop for denim, they are often left feeling as though styles such as flares or skinny jeans will end up resembling cropped gauchos or capris.

Standing at 5 feet 11 inches, former model and actress Kathryn Brolin decided it was time to launch Midheaven **Denim** to provide solutions for other tall women who want to find their ideal denim.

"Midheaven targets tall women like me who are looking for inseams a bit longer than what is usually found out there, but we've been so pleased to see that women of even average heights are ordering and absolutely loving their Midheavens. So, they've been rolling, they've been hemming, they've been self-altering their jeans."

With a soft launch of four styles in January, Brolin is aim-**■ Midheaven** page 3



Allen Schwartz Closes Flagship Store

After a 30-year run in Santa Monica, Calif., the flagship store for the **Allen Schwartz** label has closed its doors.

Allen Schwartz, creative director and principal of the downtown Los Angeles—head-quartered label, said the lease was up for his 3,000-square-foot flagship at 1533 Montana Ave. and he chose not to renew. Instead, he wants to focus on e-commerce, wholesaling overseas and continuing to supply domestic specialty stores with Allen Schwartz styles.

"I was very happy to be part of the community on Montana. I am very happy with the accomplishments we achieved there over the last 30 years," he said. "I don't think my product is still good for today's customer base on Montana. It was good for the '80s, the '90s and the aughts. It was a suiting time, and a lot of agents and actresses shopped here. But the whole fashion cycle has changed."

The flagship closed with little fanfare on Feb. 28, with the three people working at the store no longer with the company.

The closure of the flagship comes at a time of upheaval for retail. "I love the business. I'm as passionate about it as I ever was. But you have to adjust," Schwartz said.

The closing of the Montana Avenue flagship came two years after Schwartz stopped selling to department stores. "They are the biggest discounters of all. It hurts the core business. There is no way to control them," he said.

Schwartz had become very frustrated with many department stores' chargeback policies, where retailers demand payments for alleged errors made by the vendor. Also vexing were consumers demanding discounts at the Allen Schwartz flagship store because they had seen the same garments selling for less at a depart-

ment store. "I want to be paid for all of the good we are doing," he said.

Schwartz said that his flagship was a pioneer on Montana Avenue. He remembered being the first contemporary retailer on the thoroughfare in 1988. When he opened, the street was lined with neighborhood businesses such as bars, ice cream parlors and laundromats. For the past 25 years, Montana

Avenue has been the address for womenswear boutiques as well as restaurants and cafés.

The closure of the Allen Schwartz flagship also marks the final chapter of the company's retail. More than five years ago, Schwartz ran 12 stores, with locations from Orange County and Pasadena in California to New York. He also chose not to renew the leases for those stores.—Andrew Asch

February Retail Sales See Solid Jump

February was a very good month for sales. The **National Retail Federation** reported that retail sales last month rose 4.4 percent year-over-year as the economy continued to grow.

Doing particularly well were online sites and other non-store sales that jumped 10.5 percent year-over-year while clothing and clothing accessories stores saw solid performances with a 5.2 percent rise in sales in February compared to the same month last year

"Consumers are still in the driver's seat," said Jack Kleinhenz, the NRF's chief economist. "It's still too early to draw conclusions about the impact of tax cuts, but extra money in shoppers' pockets should help as the year goes forward."

The three-month moving average was

also up 4.4 percent over the same period one year ago. The NRF predicts that retails sales this year will grow between 3.8 percent and 4.4 percent.

Retail sales in other categories included:

- Building materials and garden-supply stores were up 5.1 percent in year-over-year
- Electronics and appliance stores saw a 4.3 percent increase year-over-year.
- Furniture and home-furnishings stores had a 2.9 percent growth in sales year-over-year.
- General-merchandise-store sales were up 2.4 percent year-over-year.
- Health and personal-care stores saw a 0.3 percent increase year-over-year.
- Sporting-goods stores were having a tough time with sales sliding 3.4 percent year-overyear.—Deborah Belgum



The interior of the Allen Schwartz store

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Gap Wants Its Factories to Go Digital When Paying Workers

Gap Inc. is asking 800 of its factories in 30 countries to skip the cash when paying their workers and start depositing workers' checks using a digital system by 2020.

More than 60 percent of Gap Inc.'s factories already use digital payment methods, such as online transfers to bank accounts or mobile wallets. But there is more to be done. This change will affect some 1 million workers.

About 80 percent of the world's garment industry is made up of women, who often live in a cash-only environment and have no access to formal financial services. A formal banking system allows workers a safer way to save, invest and transport money.

