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MAFI MADE

For its 2019 MAFI award, Moss Adams chose Los Angeles-based designer Coral Castillo, whose formal designs with intricate details celebrate strength and femininity.

Turn to page 7 for more award-winning looks.

KEN ALCAZAR

RETAIL

After a Tough Summer, Forever 21 Seeks to Navigate an Uncertain Future

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

It's been a cruel summer for retail giant **Forever 21**. Just after Labor Day, lawyers for A-list celebrity Ariana Grande filed a suit against Forever 21 and its beauty brand, **Riley Rose**, in Los Angeles Federal District Court. The suit alleges the company used Grande's image without her permission. Demanding \$10 million in damages, the pop singer is suing for copyright and trade infringement.

This news was only the latest addition to a long list of issues that are taking a negative toll on the apparel company. In June, news broke that the Los Angeles-headquartered company had hired restructuring advisers to bolster its liquidity.

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MANUFACTURING

Garment Restitution Fund for Workers Receives \$16.3 Million

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Some Los Angeles-area garment workers will finally be able to cash checks long denied to them.

On Aug. 31, California state senators Holly Mitchell and Maria Elena Durazo joined a celebration to mark \$16.3 million being placed in the state's long underfunded Garment Restitution Fund. More than 60 workers and dignitaries attended the event, held at the **Workers United** hall near downtown Los Angeles.

It was estimated that more than 400 people are on this fund's waitlist for compensation for unpaid wages, said Marissa Nuncio, executive director of the **Garment Worker Center**, headquartered in downtown Los Angeles' Fashion District.

"The fund has always taken one to two years to pay, but in the past few years the wait has become increasingly longer to indefinite," she said and forecasted that workers on the fund's waitlist would be paid in a few months. The Garment Worker Center estimates there are 45,000 garment workers in

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Rick Helfenbein



Stephen Lamar

Helfenbein to Step Down

After 14 years of engagement with the **American Apparel & Footwear Association**, 10 as a member and four leading the organization, Rick Helfenbein announced that he will step down as the group's president and chief executive officer. The Washington D.C.-based trade association represents more than 1,000 brands.

Helfenbein will serve until Dec. 31. Stephen Lamar will assume the roles of president and CEO on Jan. 1. With more than 21 years of experience with the AAFA, Lamar currently serves as the organization's vice president, where he has overseen lobbying and association activities, said Gary Simmons, the group's chairman.

"Many in the industry and policymaking community have grown to depend on Stephen's expertise on how policies impact the industry," Simmons said in a statement. "His foresight of potential risks and opportunities is unmatched. The board is confident that he will bring continued success

to the industry in this role."

The work Helfenbein performed during his tenure included extending the AAFA's reach by working toward an expanded Generalized System of Preferences program, criticizing multinational organizations guilty of intellectual property theft and rebranding the AAFA. He also helped give new life to the AAFA's American Image Awards, which recognizes accomplishments in the apparel-and-footwear industry.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the leader of the American Apparel & Footwear Association," Helfenbein said in a statement. "During my time as a member, I learned the essential work we do in Washington and around the world. It is with this background that I was able to prioritize initiatives and engage with our 1,000-plus brands. I am thrilled that the board has chosen Stephen, whose passion for the industry and understanding of Washington is immeasurable."—*Andrew Asch*

California Bans Fur Trapping, Considers Wider Fur Ban

The state of California has taken steps against the cultivation and possibly the sales of fur.

On Sept. 4, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law AB 273, which prohibits commercial and recreational fur trapping, making the state the first U.S. state to ban fur trapping. The law's text includes provisions making it illegal for trappers to use steel-jawed leghold traps. It also bans the sale of antlers except when the antlers have already been shed.

Breaking this law will be considered a misdemeanor, according to the bill's text. Punishments could include a fine of \$1,000 or imprisonment in a county jail for six months.

Fur trapping has not been big business in California. In 2017, a total of 133 trapping licenses were sold, according to the bill, and four fur-deal licenses were sold. The total revenue received from the Department of Fish and Wildlife was \$15,544 for fur-trapping licenses and \$709 for fur-dealer licenses.

In a tweet, bill author Lorena Gonzalez wrote, "Fur trapping is a cruel practice that has no place in 21st-century California." Gonzalez represents California's 80th Assembly District, which includes parts of the city of San Diego as well as the cities of Chula Vista and National City.

California is also ramping up to be the first U.S. state to ban the sale of fur. On Aug. 30, AB 44 was approved 4-1 by the state's Senate Appropriations Committee. It's up for a vote in the Senate, which might come as early as the week of Sept. 9, according to Blake Dellinger, a spokesman for the office of bill author Laura Friedman, who represents the 43rd District, which includes Glendale, Silver Lake and parts of the Crescenta Valley.—*A.A.*

Week in Review

Designing clothes on a computer-generated model is not science fiction. It's something that has been used for computer games and virtual dressing rooms. Fashion software provider Tukatech, Inc. developed a library of more than 750 virtual-fit models based on 3-D-body-scan data of human fit models. The Los Angeles-headquartered Tukatech announced recently that it would make the virtual-fit models available for all 3-D users, according to Ram Sareen, Tukatech's chairman and chief executive officer. A link to the library can be found on www.tukatech.com.

