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Reed Exhibitions Shelves Agenda Festival

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

After a two-year run, the consumer show **Agenda Festival** was canceled by its producer, **ReedPop**, a division of **Reed Exhibitions**.

The festival made its debut in Long Beach, Calif., in 2017 following the **Agenda** trade show held at the **Long Beach Convention Center**.

The festival made a splash because it was the first consumer-day event produced by a prominent trade show. It was seen as a way for trade-show exhibitors to make extra money after the wholesale-focused trade show wrapped up.

The Agenda Festival continued to run in 2018 even after Agenda canceled its Long Beach trade show last year. Agenda continues to produce trade shows in Las Vegas, with the next event scheduled for Aug. 12-14 at the **Sands Expo and Convention Center**.

Rob Weinstein, the marketing vice president of ReedPop West, said the Agenda Festival's pop-up market, which featured music and food trucks, remained popular with consumers. They

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

Sustainability and Secure Trade: Guatemala Provides Supply-Chain Solutions for the Americas

By Dorothy Crouch *Associate Editor*

GUATEMALA CITY—As a country that benefits from the Dominican Republic–Central American Free Trade Agreement, Guatemala is preparing to see an increase in business from United States apparel brands that might need to shift sourcing partnerships away from China. With the demand for sustainable sourcing from apparel brands, mills in the region are preparing to meet that need.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Guatemalan clothing exports to the United States are up. For the one-year period ending March 2019, Guatemala exported \$1.46 billion in apparel, which was up 9.65 percent over the previous year.

At the 28th annual **Apparel Sourcing Show**, held May 14-16 at the **Grand Tikal Futura Hotel and Convention Center**,

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FASHION FORWARD

Students from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco presented their creative interpretations on fashion at their annual student fashion show. For more looks, see page 6.

So Hyun An

RANDY BROOKE

INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM

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Boardriders to Lay Off 40 Employees in Orange County, Calif.

Boardriders, the surfwear company, is laying off 40 employees according to records filed in early May with the state Employment Development Department.

Since the beginning of this year, Boardriders, based in Huntington Beach, Calif., has been undergoing many changes after acquiring one of its chief rivals, **Billabong International**, based in Australia. The deal, valued at \$162 billion, was completed in April.

Since then, Billabong and Boardriders are in the process of combining their operations around the world. The two companies' European headquarters, both located in southwestern France, are being merged.

Billabong employees, working out of Hossegor, France, are moving to the Boardriders headquarters in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, 25 miles away. A total of about 110 employees are being laid off as the two companies combine offices, according to press reports.

In California, it was not clear which Boardriders departments will be affected by the 40 layoffs, which take effect Sept. 30 in Irvine, Calif., where Billabong USA's headquarters have been located for many years.

With the merger, Billabong is moving its Irvine operations into Boardriders' headquarters later this year. Emails to Boardriders about the layoffs were not returned.

David Tanner, the current chief executive for Boardriders and a former managing director at **Oaktree Capital Management**, said the merger will mark a turning point in the industry.

Company officials previously said that the integration of the companies will be a multi-year process and is being managed by a combination of executives from both companies.

Boardriders used to be called **Quiksilver** until two years ago, when it changed its corporate name to Boardriders Inc.

The newly renamed company still encompasses the key brands of Quiksilver, **Roxy** and **DC Shoes**. With the Billabong merger, Boardriders now includes the labels Billabong, **RVCA**, **Element**, **Von Zipper** and **Xcel**.



A Boardriders store in Malibu, Calif.

Over the past few years, Quiksilver went through some rocky times, emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2016. The publicly traded company became a privately held company whose \$800 million in debt was restructured by private-equity firm Oaktree Capital Management, now the

company's majority shareholder.

With Oaktree Capital Management as the majority shareholder, Boardriders has been trying to get more creative in a challenging retail environment.

To go beyond retail, Boardriders entered into a new partnership a few years ago with **Accor Hotels** to integrate the Quiksilver and Roxy brands into Accor's new hotel concept, called **Jo&Joe**, which is geared toward the millennial traveler.

Boardriders will open surf camps at future hotels and sister youth hostels, where guests can learn to surf and enjoy the Boardriders lifestyle. Accor Hotels currently has 4,200 hotels worldwide, two Jo&Joe hotels in France and hopes to have 50 new Jo&Joe hotels open by 2020.

Quiksilver was once a high-flying surfwear brand, started in 1976 after Bob Mc-

Knight and Jeff Hakman obtained licensing rights from the Australia-based company. The U.S. surfers launched their concept in a Newport Beach, Calif. garage, with McKnight peddling boardshorts from his VW bus to the few surf shops along the coastline.

