

CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 73 YEARS

\$2.99 VOLUME 74, NUMBER 45 NOVEMBER 2-8, 2018



SPACE FOR LACE

For his Spring '19 collection, Kevan Hall was into lace infused with subdued colors. For more looks, see page 7.

ANTHONY EVANS

New Tariffs on Chinese Goods Have Apparel Manufacturers Worried

By Deborah Belgum *Executive Editor*

When U.S. tariffs were levied in September on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports, some apparel companies saw the writing on the wall even if they wanted to erase it.

The 10 percent tariffs did not cover apparel or footwear, but it did include fabric and handbags along with a threat for more tariffs.

Now a new round of tariffs spearheaded for early next year on \$257 billion in trade with China will undoubtedly include clothing. And those 10 percent tariffs are expected to shoot up to 25 percent on Jan. 1.

With change in the wind, clothing manufacturers such as Michael Weisberg decided not to wait for new tariffs to kick in. This year, he started shifting production of his **BeBop** and **Gypsies & Moondust** juniorswear labels from China to Vietnam. Last year, 60 percent of that production was done in China. This year it is down to 40 percent, with most of

➔ **Tariffs** page 3

Dame Launches to Blend Chic Fashion With a Sustainable Lifestyle

By Dorothy Crouch *Associate Editor*

Starting with a friendship that has grown for more than 10 years and apparel-industry experience that has spanned their entire careers, Alexx Monkarsh, Molly Levin and Wells Butler wanted to create a positive impact through clothing.

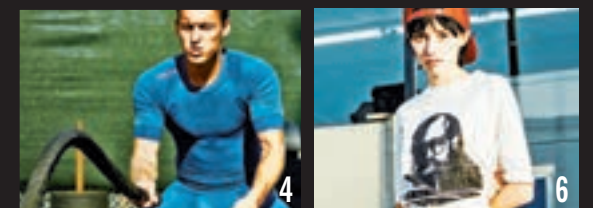
The trio decided to collaborate on a sustainable, socially conscious brand of apparel that stands apart by creating an online eco-conscious fashion-lifestyle destination. Named **Dame**, the brand launched in Los Angeles on Nov. 1 with manufacturing based in downtown L.A.

"When I was done with my previous line, I connected with Molly, who is also my sister-in-law and a stylist," said Monkarsh, a Los Angeles native whose previous label was **Alexx Jae and Milk**. Her mother is Debbie Levin, president of the **Environmental Media Association**. "We wanted to start this direct-to-consumer fashion world that provides a great uniform for women and also a styling component."

➔ **Dame** page 8

INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



Differential Brands' new name ... p. 2

True Religion's interim CEO ... p. 2

Automating marketing ... p. 3

Calik Denim and Kingpins ... p. 9

Differential Brands Group Now Has a New Name

Differential Brands Group, the Los Angeles apparel company whose labels include **Hudson**, **Robert Graham** and **SWIMS**, is changing its name to **Centric Brands Inc.** after acquiring a significant part of **Global Brands Group's** licensing business in North America.

Jason Rabin, the former president of Global Brands Group North America, will become Centric Brands' chief executive officer, and William Sweedler, managing partner with **Tengram Capital Partners**, which played a role in the transaction, will continue to be the chairman of the board of directors.

The \$1.2 billion purchase price for the licensing business was paid in cash, according

to Centric Brands, which will continue as a publicly traded company and be listed on the **Nasdaq** under the ticker symbol **CTRC**.

The new company will be headquartered in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Montreal and Greensboro, N.C.

The brands that make up Global Brands' North American licenses include **Calvin Klein**, **Under Armour**, **Tommy Hilfiger**, **BCBG**, **Joe's Jeans**, **Buffalo David Bitton**, **Frye**, **Michael Kors**, **Kate Spade**, **All Saints**, **Cole Haan**, **Kenneth Cole** and entertainment properties including **Disney**, **Marvel** and **Nickelodeon**.

Global Brands Group Holding is a Hong Kong-listed company that joined sourcing

giant **Li & Fung** in 2009.

With the new acquisition, Centric Brands is expected to generate more than \$2.3 billion in annual revenue, the company said, with branded product distribution to a diversified group of consumers across retail and digital channels.

"With the unmatched sourcing network of Li & Fung, industry expertise and a large-scale platform, we have the ability to expand organically through brand, category and channel growth as well as the potential to add brands to our portfolio through new licenses and acquisitions across strategic verticals," Rabin said in a statement.

Debt financing for the deal was provid-

ed by affiliates and/or funds managed by **Ares Capital Management**, **HPS Investment Partners**, **GSO Capital Partners** and **Blackstone Tactical Opportunities**.

Before becoming Differential Brands, the company operated under the name of Joe's Jeans, which hit a financial hurdle in 2013 when it borrowed \$90 million to buy Hudson for \$97.6 million and then defaulted on its loans.