The **Jockey** underwear and apparel brand will open its first pop-up retail store in the 143-year history of Jockey International, Inc. It will open a 1,700-square-foot space at the edit@Roosevelt Field outside of New York City. The Jockey pop-up will run until January.

New England's Timberland brand plans to take a stand against climate change with a pledge it announced on Sept. 5. It will plant 50 million trees over the next five years, said Jim Pisani, Timberland's global brand president.

The Renewal Workshop repairs and freshens up damaged and discarded clothing and textiles, and makes them into new clothing. The Portland, Ore.-based company, will produce the Restore Collection, from the H&M Group's COS division that has accumulated goods returned by customers or sourced from COS' own supply chain.

Corrections and Clarifications

In the Aug. 30 issue, the story "Tariff Issues Cool, Concerns Remain" included misleading language regarding revisions to tariffs on goods imported into China from the United States. These tariffs went into effect Sept. 1 with an additional round scheduled for December.

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Calendar

Sept. 10

CottonWorks Textile Workshops
San Francisco
Through Sept. 12

Sept. 13

Designers and Agents
Javits Center
New York
Through Sept. 15

Sept. 14

Brand Assembly
Cabana
Capsule
Pier 94
New York
Through Sept. 16

Sept. 15

Accessories The Show
Beauty@Coterie
Coterie
Edit
Fame
Footwear@Coterie
Moda
NY Women's
Sole Commerce
Vintage@Coterie
Javits Center
New York
Through Sept. 17

Sept. 16

Apparel Sourcing Paris
Texworld Denim
Texworld Paris

Paris Le Bourget
Paris
Through Sept. 19

Sept. 17

Première Vision Paris
Paris-Nord Villepinte
Paris
Through Sept. 19

There's more
on ApparelNews.net

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

Submissions to the calendar should be emailed to the Calendar Editor at calendar@apparelnews.net. 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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Surf Expo Canceled as Organizers Prioritize Safety

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

The **Surf Expo** water-sports and beach-lifestyle trade show that was scheduled for Sept. 5–7 at the **Orange County Convention Center** in Orlando, Fla., was canceled due to threats from Hurricane Dorian, which made landfall in the Bahamas on Sept. 1. In addition to the main Surf Expo show, event organizers at **Emerald Expositions** were scheduled to host the water-sports and beach-lifestyle marketplace **Waterfest** on Sept. 4, which was intended to kick off the main exposition.

Now in its 43rd year, this is not the first time that Surf Expo has been threatened by a hurricane or tropical storm. Most recently, the 2017 show was threatened by Hurricane Irma, which devastated parts of the Eastern Caribbean, including Puerto Rico.

Speaking on behalf of the event's organizers, Roy Turner, senior vice president and Surf Expo show director for Emerald Expositions, relayed that the safety of event attendees, exhibitors, show organizers, crew and partners was the company's priority.

"We wanted the minimal amount of inconvenience for our customers," he said. "At the end of the day, it is purely about safety."

At the time of the show's cancellation, the storm registered as a category 5 hurricane, threatening to greatly affect Florida and the southeast region of the United States in addition to the entire eastern seaboard of the country. Airports in Orlando and other regions of Florida were closed.

The decision to cancel the show was made after examining all potential negative effects of hosting the show. A team of Surf Expo organizers considered the welfare of the entire team along with how road and airport closures could cause attendees, exhibitors and crew to be stranded in a dangerous area.

"You don't want people getting on planes to come to an event to find out that it's been canceled, so you're trying to minimize any unnecessary travel," Turner said. "There is this bigger group that comes in early, and you don't ever want to put them in harm's way or in a position where they have to stay during a storm because there wasn't a cancellation in time."

Remaining committed to his exhibitors and buyers, Turner mentioned that show fees were being reimbursed as he hoped

to facilitate helping businesses coordinate with their sales representatives to return to selling.

"Refunds are already in the works to cover everyone as soon as possible so they can look at utilizing those funds to put their sales teams on the road and connect with the customers that they missed at Surf Expo," he said.

Longtime Surf Expo exhibitor Dale Rhodes, vice president of sales of **Katin USA**, headquartered in Rancho Dominguez, Calif., confirmed that his company's travel expenses were returned over the last few days. He was impressed by the accessibility of the trade-show team, particularly Rod Tomlinson, the company's category manager for surf and skate, and its efforts to keep exhibitors informed.

"We got all the cancellations for our air and our lodging reimbursed, and we'll be reimbursed for the show as well, so it was very professional of them. These guys are a class act," he said. "We were so appreciative of their transparency with us. They kept in close contact with every single manufacturer. It takes a lot of time, but they kept us up to date."

Noting that Surf Expo affords accessibility to East Coast retailers, Rhodes confirmed that he will be working with his reps to compensate for meetings that would have been held during the event. While business is important, he agreed with Turner that safety was a priority above all else.

