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GETTY IMAGES

NEW YORK RUNWAY

L.A. designer Tadashi Shoji had his fashions on the runway during New York Fashion Week for his Fall/Winter 2019 collection, which carried influences from Southeast Asia. For more looks, see page 8.

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Doing the Las Vegas Shuffle Proves Challenging

By Deborah Belgum *Executive Editor*

An earlier date and some location switches kept buyers hopping at the recent array of apparel, textile, accessories and footwear trade shows held Feb. 2-7 in Las Vegas.

The **World Market Center** near downtown Los Angeles experienced a first with **Agenda** and **Liberty Fairs** setting up shop Feb. 5-7. Ever since their inception, the two shows have been held at the **Sands Expo and Convention Center**. But with all the trade shows being held a week earlier than normal, scheduling conflicts with a **Lowe's** store managers annual meeting at the Sands Expo meant that the shows had to shift gears. Agenda and Liberty Fairs, however, plan to be back to their original exhibition spaces in August.

Sourcing at MAGIC set up its headquarters in the South Hall of the **Las Vegas Convention Center** after showing for years in the North Hall, which this February was taken over by **FN Platform**, normally in the South Hall.

Otherwise, locations remained the same—at least for now. But next August there will be a major overhaul of the various trade shows, which keep growing. **Informa Exhibitions**, the new owners of a number of the trade shows, announced that its lineup of events—now split between the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center** and the Las Vegas Convention Center—will unite under one roof at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The move means that logistics for thousands of buyers just got easier because they will no longer have to shuttle between two locations at the opposite ends of the Las Vegas Strip.

For our extensive coverage of each show in Las Vegas, start reading on page 3.

L.A. Becomes the Largest U.S. City to Ban Fur

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

The fur has been flying with the news that fur products cannot be sold in Los Angeles after 2020.

On Feb. 12, a ban on selling and manufacturing fur products in Los Angeles was approved by a 13-1 vote by the Los Angeles City Council.

But many people disagreed with the new ordinance, which goes into effect in 2021. Fur-industry advocate Nancy Daigneault, vice president, Americas, of the **International Fur Federation**, said that fur continues to be a vital industry that employs thousands of people and is regulated by certifi-

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Levi Strauss Files IPO to Trade on New York Stock Exchange

Rumors have been floating around for months that denim maker **Levi Strauss & Co.** would be turning its private company into a publicly traded company.

On Feb. 13, the San Francisco apparel giant did exactly that after being gone from the stock market for more than three decades. Company executives said the number of shares to be offered and the price range for the proposed offering have not been determined yet. But the company intends to list its Class A common stock on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol "LEVI."

On the financial front, Levi Strauss has had several quarters of strong revenue growth despite the fact that the denim market has seen

stiff competition from the athleisure category, with yoga pants and leggings in recent years taking a big bite out of blue-jeans sales.

For fiscal 2018, ending Nov. 25, 2018, Levi's net revenues increased a healthy 14 percent to \$5.6 billion. But net income for the fiscal year was flat, remaining at \$285 million.

At the time of the earnings announcement, Levi's president and chief executive, Chip Bergh, said the company's strategies to diversify its product portfolio, expand its direct-to-consumer business and deepen the company's connection with consumers worldwide have been working.

The company has set a placeholder amount of \$100 million to indicate the size of the IPO, whose amount could grow. Levi's

said the proposed offering will be made only by means of a prospectus, which will be available through the investment banks handling the IPO. Those are **Goldman Sachs & Co.**, **JPMorgan**, **BofA Merrill Lynch** and **Morgan Stanley**.

Levi Strauss & Co. was founded in 1873 by German immigrant Levi Strauss, who traveled west to open a dry-goods store in San Francisco and ended up making sturdy denim pants for gold miners attracted to California during the Gold Rush era. He and Jacob Davis obtained a U.S. patent on the process of putting rivets on men's work pants, and those rivets are still an integral part of the blue jeans.

With the money raised from an IPO, Levi

Strauss could start acquiring other companies, merge with other labels or expand its products, experts said.

The privately held company is controlled by the descendants of Levi Strauss, but it is required to publicly post quarterly earnings and hold conference calls on earnings results because its Japanese arm, **Levi Strauss K.K.**, is publicly traded in Tokyo.

Over the years, the company has expanded beyond the Levi's label. In 1986, it introduced **Dockers**, a casual khaki pant that could be worn to work, and then came out with lower-priced denim under the **Denizen** and **Signature** labels, which have been doing well in several markets, including the United States.—*Deborah Belgum*

Beyond Yoga Hires Lynsey Cole to Lead Sales Strategy

Athleisure brand **Beyond Yoga** announced the hire of Lynsey Cole as the director of key accounts and sales strategy.

In this new role, Cole is tasked with overseeing Beyond Yoga's sales and service for the company's domestic wholesale business with select major accounts, including **Amazon**, **Nordstrom** and **REI**.

"I'm thrilled to join Beyond Yoga's growing team," said Cole in a press release. "For over a decade, Beyond Yoga has been at the forefront of the athleisure trend and body-positive movement. I



Lynsey Cole

am looking forward to working with the retailers and sales team who have made the company a market leader."

The Culver City, Calif.-based Beyond Yoga made the announcement about Cole's hire Feb. 7 after she assumed the job on Jan. 28.

In her most recent role before joining Beyond Yoga, Cole was the director of the department-store channel at **Waypoint Outdoor**. In addition to her work in sales with

Dry Creek Enterprises and as a buyer for **Zappos**, Cole also oversaw key accounts for

Helly Hansen and **Smartwool**.

"With almost 15 years in the industry, Lynsey has a proven track record and a passion for working with top-tier partners in the active

and outdoor industry," Michelle Wahler, co-founder of Beyond Yoga, said in a statement. "We are so excited to have Lynsey join the Beyond Yoga team."—*Dorothy Crouch*

Holiday Sales Miss Earlier Forecast

Holiday sales in 2018 were a bit of a disappointment.

While holiday sales grew 2.9 percent compared to the previous year, according to the **National Retail Federation**, the results were down from the 4.3 percent to 4.8 percent the NRF had predicted before the holidays.

U.S. retailers made \$707.5 billion during the 2018 season compared to \$687.87 billion in 2017, excluding gasoline stations, restaurants and automobile dealers.

Jack Kleinhenz, the NRF's chief economist, said that analysts were puzzled by the outcome. "Today's numbers are truly a surprise and in contradiction to the consumer-spending trends we were seeing, especially after such strong October and November spending," Kleinhenz said on Feb. 14 when the results were released. "The combination of financial market volatility, the govern-

ment shutdown and trade tensions created a trifecta of anxiety and uncertainty impacting spending and might also have misaligned the seasonal adjustment factors used in reporting data. This is an incomplete story and we will be in a better position to judge the reliability of the results when the government revises its 2018 data in the coming months."