"By having our suppliers pay garment workers digitally, we aim to accelerate the transition toward a more transparent work-

place for the women and men who make our clothes," said David Hayer, senior vice president of global sustainability at Gap Inc. and president of the **Gap Foundation**.

Paying workers in cash has led to severe problems in underdeveloped countries where crime is high and workers are at risk of having their wages stolen as they go from their workplace to their homes. This is particularly severe during holiday seasons when factory workers often receive lump-sum bonuses.

Gap Inc. also has joined the United Nations—based **Better Than Cash Alliance**, a partnership of governments, companies and international organizations that accelerate the transition from cash to digital payments to reduce poverty and drive growth.—*D.B.*

Law Firm Steps Down From Paul Marciano Investigation

A little more than three weeks after **Guess? Inc.** cofounder Paul Marciano relinquished his day-to-day duties following sexual-harassment allegations, the law firm that was investigating the accusations is stepping aside.

In a regulatory filing on March 12 with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Guess announced that the law firm **O'Melveny & Myers** would no longer handle the investigation. It is being turned over to **Glaser Weil**, the same law firm that is the legal counsel to the special committee formed to oversee the harassment investigation made by model Kate Upton.

On Jan. 31, the model posted accusations against Marciano, the cofounder, executive chairman and chief creative officer of the Los Angeles denim and clothing label founded in

1981. She alleged that Marciano abused his power at the pioneering fashion company, where she once modeled from 2010 to 2011.

"It's disappointing that such an iconic women's brand @GUESS is still empowering Paul Marciano as their creative director," she posted on her **Twitter** and **Instagram** accounts. She ended the post with the hashtag #MeToo, the movement demanding that powerful men in the media and politics answer to sexual-harassment accusations.

Marciano, who was chief executive of the company until 2015 and headed up overseeing the company's advertising campaigns, denies the allegations.

Since the allegations at the end of January, Guess has seen its stock price tumble nearly 20 percent to close at \$14.92 a share on March 12.—*D.B.*

Can Progressive PLM Fix a Fashion Problem?

By Jerry Inman Contributing Writer

The new generation of shoppers is constantly connected, which sets up new expectations and selling models such as "see now, buy now," direct-to-consumer and IWWIWWIWI (I Want What I Want When I Want It). Customers are now fully in charge of what, when and where they engage and how they buy.

Brands and retailers are challenged by the convergence of connected consumer expectations, new dynamics and blurred lines of e-commerce, bricks-and-mortar stores and other channels throughout Unified Commerce and the attendant demand to turn product quickly and react to high demand. What e-commerce has taught bricks-and-mortar retailers is that "just in time" is a much better business model than carrying a large inventory, as long as you can deliver quickly.

Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) can assist with quicker production cycles, producing the right products to meet customer demands and streamlining the supply chain. PLM can cover the gamut from conceptual planning to creative design, 3-D design, technical design, sourcing, quality management, order management, logistics, supplier management, finance and more.

Unified Commerce has intensified the demand on the supply chain with the increased complexity of sharing product information and collaborating from the design to the manufacturing processes to the finished products. So, the demand for "intelligent" platforms that provide a real-time collaboration to speed up processes and help people make decisions every step of the way is critical. In the near future, there will be intertwined intelligence with the intersection of PLM systems and AI (artificial intelligence) platforms, but until then, speed, customization and personalization need to be improved right now.

So, can today's PLM solutions fast-track the design-todelivery product lifecycle? Brands and retailers need to drive business process improvement, optimization, real-time communication and reengineering through every step of the product journey. Progressive PLM platforms—whether in the cloud, SaaS (software as a service) or on-premise—can help fix this fashion problem.

Centric Software, headquartered in Campbell, Calif., has a market-driven PLM solution that provides a "single, actionable version of the truth" approach to line planning, global sourcing, calendar management, materials management, quality management, collection management, technical design and retail execution. Centric PLM drives digital transformation, enabling its customers to get closer to consumers and boost product innovation and speed time to market in order to stay closer to trend.

Centric has paired organizational process change with innovative technologies, mobility, cloud and SaaS platforms to facilitate a modern way of working. Centric Software also can feed product-tester input right into the PLM system and route it directly to designers/product personnel. In addition, the Centric Visual Innovation Platform is a visual, fully digital collection of boards for touch-based devices such as the **iPad** and large-screen televisions that enable ideation, whatiffing and executing decisions en masse to dramatically cut time to market and boost creativity.