The company was close to declaring bankruptcy in 2015 but ended up selling its flagship brand, Joe's Jeans, to the **Sequential Brands Group** and Global Brands Group Holding for \$80 million. Funds from the sale were used to retire Joe's Jeans' debt.—*Deborah Belgum*

Bebe and Bluestar Acquire Gifts Retailer Brookstone

Bebe Stores Inc. announced it has partnered with **Bluestar Alliance** to acquire the brand name and related assets of beleaguered gifts-and-gadgets retailer **Brookstone** for an undisclosed price.

In August, the Merrimack, N.H.-headquartered Brookstone filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The retailer announced it would close its mall stores and focus on 35 airport stores and its e-commerce site, *brookstone.com*. Brookstone had assets of \$50 million to \$100 million and liabilities of \$100 million to \$500 million.

Bebe, headquartered in Brisbane, Calif., also is rallying from tough times. In 2017, it shuttered all its physical stores and sold half the brand for \$35 million to Bluestar Alliance, a New York brand-management company, in order to avoid declaring bankruptcy. Manny Mashouf, Bebe's founder and chief execu-

tive officer, said Brookstone would support growth for his company.

"Brookstone is a unique brand with strong growth potential," Mashouf said. "We are pleased to expand our already-successful relationship with Bluestar and can see the potential synergies with other brands in their portfolio. This investment, a direct result of our partnership with **B. Riley Financial**, which sourced the deal, will create a strong platform for future growth and enhance our ability to generate free cash flow to maximize our dividends to shareholders."

Joseph Gabbay, Bluestar's chief executive officer, said the deal would revive Brookstone.

"We are excited to begin renewing Brookstone's innovation and its flow of new products to the market," he said. "**London Luxury** is the brand's first new licensee, known

for its expertise in the bedding, home textile and memory-foam categories. We are thrilled to have London Luxury as our licensee partner as they exemplify the standard consumers expect from the Brookstone brand.

"We are also seeing strong interest from a

myriad of prospective licensees as well as enthusiastic retail partners," he continued. "Contracts with best-in-class manufacturers in key categories, including massage, home environment, audio and travel products are expected to close this week."—*Andrew Asch*

True Religion Names an Interim CEO

Los Angeles denim company **True Religion** said it has appointed Chelsea Grayson as its interim chief executive officer while a search for a permanent CEO takes place.

The Nov. 1 announcement followed current chief executive John Ermatinger's announcement that he was retiring from the company where he has been CEO since 2015.

"We are fortunate to have someone of Chelsea's caliber and experience step up to lead the company as we continue to innovate our products and customer experience," Gene Davis, chair of the True Religion board, said in a statement.

With her appointment as interim CEO, Grayson, who is on the board of directors, will step down as the company's Audit Committee chair but will remain as a member of the board.

"Being asked to sit in this seat is something I wasn't expecting. I am so happy to get here and will do all that I can for the brand," Grayson said. "It's more than just a job for me."

Before arriving on the board last year,

Grayson was the CEO and a board member at **American Apparel**. Since her departure from that brand, she has served as a consultant for private-equity funds and is also a board member at **Delta Dental of California** and is on the advisory board of **Marca Global**.

Last year, True Religion filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy but exited a few months later. Grayson's experience as CEO during American Apparel's recovery from bankruptcy will influence her path at True Religion.

"The things that worked really well at American Apparel, which made us a nice target for that acquisition, was focusing on improving and enhancing the customer experience," Grayson said. "At True Religion, we are starting from a much better place."

Grayson will introduce fresh branding initiatives similar to the addition of Bella Hadid as brand ambassador and the **Manchester United** partnership. There are also plans to expand into streetwear, grow the brand's social-media presence and cultivate stronger e-commerce tools.—*Dorothy Crouch*

RETAIL REPORT

Study Clarifies Consumer Priorities

As consumers rely on more e-commerce options and the threat of increased tariffs on goods from China grows, cloud-based technology firm **First Insight, Inc.** noted that retail executives are not accurately informed about the impact of pricing.

During a recent survey of consumers and retail executives, the Warrendale, Pa.-based company found a disconnect between retail executives' perception of consumer purchasing priorities and the important factors that customers value.

While both groups cited quality as most important, only 20 percent of senior retail executives reported that, for them, low pricing ranked second compared with approximately 51 percent of consumers. Additionally, only 20 percent of senior retail executives believed that consumers perceived there were increases in in-store prices, but 60 percent of consumers believed there were increased costs.

"As tariffs come into play, it is more important for retail executives to understand what consumers are willing to pay," First Insight's Senior Vice President of Marketing Gretchen Jezrec said. "Retail executives need to understand, on a granular level, where there is an appetite to absorb a higher price point and where

there is not."

Despite the discount-oriented culture surrounding retail, Jezrec said that accurately identifying consumers' priorities could help retail executives avoid missing out on valuable dollars. Not everything has to be discounted. "Our testing has shown 6 to 12 percent of products that we test with consumers could bear a higher price than what retail executives were willing to charge," she said.

The study also found a large discrepancy between how retail executives perceive the role of new technologies in consumer purchasing decisions. With 75 percent of respondents surveyed owning smart speakers such as **Amazon's Echo** with Alexa voice control and 60 percent using those devices to research pricing prior to making a purchase, 80 percent of retail executives inaccurately cited mobile technology as most important to their business.

