

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

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UPSIDE DOWN: The lobby of the California Market Center was decked out for the LA Textile show as well as LA Market Week with a creative collection of fabric.

Fashion Designer Mossimo Giannulli and Wife Accused of Paying Bribes to Get Daughters Into USC

By Deborah Belgum *Executive Editor*

Los Angeles fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli and his wife were named in a massive federal indictment accusing wealthy individuals of paying bribes to get their children into prestigious universities.

In a federal criminal complaint unsealed on March 12, prosecutors in Massachusetts, California, Texas, Florida and North Carolina accused 13 coaches, 33 parents and various academic-test givers of being involved in a scheme to get underperforming students into elite schools across the country.

The indictment, which covers activity that started in 2011, included accusations of bribes to get students into **Yale University, Stanford University, the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Texas and Georgetown University**. Sometimes bribes were paid to test takers to help students cheat on entrance exams or to test givers who gave students answers to the tests or even corrected their incorrect answers afterward, court files revealed.

Among those named in the bribery scandal were Giannulli and his wife, actress Lori Loughlin, charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud and honest-services mail fraud. Giannulli was arrested at his home and taken into custody on March 12, said a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office.

He later appeared before a federal magistrate where he was ordered to appear in federal court in Boston on March 29. He was ordered released on \$1 million bail.

Loughlin, who was out of town when her husband was arrested, turned herself in on Wednesday, March 13, and appeared before a federal magistrate. She also was released on \$1 million bail.

The couple are accused of paying \$500,000 to get their two daughters—Isabella Rose and Olivia Jade—into the **University of Southern California** by being designated as recruits to the USC crew team even though the daughters did not participate in crew, court documents said.

In emails sent back and forth in 2016 between Giannulli and a person identified only as a “cooperating witness,” Giannulli wrote: “We just met with [our older daughter’s] college counsel- or this a.m. I’d like to maybe sit with you after your session with

the girls as I have some concerns and want to fully understand the game plan and make sure we have a roadmap for success as it relates to [our daughter] and getting her into a school other than ASU [Arizona State University]!”

A few months later, the cooperating witness sent an email to Giannulli informing him that his oldest daughter, Isabella Rose, had academic qualifications that were at or just below the low end of USC’s admissions standards.

Court files show that Giannulli then agreed in an email to the cooperating witness to use bribes to facilitate Isabella Rose’s admission to USC as a recruited crew coxswain, even though she did not row competitively or otherwise participate in crew.

USC’s senior women’s athletic director, Donna Heinel, then presented Isabella Rose to the USC subcommittee for athletic admissions “as a purported crew recruit,” the indictment said. At the meeting, the subcommittee approved her conditional admission to the university.

Two days later, the cooperating witness sent an email to Giannulli telling him to send a \$50,000 payment to Heinel. Later, court papers said Giannulli sent a \$200,000 payment to the **Key Worldwide Foundation**, a nonprofit organization.

After that, Giannulli and Loughlin wrote in an email that they would need similar help with their younger daughter, Olivia Jade, who was later admitted to USC.

William Singer of Newport Beach, Calif., was charged with racketeering conspiracy, money-laundering conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

Singer owned and operated the **Edge College & Career Network**, known as The Key. It is a for-profit college counseling and preparation business. He also served as the chief executive of the Key Worldwide Foundation.

Also charged is Donna Heinel, USC senior women’s athletic director; John Vandemoer, the head sailing coach at Stanford University; Rudolph “Rudy” Meredith, the former head soccer coach at Yale University; and Mark Riddell, a counselor at a private school in Bradenton, Fla.

Mossimo Giannulli once owned the **Mossimo** brand, which was sold for years at **Target** stores. In 2006, the brand was sold for \$119 million to the **Iconix Brand Group**. ●

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Disappearing Rains Help Buyer Traffic at LA Market

By Andrew Asch, Deborah Belgum and Dorothy Crouch

A Los Angeles winter of heavy rains and unprecedented cold weather lifted for buyers attending the March 11–13 **LA Market Week**.

At the three-day show, buyers were in search of streetwear, colorful prints and anything that was trending, including plaids and stripes, midi skirts and boho looks—plus **Immediates** for California stores wanting to restock warmer-weather clothing.

At the **California Market Center**, buyers were greeted with a pop of color at the front lobby, which was decked out in bright umbrellas hanging upside down from the front atrium, lending a certain *Mary Poppins* feel to the space.

The lobby also featured an arrangement of couches, tables and a tower of USB cords to keep buyers connected in an inviting atmosphere to contemplate their orders and make final buying decisions.

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

LA Textile Offers an Experiential Show to Generate Buyer Interest

By Dorothy Crouch *Associate Editor*

This season, the **LA Textile** show blended experiences with business to make the event more than a showcase for materials and manufacturing.

The **California Market Center**, which organized the March 6–8 show, held in the CMC building, attracted brands and designers through a showcase of Spring/Summer 2020 textile offerings, educational seminars and experiential amenities.

In addition to the **Sustainable Fashion Forum**, held March 7, the show hosted seminars covering topics that included domestic organic-textile regulations and emerging trends that will influence fashion for Spring/Summer 2020.