"I have reps in Florida and the mid-Atlantic. They were shoring up their homes, so they weren't worrying about the show. My priorities are my reps and their families and the other families that live in the other impacted areas. At the end of the day, I wasn't upset that the show was canceled," he explained. "We have great reps, and now they will get back out on the road."

With a tight-knit community that has supported the Surf Expo brand through a reciprocal relationship of transparency and respect, Turner is looking toward the future after having to bypass the September edition. After facilitating connections



Check-in at Surf Expo 2018

between his exhibitors and buyers through different methods, he will focus on the next edition of Surf Expo, which will be held Jan. 8–10 in Orlando.

"We are well on the way to being sold out in January. We are hoping to reach our audience that way," he said. "We will use our connections between our buyers and sellers through our online means over the course of the next few weeks to try and make other connections whether through catalogs, social media and podcasts, or any method to facilitate that commerce that was missed."

Additionally, Turner asked that those who are safe from the storm consider helping others who live in areas affected by the hurricane and were not as fortunate.

"If people could consider making a donation to the people in the Bahamas, it would be awesome," he said. "Growing up in a coastal community, I understand. Even the cost of a latte would go a long way right now." ●

RETAIL

F21 Continued from page 1



The Forever 21 store at The Americana at Brand.

Media reports also noted that the apparel company was in talks with private equity firm **Apollo Global Management** to raise debtor-in-possession funds for a possible chapter 11 bankruptcy filing. As of press time, Forever 21 has not filed for bankruptcy.

Just to make things seem tougher for Forever 21, the billionaire status of its founders Jin Sook and Do Won Chang has been slipping. They were taken off of *Forbes Magazine's* list of the top 400 billionaires in 2018. The glossy business publication currently lists their combined worth as \$1.5 billion, but in 2015 they were worth \$5.9 billion, according to *Forbes*.

The lawsuit, anxiety over bankruptcy and a rankings slide

of personal wealth were just the latest twists in a retail story that has commanded attention across the world. Forever 21 changed retail by being one of the savviest and most nimble players in fast fashion. In 2015, it ran 723 stores across the globe and claimed to be the fifth-largest specialty retailer in America. No matter what lies in store for the company, retail watchers forecast the company will have to change.

Forever 21 is definitely going to restructure, said Syama Meagher, chief executive officer of the Los Angeles-based **Scaling Retail** consultancy, who started her career by working in the merchandising offices of retailers **Barneys New York** and **Macy's**.

"Forever 21 is overexposed in bricks-and-mortar," Meagher said. "They'll follow a Barneys model where they will shut down stores, streamline their options and get smarter about e-commerce."

Meagher said that the once-innovative retailer allowed others to take over market share in digital commerce. This left Forever 21 open to reversals during a decade in which many brands have seen some of their most marked growth in digital commerce.

But a bankruptcy does not necessarily mean the end for Forever 21. Like other retailers that have experienced reversals, Forever 21 will have a second act. "A lot of second and third acts come through acquisitions," Meagher said. "They have to define brand value. That could come through a face-lift for the brand and an acquisition of a younger and a cooler brand—something that is digitally native."

Macy's sought to reinvent itself by acquiring experiential retailer **Story** in 2018 and then rolling it out to a number of Macy's locations.

In the 1990s and during the first decade of the 21st century, Forever 21 was known as one of the most innovative merchandisers in the business, said Ilse Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association** manufacturers-and-

retailers group as well as a veteran watcher of the fashion-business world.

"They were like what **Zara** is now. They sold small runs of new and fresh clothing. If you didn't get them then, you were never going to get them. They were brilliant," Metchek recalled of how Forever 21 built legions of fashion fans.

"When they found a nugget, they barreled in and put it in every store with as many iterations as they could," she said. "They created their own trends."

But Forever 21 stumbled when the brand started thinking big. One of the reasons the company may have lost its edge could be due to how it started opening giant emporiums across the world. Venturing into this undertaking meant that they had to fill a lot of space with a lot of inventory. The company ran against changing customer tastes, but it wasn't alone.

Every retailer that ran stores with sprawling square footages was pummeled by a public who embraced a less-is-more attitude. "Every customer—male, female, young and old—is not absorbing huge amounts of merchandise," Metchek said.

A Forever 21 restructuring process won't have much impact on California's manufacturing scene, Metchek said. For more than five years, Forever 21 has manufactured the vast majority of its product overseas.

Ken Wengrod, co-founder of **FTC Commercial Corp.**, agreed that it won't be the manufacturers in the United States who will suffer with a Forever 21 restructuring. "The biggest concern that I've seen is the impact on the real-estate market," he said.