From there, the company grew to a major retailer that in 2007 had revenues of \$2.43 billion. Flush with cash, Quiksilver in 2005 acquired the **Rossignol Group**, an alpine-ski-equipment and apparel maker, for \$560 million to diversify from summer-oriented surfwear to wintertime gear. The acquisition turned out to be a bad mistake as revenues dropped. Three years later, Quiksilver sold Rossignol for \$147 million.

Quiksilver's revenues, too, were in decline, dropping to \$1.3 billion by 2015. The next year, the company declared bankruptcy.—*Deborah Belgum*

Dressbarn to Close All Stores

Dressbarn, a chain of discount specialty stores, is planning to close its entire fleet of 650 stores across the United States. More than 40 of those stores are in California.

The announcement was made May 20 by parent company **Ascena Retail Group Inc.**, based in Mahwah, N.J.

Ascena did not state exactly when the 56-year-old chain of stores selling items for under \$50 would close. But it did say it wanted to concentrate on its other retail stores and brands, which include **Lane Bryant**, **Catherines**, **Ann Taylor**, **Loft** and **Lou & Grey**.

The Dressbarn announcement was made a couple of months after Ascena sold **Maurices Inc.**, a value-apparel specialty-store chain headquartered in Duluth, Minn. An affiliate of private-equity firm **OpCapita LLP** acquired Maurices for \$300 million.

Also, Ascena's top executives have changed, which was made public in a May 1

announcement. David Jaffe, the company's chairman and chief executive officer, retired, and Gary Muto, the president and chief executive of the Ascena Brands division, was named the company's CEO.

For Ascena's second quarterly earnings ending Feb. 2, 2019, net sales were \$1.69 billion compared to \$1.72 billion in the same period last year. The company had a net loss of \$72 million for the second quarter compared to a net loss of \$39 million for the same period in 2018.

During the second quarter, Dressbarn saw its same-store sales decline 1 percent to \$163.6 million compared to \$176.7 million in the second quarter of 2018.

By comparison, Ann Taylor saw its same-store sales rise 10 percent to \$202.4 million for the quarter, and Loft also saw its same-store sales in the second quarter increase 10 percent to \$436.5 million.—*Andrew Asch*

L.A. Premium-Denim and Twill Supplier Artisan Cloth Opens New NYC Showroom

Home to premium denim and twill textiles such as **Kurabo** and **HW Textiles**, Los Angeles-based supplier **Artisan Cloth** is expanding its presence in New York City.

Moving from a 350-square-foot space located in the city's garment district to a 2,500-square-foot showroom overlooking Bryant Park, Artisan Cloth owners Brad Alden Mowry and his wife, Danielle, sought to create a space that would welcome their clients into a luxurious yet comfortable atmosphere.

"This showroom is quite large, with great lighting and a great view and display area and large tables," he said. "It's conducive to group meetings whereas our old place was not. We wanted it to be inspiring and comfortable when people come over. There is enough room to have interesting product in the vicinity of every meeting."

After four years in the former space, Artisan Cloth moved into the new showroom in February with a mission to create a similar experience found in its Los Angeles Arts

District space.

The West Coast location is known for its annual **Innovation Celebration**, which blends the festive atmosphere of a great party with opportunities for networking and exploring new products. In true Artisan

Cloth form, Mowry is hosting a grand-opening celebration in New York on June 11 to welcome clients into the new showroom.

"This is an upgrade to a larger showroom overlooking Bryant Park," Mowry said. "We are planning to have an elevated grand opening. We will have a chef making delicious, custom-made food onsite. We'll also

have a bartender making martinis and non-alcoholic beverages. We're trying to make it a classy and nice evening for our guests to see the new place."

During the evening's festivities, guests will have the opportunity to explore textile options with Kurabo and HW Textiles in addition to products from apparel-hardware manufacturer **Apholos**.—*Dorothy Crouch*



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New Executive at Los Angeles Subscription Retailer DailyLook

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Los Angeles-based fashion-subscription retailer **DailyLook** has been using a proprietary algorithm since 2014 to assemble boxes of premium denim and contemporary tops for women who don't have time to shop.

To lead the subscription retailer's buying and planning team, DailyLook announced on May 22 that Chris Lepold was hired as the company's chief merchandising officer. She formerly served as the national merchandise manager for the members-only online-shopping site **HauteLook**, owned by **Nordstrom Inc.**

"I'm bringing a robust merchandising experience to this business," Lepold said. "It's a merchant's dream to have this data science behind what we do. It's driven by an algorithm, but we bring a merchant's sensibility to it."