Implementing new technology is important, but these tools are often costly, which allows room for customer analytics to provide answers.

"It is coming up more and more that retailers are recognizing the importance of analytics and the voice of their customers," Jezrec said.—*D.C.*

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Connecting to the Connected Consumer Through Mass Personalization

It's time for brands and manufacturers to automate marketing

By Paula Levy Contributing Writer

Understanding and connecting with customers directly is as important to brands and manufacturers as it is to retailers today. Where retailers have traditionally leveraged customer data and intelligence to drive email campaigns and experiences, brands and manufacturers have not possessed the customer data to understand who their customers really are—until now.

Today, with brands' and manufacturers' online presence and use of social media, there is a vehicle to communicate and connect directly with the end consumer, build loyalty, a following and gain insights directly from the consumer. These data can be used to drive personalized communications and brand education via websites, blogs, email and social-media channels, whether you sell product direct to consumers or not. Retailers are no longer the only ones gaining customer insights and connecting with the end consumer. Acquiring firsthand customer data is essential to success in today's connected marketplace.

Manufacturers and brands have automated supply-chain processes, and it is now time to automate marketing with automation tools to drive mass personalization and lead generation as effectively as retailers do. Reaching the right audience with the right message is so important to engage, convert to sales and increase brand loyalty, which in turn drives demand for your brand. Today's connected consumers want information, and they want it directly from the brand. The younger generations care about how the product is produced, how the workforce is treated and the heritage of the brand.

We have discussed in past articles machine learning, artificial intelligence and data insights. It all comes together with personalization and understanding your end consumer and automating marketing tasks for segmentation, lead nurturing, relationship marketing, marketing KPIs and reporting. These marketing-automation tools are a part of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) suite, which is focused on segmentation analysis, marketing communications, and analysis of how campaigns and engagement on various channels

(email, social, online) have performed against key metrics.

"Mass personalization" means communicating with groups or communities of your consumers in a way that provides relevant and personalized messaging. Creating these segments requires knowing your customers and followers and what is important to them, how they engage and shop your brand, and why they are engaging. Micro-communities are created based on psychographic and demographic data,

dressing all things marketing including social media, websites, blogs, reporting and analytics. The solution providers are many, and there have been extensive acquisitions in this space.

IBM acquired **Unica** as the first to market automation tools, providing a best-in-class automation suite for marketing.

Adobe, an enterprise marketing cloud and analytics solution, bought **Neolane** for segmentation and email campaigns.

Exact Target bought **Pardot**, and then **Salesforce** acquired it. Salesforce now offers a marketing cloud that includes campaign management, segmentation, lead nurturing, social listening and more.

Oracle bought **Eloqua** for its marketing cloud, which orchestrates paid, owned, and earned marketing channels for email, mobile, social and Web.

HubSpot's Marketing Hub is widely used to grow traffic, convert visits and manage inbound marketing campaigns with embedded analytics and marketing automation.

Optimove's Relationship Marketing Hub leverages AI to foster intelligent relationships with predictive customer modeling and self-optimizing personalization.

WhatsNexx is new to the market with a cross-channel marketing-automation platform with a lower cost of entry.

Today's connected consumers have multiple touchpoints through their customer journeys—starting early with brand education through purchases on multiple channels. Engaging this customer with relevant information along the way is important for everyone along the supply chain—manufacturers and brands as well as retailers. Those that collaborate and share along this path to purchase will win in the end. Collaboration is strong in the supply chain with product development, so why not marketing? ●

Paula Levy is the Chief Strategy Officer for Demand Worldwide. She is a business-technology strategist whose focus is assisting retailers and brands to transform their marketing and customer-engagement strategies with the adoption of new technologies and business practices.



lifestyle preferences and product affinities to empower personalization to the masses from marketing.

The more relevant and personalized the communications, the higher engagement and transaction value. It's that simple, and it is proven. Personalized communications reported in multiple studies deliver up to 6X higher transaction rates to those companies doing it right. According to **Aberdeen**, a global research and analytics firm, companies using marketing automation yield up to a 53 percent higher conversion rate.

Marketing automation has evolved from a marketing tool for email campaigns to an almost \$2 billion industry, ad-

NEWS

Tariffs *Continued from page 1*

that manufacturing shifting principally to Vietnam and then Cambodia and India.

"This year, our production in China started to decrease as soon as Trump started trumpeting tariffs," said Weisberg, who is chief executive of **Second Generation**, the labels' parent company, headquartered in Vernon, Calif., just outside Los Angeles. "But it is tough because there isn't enough capacity for everybody to go to Vietnam."

Because the BeBop and Gypsies & Moondust customer is a more price-sensitive consumer, Weisberg felt the company needed to move to factories outside China to keep prices down. He calculates that additional tariffs will increase the wholesale price by 50 cents to \$1 a garment if they go into effect next year. "Our business is moderate and sensitive to any price increases," he said. "It is not a risk worth taking. Unfortunately, you sacrifice reliability and speed by not being in China. Until this thing blows over, we have to be careful."