Christine Daal, an exhibitor and founder of **Fashion Angel Warrior**, was at the show to help guide designers to launch their brands. She spoke at a seminar called “Top 14

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Statewide Fur Ban Introduced in California Legislature

A growing number of California cities have passed ordinances banning the sale and manufacture of new fur garments. Now the state of California is getting involved.

On March 12, a proposed bill banning the sale and harvest of exotic fur products was approved by the California assembly's Water, Parks and Wildlife committee by a 10-4 vote.

Assembly bill 44, known as the California State Fur Ban, was sent to the assembly's judiciary committee, where no vote has been scheduled yet, said Assemblywoman Laura

Friedman, the bill's author.

Friedman is a Democratic representative for the 43rd District, which includes Glendale, Silver Lake and parts of the Crescenta Valley.

Friedman introduced AB44 last year because there is a patchwork of different laws on fur in California. Berkeley, San Francisco and West Hollywood have already imposed fur-ban laws. Los Angeles approved a fur ban, which goes into effect in 2021.

"The fur ban expresses the values of compassion and sustainability in California. The

state needs to send a strong message that we don't want to support products that are produced cruelly," Friedman said.

The proposed law offers exemptions for the sale of vintage fur as well as fur products used for religious ceremonies. A ban would not regulate skins converted into leather or products such as shearling from domesticated animals. The ban would apply to clothing, handbags, shoes, slippers, hats and key chains that contain fur.

Those breaking the law would be subject to civil penalties, but there would be no

criminal penalties.

The proposed law also seeks to prohibit the trapping of wild animals by trappers not licensed by the state as well as the sale of exotic furs from overseas locations.

Fur-ban and animal-rights laws have been criticized by fur-advocacy groups such as the **Center for Consumer Freedom** as too sweeping. "At the end of the day, animal activists want to take away choice from all Californians and impose a vegan lifestyle on them," said Will Coggin, the consumer group's executive director.—*Andrew Asch*

The Doneger Group Appoints Michelle Evans to New EVP of Merchandising Role

Fashion- and retail-strategy firm **The Doneger Group** announced the appointment of Michelle Evans to the newly created role of executive vice president of merchandising.

Reporting directly to President Abbey Doneger, Evans will manage core merchandising advisory services for the New York-headquartered company. She will spearhead the strategic merchandising direction and business analysis across the apparel and accessories categories in the women's, men's and children's divisions. Within this role, Evans will also lead The Doneger Group's Los Angeles-based merchandising team, **Directives West**, which offers industry analysis and coverage of retail, fashion and consumer behavior related to the West Coast lifestyle.

"Michelle is a seasoned executive with



Michelle Evans

outstanding leadership skills and significant insight into the changing retail landscape," Doneger said in a statement. "I am confident that our clients and Doneger team will benefit from her innovative and strategic thinking."

Evans graduated from **Wesleyan University** with a bachelor's degree in economics and a Master of Business Administration from **Yale University** and has enjoyed nearly 20 years in retail and merchandising.

Her career began in management consulting at **Charles River Associates** and she held positions with **Tiffany & Co.**, **Gilt** and **Chloe + Isabel**. Prior to joining The Doneger Group, Evans led the merchandising team at conversational-commerce startup **Jetblack**, where she cultivated the company's text message-based personal-shopping service.

"I'm excited to collaborate with the unparalleled Doneger team and apply my unique experience at the intersection of fashion, analyt-

ics and technology to help our clients thrive in a dynamic retail environment," Evans said in a statement.—*Dorothy Crouch*

New Executive at Jerry Leigh

Jerry Leigh, the Los Angeles apparel manufacturer and brand-management company, announced the promotion of Michelle Roback to the role of executive vice president of sales, juniors and the **David Lerner** brand.

Jerry Leigh was founded in 1962, and Roback has been a member of the Jerry Leigh team since 1997. Roback will now manage new-brand and business development through forging collaborations with other brands and retailers.

"Michelle is a born leader and visionary and has been instrumental in evolving our philosophy to meet the challenges of today's retail landscape," Andrew Leigh, president of Jerry Leigh, said in a statement. "Her unstoppable drive and creativity make her the ideal person to drive the convergence of our Studio and Collections businesses while con-

tinuing to shape Jerry Leigh's legacy."

During her more than 20-year career with Jerry Leigh, Roback has led the company to build multimillion-dollar apparel-licensing programs with such brands as **Disney** and **Warner Bros.** and across retail accounts such as **Target**, **Kohl's**, **Hot Topic** and **Forever 21**.

In her new role, Roback will manage international growth while she expands her initiatives into new licensed categories that include footwear, accessories and fragrance.

"It's very exciting, and it's great to see how business has evolved. I've been here 21 years and put in a lot of hard work. To have this be an example for my kids to work hard is exciting," Roback said. "I've worked in juniors. David Lerner is my newest baby, and it's exciting to share the experience from one retail space to another."—*D.C.*



Michelle Roback

RETAIL SALES

Retailers Find Soft Sales in February

February sales were soft for retailers including **Zumiez Inc.**, **The Buckle Inc.** and **Cato Corp.**

Mall-based action-sports store Zumiez reported its same-store-sales results and its fourth-quarter earnings for the year on March 14.