A restructuring for Forever 21 will probably mean that the retail giant will scale back its bricks-and-mortar retail fleet. The average Forever 21 retail store occupies 38,000 square feet, with the largest shop measuring 162,000 square feet, according to the retailer's website. With Forever 21 shops doing business on retail streets as well as inside malls across the world, landlords might have a lot of open space coming up in the future. ●

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Trims, Accessories & Branding
Retail Real Estate

Textile Preview with Tech and Resource Guide*
Trims, Accessories & Branding
Advertorial
Technology Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

L.A. Majors Market 10/2-4
L.A. Textile Show 10/2-4

September 27

Cover: Textile Trends
Quarterly Financial Report
New Lines
Fiber & Fabric
Industry Focus: Finance
Sustainability

Finance Advertorial Sustainability Advertorial

Bonus Distribution

L.A. Majors Market 10/2-4
L.A. Textile Show 10/2-4
Style Fashion Week 10/10-13
Brand Assembly 10/14-16
Designers & Agents L.A. 10/14-16
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Label Array 10/14-16
Atlanta Apparel 10/15-19

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Brand Assembly 10/14-16
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MANUFACTURING

Garment Workers *Continued from page 1*

Los Angeles, and the group contends that the employees are routinely underpaid. A **UCLA Labor Center** study released in 2015 found that Angelenos lose \$26.2 million a week in unpaid wages.

Nuncio and some of her colleagues started a campaign in April to cut down the fund's long waits by petitioning the California state government when it was putting together its 2019-2020 budget. When Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the budget in June, it included \$7.3 million to eliminate the waitlist. An additional \$9 million was transferred from another existing unpaid-wage fund.

The state government collects monies for funds to compensate a range of workers including agricultural laborers who were victims of wage theft. If workers do not claim payments, monies are placed in the state's general fund. The legal-aid group **Bet Tzedek**, the **UCLA Labor Center** and the **Western Center on Law & Poverty** assisted on the budget request.

The Garment Restitution Fund was a payor of last resort for garment workers who proved that they were victims of wage



California State Senator Maria Elena Durazo speaks.

the capital—men and women showing their values and willing to fight and say that I'm not going to stop until I am respected as a human being," she said in Spanish.

While the event was a celebration, with a DJ playing cumbia music and taquitos served, workers on the fund's waitlist informed the crowd regarding the hardships they endured due to wage theft.

"I didn't have enough money to pay rent," Carmen Torres said in Spanish. "I had to go to a church to ask for food to survive."

She brought her case to the labor commission in 2015. When her former employers did not pay, she took her grievance to the Garment Restitution Fund. She estimates that she has \$47,456 in unpaid wages coming to her.

Pedro Montiel said that he worked in abysmal conditions. "The owners would scream at us. The factories themselves were infested with rats and cockroaches. It was a disaster. I made a salary of \$250 per week, working 50 to 60 hours per week," he told the crowd in Spanish. "I couldn't stand the abuse anymore. I went to the labor commission. We couldn't get funds there. We went to the state fund. They said it would take five to 20 years to get compensated."

With the \$16.3 million funding, Nuncio said that there is a possibility that the fund would not lack money in the near future. The Garment Worker Center and its colleagues also hope to talk to state government officials to discuss how the Garment Restitution Fund will be kept in better financial condition in the future.

"We consider this a first step in our advocacy work," Nuncio said. "We don't want a situation where we have to remind our legislators that there is supposed to be a solvent fund for workers."

Later this year, the workers' rights



California State Senator Holly Mitchell speaks.

theft. The fund was started in 1999 by a law authored by former assembly member, now Sacramento mayor, Darrell Steinberg. It has been supported by business-registration fees and renewals from garment manufacturers, but the demands on the fund quickly outpaced portions of the registration fees underwriting it.

The demand and supply on the fund's finances left some garment workers remaining uncompensated for years. These workers would petition the fund after the labor commissioner's office ruled in their favor. However, many were unable to collect from the labor commissioner's rulings, as some former employers declared bankruptcy or went out of business.

This year, the fund issue was brought to the attention of Mitchell, who serves as the chair of the standing committee on budget and fiscal review. In May, the Garment Worker Center organized a trip to Sacramento to give testimony on their conditions, and the workers spoke before several committees.

"We're not afraid to fight, particularly on a righteous issue like this," Mitchell told the crowd during the Aug. 31 event in Los Angeles. "You deserve to be paid for your hard work."

Durazo told the crowd that she was inspired by garment workers who testified to get the waitlist funded. "This is what is missing in



Garment workers celebrating.

organization plans to produce the first annual **Garment Workers Congress**.

"We see it as a town hall," Nuncio said. "We'll listen and hear what are the most pressing concerns for workers, so we'll make sure that we are a responsive organization."

In the past 12 months, Garment Worker Center organizers have waged a campaign against **Ross Stores Inc.** to protest what it contends are poor wages and conditions in factories that produce clothing for **Ross Dress For Less**. In December 2018 and in May, Garment Worker Center workers held protests at the retailer's headquarters in the Northern California town of Dublin. ●



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Ring of Fire to Release Sustainable Denim Line

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

With a name inspired by the 1963 Johnny Cash hit of the same title, **Ring of Fire** clothing has been selling graphic T-shirts and denim to better department stores for 12 years. In Spring 2020, Ring of Fire, which is headquartered in Los Angeles' Van Nuys section, plans to release its first line of sustainable denim, said Josue Gonzalez, Ring of Fire's denim-design director.