When initial forecasts were released in October last year for the Nov. 1–Dec. 31 period, Matthew Shay, the NRF's chief executive officer, said at the time that the U.S. economy was strong enough to push through many of the storms on the horizon. But he changed his tune after the recent holiday sales results.

However, the recent holiday season was good for clothing stores. The NRF said that sales for clothing and clothing accessory stores were up 4.2 percent to \$61.7 billion compared to the same period in 2017.—*Andrew Asch*

Calendar

Feb. 15

Hong Kong International Fur & Fashion Fair
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center
Hong Kong

Feb. 15

London Fashion Week
BFC Show Space
London
Through Feb. 19

Feb. 17

Chicago Collective
The MART
Chicago
Through Feb. 19

Feb. 19

Milan Fashion Week
Various venues
Milan
Through Feb. 25

Feb. 20

Rocky Mountain Gift Show
Denver Merchandise Mart
Denver
Through Feb. 25

Feb. 22

Denver Apparel & Accessories Market
Denver Merchandise Mart
Denver
Through Feb. 25

GTS Florida Jewelry & Resort Expo

Osceola Heritage Park-Exhibition Building
Kissimmee, Fla.
Through Feb. 24

There's more on ApparelNews.net.

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

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

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WWD MAGIC Puts the Fun Into the Trade-Show Scene

Walking into **WWD MAGIC** is like walking into a warehouse of elaborately decorated stores with a huge party scene going on.

The vibrant orange carpet lining the aisles and the continuous buzz of buyers on the floor set the tone for the Feb. 5–7 show, held in the Central Hall of the **Las Vegas Convention Center**.

Glam, a stylish Los Angeles clothing company, was serving “rise and shine mimosas” every morning at its booth.

And **Blu Pepper**, a Los Angeles trendy boho clothing company that wholesales its garments for \$10 to \$20, was serving coffee and donuts in its booth, decorated with faux flowers artfully placed around a yellow bicycle. This is one of the largest trade shows the Los Angeles company does every season, said Janet Kang, Blu Pepper’s director of business development. “We’ve gotten a lot of drop-bys and people placing orders for **Immediates**,” she said.

Eye-catching pink and white pompoms

were strung around the **Hyfve** booth, whose other labels included the fast-fashion **Favlux** brand and the **Double Zero** label of basics.



“For us it has been really busy,” said Peter Chu, a salesperson for the Los Angeles company. “A lot of customers know who we are and where we are because we always get the same booth number every season. But we always get a lot of new customers, too.”

Another tried-and-true exhibitor at the show was John Meyer, whose **Complete Clothing Company** in Vernon, Calif., manufactures the **Willow & Clay** and **Matty M** brands of trendy womenswear with a boho look. “Foot traffic has been pretty brisk,” he said. “There is a lot of interest in Fall, which is good, but people are also buying **Immediates**.”

Popular items from the two lines were sweaters, stylish outerwear and frontier maxi dresses. Corduroy has been a popular fabric for tops, and the fabric seems to have staying power into upcoming seasons.

Meyer said buyers are upbeat but still a bit cautious. If they see the right item, however, they are right on it.

WWD MAGIC, a show for primarily juniors and young contemporary fashions, is also known for its informal panel discussions inside an area called the Social House. One of those panels was with celebrity stylist and TV personality Brad Goreski, who once co-hosted the “Fashion Police” with Melissa Rivers, the

daughter of comedian Joan Rivers. He talked with moderator Wendy Bendoni, a professor of marketing and fashion marketing at **Woodbury University** in Burbank, Calif., about what is hot in fashion in 2019 and what is not and “the stress” of being a celebrity stylist.

—Deborah Belgium

Conscious Fashion and Emerging Brands Reign at Project Womens

While **Project Womens** was held much earlier than previous February editions of the show, buyers didn’t seem to mind the Feb. 5–7 dates for the event, held at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center** in Las Vegas. Show organizers said registration was up 2 percent over last year.

At **Yoga Jeans**, which makes sustainable premium-denim jeans that wholesale from \$50 to \$72, co-founder Eric Wazana said his Montreal-based company is now expanding into the United States.

“I am surprised with the amount of attention we’ve gotten,” he said. “We’ve opened with a lot of specialty stores. They are receptive to the product and think we have a great value proposition.”

After launching in August 2018, Sheer Se-



bag, who owns the Calabasas, Calif.–based dress brand **Sheer**, had a positive show with buyers from South Africa, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and boutiques in the United States stopping by the booth.

“This show is validating and very real,” she said. “You’re seeing the real responses from people who have been in the industry for years. If they like it, it’s very reassuring for the future of your brand.”

First-time **Project Womens** exhibitor Candice Cuoco showed her Fall/Winter 2019 collection in the show’s Oasis section. Preparing to enter the wholesale market with pieces ranging from \$38 to \$500, the Los Angeles designer had appointments with **Nordstrom**, **Neiman Marcus** and **Saks Fifth Avenue**.

“The reason I got into wholesale now is there aren’t beautiful statement pieces at a decent price point. I want women to be moved in some certain way,” she said. “We’ve gotten into at least six different stores and we won ‘Best in Oasis’ yesterday.”

Visiting from Hermosa Beach, Calif., Amanda Browning, the manager and buyer for **Beach & Beverly**, placed orders with **Minnie Rose**, **Brokedown** and **Kivari**. For Browning, the show’s appeal came from the ease with which she could shop while searching for dresses, knits and sweaters at wholesale price points ranging from \$50 to \$150.

“No one is pressuring you,” she said. “It’s nice to browse and see these brands all at once. You can spread it out over a couple of days by doing as much or as little as you want.”—D.C.

Sourcing at MAGIC Celebrates Chinese New Year With a Dragon Parade on the Show Floor

Sourcing at MAGIC has always been like a mini version of the United Nations. Countries from all over the world exhibit a wide-ranging collection of clothing, shoes, accessories, textiles and machinery.

This year was no different. There was a handbag exhibitor from Myanmar, blue-jeans manufacturers from Mexico, apparel factories from Egypt, shoe factories from China and a Made-in-the-USA section where Los Angeles software company **Tukatech** displayed a high-tech micro factory using laser-cutting machines and other cost- and work-saving devices to manufacture clothes more efficiently.

Instead of being held in the North Hall of the **Las Vegas Convention Center**, as in previous years, the Feb. 4–7 show was held in the South Hall.