New York-based **CGS Software**'s next generation of PLM capabilities allows clients to launch new products directly in **Adobe Illustrator** and automatically populate PLM with the **BlueCherry** Adobe Illustrator plug-in application. This allows for more-innovative designs and better design efficiency. CGS can provide one version of the truth for the details and status of each product under design and development by centralizing and managing design images, product and raw-materials development, purchasing, and sample approval. Underpinned with end-to-end workflow tracking, the result is a decrease in iterations for samples and prototypes, reduced administrative tasks and data entry, increased efficiency, and overall greater speed and agility, which is required for today's connected consumer.

Lectra, based in Paris and Atlanta, drives what it calls the "4th Industrial Revolution" with a modular PLM approach that acts as a connected, intelligent nerve center for today's digital supply chain, from planning through design to production, ensuring a consistent flow of error-free data between processes, technologies and people.

It also provides companies with the agility to adapt to different business models, like design to source, develop to source and develop to manufacture so they can jump on trends more quickly. You can streamline the way you work, make more-informed decisions with real-time data and get closer to your customers than ever before.

New York—based **BeProduct**'s next generation of PLM empowers social product development. It was built specifically for the cloud and designed with collaboration at its heart. BeProduct streamlines the entire preproduction process, from the initial design to sample tracking, and users can access their data, no matter where they are located. You can also view, share, review and collaborate in real time on any device—redefining the way teams and partners share information and collaborate.

So, can progressive PLM fix a fashion problem? Well, the bottom line is design and product development has to become more social. Retailers and brands need to bring the social experience to the fashion design process and progressive PLM can help get you there. Most people get into fashion design for the inspiration and creativity, something that's been somewhat lost from the industry in recent years.

In order to be more creative, organizations need to shift to a more collaborative process for ideas and inspiration using these new digital platforms in a way that mirrors the consumer social-media experience. Retailers and brands that best collaborate together and leverage their knowledge, expertise and experience will make more-inspired, on-trend products and be able to deliver them quickly for today's connected and demanding consumer. •

Jerry Inman is a retail expert focused on the fashion, style and technology industries. He is also the cofounder of the retail consultancy **Demand Worldwide** as well as of the fashion trend forecaster **MintModa**.

NEWS

Midheaven

Continued from page 1

ing to introduce her entire line this April. Manufactured in downtown Los Angeles with a team of 25 sewers, the denim brand sources its fabric from Italy, a region close to Brolin's heart because she studied at the **Santa Reparata International School of Art** in Florence. The importance of finding a responsibly sourced fabric produced sustainably was important during the research-and-development process for Midheaven.

"The factory is literally located in a national park, so they have a bunch of different guidelines that they have to follow in terms of waste management and all of their production tactics. They use cotton that is sourced from the **Better Cotton Initiative**," said Brolin, who is married to actor Josh Brolin.

While the brand will offer sizes 24 through 33, with inseams that measure 33, 34, 35, 36 and 38 inches, there is a conscientious effort to accommodate women who have tall but also curvy bodies. In addition to choosing a soft fabric that will stretch with the body, but not lose its shape, Brolin would like to plan a plus-size capsule collection in 2019.

"It's so incredibly soft. The fabric stretches, but it also has amazing recovery, so women with hips and booties, they try these jeans on and they notice it will stretch with their curves," she said. "It's a very giving fabric."

Even though Midheaven's fabric is sourced in a town near Milan, Brolin wanted to keep production stateside in Los Angeles. It took her one year to find the perfect group of professionals, which led her to try working with different people in the industry, but never finding the perfect fit until piecing together her current team.





Kathryn Brolin

"As the owner of a small business, especially one that is just starting out, many factory owners—at least in this town—don't want to work with you due to the minimal value and volume of the goods that you are producing," Brolin

Despite this challenge, she is extremely happy with the devoted production team that cares about manufacturing Midheaven's designs to her exact specifications. As a town that has been central to the production of many successful premium denim labels, Los Angeles is a city with extraordinary resources for a new launch, but Brolin also

looked beyond her own needs when choosing this city.

"It's much more expensive to produce in the states, I get that, but there are so many talented garment production workers in this city that it felt odd to take this job opportunity away from them in order to take it to another place where I might make more money," she said.



Taking the first steps into the niche category of manufacturing jeans for tall women is a venture that Brolin recognizes will attract a specific consumer, but that is the clientele she wants to reach during her launch.

"I envision Midheaven as a full, well-rounded brand, but what is most important to me is to grab that customer who is really interested in finding denim that is long enough for them because it has been something that I have been looking for my entire life," Brolin explained.

Though she envisions Midheaven evolving into a lifestyle brand that includes pieces that fall within the athletic and sleepwear categories, Brolin's intentions for her growth are clear and rooted in becoming a trusted premium-denim resource.