"I wanted to see where we could lower our carbon footprint," Gonzalez said. "I'm a vegan. I wanted to put that lifestyle into it."

The company was started in 2007 by Eran Bitton, who continues to serve as the brand's chief executive officer and president. Currently, 50 people work for the brand, which includes an office of designers who create graphics for the company's T-shirts.

Scheduled for February 2020 deliveries, the new sustainable-denim line will be offered by better department stores. Designs for the collection will be guided by a spare, minimalistic look. "The branding will be the trim and the packaging," he said. "I want to have a simple style of denim with simple washes. I want it to be accessible to our consumers and to be wearable."

The sustainable jeans will feature burnt-orange copper stitching on the back yoke. This copper stitching also will make an appearance on the left back pocket with a simple stitch that will run across the lower end of that pocket. There is one concession to branding, however. On the left back pocket, there will be a graphic of a green drop, which stands for recycling.

Aside from these details, the garments will be defined by their fabric. Ring of Fire's fabric supplier worked with the brand to create a proprietary material, which is made from organic cotton sourced through farmers who work with the nonprofit **Better Cotton Initiative**. The organic cotton is



mixed with recycled **Repreve** fabric to provide stretch. The denim pants are finished in **Jeanologia** machines that reduce the amount of water used to finish the jeans. Ring of Fire denim is designed in Los Angeles, but the jeans are manufactured in Bangladesh.

The brand's sustainable denim will have three silhouettes: classic straight, slim and skinny. Washes are a crucial part of any denim line, and Ring of Fire clothing's sustainable collection will feature 10 individual washes: three light washes, three dark washes and four medium washes. The line's black jeans will feature stitching that will be the same color as the fabric, a feature that will add to the jean's design mission of simplicity, Gonzalez said. Ring of Fire also plans on releasing a sustainable line of denim for boys.

Ring of Fire is part of a wave of sustainable denim lines that

has gained a foothold in the vast marketplace for jeans recently.

Levi's has developed ways to cut water use in denim with its line of **Water<Less** jeans that use less water in the finishing process. Levi's also is a founding member of the **Better Cotton Initiative**.

In a 2018 statement, Marshal Cohen of market researchers **The NPD Group** said that sustainability will become increasingly important to consumers.

"Sustainability will continue to be an important topic for consumers and the industry in the years to come," said Cohen. "To attract consumers, particularly young adults and women, apparel brands and retailers will need to stay in touch with social-responsibility issues and educate and inform their customers with clear messaging and labeling about their sustainability efforts. Brands can't rely on the fine print on the inside label—it needs to be woven into the 'fabric' of the brand."

A 2018 NPD survey found that almost one-third of consumers say they would be willing to pay more for an apparel item that

was labeled as sustainable.

The demographic segment most interested in sustainable apparel was young adults aged 18 to 34, according to the survey. Also, 33 percent of women surveyed said that they would pay more for clothing that was described as sustainable and organic compared to clothing that was not labeled as sustainable.

Ring of Fire's sustainable denim will be introduced to the market through apparel trade shows early next year, but the company has not confirmed at which trade shows, said Patricia Thornton, the brand's vice president of sales. To meet February 2020 deliveries, the brand will rely on orders for immediates. Retail prices have not been set yet, but they will be priced below \$100. ●

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Ahead of Next Month's LA Fashion Week, Moss Adams Announces 2019 MAFI Recipient



CHRISTOS KATSAOUNIS

Moss Adams, the accounting-and-consulting firm based in Seattle, announced that it has chosen its recipient of the 2019 Moss Adams Fashion Innovator award, which will be presented on Oct. 11 during **LA Fashion Week** at the **Petersen Automotive Museum** in the mid-city area of Los Angeles. Los Angeles-based designer Coral Castillo was selected as the 2019 MAFI winner after careful consideration, according to Martin Hughes, Moss Adams's national practice leader for apparel.

The award was launched 15 years ago by Moss Adams. Last year, the company announced designer Elie Madi as the recipient of the award, which includes \$5,000 in Moss Adams services and is bestowed upon a California designer during LA Fashion Week.

"The MAFI award is given each year to a designer who is doing something innovative in the industry," Hughes said. "Every year we look at a number of different designers and we go through everything. When we saw Coral's designs and some of her recent runways, the designs were so beautiful, edgy and innovative. She stood out."

In 2001, Castillo—whose mother is a dressmaker—emigrated from Mexico to the United States. An associate-degree graduate of **The Art Institute of California—San Francisco** and bachelor's recipient at the



school's Orange County campus, Castillo is known for her strong designs with feminine details. As a mother of one, Castillo recognizes the challenges that are unique to many women, particularly in the fashion industry.

"There is more work that we have to do to be in a position of power, especially in the fashion industry. I've seen women who have kids come to work and they do everything and are successful in their careers," she said. "My designs are a celebration of that and a reminder that we are still women, we are beautiful, but we are strong and we are warriors."