Other manufacturers are waiting before the tariffs take effect to move their production because China is an efficient place to make clothing. All the raw materials and inputs are there as are well-managed factories with decades of experience.

David Vered, president of Los Angeles-based **YMI Jeanswear Inc.**, said about 60 percent of his denim pants and non-denim pants are made in China and the rest are produced in Vietnam. "China is really good at having everything [raw materials]," he said, noting that most of the fabric used for his production in Vietnam comes from China. "But if the tariffs come into play, we will have to move a lot of our production to Vietnam."

However, Vietnam doesn't have the capacity to produce

the outerwear and swimwear that YMI's licensees make in China. "That would be a big issue if it comes to tariffs," he noted.

Another manufacturer waiting to move production is **Stony Apparel Corp.**, whose labels include **Eyeshadow** and **Love on a Hanger**. About 80 percent to 90 percent of the Los Angeles company's collection of dresses, T-shirts, tops and pants for juniors and girls is produced in Chinese factories, said company co-founder Steve Maiman.

But he does have to keep costs down for his price-sensitive customers. "We are looking into alternatives to supplement what we do," he said. "If we move, it would have to be within a reasonable distance from China, such as Vietnam or Cambodia, because most of the fabric we use comes out of China."

Moving production can't be done with the snap of a finger. Most apparel production is planned 12 months to 18 months ahead of schedule, said Elise Shibbles, a member of the international law firm **Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg**. "So current consideration of product placement likely wouldn't be evident in trade data until over a year from now," she noted.

To have tariffs or not have tariffs

No one is too clear about whether the Trump administration will expand its tariffs on Chinese products. There will be a clearer indication of what will happen after the mid-term elections on Nov. 6 and after a critical meeting in late November in Buenos Aires, Argentina, of the Group of 20, an international summit of governments and central-bank governors. Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump are expected to meet there and discuss the escalating trade war.

But many are pessimistic about an immediate solution. "We are on track for this thing to happen," said Steve Lamar,

executive vice president of the **American Apparel & Footwear Association**, a Washington, D.C., trade group that represents the biggest and most important apparel and footwear manufacturers in the United States. "It doesn't seem like the groundwork has been laid for a breakthrough."

He has been hearing from manufacturers, both big and small, that they are worried and are seriously considering shifting production to other countries. Vietnam is the preferred country for production, but the country's factories right now can't accommodate a sudden big influx of business. "All the new businesses going into Vietnam may drive up costs and create a capacity restraint," he said.

Taking a more sanguine approach on impending tariffs is Julie Hughes, president of the **U.S. Fashion Industry Association**, a Washington, D.C., group representing apparel and fashion-goods importers. She doesn't believe new tariffs are necessarily a done deal. "I don't think they are going to do anything until the two leaders [of China and the United States] meet. The Chinese are pretty smart," she said. "I suspect they have a strategy."

The mid-term elections, she said, will also help to interpret the future of more tariffs. If the Republicans keep the U.S. House and Senate, there will be nothing to hold Trump back from adding more tariffs on Chinese goods. If the Democrats win the House and the Republicans keep the Senate, it may slow things down. If the Democrats win both the House and the Senate, expect a big opposition to tariffs.

But if tariffs are imposed after that November meeting in Buenos Aires, expect the Trump administration in early December to draw up a list of more goods to be added to the more than 5,000 items already on the tariff list. Those new tariffs could go into effect as early as January or February.

"This could be a devastating blow to our industry," said Vered of YMI Jeanswear. "I hope it is not going to happen." ●



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ACTIVEWEAR

Snapbac's Performance Wear to Ice Down and Warm Up

Icing down sore muscles is part of a typical pain-management regimen.

Most people reach for a bag of frozen peas to take care of sore muscles. A San Diego startup called **Snapbac** is betting that people would rather wear a small ice pack on their exercise clothes to ease muscle pain.

This month, the small company is scheduled to introduce a line of exercise clothes that mix fashion, fitness and wellness on its direct-to-consumer channel, *snapbac.com*, said Kevin Bello, co-founder and chief operating officer of Snapbac. The brand also is continuing to raise funds for the venture.

"You can't **Saran**-wrap ice packs on shins and calves," Bello said. "We wanted to give a wearable-therapy approach."

People wearing Snapbac tops and bottoms will attach what Bello calls "therapy pods" to any part of their bodies. The pods can be heated up to loosen up muscles or they can be cooled down to ice a muscle after a rigorous workout.

The pods can be attached to tops or bottoms of Snapbac garments with a **Velcro**-like micro grip liner. The pods, sold with the suits, contain a propylene gel and a glycol compound often used in products that transfer heat or provide cooling.

"It's not a new technology," Bello said of the pods. The brand's point of difference is that it offers ways to wear the packs. Bello also warned that the pods cannot

be worn for extended periods of time. It is similar to putting an ice pack on skin for long periods of time, which can risk frostbite.