Same-store sales for the retailer decreased 3.8 percent in February while its net sales for that month were down 3.1 percent. For the fourth quarter ending Feb. 2, net sales declined 1.2 percent to \$304.6 million from \$308.2 million.

The Lynnwood, Wash.-based company also provided guidance for its upcoming quarter. It forecast that same-store sales for the period will range from negative 2 percent to flat with net sales projected to be in the range of \$202 million to \$206 million.

But Zumiez executives remain optimistic about the company's future. They said it is on track to open 14 new stores around the globe in fiscal 2019. Rick Brooks, Zumiez's chief executive officer, said its success is based on a nimble retail model that features some fulfillment tasks at retail stores, not just warehouses.

"Our localized fulfillment strategy has provided a retail model with a singular cost structure that we can more easily leverage to drive operating margin expansion," he said in a statement.

Also in negative territory was the mall-based denim store The Buckle, which reported a 6.8 percent dip in same-store sales in February compared to the same period last year. February net sales for the chain, based in Kearney, Neb., declined 7.2 percent to \$59.4 million compared to \$64 million from the previous February.

Value-priced fashion-apparel retailer Cato Corp., based in Charlotte, N.C., saw a 10 percent decline in its February same-store sales with net sales sliding 12 percent to \$59.1 million from \$67.2 million last year.

John Cato, the retailer's chairman, president and chief executive officer, said that February same-store sales were well below the company's expectations. In February, the retailer closed three stores. Its retail fleet now numbers 1,351 outposts.

Jeff van Sinderen, a senior analyst at **B. Riley FBR**, said winter's unfavorable weather affected both traffic and a general demand for spring merchandise.

"Timing of tax refunds and the calendar shift also favor a later progression toward seasonal peak sales volumes this year," he wrote in an email. "For numerous retailers, February was a tough month. That said, business has started to improve in March, especially in warmer-weather markets, and we would expect a solidly positive April overall."—*A.A.*



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UCLA Anderson Forecast Sees a Downshifting in the Economy

By Deborah Belgum *Executive Editor*

For the past year, the U.S. economy has been traveling at 80 miles per hour as tax cuts and federal stimuli revved up financial growth in 2018.

But by next year the economy may be riding the brakes at only about 30 mph as tax cuts disappear, the global economy shrinks and the trade deficit grows.

That was the conclusion of the first quarterly report for 2019 by the **UCLA Anderson Forecast**, which sees the country's gross domestic product growing at only 1.7 percent this year and to a near-recession pace of 1.1 percent in 2020.

Economists will have a better idea if the economy is headed into a recession by the second half of 2020. "It is going to be a close call," said David Shulman, senior economist with the UCLA Anderson Forecast. "Whenever the economy falls below 1 percent, you can be in that zone where any outside event can push you into a recession."

If there is any silver lining in this darkening cloud, it is that interest rates will probably start declining next year when the Federal Reserve is expected to make three benchmark interest-rate cuts of 25 basis points each as the economy cools. This year, the Federal Reserve is predicted to enact two rate hikes after making four in 2018, bringing the benchmark interest rate to a current 2.25–2.5 percent.

"If I were a business I would go for it this year," Shulman

said. "I think the risk is more in 2020 than 2019."

A slowing economy is based on several factors. One is that major economies around the world are stuck in low gear. China, the world's second-largest economy, saw its slowest GDP growth in 28 years last year. Its economy in 2018 grew at 6.6 percentage points, which seems robust by Western standards but was down 0.2 percent from the previous year.

Europe saw only 1.8 percent economic growth in 2018 compared with a 3 percent GDP rise in the United States.

Shulman noted that the country's weakness is being amplified by the Trump administration's protectionist trade policy, which has implemented tariffs covering \$250 billion on various Chinese products, and that could increase. He also pointed to the uncertainty surrounding Great Britain's March 29 exit, known as Brexit, from the European Union.

But U.S. payrolls will continue to expand, even if it is at a much more moderate rate than in the last couple of years. "Payroll employment growth will decline from its monthly record of 220,000 to about 160,000 per month in 2019 and a negligible 20,000

per month in 2020, with actual declines occurring at the end of that year," Shulman noted.

The current U.S. unemployment rate of 3.8 percent will decline to 3.6 percent later this year and then gradually rise to 4.2 percent in early 2021.

When it comes to investment in the economy, one bright spot is in intellectual property, which consists mostly of software development, motion picture/television production,

and corporate research and development. That sector is expected to expand at a faster rate than the rest of the economy because of corporate computing moving to the cloud and a number of new entrants, including **Amazon**, **Netflix** and **Hulu**, in motion-picture production.

California hits some speed bumps

Much has changed for California since the last UCLA Anderson Forecast at the end of last year. Economists are expecting California's unemployment rate to rise slightly to 4.5 percent in 2019 from its 4.2 percent in January. But it will dip back down again in 2020 and 2021 to 4.3 percent.