With her current collection, Castillo wanted to bring the strength and beauty of female warriors to her garments. Inspired by Greek and Roman mythology, particularly the goddess Nike, Castillo created her collection.

"When designing, I am always thinking of a woman who is strong and powerful that never forgets who she is and is feminine," she said. "[Receiving this award], I feel lucky and it makes all of my work feel worth it."

—Dorothy Crouch



Atlanta Apparel: Unique Brands That Offer Premium Style

While the weather outside may be cooling, Atlanta Apparel is the place to see harbingers of the best and brightest of Spring/Summer 2020. If these premium womenswear and shoe brands are any indication, the coming seasons herald fun and fabulous creativity in color and style.

ASTARS

ASTARS is proud of the fact it is "one of those unicorn" womenswear brands that dresses both mom and daughter, offering a 100 percent vegan product. Upholding the legacy of the Alpinestars brand, it has infused it with "the influential spirit of the West Coast girl." For Spring 2020, "we took relaxed bougie to a whole new level"—from a drapy suit comfortable enough to lounge in to washed satin yet elevated tees and dresses that can go from coffee to a girls' night out. Inspired by a recent trip to Joshua Tree in California and the solitude, simplicity, and majesty of the desert, the key pieces are the Le Boss Suit, the Mira jumpsuit, and the Cargo Pants and Jacket—"all part of our Joshua Tree dream outfits!" Wholesale price points range from \$20 to \$67.



From St. Xavier

The artisanal contemporary women's label From St. Xavier blends a high-quality, refined aesthetic with prominent trends and its own brand of quirky personality that takes primary inspiration from its environment, "where an abundance of unique, natural, and urban colors and textures is never far off." Employing new textiles and handcrafting techniques, pieces can take up to four days and 20 hands to produce. Spring/Summer 2020 specifically references dynamic pop culture motifs and sayings in an array of soft pastels and warm metallics offset with pops of pink and orange, organic textures, and "unexpected bursts of personality." The company pegs the Metal Pearl Bag a "perfect balance" of craft and leading trend as a bestseller but are also "loving" the of-the-moment graphic typography pieces "You Do You" and "Power." Wholesale price points range from \$44 to \$64.



Lucy Paris

Lucy Paris designs its womenswear collection with "the city girl in mind," inspired by chic city dwellers in Paris, New York, and Los Angeles. For Spring 2020, the main inspiration comes from the street style of Copenhagen. "We are obsessed," they say, "with the color-blocking pastels, the print mixing, and bold



and bright florals worn by influencers and editors during Copenhagen Fashion Week." Spring features knits, updated animal prints, ombré, and tie-dyes as well as pastels such as mint green, coral, light blue, and neutrals. "Our customers constantly return to our brand because of our fit, fabric quality, textures, and fun prints," they report. Anticipated bestsellers include the Janessa Color-Block Sweater and Skirt, Leonie Slip Dress, Mischa Animal Dress, and Skyler Smocked Top. Wholesale price points range from \$26 to \$42.

Matisse Footwear

Los Angeles-based shoe stylist Matisse Footwear melds quality, craftsmanship, and artisanal touches with contemporary design and a casual aesthetic for versatility and comfort. Its target customer is fashion focused "but not a slave to it." Vintage is always "a huge source of inspiration": "We offer looks that are sometimes just our trends," they say, but season-driven looks are plentiful. For Spring, the colors are mint and soft greens as well as warmer tones in coral and orange, and silhouettes remain feminine with a focus on covered outside heels. As far as bestsellers go, "Our Elevation Boot is absolutely the coolest ever," they enthuse. "That is the showstopper that every girl will want on her feet." Wholesale price points for Matisse range from \$37 to \$85; Coconuts by Matisse ranges from \$12 to \$39.



Sol Sana

"Spring 2020 is new in every sense of the word," say the people behind Sol Sana, the Australian fine-footwear company. "We have redefined the Sol Sana story and present a contemporary collection with an elevated aesthetic that marries perfectly with the brand's progressive direction." Taking their cue from "the beaches of Australia in the early morning light," the playful color palette centers on delicate lilac, rosewater, and mint foam along with such textural elements as ostrich-embossed leathers and intricately woven panels worked in minimalist silhouettes, "barely there" accents, and progression in prominent sports-luxe trends. Anticipated bestsellers are the Lily heel, Jenny mule, edgy updates to their classic slides, and the Amber mule—"our biggest love affair." Wholesale price points range from \$40 to \$80.



The next edition of **Atlanta Apparel** takes place Oct. 15–19 at **AmericasMart** in Atlanta.

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

NorCal-based and Pacific Northwest Buyers Find Fill-ins and Spring 2020 at CALA SF

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

On the heels of its inaugural Las Vegas show, the **CALA** contemporary-apparel trade show hosted its San Francisco edition. Opening the day after the Labor Day holiday at **Fort Mason**, CALA's Sept. 3-4 installment saw buyers mainly from Northern California, Washington state and Oregon, according to show organizer Robert Murtagh.