Brian Ree, DailyLook's founder and chief executive officer, said Lepold will oversee strategy and drive overall brand growth. "She has an ability to implement change swiftly and effectively and brings a perfect mix of art and science to the business," he said.

Lepold said her top goals are to expand the company in a cost-effective manner as well as improve the DailyLook's customer experience.

DailyLook made news in 2018 when **Forever21** invested \$8 million as a quiet investor in the subscription retailer. De-



Chris Lepold

spite the investment, the fast-fashion retailer's styles are not included in the boxes that DailyLook sends to its subscribers on a monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly basis.

The retailer deals in premium-denim and contemporary fashions whose retail prices range from \$65 to \$300. About 50 percent of the retailer's merchandise comes from contemporary brands and premium-denim labels such as **J Brand** and **Hudson**. It also delivers private-label brands from third-party retailers. DailyLook estimated it works with more than 25,000 customers.

Subscription-fashion retailers came to the forefront almost a decade ago when companies such as the San Francisco-headquartered **Stitch Fix** combined the inspiration of human stylists with algorithms to assemble boxes of clothes to be delivered to consumers across America.

Subscribers purchase what they like in the box and return what they don't. The element of fashion surprise is part of the box's allure. "It's a combination of the convenience factor and the surprise and the delight factor of getting this delivered right to her door," Lepold said.

At DailyLook, a \$40 styling fee is charged for each individual box, which is credited toward any purchases made. A point of difference is that DailyLook offers consumers a preview of the contents of the box before it's delivered. The previews help cut down on returns, Lepold said.

DailyLook's main demographic is a suburban woman who loves fashion but doesn't have a minute to shop. When women sign up for DailyLook's services, they fill out a detailed 15-minute questionnaire about their fashion likes and dislikes. The information is fed into DailyLook's algorithm, which then will suggest other items that the consumer would like, based on her questionnaire.

The retailer also has 36 full-time stylists on staff who finesse the content of the boxes sent out. The stylists communicate with the retailer's consumers through email. Currently, DailyLook is experimenting with chat apps.

Subscription retailers are here to stay, said Paula Rosenblum, a retail consultant with **RSR Research**, headquartered in Miami. It's because their business models are based on retailers who thrived long before the Internet and social media.

"I always go back to the **Columbia Record Club**," Rosenblum said of the defunct record and cassette subscription service that peaked in the 1980s through 1990s. "It's a different product, but certain rules still apply. This was a way to get music into the young adult's home. It was often easier to just accept the record than to turn it down. And the company had other outlets for its products, so it was accretive rather than singular. This is important for all subscription retailers. Do you have other ways to sell your products or are you solely depending on subscriptions? And if all you're depending on is subscriptions, what do you do with the excess? I prefer to see it as part of an overall business strategy rather than something all on its own." ●

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Apparel Sourcing Show *Continued from page 1*

hot topics of discussion were the escalating United States-China tariff war and greater sustainability options across the supply chain.

Reporting a nearly 11 percent increase in attendees during this year's Apparel Sourcing Show, organizers said that exhibitors represented a variety of different resources from around the world.

"The mix of exhibitors showcases a fully integrated supply chain," said Lucía Palacios, executive director of the Apparel Sourcing Show. "This year we had 21 companies that were new. It adds more value to our industry."

During the event, 34 percent of exhibitors represented textiles; 31 percent exhibited machinery for sublimation, screen-printing and embroidery; 16 percent were in the business of apparel manufacturing and production; 14 percent provided notions and accessories; and 5 percent offered services such as cargo solutions.

"In Guatemala, I now see big companies with new machines and big factories, but before I didn't think it was possible," said Marcos Haber of **Torcidos Industriales, SA**, a thread producer from Mexico who was at the show to see apparel-manufacturing trends. "My opinion regarding Guatemala has changed for the better."

Trends toward more-ecologically sound apparel sourcing resulted in a bigger presence by Guatemalan and United States-based suppliers of sustainable products and services.

For Ludovic Duran, commercialization manager at Canadian clothing brand **Tentree**, working with transparent, sustainable manufacturing partners is at the core of his company, which plants 10 trees for every product purchased. The company in Vancouver doesn't currently have any production partners in Central America, but Duran was interested in simplifying the supply chain, making this region a smart choice. But he had reservations.

"So far, the contacts that I have made here have been great," he explained. "My concern right now is that they haven't had a lot of experience with the material we'll be working with. They're willing, but they'll be competing with other countries that have been working with these materials."

Seeing a sustainable shift

During the show, exhibitors with sustainable offerings were able to accommodate the growing demand for eco-friendly supplies. Karla Mejía, a textile sales executive for **Liztex**, one of the largest textile manufacturers in Central America, located in Amatitlán, Guatemala, said that she saw a strong trend toward producing fibers from recycled sources.