When not using the pods, they can be stored in the garments' pockets.

Although it is not a new idea, attaching ice and heat agents to clothing is not well represented in the market. Scott Sykes, owner of the **Universal Body** boutique in West Hollywood, Calif., said he was not aware of a product like Snapbac. However, athletic brands are in a pitched race to introduce new details to improve performance.



"They're always trying to invent the new **Velcro**," Sykes said. "If I throw in mechanical details, clients zone in on it. They'll pay extra if it works."

Snapbac's inaugural collection will include compression tops and bottoms, which are popular in any fitness line, said Jamie Maunders, Snapbac's head of design. The

brand's dual-layer fabric can hold the thermal therapy pods against any part of the garment and also offer a comfortable feeling, she said. Estimated retail price points range from \$75 to \$190.

Bello started Snapbac with Ali Nilforushan, who has competed in professional equestrian events in California. The development team included Dr. Andy Walshe, who has consulted for the **Australian Institute of Sport**, the company said.—*Andrew Asch*



Calendar

Nov. 2

Los Angeles Christmas Cash & Carry Gift Show

Los Angeles Convention Center
Los Angeles
Through Nov. 4

Nov. 7

CALA
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
Through Nov. 8

Nov. 8

FCI Fashion School
Student fashion show
3011 E. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles

Outdoor Retailer Winter Market

Colorado Convention Center
Denver
Through Nov. 11

Nov. 13

ReMode
Los Angeles Convention Center
Los Angeles
Through Nov. 14

Nov. 16

San Mateo Christmas Cash & Carry Show
San Mateo, Calif.
Through Nov. 18

Nov. 27

DG Expo
San Francisco Hilton Hotel
San Francisco
Through Nov. 28

Nov. 28

Kingpins
Pier 36 Basketball City
New York
Through Nov. 29

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

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

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With its new Polyester Offering, Pantone proves why it became and remains the world leader in global color standards

When your brand name becomes synonymous with your product category, you know you are doing something right. So it is with Pantone, the name everyone knows when it comes to thousands of color standards. Since the early 1960s, when Pantone first became the tonal touchstone for the graphics industry, Pantone hasn't simply joined a market category, it has defined it.

That was then, and this is now, when Pantone's influence has extended way beyond ink and the print world and into, among its many venues, fashion. In June, the New Jersey-based company announced its latest creation, a 203-color-palette collection of super-saturated, eye-popping colors designed specifically for polyesters and the many iterations of new man-made fabrics that make up the explosively popular athleisure, swim, and fitness markets.

The Polyester Swatch Set is a natural evolution for Pantone, which first waded into textile and apparel waters in 1987, offering fabric-appropriate pigments in addition to print inks. That step was followed closely in the 1990s by its expansive cotton swatch collection and in 2011 with Nylon Brights.

"We do see it as an evolution," says Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Color Institute, Pantone's trend-tracking division, which annually comes out with its influential Color of the Year. "With the trend toward man-made materials exponentially increasing, we saw this as more in line with what the market is doing now."

The unique colors of the Polyester Swatch Set complement, but do not intersect with, Pantone's Cotton Swatch Library of 2,310 colors, for good reason. As Lisa Charkowick, product manager for Fashion, Home and Interiors products, explains it, "You want to have a standard that is closest to the end use of what you are doing." While cotton is the most stable fabric for color reproduction, "the depth of saturation of color wouldn't be there," she continues. "The palette for polyester materials is different than cotton—the colors achieved in polyester is different than what you can achieve with cotton."

The 203-color swatch set, dyed on 100 percent polyester knit, was the product of more than a year of selection, experimentation, and testing. There are eye-popping brights, to be sure, but also a range that includes softer neutrals, blush tones, and pastels to mid-tones and dramatic darks.

The mix "is based on what we thought were the most important color ranges we had to bring out in the market," Pressman says. "Our goal is to ensure that our clients have in their hands the colors consumers would be looking for. It had to be a strong collection that crossed all color families that we thought were salient, what was critical. It's like what we do with our color forecast each season—calling out the particular yellow or blue that will be on trend."

Key to the development process was collaboration: the trend spotters and prognosticators both within and outside the Pantone company, forecasters on synthetic material



203 new colors on polyester



2" x 2" swatches included in the set



4" x 4" swatch cards



Polyester Swatch Set

trends, and the clients themselves with whom, Pressman says, "we work closely to better anticipate what people will need."

The colors are rigorously tested in-house to ensure their reliability—"far be it for us to put something out there our clients can't achieve in the real world," Charkowick says.

And so, it came down to 203 colors—not 200 or 225. "There's a lot of thought process behind choosing the colors," Charkowick says. In fact, she notes, Pantone's careful curation of colors is the collection's true strength. "It's not about having thousands of colors," she says. "These are the right colors for what the market needs."

The complete 203-color Polyester Swatch Set, which sells for \$749, is available in a storage case of 2" x 2" removable

swatches, as well as individual colors in 4" x 4" swatches costing \$14.25 each that unfold to 4" x 8" for visualization, specification, and instrumental evaluation. Polyester Spectral Data—the exact dye recipes for each color—will be available late August.