"Because we are starting small, with the intention of growing organically, we don't want to offer too many things at the start for fear that our brand would get diluted," she said. "We want to be known as a denim brand first and forement."

Once Midheaven launches exclusively at www.midheavendenim.com, styles will range in price from \$189 to \$280 retail.

These issues feature Technology special sections, editorial, and advertorial.

March 23

Cover: LA Runway **Technology**

T-shirt Report Retail Report New Resources

T-shirt Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

LA Majors Market 4/3-5 Style Fashion Week Palm Springs 4/5–8

March 30

Cover: Fashion Denim Report

Technology

Technology Advertorial Denim Advertorial Education in Focus

Bonus Distribution

LA Majors Market 4/3-5 Style Fashion Week Palm Springs 4/5–8 Fashion Market Northern California 4/15-17 Atlanta Apparel 4/10-14

April 13

Cover: Runway Retail Report **Technology** T-Shirt Report

Bonus Distribution

Marcum Retail Symposium 4/19 DG Expo Dallas 4/25-26

April 20

Cover: Fashion Quarterly Financial Report FMNC Coverage

Technology Industry Voices: Retail Business Intelligence Retail Notes

Finance Advertorial **Supply Chain with Tech**

May 4

Cover: Fashion Denim Report **Technology**

Made in LA Advertorial **Denim Advertorial**

Bonus Distribution

Apparel Sourcing Show Guatemala 5/22-24 Techtextil Texprocess 5/22-24

May 11

Cover: Fashion Eco/Supply Chain Import/Export

Technology

Supply Chain Advertorial Technology Advertorial Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

Coast Delray Beach 5/21-22 Apparel Sourcing Miami 5/21-23 Techtextil 5/22-24 Texprocess 5/22-24 Apparel Sourcing Show Guatemala 5/22-24

May 18

Cover: Fashion Freight & Logistics

Technology Industry Voices: Marketing Automation/

Trade Show Special Section Technology Advertorial

Bonus Distribution Kingpins NY 6/6-7

May 25

Cover: Fashion Technology

Salute to Suppliers & Services

Bonus Distribution Dallas Market Week 6/6-9 Kingpins NY 6/6-7

June 1

Cover: Fashion New Resources Technology

Technology Advertorial

Bonus Distribution Atlanta Apparel 6/13-16

June 8

Cover: Fashion **Technology** Retail Report What's Checking

Finance Advertorial **Fashion District Advertorial**

Bonus Distribution

Designers & Agents LA 6/18-20 L.A. Fashion Market 6/18-20 Fashion Market Northern California 6/24-26

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Cover: LA Market Wrap Real Estate Charts

Technology Industry Voices:

Technology Advertorial Education in Focus

Bonus Distribution

L.A. Fashion Market 6/18-20 Designers & Agents LA 6/18-20 Fashion Market Northern California 6/24-26 Agenda Long Beach 6/28-29

June 29

Cover: Fashion **Technology**

Made in California **FMNC Coverage**

Made in California Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

Hammock 7/14-16 Miami Swim Show 7/14-17

July 6

Cover: Fashion Mid-Year Financial Review Retail Report

Swim Advertorial **Textile Preview and Resource Guide with Tech Finance Advertorial** Waterwear

Bonus Distribution Cabana 7/14-16

Hammock 7/14-16

Miami Swim Show 7/14-17 DG Expo NY 7/17-18 Premiere Vision NY 7/17-18 Apparel Sourcing USA 7/23-25 Texworld USA 7/23-25

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Cover: Denim Technology Company Profile Activewear

Tags & Labels Advertorial Activewear Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

AccessoriesTheShow/FAME/ Moda Manhattan 7/22-24 Project NY 7/22-24 Apparel Sourcing USA 7/23-25 Texworld USA 7/23-25 Outdoor Retailer 7/23-26

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Cover: Agenda Wrap **Technology Industry Voices: Design Software**

Technology Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

Curve NY 7/29-31 LA Fashion Market 7/30-8/1 Active Collective 8/1-2 Swim Collective 8/1-2 Atlanta Apparel 8/7-11

August 3

Cover: Runway LA Market Wrap

Fashion Advertorial Sourcing & Fabric Special **Section with Tech**

Bonus Distribution

OffPrice Show 8/11-14 Sourcing@MAGIC 8/12-15 CurveNV 8/13-15 POOL 8/13-15 Project 8/13-15 Project Women's 8/13–15 Stitch LV 8/13–15 WWDMAGIC 8/13-15 WWIN 8/13-16 NW Materials Show 8/15-16 Fashion Market Northern California 8/19-21 Agenda LV LĂ Swim Week Liberty Fairs LV