"We have a machine that you put all the scraps in and it produces the yarn and fabric again," she said. "Right now, we're doing post-industrial cutting and sewing. We have other custom-

ers with whom we are negotiating post-consumer options," she added.

By expanding its sourcing options, the company will generate more production opportunities for not only Guatemala but also the entire Central American region.

"There are options in this region. We can offer the best-quality products and satisfy customers," Mejía said. "Many customers think that everything comes from Asia, but we can offer the

a better industry.

"We have to look at changing how we do things now. The world is changing around us. It's time we change with it," she said. "Our competitors can be our best friends. Instead of saying, 'We have obstacles,' we have opportunities."

Apparel sourcing beyond borders

While many local Guatemalan apparel leaders were excited about a growing opportunity to increase apparel and textile production, they were also concerned about whether the smaller Central American country could compete with China's enormous production capacity.

"We have a window of opportunity with the conflict that is going on between China and the U.S. It is going to take a little bit of time because everyone can't afford to move all of their operations here," Palacios said. She noted that investments to expand the country's capacity would be necessary to accommodate demand that could result from the trade war.

For companies hailing from the United States, a major topic of conversation was the shift of apparel-brand relationships away from China while fortifying those within Central America. Mohamed Suliman, regional sales manager for Indian Land, S.C.'s **Keer America Corporation**—a United States subsidiary of Zhejiang, China's **Keer Group**—felt that Guatemala's quality was a selling point for the apparel industry.

"Guatemala's textile industry is more high end," he said. "The quality—whether in fabric or sewing and cutting—is a lot higher than other parts of Asia or even in Honduras or Haiti."

One exhibitor from China was Wendy Wei, manager of the **Shaoxing Bigeng Textile Co.**, located in Zhejiang. She said the show had been slow at her booth, but many of the attendees who stopped by were locals from Guatemala.

"Right now, customers are getting ideas and will follow up later," she said. When asked about the trade situation between China and the United States, she recognized potential negative impacts but felt hopeful due to her country's increased influence around the world.

"We must respect each other," she said. "The policies may impact business, but China has become stronger."

A newcomer to the Guatemala show, the Embassy of India in Guatemala had a booth to help forge new relationships between the country and the Central American region. With a new ambassador to Guatemala—Shri B. S. Mubarak—who assumed his post approximately six months ago, India was present to promote **Texprocil**, the country's textile-export council.

"We are sharing a database with potential buyers and importers—people who are interested in exploring business partnerships with India," said Carlos Sosa, marketing executive for the Embassy of India in Guatemala. "The ambassador, who has been here for six months, is very active in all sectors. He wants to increase trade between the region and India." ●



Liztex booth



Inside the Industria Textil S.A. factory

same products and quality."

At Eco Yarn producer **Industria Textil S.A.**'s factory in Guatemala City, Federico Zimeri Köng, general manager of his family's 43-year-old business, emphasized the company's commitment to sustainable-apparel production. Using recycled cotton scraps and polyester generated from recycling PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles, the company generates fibers to produce approximately 10 million pounds of yarn each year.

"We developed the Eco Yarn, which offers upcycled yarn, to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions, water consumption and toxic materials such as pesticides," he said. "We're starting to focus on the U.S. and calculating the capacity for Guatemala. We want to grow and are about to make an important investment in this spinning facility."

On the show floor at the **Cotton USA** pavilion, **Buhler Quality Yarns Corp.** National Sales Director Dee Dee Harris expressed her optimism for building a sustainable-apparel-manufacturing industry in Central America. She noted that adopting a more responsible system takes collaboration.

"At Buhler, we're close with our brands, so we can say, 'Okay, if you really want sustainability, this particular factory here in this hemisphere can do that,'" she said. "We're making some headway with the brands to define true sustainability. Looking at it from a manufacturer's point of view, if you want to look at sustainability, look at the whole supply chain."

Supporting apparel-industry expansion within the Americas and growth in sustainability, Harris mentioned that there are times when progress is made through unlikely partnerships. In addition to responsibly sourcing its fibers, gaining OEKO-TEX certification and adhering to power-saving initiatives in its plants, the Jefferson, Ga.-based Buhler is securing a partnership with an unnamed competitor within the United States to build

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NEWS

Agenda Continued from page 1

bought tickets starting at \$45 for the 2017 run of the Agenda Festival to get exclusive looks at new and one-of-a-kind garments and footwear from more than 500 athletic, action-sports and streetwear brands. In 2018, more than 15,000 tickets were sold for the event.