Having standards with set color recipes builds a level of instant communication that is increasingly valuable in time and cost savings, with manufacturing sometimes taking place around the world and speed-to-market accelerating at a lightning-fast pace. "When everything is speed, speed, speed, to have a color standard in these intense, saturated colors, it's good for the design team, good for the factory," says Charkowick.

And color, as Pressman points out, is becoming an even more important selling tool in the fast-paced world of fashion, influencing, she says, 50 percent to 85 percent of "ideas and product-purchase decisions." For the 20-year Pantone veteran, color education is both her "mission" and her "passion."

"Color influences everything, how we feel psychologically and physiologically," she says. "It's the first thing we see when we open our eyes in the morning, it's the first thing that will engage you. We live in a very visual world, even more so now. Color is what connects us to our environment and the things we love."

Not all of the appeal is purely visual. "Everything is in the naming," Pressman says. "I look at some of the more interesting colors that stand out—Blueberry Pancake, Lime Zest. It absolutely engages you, it speaks to the lushness of that blue, the freshness of the yellow-based green. You want that swatch."

The recent launch of the Polyester Swatch Set was "welcome," Pressman says, and the response "happiness—it gives people the depth of color they are looking for in the market."

"One of the things burned into our brains," Pressman goes on, "is this is not about 'right now' for the consumers. It's based on trends, looking forward, forward, forward. We are leading the market, and we are listening. Our clients expect us to have the right colors in the palette, not just navy blue but the right navy blue. So when someone walks in to buy that shirt, it's different, it's on trend. We are informing our clients of the colors they will need to have in their product to best engage consumers to purchase."

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DC Shoes Founder Builds Up Latest Apparel Brand

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

More than 20 years ago, Damon Way and Ken Block launched **DC Shoes** and built it into one of the skate category's most influential brands. It was later acquired by **Quiksilver**, now called **Boardsiders**, for \$87 million.

Now Way has a Los Angeles-area clothing project called **Fact.**, which is, in a way, a return to his roots when he started



his DC Shoes brand on a shoestring budget

This week, Way introduced the brand's newest capsule collection done in collaboration with the 1980s and 1990s hip-hop hit makers the **Beastie Boys**.

The Fact. brand's new capsule collection will be sold at merchandise tables at the back of events where Beastie Boys musicians Michael "Mike D" Diamond and Adam "Ad-Rock" Horovitz will talk about their music and wild times.

Way designed the Fact.'s "Beasties" collection with Mike D, going through the band's photo archives to put together collages for the collection, as well as looking at flyers from early punk gigs.

The collection, which includes a hoodie and some T-shirts manufactured by **Los Angeles Apparel**, will also be sold at high-end skate and streetwear boutiques as well as on the direct-to-consumer website **factbrand.com**.

Retail price points range from \$38 to \$45 for T-shirts to \$130 for hoodies, Way said.

The Beasties collection was released just as Way started to grow the Fact. brand. Fact. released some small T-shirt collections in 2016 and 2017. Its Spring '19 collection will offer a much wider assortment of looks, which will include items such as pants designed and produced by its Japanese partner, **Jack Inc.**, which also maintains a partnership with Southern California streetwear pioneer **Stüssy**.

The artistic inspiration for the brand is English. The name Fact. is inspired by **Factory Records**, a British music label responsible for releasing the music of many bands, including **Joy Division**, **New Order** and **Happy Mondays**, which dominated 1980s and 1990s music charts.

Peter Saville, Factory Records' art director, also developed a group of unique graphics, which were placed on the label's albums. The Fact. brand's graphics are inspired by the music label's graphics, which are on the brand's hoodies and T-shirts.



"The graphics have their own appeal even someone who may not understand their musical nuances will buy into it," Way said.

Fact. seeks to visually communicate the intersection of skateboarding with musical subcultures fostered by Factory. "It is understanding the power of culture and individuality through those subcultures," Way noted.

The small brand is growing just as Way reconnected with DC Shoes. He left the brand in 2008—four years after it was acquired by Quiksilver.

In 2016, he rejoined the company to help reinvigorate DC Shoes. Part of his job is to help the brand reconnect with its roots and position it as a higher-end brand, which features more technical aspects in its apparel and footwear.

"It's been fun and meaningful to participate in the process of repositioning the brand," Way said.

The rethinking of DC Shoes also will feature a reappearance of **Droors**, one of the first brands that Way worked on with DC co-founder Block. DC Shoes is working on a new Droors collection, which Way is considering introducing at **Paris Fashion Week** in

January. This new Droors collection will feature T-shirts as well as nylon soccer jerseys and track suits.

For Way, working on a startup and an established brand has been invigorating. "It's a great balance for sure," he said. "With DC and Droors, you get the sophistication and the formal business experience. Fact. is literally like a scrappy garage operation. It's very nimble. It's full of risks. It behaves like a teenager." ●

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Lace and Fringe Infuse the Spring/Summer '19 Collection by Kevan Hall

For his latest collection, Los Angeles designer Kevan Hall introduced a new split-pant silhouette in stretch crepe for day and accented it with a tuxedo sequin stripe for night.