August 10

Cover: Fashion **Technology**

Denim Report Made in America Active Collective Coverage Swim Collective Coverage

Supply Chain Special Section with Tech Fashion Advertorial Finance Advertorial Made in America Advertorial **Denim Advertorial**

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EVENT

City of Hope 2018 Spirit of Life **Event Parties for a Cause**

At the City of Hope's Annual Spirit of Life celebration, Grammy-nominated blues singer Janiva Magness sang the blues and fashion executives, factors and other attendees played casino games at the James Bondthemed "Casino Royale" night, held March 10 at **The Reserve** nightclub in downtown

They also bid in a silent auction for vacation getaways and luxe items to raise funds for the Duarte, Calif.-headquartered research hospital, which treats cancer, diabetes and other serious illnesses.

Gifts being auctioned off ranged from

The "Welcome Sponsor" to this year's event was juniorswear maker Stony Apparel, said Rosenthal & Rosenthal's Sydnee Breuer, who is the executive council president for the Fashion & Retail Group.

'We're friendly competitors," she said of the evening's sponsors. "It's nice to come together for this celebration and raise money for this great charity." Unlike past years, the 2018 event had no individual honoree. But a search is on for an honoree for the 2019 event, Breuer said.

Breuer talked about the City of Hope's mission and introduced Emily Bennett Tay-



Kevin Sullivan

Emily Bennett Taylor



Sydnee Breuer, left, with Kaleigh





Sponsors from City of Hope's Fashion & Retail Group

Items from the silent auction

signed jerseys from Golden State Warriors basketball player Kevin Durant to a vacation in a villa in Southern Italy. The minimum bid for the Mediterranean stay was \$15,000.

Over the years, the City of Hope's Fashion & Retail Group has raised

Castillo \$44 million for the hospital and research center. At this event, it raised \$300,000.

The top sponsor for this year's fundraiser was Los Angeles manufacturer Topson Downs. The second top sponsor was the factor Rosenthal & Rosenthal. Other sponsors included Buchalter Nemer, Connected Apparel, Moss Adams, Wells Fargo Capital Finance, TJX, CIT, Signal Brands, Hub International, the Vera R. Campbell Foundation and Swat Fame.



lor. The woman, from Long Beach, Calif., was diagnosed with Stage IV lung cancer when in 2012 she came under the care of the City of Hope's Dr. Karen Reckamp. The forecast for her survival was poor. But after chemotherapy and surgery, she lived to become

the mother of twins.

City of Hope's Fashion & Retail Group often puts on gala events for the hospital. Each year, the Spirit of Life is held at different venues. In the past, events have been held at Soho House in West Hollywood, Calif., and the City National Grove of Anaheim, adjacent to Angel Stadium. In 2012, the philanthropic group held a **Studio 54** party where pop star Miley Cyrus performed and Britney Spears attended.—*Andrew Asch*

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Booths at D&A









Andiyah Patrick of Mar y Sol at D&A

Pura Vida Bracelets at Select x Emerge

A booth at Brand Assembly

LA Market Continued from page 1

usual over the first few days. Doris Johnson, whose eponymous showroom is on the third floor, has been in the building for more than 30 years with her lines including **Soulmates**, **Nina Field**, **Sunrise to Sunset** and **Rossi Roma**. She noticed that traffic at this most recent market was less than in the past.

"It's a combination of things," said the showroom owner. "Our bricks-and-mortar people are suffering. They truly are. I've been here a long time, since '83, and we've lost a lot of our account base."

But there were some new retailers visiting the show. Julie Winter Havel, the owner of **Bluetique**, in New Hampton, Iowa, and the store's specialty buyer and merchandiser, Annie Lukes, arrived Tuesday but were a bit confused by the various buildings and felt new attendees would benefit from a clearer picture of the complex's layout. But by Wednesday morning, they were ready for business.

"Today will be our day to go back and revisit some of the things that we wrote down yesterday that we showed interest in," explained Lukes. "We are hoping to place a few orders, but that may turn into more as we are able to sit down with the vendors and talk more about the lines."

For temporary exhibitors, the CMC organized the **Select x Emerge** show in the penthouse, where traffic was still slow, but



Eileen Fisher Fall 2018 at The New Mart



Peri Donch, owner and designer of PERI, at Select x Emerge

many manufacturers were optimistic. For eco-friendly clothing line **PERI: Pure Eco Rag Industry**, whose wholesale price points range from \$38 to almost \$100, remaining in touch with clients and anticipating customers' needs is the secret to generating orders.