Because this year’s show took place one week earlier than in previous years, it coincided with Chinese New Year, which began on Feb. 5.

That meant scores of Chinese companies did not attend this season’s trade show. However, about 600 exhibitors out of 1,100 booths were from China. To keep everyone in a festive Chinese mood, there was a Tuesday-evening party from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the show floor that kicked off with a dragon parade and drums.

There were plenty of first-time exhibitors at the show making a grab for new business. One of those was **Pavlina**, a handbag manufacturer from Myanmar that was trying to sway U.S. buyers into purchasing the handbags, which enter the United States duty-free. Right now,

almost all of the company’s business is with European stores. “We’ve already had a few interested buyers,” said Amit Goyal, the owner of Pavlina, whose stylish bags are made of polyurethane. “We took a look around the show last August to get an idea of what was here and found that the volume of buyers here could be interesting.”



Another new vendor was **LA Fashion Trading Ltd.**, which makes blue jeans in Guangzhou, China. “We decided we had to try the show because our business is going down and we are trying to get new customers,” said David Ghacham, a salesperson with the trading company, which designs its own jeans. He noted that several Chinese factories were being hard hit with the tariff threats by the Trump administration.

Colorful clothes dominated the pavilion from India, where about 70 apparel companies came with the support of the country’s **Apparel Export Promotion Council**. “We get a lot of introductions at the show,” said A. Sakthivel, the council’s vice chairman.

Permeshwar Exports, started in Mumbai, India, in 1964, has been at the show eight to 10 times now and always gets good feedback, said the company’s founder and director, Basudev Sadh. Many buyers are attracted by the booth’s bright-white cotton scarves and tunics trimmed in vibrant colors, which wholesale for \$4.

“It is a good market for us,” Sadh said. “People like very much our selection. If someone appreciates what we make, I like that they come here.”—D.B.

Stitch Offers Eclectic Mix to Buyers, But Exhibitors Wanted More Traffic

During this February’s **Stitch @ Project Womens**, held Feb. 5–7 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**, buyers encountered an array of ready-to-wear offerings. From cozy outerwear to resort styles and accessories that complement everything in between, the selection at **Stitch** provided an eclectic mix to buyers who were ready to place orders but risked becoming overwhelmed by the options.

For manager’s assistant Keegan Francel, who visited the show from Grand Island, Neb., to find styles for the **A-List Boutique**, the show provided opportunities to find new products.

“There is so much here. It’s a bit of sensory overload,” she said. “There is a lot of diversity here with different styles. You could really find whatever you’re looking for.”

Searching for products that wholesale from \$8 to \$23, Francel explained that the majority of her clientele comprises moms in their late 20s through 50s who like to wear on-trend pieces with an edgy, rocker

twist. “We like to offer mid-range pricing to customers,” she said. “We’ve placed orders for jeans and hats.”

On the exhibitor side, while the show generated traffic, some brands were hoping to do more business. At the booth for Miami-based womenswear brand **Muche et Muchette**, assistant designer Krystel Murillo was selling designs she described as “hippie chic” for consumers between the ages of 35 and 55. The brand’s wholesale price points range from \$19 to \$165 and average \$29 to \$89.



The Muche et Muchette booth

While her booth received orders from stores located in Mexico, Michigan and California, she felt the show was not as busy as she had wanted. However, she felt it was an improvement over the February 2018 installment.

“This year was a little bit better than last year,” she explained, “but I wish it was better. The first day was good. We had a few orders. But the days became slower as the show went on.”—Dorothy Crouch

Curve Las Vegas Launches New Section for Emerging Lingerie Brands

At **Curve Las Vegas**, held Feb. 5–7 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**, organizers wanted to bring sexy back. With the addition of the Kinky Korner—an area devoted to showcasing luxurious, provocative lingerie from international and emerging brands—organizers introduced collections that did not have a booth at the show.

“We have **Fräulein Kink** here with incredible outfits that could be \$2,000 each,” said Marion Pradier Sentucq, Curve’s director of sales and branding. “We’ve collected so many leads for these brands. It’s a new format for us because it’s not a booth and they don’t have a team here. Basically, we’re the team.”

Chatsworth, Calif.-based lingerie company **The Felina Group** received orders mostly from buyers based in the

Western region of the United States. With wholesale prices ranging from \$17 to \$35, Vice President of Sales Rob Gardner saw demand for bralettes, full-figure styles, strapless designs and loungewear.

Gardner felt the show this year was better compared to last year, but he believed traffic would have been heavier if there hadn’t been competition from other shows in the same category that were being held during the same time.

“The industry did not help itself this year by having ILS [the **International Lingerie Show**] the same week and **New York Market** the same week,” he said. “It’s counter-

productive.”

Looking to expand her inventory, which currently in-

cludes clothing, shoes and accessories, Kathy Baker, owner of the **Fun Fashions Boutique** in Stanfield, Ore., attended Curve Las Vegas with her sister and sales associate, Vicky Veliz.

“It’s been wonderful. They are very accommodating online and on any of the phone numbers you call,” said Baker, who was looking for pieces that wholesale from \$15 to \$25. “I placed an order with **Claudel Lingerie**, and there is a brand-new line of panties from Portland, Ore., called **Evelyn Bobbie**, which I will probably order.”

Beyond the lingerie segment, **Beach Joy Bikini**, a Los Angeles-based company, saw a lot of traffic as buyers from South America, Puerto Rico and California placed orders for swimwear and resort pieces that wholesale between \$20 and \$145.

“For us, traffic has been really good,” Merchandise Manager Melody Dong said of the demand for solids in teal and coral, tropical prints, textured materials, and animal prints in snake or leopard. “This show has been good for us for a long time because buyers know us and come directly here. We’ve been busy with appointments.”—*Dorothy Crouch*



The Claudel Lingerie booth

Pool Promotes Independent Brands With an Array of Unique Offerings

The eclectic mix of goods available during **Pooltrade-show**, held Feb. 5–7 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**, excited buyers who were looking for unique items and artisan-crafted goods.

Searching for products that wholesale from \$2 to \$20, Calrissian Whitaker of the **Warisan Group**, based in Las Vegas, was impressed by the elevated environment at an event focused on independent and emerging brands.

“Compared with other wholesale experiences, this is practical, and there are quality goods,” he said. “At a lot of wholesale places, you feel like you’re going to a flea market. Every time you look at the product, it makes sense.”

For San Francisco’s **Camp Collection**, business was better than last year. The brand fielded orders from Japan, Canada, and the East Coast and Midwest sections of the United States for its summer camp-inspired pieces, wholesaling between \$13 and \$48. Sales Director Krystal Castro felt the brand had a better booth location than last year but also em-

phasized the importance of attracting buyers with a well-designed space.