Other silhouettes included red-carpet-ready gowns that have intricate detailing and leg-baring dresses that are flirty and fun.

"Luxury abounds in the collection with an imported slash Chantilly lace with a touch of ostrich feathers, silk fil de coupe, stretch crepe and stretch duchess satin," Hall said.

His Spring/Summer palette was infused with lavender, raspberry, blueberry and coconut. "My summer tweed with fringe accents creates a mélange of all these beautiful colors," Hall noted.—*Deborah Belgum*

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Dame *Continued from page 1*

As a stylist, Levin brought a fashion expertise to Dame that allows the brand to expand into the lifestyle category. This reach will see the brand providing styling tips with

each purchase and serving as an online destination where clients can find the input of fashionable guests, which will include actress Malin Akerman, known for her role as Lara Axelrod in the TV series “Billions.”

“Nine times out of 10, somebody sees something online, thinks it’s super cute, orders it and doesn’t know how to put it together after it arrives,” said Levin, who also grew up in Los Angeles. “Wouldn’t it be nice to include a style card with everything that they order? We’re providing style cards to build their confidence so they can know that they, too, can be a stylist.”

In addition to manufacturing limited-run pieces from upcycled dead stock, the company sells vintage styles that complement the collection. The company’s pieces will be released nearly every month, and vintage stock will be consistently refreshed as new pieces are sourced.

“The fashion market is so saturated,” said Butler, the owner of **Prinp Clothing** line. She grew up in the Midwest, where she relied on shopping for vintage pieces to recreate on-trend looks. “In order to set yourself apart, you have to have a different component,” she said. “I love the hunt, going through racks to find special pieces, and it’s something that I enjoy doing for Dame.”

Each limited-run collection will include 11 to 15 basics created in beautiful fabrics from quality dead stock. For its first Back-to-Basics collection of T-shirts, tank tops, blouses and pants, Dame is launching with easy-to-style pieces that complement one another.

“We wanted to start our line with the base of a client’s wardrobe—the building blocks of your closet,” Monkarsh said. “We’re all mothers, working women and busy, but we want to grab something that is easy to go while still looking chic and tailored.”

For their clients, the Dame women want to provide options to appear effortlessly styled by allowing the company to plan their wardrobe. It was through their own personal difficulties balancing their demanding lives with looking chic that the women devised a plan for Dame.

“Less and less do I want to think about serious outfits: jeans, a belt, blouse, a blazer, shoes and the right bag,” Levin said. “I have to grab something quick, which doesn’t require a lot of thought and is comfortable, but I have to look nice when going to a fitting or pulling pieces in Beverly Hills.”

For the founders, it was extremely important to choose a manufacturing partner whose practices were ethical and offered fair wages in addition to having sustainable-apparel creation. By making their EMA Green Seal-approved clothes locally, the women are reducing their business’s carbon footprint and supporting Los Angeles’ economy.

“They are awesome and want to be as green as possible,” Monkarsh said of the unnamed factory where Dame is manufactured. “In 10 years, I hope we live in a world where brands do sustainable fashion and consumers are conscious about what they’re wearing,” she said.

As upcycling and clothing resale rise in popularity among consumers, Butler emphasizes the flexibility that manufacturers and shoppers have when choosing sustainable-apparel options.

“Sustainable clothing could be anything,” she said. “You could do couture that is sustainable.”

The handcrafted pieces in the Dame collection are sized XS to L, which will fit a standard size 10 or 12. Fabrics are sourced by Tori Monkarsh, Alexx’s niece and the company’s production and development lead, who scours the city for fabric resources.

In addition to the T-shirts, tank tops, pants and blouses, the women were sure to include a kimono jumpsuit, slipdress and a comfortable, yet stylish, blazer, which can be paired

with any piece in the collection to add a classic look.

“We’re combining elevated basics that we are manufacturing ourselves, with vintage, and those are the perfect elements of the best wardrobe,” Butler explained. “All you need are elevated basics, including cotton/Modal T-shirts, and these whimsical vintage pieces—such as vintage high-waisted **Levi’s**, Indian block-printed dresses and skirts—and you’re good to go.”

During the holidays, between its first and second collections, Dame will release a limited-edition Cozy Box, which includes a loungewear set with a sweatshirt and pants that can be monogrammed by the company. The women designed the pieces to be comfortable enough for opening holiday gifts or running out to grab a bite to eat.

Price points for the first collection range from just under \$60 for dead-stock-sourced cotton/Modal tank tops to V-neck and muscle T-shirts for \$250. While they might eventually launch pop-up shops, the women intend to continue their direct-to-consumer model in an effort to maintain affordability and a sustainable supply chain.

“More and more, direct-to-consumer is what you’re going to see,” Levin said. “It’s essentially wholesale, and we’re able to keep the price down. To be able to keep an approachable price point, I feel it will be what we see more of these days.”