"I do Spring and Fall at the same time just because we're LA, plus I can make it in six weeks," said owner and designer Peri Donch. "The orders are not small. I had, in the past when I was in my showroom, a \$200 or \$300 order and these are

much bigger than that. I think the flexibility of my turnaround [attracts retailers]."

For San Diego-based **Pura Vida Bracelets**, whose wholesale prices range from \$3 to \$15, orders were being placed, but the amount of traffic did not meet expectations.

"We placed a few new orders, opened a few new accounts and saw one of our recurring accounts," said D.J. Hernandez, who is the wholesale account representative for the West Coast.

The New Mart sees activity

This year's Los Angeles Fashion Market seemed to be a success for the **The New Mart** with organizers reporting double the number of attendees for the first day of market, which for the building was Sun., March 11.

The rest of the week was busy too. "We have already beat the 2017 week's total number of attendees in just the first three days of this market," said Ashleigh Kaspszak, the building's assistant property manager.

At the **Salt & Pepper** showroom, store owner Chris Baumgartner was looking for unique pieces that would best represent the clientele of her Washington state—based boutique, **Istina**. While the showroom's Emmalena Bland reported consistent traffic, Baumgartner felt overall attendance was different than previous events.

"It seems slow compared to other shows," she said. "There is a whole new normal now. It's hard to compare because it's apples and oranges now, and we're doing really well. But I hear

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that people are closing."

At the **Eileen Fisher** showroom, Alexandra Brooks, the brand's team leader of specialty stores, explained that for Fall, the brand is going to focus on a particular pattern inspired by the company's core principles of empowering women.

"We're actually having a very successful show," she said. "We are introducing the Morse Code, and that is a print that we are offering in three styles. It is Morse Code for 'The Future Is Female."

With wholesale price points ranging from \$78 to \$348, Brooks said the brand was experiencing an increase in orders and early purchasing.

At accessories showroom M Group Showroom—which represents Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Calvin Klein and Timberland—Brett Morris had written a few orders but revealed that traffic might be down due to show exhaustion coupled with a shift toward the digitization of business practices.

"There are just a lot of shows in general," he said. "We're very tech savvy here, so a lot of the stuff we do is digital **Power-Point** line sheets and we just email them out to everybody. It's not like back in the day when I would hop on a plane."

Despite an interest in Immediates for its accessories brands, such as **An Old Soul**, the **Rande Cohen Showroom** had ex-

perienced a lot of traffic starting on the first day and saw retailers who were ready to move past the Summer season.

"We're in Fall. Some people are playing a little bit of catch up, doing April and May, but the focus is definitely on Fall," Rande Cohen said.

For **Lola & Sophie** owner and designer Gene Kagan, the Fall line was generating a lot of interest, as trends shifted from bright, striking color.

"Orange is selling out now," he said. "I think it [Fall] is about plaids and camouflage."

On the third floor of The New Mart, the 22-year-old **Designers and Agents** show took over as 83 collections were on display

in an intimate setting that was created for more-independent designers. As co-owner Ed Mandelbaum explained, "We're not about quantity. We're about quality. It's all about creative integrity."

Arlean Gall of Trippen

One exhibitor at the show was **Transit**, whose wholesale price points range from \$118 to \$800 for specialty items. Margaretha Silverman, a sales representative for the Italian label, said the show was very good if you don't sell to departments stores but sell to specialty stores.

Lost and Found, a line of premium basics manufactured from cotton jersey and cashmere, is in its second season. It was launched by Jamie Rosenthal, a retail veteran who wanted to fill a void in the market by designing quality hoodies, turtlenecks, sweatshirts, and long- and short-sleeved T-shirts.

Erica Trinder-Torre, who is the brand's showroom representative, said Rosenthal understands the formula of looking stylish without appearing overly formal.

"When you have a really great jacket and a really great skirt but you don't want to wear a blouse with it and you want a great T-shirt, what T-shirt do you wear that still looks really polished? It fits in well with some of your nicer clothes," she explained. "The show is really good. We're getting orders and revisiting a bunch of stores that we started with last season."

Visiting the show for the first time was Jazmyne Givens, who would like to open an online boutique in her hometown of Las Vegas but didn't know where to begin and thought D&A would provide a strong foundation for her vision. "I looked at some of the pictures online and it looked pretty interesting," she said. "Thought I should stop by and see if there is anything here that I would like to take into my inventory."