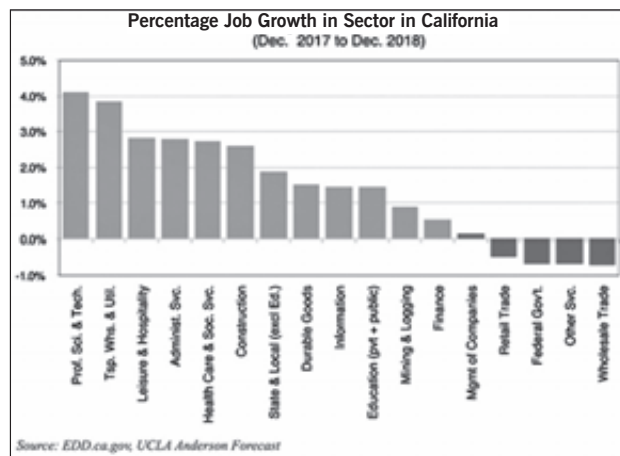
One thing that has changed in California is home prices beginning to decline since last June. According to the **California Association of Realtors**, the median price for existing single-family detached homes fell at a 15 percent annual rate between June and December. "Clearly home prices are falling in California, and the decline is widespread and substantial," wrote Jerry Nickelsburg, director of the UCLA Anderson Forecast.

While demand for housing continues to be strong in California, there is some reluctance for buyers who are afraid to commit to buying a home with talk of a slowing economy, interest rates peaking and memories of the recession when housing prices plummeted.

"It is pretty clear that buyer expectations have changed, and we don't have any clear data on why they changed," Nickelsburg said. "But there is certainly in the news media concern about where we are in the business cycle. Buyers have clearly pulled back."

Consequently, housing starts will be down in California for 2019 and 2020, affecting the construction industry, and headed back up in 2021.

Despite a slowing economy in California, there will be employment growth as payroll jobs are expected to grow 1.8 percent this year, 0.6 percent next year but at a very slow 0.1 percent in 2021. ●



TRADE SHOW REPORT

LA Textile Show *Continued from page 3*

Mistakes Startup Designers Make & How to Avoid Them."

"The show is super helpful because it saves a lot of time. If you were to make appointments with each of these vendors individually it would take you weeks, but you can get it done in a three-day show," she explained. "Plus, all the seminars are amazing to get an education, to get information, to know what is happening and on the forefront of fashion."

While everyone wanted to talk business, there were several amenities, such as a **FabFad** selfie station, lunch for online-registered attendees, an **On the Rocks** happy hour and complimentary **Uber** rides to and from the show.

A Neihulé Salon x Alexander Henry manicure station provided vegan and cruelty-free nail wraps with designs created by Los Angeles' **Alexander Henry Fabrics**, printed by cosmetics company **NCLA Beauty** and applied onsite by **Neihulé Salon** technicians. In a different area of the show, attendees were able to watch artist KiriLeigh Jones create a mandala and floral-inspired painting using raw selvedge from premium-denim brand **Japan Blue Co. Ltd.** as her canvas.

"This is going back with them [Japan Blue] to their facility," said Jones, a California native who was inspired by the state's poppy flower. "It's their piece of art given to me to create for them. They were excited. It's something different."

Blending experiences with business seemed to be a hit with attendees such as Li Choi, a veteran designer who was shopping for **Kiyo Inc.**, her downtown Los Angeles brand of women's contemporary clothing. While Choi was impressed by the Japan Blue x KiriLeigh Jones live mural painting, she also noted that the importance of the show lies in the quality of exhibitors.

"I started on the first day and participated all three days because it's a very important asset to me," Choi said. "There

isn't much repetition, and they have a high-end concept. It's concentrated in this space and the vendors are serious. As manufacturers and designers, that makes us happy. We don't have to go up and down throughout the building."

The show also saw new attendees, such as James Richards of **Crown Hats**. A Philadelphia native who has been in Los Angeles for 10 years, Richards was searching for textiles to create unique designs using unconventional hat fabrics.

"I was looking for a lot of different fabric to do different hats in silks and velvets," he said.

"There are a lot of different materials, so I can expand the line."

Visiting Los Angeles

for her first show on the West Coast, **FeltLoom, Inc.**, President Lanette Freitag received a lot of interest for her small-scale production services. But she garnered the most attention from her needle-felting machine, whose cost ranges from \$7,500 to \$23,000.

After selling her machine to companies including **3M** and **Eastman**, she was showcasing its ability to repurpose materials into new fabric, thereby increasing the options for sustainable-textile manufacturing in the apparel industry.

"The show has been very welcoming and very easy. I've done a lot of shows in my life, and this one was very comfortable," she said regarding her show experience after

traveling from Sharpsburg, Ky. "FeltLoom is beginning to take off. Our goal is that we'll have a FeltLoom in every city in the United States so people can come in and repurpose their own textiles."

For Spring/Summer 2020 at the **Solstiss** booth, the Caudry, France-based company's president, François Damide, saw a return to dream-worthy details. Traffic at his booth was generated by local designers and brands based out of Australia, the Cayman Islands, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Texas and Florida.



Zen Textiles



Japan Blue x KiriLeigh Jones

"The trend is very romantic—the Chantilly lace, trims, lots of pastels," he said. "It varies, but the trend is sheer and delicate so people have been placing orders for these types of articles. They also love to match the allover material with the trim. We had some movement on the Summer velvet."