The direct-to-consumer model also aligns with Dame’s mission to help women easily find fashionable, ecologically responsible clothing. Providing this ease in shopping allows women to enjoy their lives while looking stylish.

“We’re offering busy women a one-stop shop for the best wardrobe, and that is invaluable. Continue to build your life but not sacrifice your wardrobe,” Butler said. “We’re helping to build your wardrobe so you can build your life.” ●



From left, Alexx Monkarsh, Wells Butler and Molly Levin



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APPAREL NEWS GROUP
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California Denim Leaders Head to Amsterdam to Discuss the Industry's Future

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

Descending upon Amsterdam for the city's jeans-focused, event-filled week, leaders from the world's denim industry met to share ideas, unveil innovations and work together to make a better supply chain. With events scheduled throughout the city by apparel-industry leaders, local shops and global apparel makers, California brands headed to the Netherlands to meet with their international peers.

Calling on denim's kingpins

From Oct. 22 to Oct. 28, Amsterdam hosted its **Denim Days**, and from Oct. 24 to Oct. 25, **Kingpins Amsterdam** held its biannual trade show in the region. Launched in 2004 in New

York, Kingpins now produces annual events in Hong Kong and China and shows twice a year in New York and Amsterdam. The show not only brought together leaders from the global denim industry but also newcomers who wanted to learn about innovative manufacturing.

"It's nice to feel that you're part of a community," said Andrew Olah, the founder of Kingpins. "It's nice to meet people who do the same things we do, and I think that is delightful. All trade shows provide a lot to do, but I think Kingpins is beautiful, and that is something that I am really proud of."

Echoing this sentiment, Jessica Dorfman, the head designer of Los Angeles-based **Re/Done**, was excited to see established contacts who share her passion for denim. "The show is much larger than New York. There are many more mills, and it's nice to be surrounded by brands from around the world," she said. "It's important to represent California because we have a specific point of view, and I think we need to represent internationally."

In addition to including denim-manufacturing innovations on the trade-show floor, Kingpins organized a **Transformers Summit** and Transformers section, which is a new area introduced earlier in 2018 to showcase the work of denim innovators. In the Transformers Summit, Kingpins hosted panel discussions and breakout sessions to provide education and opportunities for collaboration.

"Our Transformers Summit is an event

somewhat that we miss in L.A.," he said. "It is the engine in the denim innovation."

Goldschmied's daughter, Marta, also found value in Kingpins' ability to serve as a creative space for denim veterans and newcomers to collaborate on the industry's future. "It's so special because it's a place where the most creative, forward-thinking denim leaders have a chance to come together with a fresh generation of designers to learn from each other and collaborate," she said. "It's really a chance for the old and new generations to connect in a fun environment."

While the elder Goldschmied was impressed with the show in Amsterdam, he felt the camaraderie found at Kingpins is an asset missing from the local Los Angeles industry. "The sense of the denim community is

Denim Chief Executive Officer Hamit Yenici in a statement.

In addition to panels that identified the demands of millennial consumers, a discussion regarding "The Power of Collaboration" also took place, addressing the often-ignored need for apparel-industry professionals to work together in the name of progress.

Building upon the company's motto of "Ever Evolving," the inaugural event included speakers such as designer Willy Chavarria and Ken Segall, the former creative director of Apple.

"The buzzword in everybody's vocabulary now is sustainability. Everyone was talking about the core values of a brand—how they become sustainable—and collaboration," said Barbara Bundy, vice president of education at Los Angeles' **Fashion Insti-**



Calik Denim's Ever Evolving Talks



Kingpins floor

that we do with a lot of love," Olah explained. "It's about incredible people who bring their transformative technologies or experiences to the event, and we had an incredible standing-room-only crowd."

Denim veterans were extremely impressed with the show, citing the inspiration found at an event dedicated to their craft. "The show was absolutely amazing. There is nothing like this in the world," said Adriano Goldschmied, founder and chief executive of the Los Angeles-based **Genious Group**. "The entire city is breathing blue—stores, people, schools, brands and profes-

sional. All the events—Kingpins for sure—but also Transformers and Denim Days are the perfect inspiration for all of us."

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"The sense of the denim community is

Evolving toward a better apparel industry

Prior to exhibiting at Kingpins, Istanbul's **Calik Denim** launched its inaugural **Ever Evolving Talks** on Oct. 23 in Amsterdam. The event, held at the **Theater Amsterdam**, challenged apparel-industry professionals to look toward the future, beyond business as usual.

"Our 'Ever Evolving' motto reflects our vision to continually progress," said Calik

tute of Design & Merchandising. "He [Segall] pulled everything all together by talking about innovation and simplicity."

At Ever Evolving Talks, exploring the future of the industry included examining wearable technology and discussing how to include sustainability as part of a company's core values rather than treating it as a fad.

"It's not just our brand that we aim to move forward; we created Ever Evolving Talks by Calik Denim to move our sector into a more sustainable future, breathe new life into existing events and fulfill our promise to be truly 'Ever Evolving,'" Yenici said. ●

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