Increased activity at the Cooper

While different showrooms at the **Cooper Design Space** reported various levels of success, Israel Ramirez of the **Siblings Showroom** estimated that the show's buyer traffic was even with Los Angeles Fashion Market last year, but retailers were ordering more. "Retail has been on a growth trajectory," Ramirez said. "Confidence is back."

At the **Focus Showroom**, down the hall from Siblings, Sylvana Lankshear said the show started slowly on Monday morning, but by afternoon traffic had gotten busy enough to warrant staying until 8 p.m.

The second day of the show was one of the busiest working days in memory Lankshear said, and traffic was solid on the third day. Unlike past shows, Lankshear said that there were no retailers from Florida or the Northeast but mostly West Coast retailers.

The March market was a time for double duty for the **Bandolier** showroom. Adam Derry said there was a steady flow of traffic. "But this market became a bit less about foot traffic and

more about direct follow-ups," he said.

Sometimes the March edition of LA Fashion Market is a bit difficult because it is scheduled a month after the sprawling Las Vegas trade shows. Fred Levine of the **M.Fredric** line of boutiques said he skipped the market because it was scheduled too close to the Las Vegas shows.

With little fanfare, the **Trade Showroom** opened in the building for the fashion market. Diana Oh, the showroom's owner, dove into the market, meeting with stores. Making appointments was key to her success, Oh said. "We had a good market, but there were not many walk-ins," she said.

On the 11th floor of the showroom building, the **Brand Assembly** trade show was celebrating its five years in Los Angeles with an event that wanted to bring emerging brands to a trade-show forum.

For the show's March 12–14 run, an estimated 20 percent of the vendors were new to the show, said Hillary France, the cofounder and chief executive officer of Brand Assembly. More than 50 percent of the brands exhibiting at the show returned to exhibit at the show, held on the Cooper's 11th floor. The 150 brands exhibiting at the show were about even with last year.

Retailers visiting the show included majors such as **Saks**, **Nordstrom** and leading Los Angeles–area boutiques such as



Reception at Brand Assembly

Elyse Walker, Principessa, Polkadots & Moonbeams and Trina Turk.

Like most trade shows, vendors had varying degrees of success and experiences. For Ben De Luca, brand manager of **Brooklyn Hat Co.**, the show was part of a wave of good business

"There's a bit of life coming back to the fashion world," De Luca said. "The last couple of years have been slow. This show is good. People are buying again."

Before the recent trade-show season, buyers were looking to order only two or three pieces from each of the company's hat categories. This year, they are buying much deeper, De Luca said. Recent looks for the company included distressed fedoras with a burnt look

Ty McBride of the **Intentionally Blank** brand reported good business. But he was dissatisfied with the trade-show model. "No one wants to pay \$5,000 to sit. I'm rethinking my trade-show business," he said.

He said he will invest more in his brand's direct-to-consumer

business, along with wholesaling to current accounts. On St. Patrick's Day weekend, he is scheduled to open a 1,100-square-foot Intentionally Blank boutique in San Francisco's Mission District. The formerly blue-collar and immigrant enclave is enjoying a spike of interest with chic restaurants and boutiques opening.

Wendy Freedman of Polkadots & Moonbeams shopped at the show. For trends, retro styles continue to reign over fashion. Despite Wall Street cheering the U.S. economy, she said business is no picnic for boutique retailers.

"The economy is really tough. Stores are really suffering. We have to work four times harder to stay in business," she said. "We're survivors because we have loyal customers."

Tried-and-true buyers at the Gerry Building

Showroom owners and exhibitors in the historic building with nine floors of showrooms and offices said they felt traffic was light at this most recent market, with only regular buyers showing up.

"We had a decent market, but the traffic is down," said Sarah Kirakossian of **Arlene Henry Sales**, whose lines include **Staples USA**, **Lauren Vidal**, **Color 5 Power** and **Mezon**.

Miriana Ojeda, who has an eponymous showroom on the seventh floor and organizes an auxiliary showroom during fashion market for temporary exhibitors, said she saw buyers she normally sells to but no new customers. "They wrote but nothing beyond that," she said, noting she did better at the **Curate International Collection** in February in New York than at this market.

At one of the two showrooms occupied by temporary exhibitors, business was fairly lackluster. Chad Patton, the La Jolla, Calif.—based distributor of **Nuno**, a clothing line made by a well-known Japanese textile maker, said he had seen no more than 10 buyers in nearly four days. "It is definitely slow," he said. "People are going

to the brands they were successful with and not to new brands."