Representing the Los Angeles showroom for **Zen Textiles**—headquartered in Rockville Centre, N.Y.—sales representative Shannon Bamrick was pleased to see the changes at the show and felt that LA Textile is a crucial part of her business. With buyers coming in from Seattle, Canada and San Francisco, she saw a lot of interest in ecologically sound materials and technical fabric.

"A big draw for us is yarn dyes plus organic, eco-friendly shirting and prints. We service the streetwear and contemporary markets in L.A. a lot," she said. "The weather-cloth look is a big one for us. That is where we do our technical fabrics—bombers, boardshorts, everything that is water repellent, technical fabric."

At the **Texollini** booth, a steady flow of traffic over the three days meant 80 percent of the people seen were new clients searching for textiles that would work well for swim, men's performance tops, active/athleisure and some demand for kids' contemporary.

"We've had a good show. We've been busy with a lot of new and upcoming brands and designers. Overall, there was a nice, steady flow," said Sherry Wood, the Long Beach, Calif., company's director of merchandising. "When the shows were Monday through Wednesday, Monday wasn't a good day. I think making the show Wednesday through Friday helped." ●

How Retailers Can Navigate the Changing Social-Media Scene

Fashion trends come and go, and the way to communicate with customers has been turned upside down.

"There are no seasons. We're wearing white in September," said Ilse Metchek, observing that a once-important fashion rule of not wearing white after Labor Day has all but disappeared.

Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association**, was the moderator for a March 11 seminar about "Reaching the New Consumer," held during the **Label Array** show at the **California Market Center** March 11-13.

To bring everyone up to speed, Metchek went over a little recent fashion history. In the past decade, there's been a top-to-bottom transformation of the fashion-business model. One of the most visible changes is that the once ironclad fashion calendar has changed. Seasons are not as important to designers as they once were.

Fashion trends play out sooner where they once took a few years to go through a lifecycle, often championed by trendy people who study the latest in fashion and wear the trending styles.

Also, ways of communicating with consumers have changed. At the top of this new fashion-communication world are social-media influencers, notably the Kardashian family, who promotes products on social-media channels such as **Instagram** and other outlets. Influencers' cultural cachet com-

mands attention from many demographics, and retailers want to reach them.

According to a 2018 **Klear Marketing** report, the number of social-media posts created to promote a product doubled between 2016 and 2017.

Panelist Amelia Castellanos, vice presi-



Amelia Castellanos, Ilse Metchek and Aaron Polk of Bank of America

dent of digital media for **Grass Monkey**, a Los Angeles-based e-commerce consulting company, cautioned that retailers need to become well versed in the rules and laws regarding what images they can post on social media. If a celebrity is photographed wearing a brand, it doesn't mean that the celebrity is endorsing that brand. Retailers should confirm what images they are able to post when it comes to a celebrity wearing a specific brand and choose the right social-media platforms for their audience.

—Andrew Asch

Calendar

March 17

ASD Market Week
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas
Through March 20

March 19

Artisan Cloth The Greatest
Showroom Innovation
Celebration
1308 Factory Place, Suite #105
Los Angeles

March 21

Art Hearts Fashion
Majestic Downtown
Los Angeles
Through March 24

March 22

LA Fashion Week
Petersen Automotive Museum
Los Angeles
Through March 25

March 23

Malibu Fashion Weekend
Rosenthal Wine Bar & Patio
Malibu, Calif.
Through March 24

March 25

DG Expo Fabric & Trim Show
Miami
Doubletree Inn by Hilton Miami
Airport Convention Center
Miami
Through March 26

March 27

Dallas Apparel & Accessories
Market + Total Home & Gift
Market

Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through March 30

Dallas Western Market
Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through March 30

Kidsworld

Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through March 30

March 31

Gift & Home Spring Market
LA Mart
Los Angeles
Through April 2

April 1

LA Majors Market
California Market Center
Los Angeles
Through April 3

April 2

Atlanta Apparel
AmericasMart
Atlanta
Through April 6

April 7

Denver Apparel & Accessories
Market
Denver Merchandise Mart
Denver
Through April 9

April 7

NW Trend Show
Pier 91, Smith Cove Terminal
Seattle
Through April 9

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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A woman with brown hair, wearing sunglasses, a white blazer, and a light blue top, is smiling and looking at her smartphone. She is holding several shopping bags in her left hand. The background is a textured grey wall.

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L.A. Drops in Retail-Real-Estate Investment Index

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Los Angeles County commands global attention for its entertainment glitz, health-conscious lifestyles and bustling malls, but its ranking for retail-real-estate investment dropped in the recently released 2019 forecast from influential commercial-real-estate brokerage **Marcus & Millichap**.

L.A. County dropped eight notches from the 18th most-favorable place to invest in retail real estate, according to the company's 2019 National Retail Index rankings, which have been released since 1999.

The top two spots were held by the Seattle-Tacoma area and San Francisco out of the 46 metropolitan regions ranked by the annual forecast.