While he mentioned there were concerns regarding producing the show immediately after the holiday, the convenience of seeing beloved brands was too great an opportunity for buyers from the region to miss.

"San Francisco is an established show that has been around for 13 years, and the buyers are familiar with the show and they know the brands," he said. "It's an alternative to Las Vegas. They can do some shopping in their own backyard. Instead of leaving the store for a few days, they can leave for seven or eight hours on one day."

While buyers were seeking an inviting shopping atmosphere with which they are familiar, Murtagh noted that there was a change in this edition of the event. Citing the holiday and heavy San Francisco traffic, show organizers decided to push back show hours on the event's first day, changing from the 9 a.m.-6 p.m. schedule to 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

"Because of Labor Day on Monday, the reps could set up on Tuesday from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Also, being open until 7 p.m. gives buyers more opportunity to buy," Murtagh explained. "The buyers and reps seemed to appreciate it."

At the booth representing Irvine, Calif., brand **Z Supply**, Kenny Gandolfo reported an excellent turnout for the show, with buyers seeking fill-ins and goods to prepare for Spring 2020. While he had buyers interested in loungewear, slounge wear and Spring sweaters, he organized deliveries to bring a fresh approach for customers.

"For part of our Spring collection, we front-loaded everything. Instead of bringing it in 1/15, we are bringing it in for 11/15 for newness on the shelf," he said. "Z supply is definitely a replenishment business for us. Our basics that we carry in stock, people were filling in. It was a very good Labor Day, and the last couple of weeks of summer were great."

With wholesale price points of \$12.50 for basic tops, \$18 for bottoms and \$34 for



CALA

sweaters, Gandolfo, who represents the Northern California, Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain regions, was riding on the loungewear momentum that he experienced in Las Vegas. He mentioned that buyers were interested in trends in neon, lime, pink, mauve, rose and paprika in addition to spin-dyes and soft tie-dyes.

While he has faith in the quality of his goods and the buyer following they generate, Gandolfo noted that there is a unique benefit to working with CALA San Francisco.

"Everybody that is in the women's



CALA San Francisco show floor

contemporary market, 80 percent of them are here—jewelry, clothing and accessories," he said. "Look out the window to the left and you see the Golden Gate Bridge. Look out from the center window, you'll see **Alcatraz**, and, if you look out to the right, there is **Fisherman's Wharf**. I don't know if there is another show that gives you this ambiance."

Echoing this sentiment was Ross Martin, vice president of sales for **E Victor Gabriel Inc.**, who felt the show provided a boutique atmosphere.

"There is going to be something for everyone at CALA. It's a great atmosphere. It's fast and easy," he said.

Representing European lines such as **NÖR Denmark** and **MC Planet by Innate**, Martin was focused on Spring 2020 trends, with wholesale price points starting at \$79 and moving up to \$300 for outerwear.

"I think linens are going to come back strong for Spring," he said. "A lot of my buyers are loving prints with the black-and-white scheme. Chartreuse green is making a big comeback, also the **Hermès** orange and canary yellow." ●



KENNY GANDOLFO

Z Supply booth

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Levi's to Acquire Assets from South American Distributor

Levi Strauss & Co. announced on Sept. 3 that it will spend more than \$35 million to acquire all of the operational assets related to its **Levi's** and **Dockers** brands from **The Jeans Company**. The company serves as Levi Strauss & Co.'s distributor in Chile, Peru and Bolivia.

The Santiago, Chile-headquartered TJC owned 80 Levi's and Dockers retail stores as well as distribution for the region's multi-brand retailers and logistical operations within these Latin American countries.

"Over the course of our 30-year partnership, TJC has enhanced the market position of the Levi's and Dockers brands in Chile, Peru and Bolivia," Roy Bagattini, president of the Americas region at LS&Co, said in a statement. "We

believe the acquisition of these assets will build on the strong foundation established by TJC and position us to accelerate growth across the Andean region."

Bringing Levi's retail and logistical operations for Chile, Bolivia and Peru in-house will have an estimated impact of \$20 million on Levi Strauss & Co., according to a Levi's statement. The impact on revenue will be distributed evenly between the third and fourth quarters of the fiscal 2019 year. The company does not expect any similar impact in 2020.

"Deploying capital through organic acquisitions is a key part of our long-term strategy to become a world-class omnichannel retailer," Harmit Singh, chief financial officer of LS&Co, said in a statement. "This transaction will further

diversify our business, create operational synergies and enhance shareholder value."

Latin America has historically been an important market for Levi Strauss & Co. Last year, it dramatically increased its presence in Mexico City. It also opened its first Latin American flagship in the Mexican capital in March 2018. The 10,000-square-foot flagship offers Levi's lines such as its **Made & Crafted** and **Levi's Authorized Vintage** collections.

"Opening this new store on one of Mexico City's most iconic streets sets the Levi's brand at the center of culture in Latin America," Bagattini said in a 2018 statement.