Reed was on track to sell the same number of tickets for the upcoming Agenda Festival June 28–29. However, interest was flagging from vendors, Weinstein said, and Reed didn't

“You were face-to-face with the consumer. What better feedback could you get?” Boles said. He remembered attending the Long Beach Agenda trade show in 2017 and getting \$2,500 in wholesale orders. The following day at the Agenda Festival he made \$7,000 from consumers buying Wvs Brdgd T-shirts and accessories.

Patricia Thornton, now vice president of sales at **Ring of Fire Clothing**, exhibited at the Agenda Festival in 2017 and 2018 with former employer **Maui & Sons**. She was



ANDREW ASCH

think it could produce a festival on par with last year's festival.

“Therefore, a decision to cancel was made before any tickets were put on sale,” Weinstein wrote in an email. “Ultimately we opted to cancel the event rather than deliver one that is less than a world-class experience for both brands and attendees.”

Reed is still bullish about the business model of mixing a fan convention with pop-up shops, which inspired the Agenda Festival. A similar Reed event, **ComplexCon**, is scheduled to run Nov. 2–3 in Long Beach and in Chicago July 20–21 at the **McCormick Place** convention center, located on the shores of Lake Michigan.

The Agenda Festival's cancellation was met with disappointment by some vendors. Brian Boles, founder and creative director of the Los Angeles-headquartered brand **Wvs Brdgd**, said he prefers consumer events to trade shows.



TIM REGAS

surprised the festival was canceled.

“There were a lot of people there. A lot of people were having fun at the concerts,” she said. “Brands were selling exclusives just for the show. I'm not surprised that Agenda Long Beach closed because a lot of big brands pulled out. But I thought that the festival would continue. Consumers are always excited to get exclusives.”

Greg Weisman, an attorney with **Ritholz Levy Fields**, attended Agenda Festival in 2017 and 2018. He thought the consumer day was a valuable opportunity for wholesale brands to meet their consumers. But a consumer day demanded that traditional wholesalers develop new skills, which is a reason why these brands did not want to exhibit at upcoming Agenda Festivals. “The old line, wholesale brands struggled with how to engage with their fans,” he said. ●

Calendar

May 28

Apparel Textile Sourcing
Mana Wynwood Convention Center
Miami
Through May 30

May 29

Miami Fashion Week
Ice Palace Film Studios
Miami
Through June 2

Make It British Live!
Business Design Centre
London
Through May 30

May 30

Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week
Ushuaia Ibiza Beach Hotel
Ibiza, Spain
Through May 31

Couture
Wynn Las Vegas

Las Vegas
Through June 3

Las Vegas Antique Jewelry & Watch Show
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas
Through June 3

June 1

Norton's Apparel, Jewelry & Gift Market
Gatlinburg Convention Center
Gatlinburg, Tenn.
Through June 3

June 2

Trend Seattle Caravan
Embassy Suites by Hilton
Seattle
Through June 4

Michigan Women's Wear Market
Embassy Suites Detroit-Livonia
Livonia, Mich.
Through June 5

June 3

Coast
Moore Building
Miami
Through June 4

China International Nonwovens Expo & Forum
Shanghai Convention & Exhibition Center of International Sourcing
Shanghai
Through June 5

There's more
on ApparelNews.net

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

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Artistic Milliners: The Denim Company of the Future

Established in 1949, Artistic Milliners is a vertical denim-fabric and garment-manufacturing and -exporting company with a strong focus on technology, innovation, and sustainability.

Ranking third on the Top 10 list of Pakistani textile exporters in 2018, with a total annual turnover of \$256 million, Artistic Milliners today employs nearly 20,000 people in 17 factories with representative offices across the globe and a showroom in SoHo, New York.

As a vertical denim company, it serves reputable jeanswear brands worldwide, and nearly 70 percent of the company's clientele is from the United States. Today, the company produces 7.5 million yards of denim fabric and has a capacity of 2.4 million garments per month.

Artistic Lab Dubai is the company's design and R&D center, equipped with innovative technology machines and utilizing eco-friendly processes. It serves as an incubation center for designers and developers to experiment with washing techniques and the latest technological advancements in sustainable garment washing.

Artistic Milliners is the first denim mill to develop **Cradle-to-Cradle (C2C) Gold-Certified Denim Fabric** and is the developer of the Crystal Clear clean indigo technology together with DyStar® and G-Star RAW. Crystal Clear is a revolutionary technology that eliminates waste at the design stage, reducing water consumption and generating 100 percent recyclable effluent. The plan is to cover all of its products under the C2C umbrella by 2025.