“It’s really important that you have to make sure your booth stands out. The buyers sometimes have tunnel vision and will walk right by,” she said.

At the booth for Austin, Texas-based **Supermaggie**, a brand of hand-printed made-to-order T-shirts, hoodies, dresses and home goods wholesaling from \$13.50 to \$32.50, co-owner Maggie Kleinpeter was interested in helping buyers recognize the value of working with small businesses.

“We all just have to keep working to support small independent businesses, which will keep our industry alive,” she said. “If everything keeps consolidating into bigger and more impersonal companies, it will make it harder for inde-



The Camp Collection booth

pendent retail stores to stay unique.”

Representing San Francisco-based sustainable women’s clothing brand **Tonlé**, Nicole Arauzo met with buyers from Kentucky, New York, Canada and Egypt to spread the company’s message about sustainable apparel production. Showing pieces that wholesale between \$20 and \$98, Arauzo explained that the brand’s method of upcycling fabric waste and manufacturing pieces using dead stock was generating excitement among attendees.

“The people that have found us are excited about our recycled material and that we’re one of the most eco-friendly labels they have found,” she said. “It’s refreshing for them.”—*D.C.*

MAGIC Mens Appeals With a Diversity of Styles

Along the fringes of the **MAGIC Mens** show, held Feb. 5–7 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**, Dean De Costa of **Cotton Heritage** exhibited his brand’s blank T-shirts.

A booth for blank tees might not have seemed like a good fit for a trade show with a focus on everything from classic menswear collections to jeans, but De Costa and his colleagues thought their booth would appeal to fashion businesses that need T-shirt blanks for licensed apparel.

Located alongside the **Project** trade show, **MAGIC Mens** sought to serve a wide array of fashion markets with products ranging from tuxedo

jackets, motorcycle boots and denim to Halloween costumes and socks with images of breakfast cereal icon Tony the Tiger.

Ahmed Akar, owner of the **Odd Sox** brand, exhibited at the show to sell to a wide range of stores. “It’s a diverse retail audience,” he said of the show’s attendees. “You have majors, specialty stores and independent boutiques.”

Cesar Lozano, chief executive officer of **David Gonzales Art** in Paramount, Calif., exhibited T-shirts, hoodies and boardshorts from his Spring 2019 looks, focused on the Chicano and low-rider art of David Gon-

zales. “The show is great for us. We picked up a lot of new stores,” Lozano said.

The trade show had a similar pace to many of the other trade shows in Las Vegas, said Jeff Radtke of **Creative Apparel Concepts**. “The first day was very good,” he said. “The second day was steady until the early afternoon. Then it died down.”

Hillel Lieberman of outerwear-focused company **Trailcrest** said that the often moderate pace of buyer traffic at the show had a benefit for vendors. “It’s a great place to have meetings,” Lieberman said. “It’s a very calm environment. There are no overpowering booths.”

Andrew Sumner of **Titan Entertainment** displayed licensed products including vinyl collectors’ toys and T-shirts for music and entertainment properties such as **The Beatles** and **Doctor Who**. He said he had more than 50 meetings at the show, although that was a decline over previous years. “It’s about quality meetings that I have in these three days rather than the quantity,” Sumner said.—*Andrew Asch*



Lanzzino booth

Project Tries On a New Look

The sprawling **Project**, devoted to men’s contemporary styles and premium denim, introduced a new section called **N:OW** that focuses on new and emerging brands with a streetwear edge.

Jason Peskin, a brand director of men’s fashion for **Project**, held Feb. 5–7 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**, said that **N:OW** was part of a new direction for the trade show. “It’s more community driven,” he said. Show directors sought to develop more lounges and opportunities for vendors and attendees to mix together. New show features included panel discussions as well as taco bars.

Montreal-headquartered brand **Kuwalla** made its **Project** debut at **N:OW**. The brand was part of a delegation of Quebec brands assembled by the trade association **Mmode**. Yaniv Abecassis, Kuwalla’s chief executive officer, thought the show was well organized. “I like the open booths of **N:OW**,”

Abecassis said. “We saw a wide range of buyers, from streetwear to suiting.”

Several vendors said they did robust business at **Project**. Vince Gonzales of the **Paisley & Gray** suiting brand estimated that sales grew 50 percent over the New York-based brand’s February 2018 **Project** show.

Eric Martin, founder of the Los Angeles-headquartered **Park Showroom**, estimated that his show-room’s sales increased 20 percent over last February’s **Project** show. He was glad that show directors gave him leeway to display women’s brands at his 4,500-square-foot booth.



Ron Tomson booth

Sharon Bensason, president of the Los Angeles-headquartered **Ron Tomson** blazers, jackets and denim brand, estimated his brand’s sales increased 30 percent over last year. “There were not a lot of people,” he said of the show, “but the people who were there were buying a lot.”

Jay Ko introduced his self-named **Jay Y. Ko** suiting and outerwear brand at **Project**. He said the show enjoyed good traffic the first two days and then slowed on the third. He had meetings with **Nordstorm**, **Macy’s** and **Men’s Wearhouse**. “There were more majors than specialty stores,” he said.—*A.A.*



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Business Good for Many at Agenda Despite the Move

When **Agenda** moved off of the Las Vegas Strip for its Feb. 5–7 show, it stepped into uncharted territory.

No one knew if any retailers would drive from the Strip to the **World Market Center** near downtown Las Vegas, which is more than a 20-minute drive from the **Sands Expo and Convention Center**, where the streetwear-dominated Agenda was typically held.

Never Broke Again, a brand of T-shirts and hoodies, made its trade-show debut at last week's Agenda. "We were worried. We didn't know if the show would work at a different location. But all of our stores



came," said salesman Beni Romero.

National sales manager for the **A. Tiziano** menswear brand Vanessa Vickers said that preshow fears about a different location were unfounded. "Everybody said that it was going to be a one-day show," Vickers said. "But it was awesome. We were very busy."

Some Agenda veterans did not make the move to the World Market Center because some believed buyer traffic would be slow at the new location. The departure of some prominent brands proved to be a benefit to smaller brands exhibiting at Agenda, said Andres Parga, co-owner of the Los Angeles-based

Never Made brand, which features T-shirts and other items by graphic artist Francisco Reyes Jr. "That gave the little brands an opportunity to shine," he said.

Being in a relatively isolated place served vendors well, said David Blumenfeld, chief operating officer of **Wild Kind**. When Agenda was held at the Sands Expo, it often lost traffic to other shows. "If someone comes here, they come here for the whole day," Blumenfeld said.