Also showing in the same temporary showroom space was New York—based Arlean Gall, distributor for the avant-garde German footwear line **Trippen**. "Last market was very strong for us. We picked up a lot of new stores," she said, noting that this market was surprisingly slow. "Right now, we have to find new, creative ways to reach new customers."

But store buyers were wandering through the Gerry Building and writing paper. Laura McGuire—the buyer for **Wendy Foster**, a decades-old small chain of California specialty stores in Santa Barbara, Montecito and Los Olivos—was placing orders at the **P. Taylor Clothing** booth, a company in Pasadena, Calif., specializing in chic oversized women's shirts made of luxury fabrics.

McGuire said retailers are adjusting to "the new normal," but customers are still buying. "We have been in business for 50 years, and our customers want something special they don't already have," she said. "They want new things that are well made."

NEWS

Trend Forecaster WGSN Paints a Picture of the Future Consumer

In 2020, consumers will increasingly be doing business by smartphone while retailers will depend more on artificial intelligence and virtual reality to produce retail experiences. Young consumers will be more likely to support businesses imbued with a sense of activism, such as **Patagonia**.

That was the prediction by London-based trend forecaster **WGSN**, which issued a research paper called "Future Consumer 2020."

The paper notes that demographics in North America and Europe will change, with younger consumers more likely to be a member of a minority group. WGSN suggested that businesses look for ways to sell to people with Latino and Muslim backgrounds.

Carla Busazi, WGSN's managing director, said the forecaster's staff traveled to 95 countries in the past 12 months to do interviews with consumers from every age group. They also did independent market research and culled information from research papers from outside groups on a number of subjects ranging from technology, economics, demographics to studies on new markets such as cannabis and cryptocurrencies.

Cryptocurrencies will matter in a world where consumers

have more choices. "Consumers are growing ever more distrustful of large institutions—government, banks and large corporations— because they haven't fixed the things they promised. Businesses that succeed in the future world will have to stand for something. Our future consumers are more than happy to take their money elsewhere if they don't share the ideals of the brand they're buying from. So businesses need to think long and hard about where they stand on big issues. It's not about storytelling anymore. It's about action," she said.

The paper had an optimistic outlook for technology. It forecast that Fifth Generation wireless systems, known as 5G, will revolutionize business and the use of smartphones. The networks are predicted to be faster, stronger and more nimble than what most U.S. consumers are currently using. More reliance on technology, WGSN said, will create more jobs.

Changing demographics is a hot topic right now. On March 13, the **U.S. Census Bureau** forecast that older people will probably outnumber children in America by 2030. By that time, all baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—will be older than 65. By that time, one out of every five residents will be of retirement age.—*Andrew Asch*

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Art Hearts Fashion Changes Venue With Full Schedule

Los Angeles Fashion Week kicked off with Art Hearts Fashion, the first of two back-to-back, multi-day shows that filled the week with more than 35 designers on the runway.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Art Heart Fashion, held March 12–16, switched venues this season to **The MacArthur**, formerly known as the **Park Plaza Hotel**, an elegant Gothic Revival structure near MacArthur Park originally built in 1923 for the **Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks**,

also known as the Elks Club.

The first night of Art Hearts Fashion saw the runway filled with a number of Los Angeles designers including Kentaro Kameyama, Fernando Alberto, Candice Cuoco and Nathalia Gaviria.

The show's five days of presentations has featured a global selection of designers from faraway spots including Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Jamaica, Palestine, Mexico and Malta.—Deborah Belgum



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designs deliver what she promises fresh shapes with a vibrant, vouthful appeal yet offering comfortable coverage on the top and bottom. Paradise Ranch goes bold with prints, an array of exuberant tropicals mainly sourced from Italy and France, with solids produced in the United States. The line's success has enabled Goddard to start buying print designs exclusive to Paradise Ranch. "The custom prints in our line provide exclusivity of design and keep everything in the USA. I'm loving that." Beyond the bright look however Paradise Ranch is developing a loyal customer base for its smart silhouette choices and Goddard's meticulous attention to fit issues. "My collection is meant to be multifaceted. Goddard notes. "It's more than just swimwear—it's wearable to many places it's interchangeable it makes for easy packing. That's the mainstay of

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March 28

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April 3

LA Majors Market California Market Center Los Angeles Through April 5

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April 7

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April 9 **CALA**

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Atlanta Apparel AmericasMart Atlanta Through April 14

Fashion Market Northern California San Mateo Event Center San Mateo, Calif.

April 19

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Marcum Retail **Symposium** JW Marriott Los Angeles

April 22

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Phoenix Convention Center Phoenix Through April 24

April 25

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