Artistic Milliners has a holistic approach toward sustainability. The company's major focus areas for the next few years are **water stewardship, renewable energy, and worker well-being**.

C.L.E.A.N. (Chemical free, Laser processing, Environmentally friendly, Alternative energy, No stones) represents the company's philosophy, where smart technologies use safe and renewable materials to help the creatives design **zero-waste denim**.

Having the largest laser capacity in Pakistan, Artistic Milliners has a daily production capacity of 30,000 pieces per day. Currently, 30% of daily production is made with lasers. The goal in 2019 is to enhance current share to 90 percent and to eliminate PP spray, which is hazardous for both the environment and workers. Artistic Milliners plans to invest \$10 million to achieve **zero liquid discharge** across all its facilities by 2022, which means recycling 2 million gallons of water per day.

The latest investment, in the company's **Eco-Tech Unit**, is **Pakistan's first LEED platinum-certified** factory with a capacity of 25,000 garments per day. Fifty percent of the building's energy requirement will be met by solar energy. The facility is a hallmark of the latest technology innovations housing both the **SMART Laundry** and automated stitching machines.

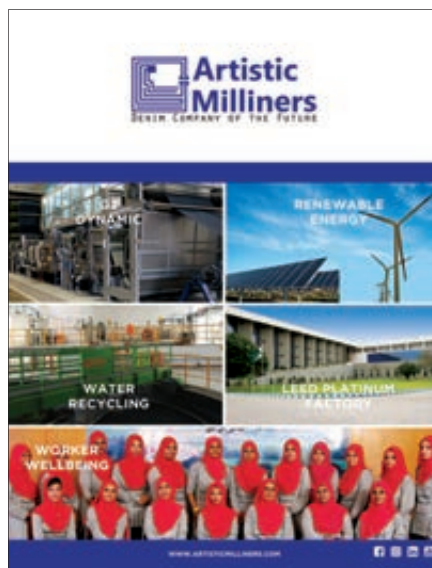
With the commitment to **clean and renewable energy**, Artistic Milliners has invested in establishing a wind-power plant of 50 megawatts in Karachi and targeting an additional 1.4 megawatts of solar energy in its factories.

Artistic Milliners differentiates itself from its competitors by building a strong reputation as the only textile company in Pakistan's manufacturing sector with the most women in senior-management positions. Currently, the ratio of women and men in senior management is 50/50 whereas approximately one-third of the company's minimum-wage employees are women. In partnership with the **United Nations Development Programme**, Artistic Milliners delivered a **Youth Employability Program** through which women who had never worked before are taught employability skills by UNDP staff and company employees.

In 2018, IFC World Bank published a case study on Artistic Milliners promoting women in leadership roles, and the company's leadership has been recognized by the **Financial Times** for the pioneering work on imparting life-skills training to working women. The company continues to expand and invest in programs such as Gap Inc.'s P.A.C.E. and Levi's Worker Wellbeing initiative to cover the majority of women in the workforce. The **Artistic College of Technical Development** will be an educational wing of Artistic Milliners to train and educate the workers in several professional and personal-development areas.

A **state-of-the-art daycare center**, comprising 4,500 square feet, is being set up with consultants that are accredited by both the U.S. Department of Youth and Family Services and the U.S. Department of Education.

Artistic Milliners is Pakistan's **first FAIRTRADE-certified factory**, which represents safe and healthy working conditions, a sustainable livelihood for the people behind it, environmental protections, and additional funds to empower worker communities.



Artistic Milliners
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Academy of Art University Students Take On Nature and the International Scene for Inspiration in Their Annual Fashion Show

The 29 collections seen on the runway at the annual **Academy of Art University** student fashion show in San Francisco drew inspiration from the Japanese technique of shibori to the colorful culture of Colombia.

Other influences came from the fluidity and movement of water, colorful birds, functionalism and drag performers. Just about everything

at the May 11 event took on an air of extreme creativity with ultra-geometric shoulders, oversized knits in vibrant colors and layered dresses from metallic jacquard to neoprene.

Before the fashion show started, school President Elisa Stephens presented honorary doctorates to fashion-industry veterans Livia Stoianova and Yassen Samouilov, the found-

ing designers of the accessories company **On Aura Tout Vu**, which was launched in 1998. "It is interesting to discover the possibilities that this school gives to everyone, the materials, everything is amazing," said Stoianova. "The students have big possibilities to work, to be free, to create."