Retailers dropping by the show included **Macy's**, **Nordstrom**, **Foot Locker**, **Footaction**, **Nice Kicks**, **Shoe Palace** and **Sheik Shoes**, said Tony Shellman, Agenda's event director. He said that 90 vendors exhibited at the show, down by 10 vendors from the show in February 2018.

Despite a good turnout, Agenda will not return to the World Market Center. For its upcoming shows, it will return to the Sands Expo and Convention Center, Shellman said.

—Andrew Asch

Liberty Exhibitors Remain Steady But Buyers Down

Despite a move to downtown Las Vegas, **Liberty Fairs** did not see a decline in the number of vendors exhibiting at its recent show, held Feb. 5–7 at the **World Market Center**, said Sharifa Murdock, Liberty's co-owner and partner. But she estimated that there was a slight decline in buyer attendance from a year ago.

"People were scared," Murdock said. "But buyers and brands trusted in us. That felt really good." Retailers including **Neiman Marcus**, **Nordstrom**, **Urban Outfitters** and **Ron Robinson** shopped at Liberty. Los Angeles denim brand **AG Jeans** made its Liberty debut in a

temporary space.



Despite being located off the Las Vegas Strip, this Liberty felt like other trade shows. Some vendors raved about their show's business. Others said that there was room for improvement.

"It was fantastic. We got to see all of our stores," said Glenn Coleman of the **Nana Judy** streetwear brand, which opened a boutique on Los Angeles' Fairfax Avenue in October. Jim Leatherman of the footwear and handbag brand **Bed Stu** said that buyer traffic on the first day of the show was busy.

But a move did create some confusion. Alfred Davis of the **T&A Showroom** said he heard

stories of retailers looking for Liberty at the **Sands Expo and Convention Center**, where it normally was held and will return to for future Las Vegas shows. Retailers Johnny Alper and Gila Leibovitch of **The Vault** group of stores in Laguna Beach, Calif., said they wasted a lot of time in transit going from show to show. "We want everything under one roof," Leibovitch said.

There were some benefits to a new space. Davis said access to the trade show was easier because buyers didn't have to walk through a crowded casino to reach the event. Trinidad Garcia of the **Trinidad 3** brand said it was easier to set up booths at the temporary venue because vendors set up their own booths instead of workers employed by the Strip's convention halls.

Robin Yates, co-founder and vice president of the **Nobis** brand, said he felt the conventional trade-show model these days has to do a lot more to appeal to retailers and vendors. "We have to create more draws that are fun for people to go to. They are giving up time from their business. If they are giving that up, they need ROI," Yates said.—A.A.

The Tents Attracts Major Buyers to the Boutique-Style Show

Veterans and new vendors exhibited at **The Tents**, which is devoted to designer and contemporary men's styles, cultivating a boutique environment with white-walled booths.

Several topnotch retailers including **Neiman Marcus**, **Bloomingdale's** and **Saks Fifth Avenue** shopped the trade show, held Feb. 5–7 at the **Mandalay Bay Convention Center**.

This was the first time at the show for Peruvian menswear label **Juan Arias**, which showed hoodies and sweats made out of Pima cotton grown in Peru. Designer Juan Arias, the label's namesake, was happy with the show, saying the location of his booth contributed to the success of his inaugural run. "Being located in the corner really helped," Arias said, noting there was lots of foot traffic going by. "I got five orders and a lot of opportunities for networking."

This was the fourth time that **Sol Angeles** was at the show. Eli Myers, the co-owner of the Los Angeles label, which makes comfortable casual wear, said that buyer traffic was good the first two days of the show but quiet the third day. "A lot of the traffic dried up," he said.

Myers said expenses to cover exhibiting at the show totaled more than \$20,000, which included the trade-show booth, hotel rooms and meals for the six people on the Sol Angeles team.

To increase traffic at The Tents, Myers suggested devel-



Eli Myers

oping more experiences to build bridges between vendors and attendees. In previous years, the **Project** show had ping-pong tables on the show floor, which Myers said contributed to more camaraderie between buyers and exhibitors. "A little added value goes a long way to bonding with stores," Myers said.

The show's directors held one seminar during the event. Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst for market research company **The NPD Group**, gave a talk on Feb. 5 about "Retail Realities—Specialty and Beyond."—A.A.

OffPrice Adds New Section to Discount-Merchandise Trade Show

New to the longstanding **OffPrice** show this year in Las Vegas was a section called Boutique Buyer.

It featured labels that normally sell for higher prices but had goods to sell at a discount and in smaller quantities, just the opposite of the large volume of discount merchandise normally sold at the show, which ran Feb. 3–6 at the **Sands Expo and Convention Center**.

The new section, located at the back of the large trade show, had a more intimate vibe with smaller booths populated by several vendors who normally attend the **Womenswear In Nevada** show, held in Las Vegas during the same week.

Nanaz Golshan, who is vice president of sales, marketing and merchandising for Los Angeles-based **Luxe Moda** and **Tesoro Moda**, said the company was testing the waters at the show while the company continued to exhibit at **WWIN**. "We brought our markdown things, seeing it as a chance to move this merchandise," she said, standing in front of a selection of denim jackets decked out in sequins, embroidery and other bling as well as ripped and well-washed blue jeans that had a very hip vibe. Jackets were wholesaling for \$49, and pants were selling at wholesale prices ranging from \$29 to \$39. "The show has been okay. Nothing to write home about for now," Golshan said.

Nearby, Ben Navabian, head of Los Angeles-based **American Fashion Inc.**, was sitting at a booth with Sammy Sanchez. They said that the price to exhibit in the Boutique Buyer section was half the cost of exhibiting at **WWIN**, where the company has exhibited before. "Here you can meet big potential buyers, boutique buyers, and you can clear your merchandise," Sanchez said. "We've seen a lot of customers."

In the regular section of the trade show, where tried-and-true exhibitors have been coming for years, business was steady despite the first day of the show being on **Super Bowl Sunday**, which many exhibitors said caused a crimp in sales the first day.

"I think the Super Bowl definitely affected the whole show. It's hard to compete with," said Eddie Sitt, vice president of **Aggressive Apparel**, an off-price division of New York-based

One Step Up Ltd. "We usually have two power days because we start two days before **MAGIC**. This year, we had only one power day, but people still did business."



Show organizers said attendance during the first two days was up 11 percent over last year.

It was pretty much business as usual at the show for Scott Reffsin, a salesperson with **Alliance Wholesale Corp.**, a big East Coast off-price discounter selling casual wear, swimwear and other goods.