Still, John Chang, a senior vice president of research services for Marcus & Millichap, based in Calabasas, Calif., said that Los Angeles continues to be a good place for retail-real-estate investment. "Los Angeles is performing very well. It has a lot of momentum and strength going for it," Chang said. "But the pace of growth is slowing down in Los Angeles."

L.A. has one of the slowest rates of job growth among the largest U.S. metropolitan areas, according to data released in 2018 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Los Angeles' job growth increased by 1.1 percent during the one-year period between July 2017 and July 2018, according to data compiled by **Bloomberg**.

A slowdown in job growth in Los Angeles County happened at the same time as an increase in construction and higher vacancy rates for commercial properties. Higher-ranked areas enjoyed greater job growth, which spurred greater demand for retail and services.

The mere location of a region could help boost its ranking. Oakland, Calif.'s ranking increased six places to number 15 in the Marcus & Millichap study. Located near to the Silicon Valley hot spots of San Francisco and San Jose, people are looking for relatively cheap rents in Oakland. Property development has slowed in the city, and more businesses are leasing commercial space, so the study deemed Oakland as an increasingly attractive place to invest.

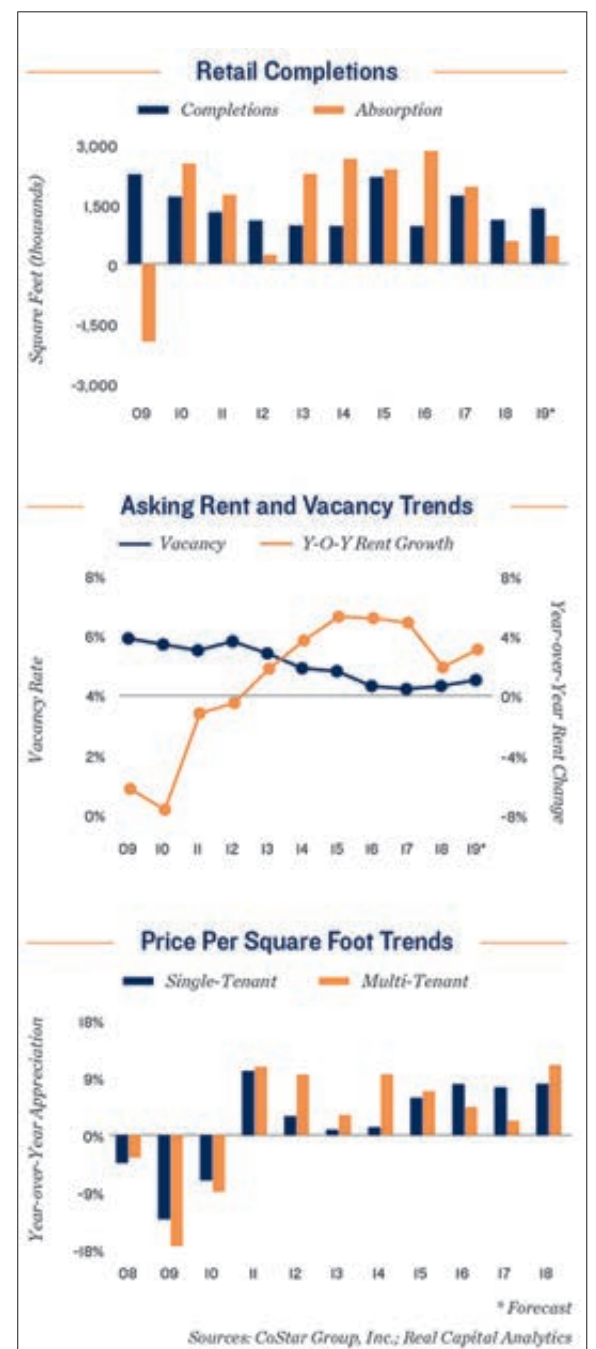
Chang also talked about Los Angeles County's changing retail-real-estate scene. Over the past few years, malls that previously devoted most of their space to fashion retailers have been experimenting with their tenant mix. Mall managers are increasingly looking for previously nontraditional tenants such as gyms and medical offices to fill up spaces.

One of the biggest Los Angeles retail-real-estate stories in 2018 was the transformation of **Macerich's Westside Pavilion** mall into office space. About 90 percent of the mall was leased by tech giant **Google**.

"This is a hallmark event," Chang said. "You have a shopping mall that was not doing great. It had a transformation and solved a problem for Google."

Google is one of a number of tech companies creating offices to be closer to where job talent lives. In 2018, Google made Southern California headlines for opening 525,000 square feet of offices in the former Spruce Goose hangar in Los Angeles' Playa Vista region. **Amazon** also has made news for seeking cities for a second headquarters. Like Google, it is bringing its offices to where the job talent lives rather than bringing them to company headquarters, Chang said.

It's not just malls that are being changed to suit the needs of tech giants and retailers. Retailers are taking former light-industrial facilities and transforming them into warehouses and fulfillment centers to serve the last leg of omni-channel retail, said Larry Kosmont, chief executive officer of the real-estate and advisory firm **Kosmont Companies**.



"The digital generation wants goods immediately. They can see something, order it and receive it quickly," he said. The move to omni-channel retail needs more fulfillment centers located close to major population centers. This real-estate trend, Kosmont said, is called "re-industrial."