The distinguished-guests group included

fashion designers Edwin Mohny and Andre Walker; Sara Kozlowski, director of education and professional development from the **Council of Fashion Designers of America**; Olya Kuryshchuk, founder and editor-in-chief at *1 Granary*; Lara Lettice Johnson-Wheeler, a writer, editor and broadcaster; and artist/designer Bernhard Wilhelm.—*Deborah Belgium*



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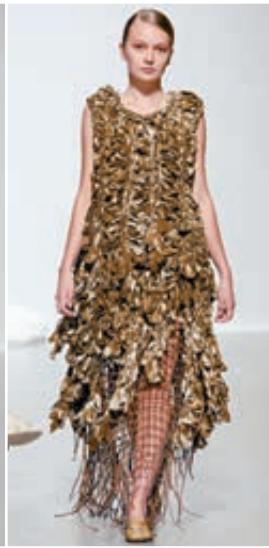
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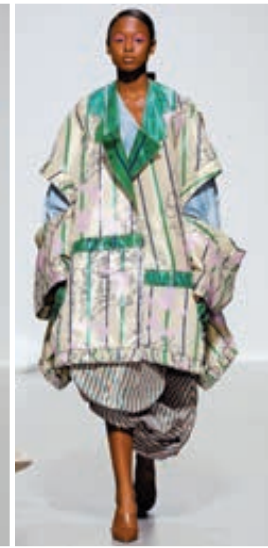
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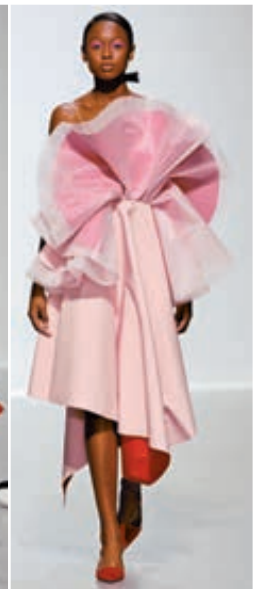
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ACTIVEWEAR

Denim House Isko to Enter U.S. Performance-Fabrics Market With Isko Vital

By Dorothy Crouch Associate Editor

Leading denim producer **Isko** will enter a new market in the United States next month when it introduces Isko Vital, a four-way-stretch fabric that provides compression technology.

After launching the fabric for European customers during the **International Trade Fair for Sports Equipment and Fashion** in Germany in February, Isko said it is currently in discussions with brands to integrate Isko Vital into their designs.

During the **Outdoor Retailer** trade show in Denver June 18–20, the Inegöl, Turkey–headquartered Isko will unveil Isko Vital to the North American market.

with polyester and **Lycra**.

“The material stretches in four different directions, giving 360-degree freedom of movement,” Cortazzi said. “Blue Skin responds to the body’s movement like a second skin.”

While Isko focused on developing a more technologically advanced performance fabric, the company remains committed to sustainable practices. A recipient of the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and the EU Ecolabel for pieces in its Earth Fit denim collection, Isko is also a member of ZDHC (Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals), the Amsterdam-headquartered group that challenges companies to eliminate hazardous chemicals throughout the supply chain.



“[Outdoor Retailer] is a must-attend for those who are serious about the outdoor and sportswear industry,” said Isko Global Marketing Director Rosey Cortazzi. “Isko Vital is positioned at the intersection between sports, wellness, travel and leisure, which makes this show an ideal launch platform.”

The company says it is now ready to unveil Isko Vital stateside as the first woven fabric to offer a compression-technology system of this kind.

“We apply graduated compression that starts at the lowest part of the leg, the ankle, and travels along the leg to the upper thigh, creating a pumping mechanism on the body,” Cortazzi said. “This improves blood flow and forces blood back to the heart.”

In addition to promoting post-activity muscle recovery for active consumers, Cortazzi says that travelers will benefit from the increased blood flow during long flights, which can result in deep vein thrombosis or blood clots that form after legs are immobile for extended periods. Through increased blood flow, Isko says that the fabric includes massage properties.

Using its existing Blue Skin fabric, which has been used in the company’s denim, Isko created Isko Vital by blending this textile



“This year we became a signatory member of ZDHC to highlight our commitment not to use harmful substances in the supply chain,” Cortazzi said. “We also obtained Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) for all of the more than 25,000 products in our portfolio, including the fabrics used in Isko Vital.”

According to Isko, it produces 328 million yards of fabric a year, which provides a strong foundation for its activewear venture outside of the denim industry, where it has gained a great deal of recognition.

As a member of the global apparel-manufacturing community, the company recognizes its responsibility to ensure that its fabric is created with sustainability in mind. Noting that consumers are demanding more from companies, in addition to the lack of brand loyalty among generations Y and Z, Cortazzi recognizes that her company must distinguish its products from the competition by offering eco-friendlier options.