—Andrew Asch

Vegan Fashion Week Returns to Los Angeles



Vegan Fashion Week February 2019

Returning to Los Angeles for its second installment, **Vegan Fashion Week**, the ethical-fashion runway and trade-show event, will be hosted Oct. 10–15. Produced under the theme "Fashion Is Activism," this installment of VFW challenges the apparel industry to explore ecology and climate-change connections to fashion by education regarding innovation, ethics, science, technology and legal practices. Following the success of the inaugural event in February, founder Emmanuelle Rienda chose to maintain a presence in Los

Angeles due to the city's deep roots in conscientious fashion.

"I have been thinking about how to sustainably develop the movement. A good thing to focus on is Los Angeles as the world's ethical-fashion destination," explained Rienda. "It's important to keep going with that story and gain support from organizations toward a stronger way."

A launch event will be hosted at the **Theatre at Ace Hotel** on the evening of Oct. 10, complete with fashion and music, including a performance by Kate Nash. There will also be an awards ceremony to recognize high-profile vegan advocates such as performer Miley Cyrus, actor Natalie Portman and fashion stylist Tara Swennen, who has worked with actor Kristin Stewart.

Following an online public-voting process that will take place from mid-September until October 8, a final decision will be made by a jury of judges, which includes actor Emily Deschanel, designer Chloé Trujillo and Karen Rappaport. Eight categories will be highlighted including fashion design, furniture design, photography and modeling.

"We are trying to highlight and support the vegan creatives in different areas, not only fashion design. Being vegan is a lifestyle, it's not only about fashion. We are celebrating people who are really moving the industry and the world forward,"

she said. "I wanted to highlight this in the most creative and appealing way so people will understand that it is beautiful to be cruelty free."

Oct. 14–15, Vegan Fashion Week will host **Vegan World**, a vegan-fashion trade show that will occupy the penthouse of the **California Market Center**, located in the **Los Angeles Fashion District**. A second edition of **The Future of Fashion** conference, which launched in October 2018, will continue the discussion concerning issues facing the fashion industry, with input from designers, scientists, policymakers and media.

In addition to the ethical shopping opportunities on the show floor, the event will also include a vegan lounge, a vegan-clothing swap and experiential activations. For this edition of VFW, Rienda is committed to establishing a connection between cruelty-free fashion and nature through reducing the environmental impact of the event.

"We've launched the first vegan-fashion trade show in the world. It is important because we are cruelty free but also trying to care about the environment by including sustainability inside the event," she said. "This is a new kind of fashion industry and a new kind of trade show."

—Dorothy Crouch



Emmanuelle Rienda

TRADE SHOWS

ISS Orlando Canceled

The Orlando, Fla., edition of the **Imprinted Sportwear Shows**, trade events for suppliers of decorated apparel and T-shirt blanks, was canceled Sept. 3 due to threats from Hurricane Dorian as the storm's winds were projected to potentially reach 110 miles per hour if it reached Florida's east coast, according to the **National Hurricane Center**. ISS Orlando was scheduled to run Sept. 5–7 at the **Orange County Convention Center** in Orlando, Fla.

"We are extremely disappointed that we cannot stage the 2019 ISS Orlando," a statement from ISS management said. "Hurricane Dorian continues to pose a serious threat to Florida and the East Coast. Canceling the show allows those in the storm's path to focus on preparing their families, businesses and communities and prevents those traveling from outside the area from coming to an unsafe situation."

More than 3,000 people typically attend ISS Orlando. But about 4,800 people had registered for the September show,

said Joshua Carruth, ISS' director.

The trade-show statement also guaranteed that no cancellation fees would be charged. ISS parent company **Emerald Expositions** had also canceled the **Surf Expo** trade show, which was scheduled to run Sept. 5–7 in Orlando as well.

The next scheduled ISS Orlando show date is April 2–4, 2020, Carruth said. It will run in conjunction with the **International Sign Association's International Sign Expo**.

"There's synergy in print-minded businesses," Carruth said. "It lines up for our clientele."

ISS also produces other trade shows across America, including shows in Atlantic City, N.J.; Fort Worth, Texas; Long Beach, Calif.; and Baton Rouge, La.

For September 2020, Emerald Expositions has not scheduled another ISS Orlando trade show, but Senior Vice President Roy Turner wants members of the event's

community to look to the future.

"We have a show coming up at the end of the month in Fort Worth, so what we would be looking for is the exhibitor and attendee focus to be on that show, Oct. 3–5." ISS Fort Worth will be hosted at the **Fort Worth Convention Center**.

Earlier this year, Emerald announced that the show's name would be changed to **Impressions Expo**, which would better reflect the show's connection to *Impressions* magazine, which is a trade publication and sponsor of the show. The name change is expected to be made formal at the ISS trade show in Long Beach Jan. 17–19, 2020.

Dov Charney, the founder of **Los Angeles Apparel**, exhibits at the ISS Long Beach show. He said that the cancellation of the Orlando show would affect the industry. "But it won't affect it for the long term," Charney said. "ISS is an important organization. The industry would cease to function without ISS."—A.A.

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