Chang and Kosmont forecast there will be more changes down the road for malls and retail streets. Chang said that in Los Angeles County, there would be increased growth in boutique shopping, reflecting new trends in consumers' evolving shopping habits. "There's a lot more boutique and smaller-footprint retailers. Their styles remain fresh and innovative," Chang said. ●

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Sustainable Fashion Forum Provides a Tech Focus for Green Apparel Manufacturing

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

Working toward a cleaner and greener apparel industry was the mission of the **Sustainable Fashion Forum**, held at the **California Market Center** on March 7 during the March 6–8 run of the **LA Textile** show.

The theme for the collaboration between LA Textile and New York’s **Fashiondex** was “Digital & Tech-Based Solutions.”

As the fashion industry’s reliance on new innovations grows and disruption by new technology increases, these tools are helping the apparel business move toward a more sustainable future.

“We are currently 7.6 billion people on the planet and we will be 8.5 billion soon. We are one of the most pollutive industries. Ranked third right below oil and food is fashion,” said Fashiondex founder Andrea Kennedy. “Our vision is a fully sustainable future in fashion where we make no negative impact environmentally or socially.”

For Solána Rowe, the recording artist known by her stage name **SZA**, the forum provided an opportunity to meet apparel-industry experts as she plans to build an initiative promoting sustainable-apparel manufacturing and wellness. The singer has hinted at launching a clothing line named **Ctrl Fishing Co.** She said she would like to channel her concerns regarding environmental conservation into a larger mission such as teaching children to meditate and de-escalate their own anxieties.

Rowe was interested in finding sourcing partners to help manufacture clothing by adopting practices promoting a circular economy, such as reusing unwanted, donated clothing

to recycle into new fibers. It is Rowe’s hope that through her donation centers she can also cultivate an interest in the artistry of clothing design by building upon the younger generation’s interest in do-it-yourself design.

“The insurmountable responsibility of saving the planet is really crazy for an individual person to carry on his or her shoulders,” she said. “Starting in any small way—even changing your packaging—you’re doing something and it’s much better than doing nothing.”



Trish Scull (left) and Kevin Nelson

For fashion merchandiser Katherine Montoya, a vacation to Los Angeles turned into a learning opportunity for building an affordable, sustainable line. Currently working for a footwear brand in New York City, Montoya is in the process of building her **Green Label Collection**, a fashion-forward—yet affordable—sustainable womenswear brand.

“To impact the people, you need to make it accessible,” she said. “The more accessible it is, the more people will be drawn to it regardless of whether they care about sustainability or not. That is why I like coming to these things, to see if there is new information, new technology that could possibly bring price points down in manufacturing.”

With an interest in textiles created from natural sources, such as mycelium from mushrooms, pineapple-leaf and orange fibers, Montoya hopes to use biodegradable or reusable materials in her collection. While listening to the “Textiles, Technology and Sustainability” panel, Montoya found the solutions discussed by Shay Sethi of the Los Angeles company **Moral Fiber** to be the most groundbreaking.

“He claims that his polyester is infinitely renewable—not

just once—and that is the problem with PET [polyethylene terephthalate] textiles at the moment,” Montoya explained. “If he is saying it can be infinitely renewed and you just have to bring it back so they can regenerate, then it is the perfect solution.”

While much of the focus on a more ecologically sound apparel industry has fallen on environmentally friendly materials sourcing, there also exists a need for gathering and sharing information more efficiently.

During “How AI Can Help With Sustainability and Predicting Customer Preferences,” **Google Cloud**’s SoCal leader Trish Scull emphasized the importance of organizing data when working toward a more sustainable industry.

“Everything from data-centric services to artificial intelligence and machine learning is going to help drive sustainability,” she said. “Ultimately, artificial intelligence is only as good as the underlying infrastructure, applications and—most importantly—that data, which you present to the science.”

As she discussed at “Technology for Collaboration and Connection,” **Addlane** founder Roxy Starr explained that the efficiency the fashion industry promotes in the name of sustainability also applies to human workers who utilize technological tools.

“That is why we develop technology, so we can all be more efficient, more productive, transparent and sustainable,” she said. “They are buzzwords that we hear, but ‘sustainable’ also applies to ourselves and making sure we can efficiently get things done and communicate with our partners wherever we may be.”

After illustrating how concepts in machine learning can be applied to the apparel industry, Kevin Nelson, an architect advocate for Google Cloud, encouraged attendees to use innovative technological tools and become immersed in the process to understand how they can build a better industry.

“Just using technology tools isn’t enough,” he explained. “You really have to embrace a new way of doing business. It’s about transparency. It’s about embracing the change and being excited about it—finding ways to do things more efficiently and better.” ●





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TRADE SHOW REPORT

LA Market *Continued from page 1*

One buyer who took advantage of the comfortable space was Jennifer Manion, who owns the **42 Saint** store in Phoenix with her husband, Mark, where they sell slightly edgy men's and women's clothing for customers ages 20 to 70. As a buyer who attends market twice a year during March and October, Manion was excited about visiting the **T&A Showroom** to refresh her inventory.