“We believe it is our responsibility as an industry leader to set new standards and lead the way toward a better future,” she explained. “We want to raise the bar to support the whole industry, and we want to assist our customers on their responsible journeys.” ●

Survey Finds Sustainability Affects Clothing Purchases

The results of a survey of 7,300 men and women in various countries revealed that more shoppers are taking into account the role clothing brands are playing in sustaining the environment and preventing climate change.

Cotton Inc. and **Cotton Council International** polled consumers between the ages of 18 and 60 in the United States, Great Britain, Mexico, India, Italy and China in 2017 to get their opinion on whether sustainability was really important to them or just something they thought about but didn't act upon.

The results of the recent "Global Environmental Research Study" showed many consumers felt that things need to be done differently when it comes to manufacturing clothing.

That is driven home by the Environmental Protection Agency's 2015 estimate that more than 16 million tons of textiles are discarded every year, with 66 percent ending up in landfills. About 60 percent of apparel textiles are made of synthetics, including polyester, nylon and acrylic, which are not biodegradable.

Sustainability is something that influences more than three-quarters of consumers when they shop for food and household appliances and 61 percent when they purchase clothing.

While quality, fit and comfort are still at the top of the list when buying clothing, sustainability can set a brand apart.

The traditional markers like fit and comfort (91 percent) and price (90 percent) remain most important. But when it comes to sustainability, 37 percent said they thought about doing their part for the environment and doing the right thing.

Consumers definitely take into account what kinds of fab-

rics are used when determining if a brand is sustainable or not. Many are looking for biodegradable natural fibers such as cotton. While only 25 percent of global consumers are aware of environmental issues surrounding synthetic-fiber production and use, an increasing amount of media attention is focusing on the benefits of natural fibers versus synthetic fibers.

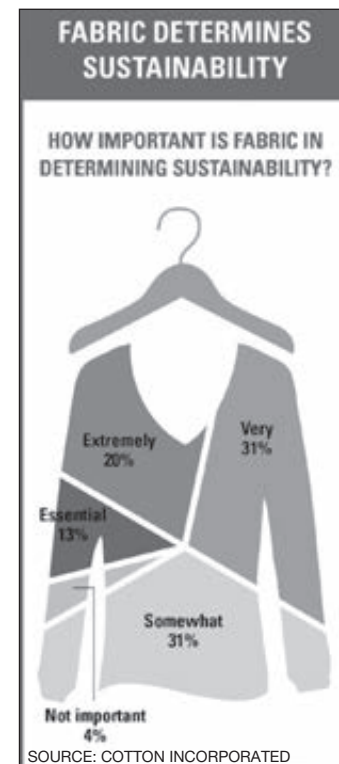
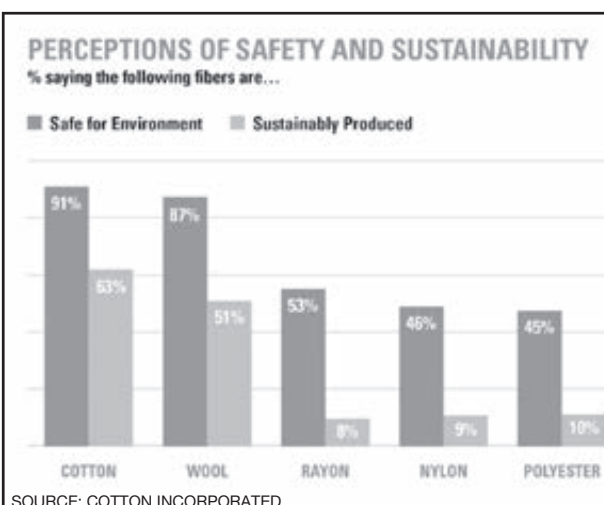
One issue that has been at the forefront of sustainability is micro-plastic pollution. This is where synthetic-fiber clothes release plastic fibers after being washed in a washing machine, becoming a major source of contaminants entering the ocean.

Last year, California Assemblyman Richard Bloom from Santa Monica introduced Assembly Bill 2379 to address this issue. It would have required all clothing made of more than 50 percent polyester to have a label warning that the garment sheds plastic microfibers when machine washed. Instead, hand washing was recommended.

That bill died months later when it did not get out of the Assembly and failed the house-of-origin deadline.

Still, consumers do have significant opinions about which fibers are safe for the environment. Fewer than 10 percent believe man-made fibers such as rayon, nylon and polyester are sustainably produced.

Cotton Inc. and Cotton Council International emphasized that brands can capitalize on sustainability issues by using natural fibers such as cotton to make their products more attractive to consumers sensitive about the environment and clothing quality.—*Deborah Belgun*



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