"It's pretty standard every year," Reffsin said. "About 50 percent of our annual business is done here."

He believes every OffPrice show gets better because the mix of retailers is changing.

"The trend has become that the people who didn't want to sell off-price merchandise have to now. So that has attracted more buyers to come here," he said.—Deborah Belgium

Xabi Jeans Focuses on Rebuilding Local Denim Industry

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

After leaving Mexico for the United States in 1987, Javier Marquez spent 19 years learning about Los Angeles' local denim industry.

He helped make jeans for companies including **Bebe**, **Strong Hold**, **Z. Cavaricci**, **Paris Blue**, **Von Dutch**, **Blue Colt**, **Sanctuary**, **Rock & Republic** and **Seven7 Jeans**. Marquez eventually opened his own factory, **Magic Denim Wash**, located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Following the premium-denim exodus that led brands to move production in recent years from Los Angeles to Mexico and Asia, Marquez wanted to support local manufacturing by making jeans domestically. Three years ago, he developed **Xabi Jeans**, a premium-denim brand that launched in early 2018.

"This is where Xabi Jeans was born. All these changes in the industry led a lot of brands to move to Mexico, China, South America and Asia to produce their stuff," head designer Luis Pelayo said. "In Los Angeles, everyone—the bigger factories and the really small ones—started shutting down."

At the height of the factory's success, nearly 500 workers were employed to make denim products for other brands. After premium-denim labels moved production overseas or across the border, Marquez was forced to cut more than 300 employees.

"Our goal is to keep employing these families but also create more employment by keeping the denim industry alive in L.A.," Pelayo said. "As a manufacturing community, we're really close to losing the industry."

Xabi Jeans employs approximately 150 workers,



Xabi Jeans Fall 2019



Xabi Jeans Fall 2019

In its 80,000-square-foot factory, Xabi Jeans relies on a staff of professionals to sew, launder and finish the label's jeans. An exclusive partnership with **Candiani Denim** in Milan allows Xabi Jeans to use premium material to manufacture its products.

"The mill that we buy the denim from is really careful about how they make the denim," Pelayo said. "They're really green about how they make the denim and cautious about affecting the environment less, creating a really nice denim in a more eco-friendly manner."

Showcasing its Fall 2019 collection at the **Agenda** trade show in Las Vegas, Xabi Jeans unveiled color offerings such as crisp whites, hues of cranberry red and shades of olive green. More-traditional blue jeans in the collection range from deep indigo to a light-blue wash.

Small details that set apart the blue jeans from other labels include an overlap fly with snaps, trouser pleats, zippers and slight embellishments on the jeans to create a new take on classic American denim.

Women's styles include jeans, shorts and skirts, while men's pants are available in cargo, cropped and more-traditional cuts. Xabi Jeans is considering larger retail partners but is currently working with 45 specialty stores in the

United States.

"We are not paying a third party to perform the manufacturing for us," Pelayo said. "We want to provide a really high-end jean that is made in the U.S., made in L.A., but is more affordable."

Available through select retailers and online at xabijeansla.com, the brand offers men's sizes 28–42 and women's sizes 24–31 with wholesale prices ranging from \$79 to \$92. ●

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Camaraderie Among IFJAG Members Brings In Buyers to Las Vegas

Exhibitors at the **International Fashion Jewelry & Accessory Group** (IFJAG) show, held Feb. 2–5 at the **Embassy Suites** in Las Vegas, were able to meet with buyers on a more intimate and personal level.

For this show, held in hotel suites, buyer attendance was on a positive note. Don Valcourt, IFJAG's managing director, said 20 percent of attendees were visiting for the first time and many were from medium-size regional chains comprising between eight and 20 stores.

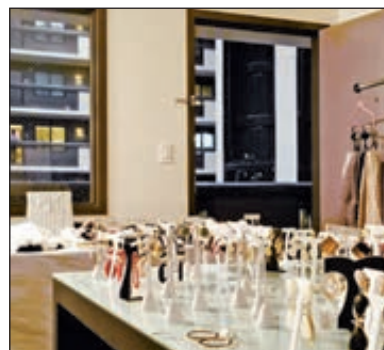
While the competitive nature of the apparel-and-accessories industry kept members in the past from inviting their clients to the show for fear of losing business to other exhibitors, Valcourt felt IFJAG businesses were now warming up to the idea. "In the past, members would keep quiet and they wouldn't tell their customers about the event, but this time they invited them to the show," he said.

For Lesley M. Wilbur, who is the North Billerica, Mass.–based senior buyer for Western wear and accessories company **Back in the Saddle**, the show remains an important resource.

She was searching for turquoise and patina jewelry in addition to lace scarves that would complement her customers' wardrobes.

"At this show, everybody is always attentive. These vendors really want to work with you," she said. "There is something for everyone here, and the prices are great. It freshens everything up, whether you're a store, catalog or online. You just have to keep flipping through the boards and you'll find something."

For Summer Schriener, owner of Lansing, Mich.'s **Grace Boutique of Old Town**, the show afforded opportunities to find vintage-inspired pieces. During her first time at the show, she was searching for items wholesaling from \$5 to \$40 for her female clientele, which ranges in age from 15 to 65. While she was happy



Nyne Accessories

about the show, she did offer one caveat for other buyers. "The price points are fantastic, but you have to keep in mind that it's for larger quantities," she said.

As a member exhibiting at the show for more than 15 years, **Nyne Accessories** owner Gopal Kohli has experienced it all at IFJAG while selling his jewelry, wraps and scarves, which wholesale from \$2 to \$12. During this show, he found some new business for his San Francisco–based company and fielded requests for samples, as many of the buyers he met will place orders weeks after the show.

"Overall, we picked up a few new clients, which is good," he said. "Our board has done a great job of piggybacking onto other shows that get our clients into one city with four or five shows. It has been proactive at accommodating domestic and international clients."—D.C.

Womenswear In Nevada Filled With Buyers Who Gathered for a Surprise Announcement

Inside the **Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino**, the various ballrooms with exotic names such as Amazon, Brasilia and Tropical were packed with clothing and accessories that painted a vivid portrait of the vast apparel offerings sold in the United States.

For the past 19 years, the twice-a-year **Womenswear In Nevada** show has been jammed with hundreds of exhibitors who cater to a specialty-store crowd from across the country. This year, some 400 exhibitors were at the Feb. 4–7 show, which was filled with buyers on the first day, one day before the start of **MAGIC**.