After emigrating from Romania 24 years ago, Valerica Moldouan, who owns **Vali's Studio** in Rocklin, Calif., was expanding her store from a custom-apparel business into a

retail boutique. "Formalwear, accessories, dresses for mothers-of-the-bride," she said, as she explained her focus on this market. "I want unique and different, not something that could be found in every store."

She was excited about the offerings at the **Alberto Makali, Frank Lyman, Elvi, Doris Johnson** and **Betty Bottom** showrooms. She emphasized that she was searching for quality pieces at reasonable prices.

At the **Soulstar** showroom, Patric Liu reported a slower pace but attributed it to greater access to online shopping. He mentioned that the buyers who did visit his space were interested in new streetwear trends. "The people who came in were interested



The lobby of the California Market Center



Josephine Tchang of Purplemaroon and Yumi Aoyama of Evolg



Rae de Mimo store owners Paulette Ledyard and Mimo Boghossian in front of Ivko fashions



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LA Market *Continued from page 8*

in track suits, plaids, straps and vertical stripes," he said.

Sales representative Liz Lugo at the **Anu by Natural** showroom reported a good show. She received orders for **Immediates**, **Spring** and **Summer** in addition to **Fall**. Known for the brand's colorful apparel, ranging from wholesale prices of \$6 to \$79, buyers were interested in jackets, silk shirts, embroidered scarves, and tops and skirts.

"The business is still strong. You have to keep doing what you do best. You have to follow trends somewhat, but you have to keep your own DNA," she said. "The market wasn't bad, and I opened new accounts."

At the concurrent **Label Array** show in the CMC, some exhibitors reported slow traffic, but buyers were placing orders. At the **Pol Clothing** booth, which sells women's boho fashions, sales representative Ashley Kang reported a lot of new buyers for the Vernon, Calif., business, whose wholesale prices range from \$13 to \$40.

"We are known for our quality. They came to look and feel the products in person. That is why we go to all the markets," she said. "Having LA Market—it's important."

Consistent sales at The New Mart

Daniel Bohbot, chief executive officer of **Hale Bob**, estimated that his traffic enjoyed a big spike, with 40 percent more traffic than last year. He credited the relatively warmer weather in Los Angeles for the uptick. "Weather is good. There is excitement at stores. There are more store events," he said.

Matt Boelk, sales manager for **Dear John Denim**, said show traffic was okay for the

brand. "There were some waves of good traffic, and there were some periods where there seemed to be no one around."

Management at The New Mart hadn't done a final count of buyers visiting the market by the end of the show, but building manager Ethan Eller forecasted that it surpassed last year, when 536 retailers registered for the show.

At the **Designers and Agents** show, on

usual weather, California buyers are uncertain about what people will be wearing the rest of the year.

Steady market at the Cooper Design Space

Retail traffic was described as steady to light at the **Cooper Design Space** and the **Brand Assembly** trade show.

Showroom, estimated traffic was even with last year's March show. She saw buyers from Los Angeles retailer **Madison** as well as **Pitkin County Dry Goods** in Aspen, Colo., and **Tootsies** in Houston.

Other Cooper showrooms said they saw a slower pace of traffic. "It was a little quieter than usual for a March market," Israel Ramirez of the **Siblings Showroom** said. "But we still see a good amount of people each market. Boutiques have had a tough time selling Spring clothing when it is 40-degree weather," he said.

At the **Brand Assembly** show, there were 113 booths exhibiting, up from 90 last March, said Adam Eisenhut, **Brand Assembly's** vice president of trade shows and community. Retailers shopping **Brand Assembly** included **ShopBop**, **Revolve** and **Forward**.

Diane Levin of the **Diane Levin Showroom** was exhibiting at the show and said it had steady traffic. "We saw the same amount of people," Levin said. "You always end up opening new stores and making your numbers."

Going at the Gerry Building

At the **Impulse Moda** showroom, owner Lori Marchand said she was surprised by the number of people who attended the show. "I had people I've not seen in quite some time and then new people came in too," she said. "I think it was better than last year."

The owners of **Rue de Mimo**, a longstanding boutique in South Pasadena, Calif., have stayed in business for more than 15 years by stocking unique merchandise that keeps their customers coming in. That is why they were looking at the **Ivko** label, a colorful ethnic brand made in Serbia, which was being displayed at an auxiliary showroom set up by Miriana Ojeda across from her permanent showroom. ●



Brand Assembly Scene



Marcia Moran



Pol Clothing booth at Label Array

the third floor of the building, 70 vendors exhibited Fall 2019 styles.

But many buyers were focused on placing orders for **Immediates**. Mattie Irel of the **JP and Mattie** brand estimated that 40 percent of her show orders were for **Immediates** because many retailers were navigating an uncertain market. Because of the recent un-

Michael Moshi, chief executive officer for the **Lauren Moshi** brand, exhibited new leather and Sherpa jackets. He said that retail traffic seemed even with other LA Markets. "It was busy," he said. "We had new accounts. We saw accounts that we missed at the New York shows."

Jasmine Tsai, sales manager of the **Hatch**

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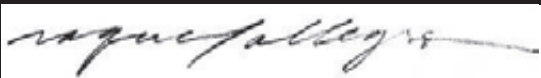
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