This was the third year in a row that Sandy Martin and her husband, Jim Martin, have been showing **Green 3**, an apparel manufacturing company they started in Oshkosh, Wis., in 2006. The manufacturer concentrates



Jess & Jane booth

on making its entire collection of sweaters, ponchos, skirts, shirts, T-shirts, tunics and accessories out of organic cotton or reclaimed materials. Everything is made in the United States.

"The show is actually a good show for us," said Sandy Martin, who for years worked for **Kohl's** and was in charge of the department store's **Sonoma** brand. "It is the one location we know we are going to see specialty-store and catalog buyers," she said, which is the kind of retailer Green 3 appeals to because it offers a different selection of merchandise. "There is a range of people here who are from coast to coast."

Jim Martin said the company gets a lot of customers because its sustainable goods are out of the ordinary and appeal to the

buyer looking for something different. "Because of that, we get a lot of new customers here." As he was talking, a retailer from Ottawa, Canada, stepped up to the booth to take a closer look at the cropped cardigans and organic-cotton ponchos that had clever animal-oriented designs on them.

Nancy Provda, who every season brings her **Signature by Fridaze** line to the show from her Northern California office, was seeing appointments and some walk-by traffic for the line, which is known for its wrinkle-free linen tops wholesaling for \$59.

"This is a good market for us because we open new accounts," she said, noting she had already opened a new account from Oregon and one from Virginia. "There are a lot of people who come from all over the country here."

On the first night of the show, the usual wine-and-cheese networking party was set up on the show floor. On Tuesday evening, the show organizers had a cocktail reception where they announced that the womenswear show would be moving to the **Caesars Forum** for the Aug. 17–20, 2020, edition of the event.—Deborah Belgun

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Tadashi Shoji Looks to Southeast Asia for His Fall/Winter 2019 Collection

Los Angeles designer Tadashi Shoji, who showed his Fall/Winter 2019 collection on Feb. 7 during **New York Fashion Week**, drew upon his travels to Southeast Asia for this season's inspiration.

That can be seen in dresses embroidered with bright flowers or in the gold-printed frocks that remind one of a stupa whose domes shine in the setting sun. "While Southeast Asian traditional dress is as diverse as its landscape, it shares the common bonds of beauty and fascination," Shoji wrote, describing his recent designs. "Graceful proportions inform each look. Luxurious one-shoulder folds hint at the

shawl-like sabai, and a glimpse of a midriff entices a longer gaze."

Rich velvets in blue, red and green populate the collection, as do lace and embroidered prints of gold and black or silver and black. Tiered tulle dresses mimic the precise roofs seen in a temple.

Most of the collection concentrates on evening gowns, many of which are seen on the red carpet during Hollywood's awards season. Shoji, who moved from Japan to Los Angeles when he was in his 20s, studied at **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College**, which paved the way for him to open his own fashion house in Los Angeles.—*Deborah Belgum*



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Fur Ban *Continued from page 1*

ing organizations that hold high standards for farms raising animals as well as for trappers.

Furs are harvested quickly and painlessly from animals, Daigneault said. In a 2015 testimony before the Canadian parliament, she said that fur trappers are good stewards of forests and help reintroduce animals such as wolves to areas where their numbers were decimated by hunting.

In late 2017, the Toronto-based IFF put together a study of how a fur ban would affect retailers in San Francisco with predictions that retailers would lose \$10 million to \$50 million a year.

She said Los Angeles City councilmembers did not respond to her organization's requests to present their case, but City Councilmember Paul Koretz, who backed the ban, said that concerns from fur retailers were heard.

Because retailers wanted a longer time to sell off fur inventories before a ban went into effect and ban advocates wanted a shorter time period, there was a compromise to wait two years before it became illegal to sell fur products in Los Angeles.

Koretz said Los Angeles retailers won't lose out because fur will be replaced by faux fur and other synthetic materials. "We won't miss a beat," he said. "Any minor costs this creates will be nothing compared to the value of helping end this industry."

Los Angeles retailer Amy Rebecca Wilde anticipated that a ban would boost sales at her store, **Vegan Scene**. "This is a new era of compassionate consumerism. We have already seen an increase in sales as more and more people become aware of the importance of vegan fashion. I think the vote will help us see an increase in foot traffic from local L.A. residents," she said.

On Robertson Boulevard, the **Mark Zunino** atelier expects to continue to sell high-end women's fashions with vintage fur, which will remain legal under the ban. Mark Zunino, the founder and designer of the self-named atelier, estimated that more than 60 percent of his clients prefer that he work with vintage fur.

Many of his clients give him vintage-fur garments because the

garments have been tough to sell on the used-fur market, and some of the pieces may no longer be trendy.

Many of his clients, who are inspired by the Hollywood of the 1950s when fur was big, request pieces of clothing trimmed with fur. "When they know what we have access to, they understand that there is no reason to ask for anything but vintage," Zunino said.

L.A. City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield wrote the ordinance, which was first presented to the 15-member council in June. The only councilperson voting against the ban on Feb. 12 was recently appointed Greig Smith, who was named to fill the seat left vacant by Mitchell Englander.

Councilmember Paul Koretz said that the effect of L.A.'s fur ban would be far reaching. "This is a barbaric industry," he said. "Its practices are absolutely disgusting. They include skinning animals. Even its most humane practices are inhumane. Since Los Angeles is a fashion mecca, I'm hoping the groundwork we lay today will end up with the fur industry disappearing in the next 10 to 20 years in this country."

The ban must go before a procedural reading before Mayor Eric Garcetti vetoes it or signs it into law. The next reading has not been scheduled, but Koretz forecast that the council will discuss it again by March, at the latest.

Fur harvested by trappers who have a license within the state of California will not be affected by the law.

Already, California cities including San Francisco, Berkeley and West Hollywood have passed fur bans. West Hollywood's fur ban went into effect in September 2013, which the city enforces by giving tickets to retailers violating the ordinance.

Koretz said that no enforcement tools are currently written into the Los Angeles ban. "It will be like smoking ordinances from decades ago," he said. "People thought there would be a smoking police. But it was self-enforcing. I doubt if we will need a hammer to enforce this."

One reason the city will not enforce the ban is because fur is on its way out, Koretz said. High-profile designers such as Stella McCartney, Vivienne Westwood, Tommy Hilfiger and Michael Kors vowed to make their companies fur free. ●

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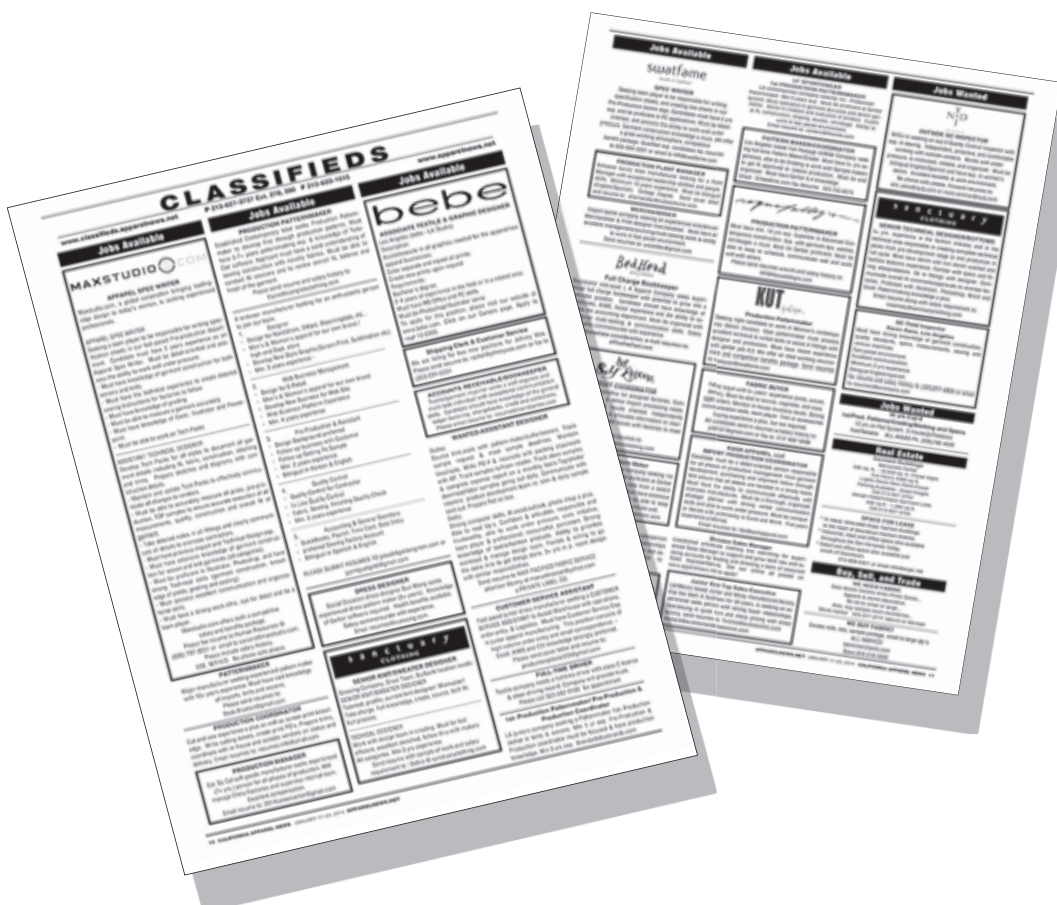
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March 1

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T-Shirts
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March 8

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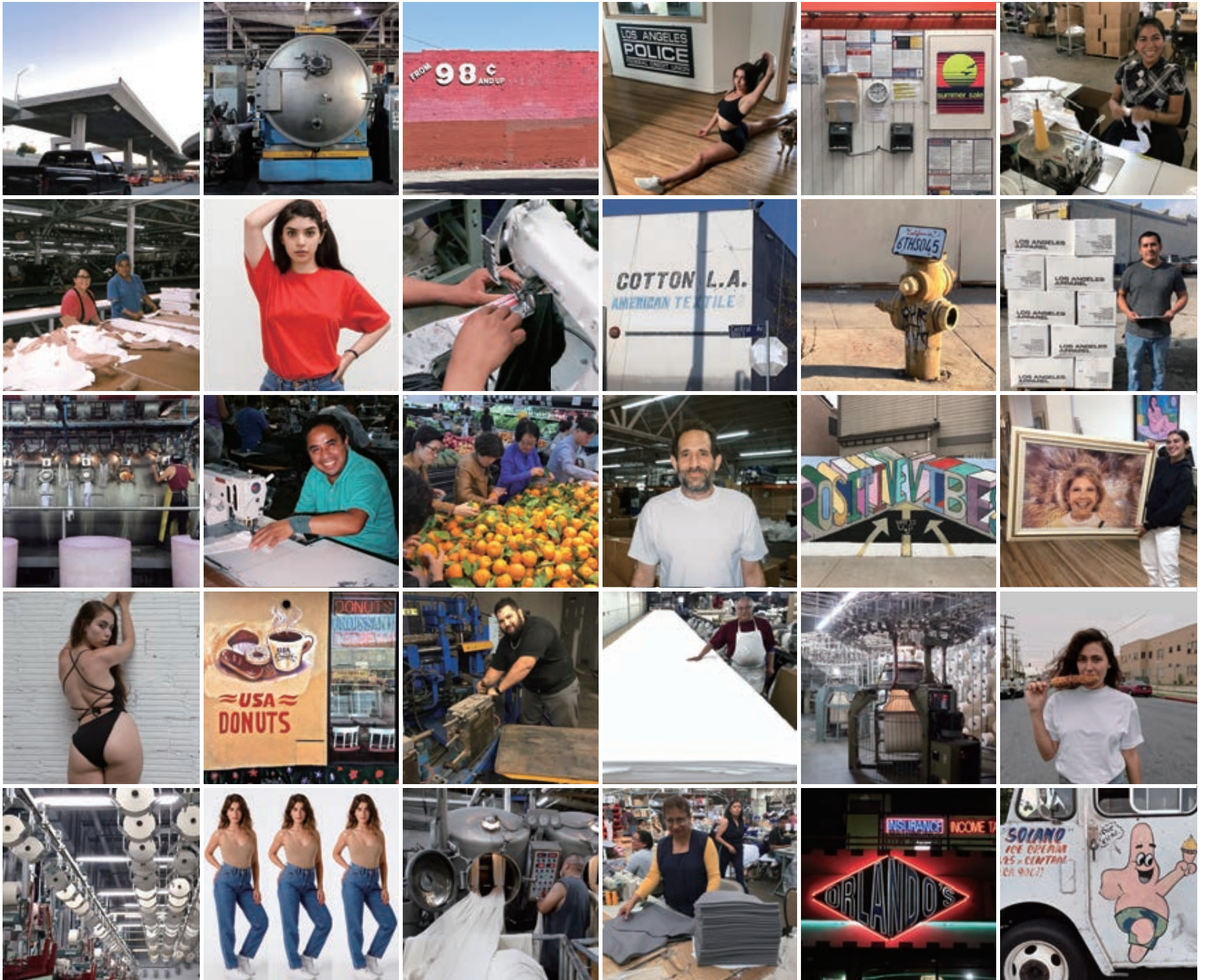
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