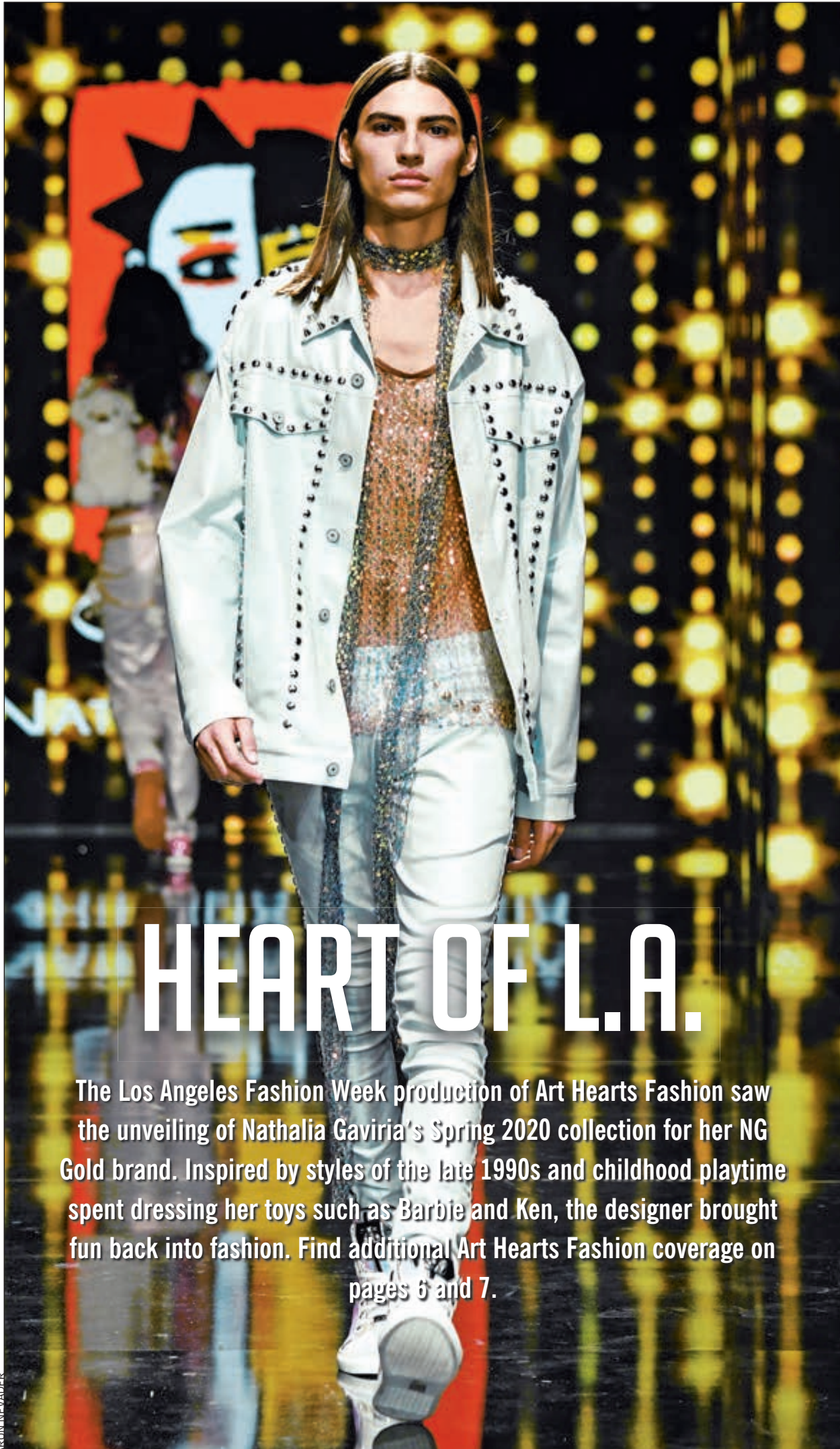


CALIFORNIA Apparel News

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR **74** YEARS

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HEART OF L.A.

The Los Angeles Fashion Week production of Art Hearts Fashion saw the unveiling of Nathalia Gaviria's Spring 2020 collection for her NG Gold brand. Inspired by styles of the late 1990s and childhood playtime spent dressing her toys such as Barbie and Ken, the designer brought fun back into fashion. Find additional Art Hearts Fashion coverage on pages 6 and 7.

ARJIN NEVADER

RETAIL

ABG Nearing In on Closing Barneys Deal

On Oct. 31, **Authentic Brands Group** was in grasping distance of acquiring influential yet troubled retailer **Barneys New York Inc.** In a hearing at the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, Judge Cecilia G. Morris approved ABG's \$271.4 million bid to take over Barneys, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in August.

The ruling left a small window open for another bidder to submit a higher bid. The deal officially closes on Nov. 1. ABG's rivals could scramble and assemble a more lucrative offer, according to media reports.

On Oct. 24, ABG claimed that it had wrapped up the deal to acquire Barneys. The announcement was upended when a competitor, Sam Ben-Avraham, submitted a rival bid. He also mounted a "Save Barneys" social-media campaign that gained more than 19,000 signatures supporting his group's bid.

➔ [Barneys page 2](#)

REAL ESTATE

In a Time of Few Mall Developments, New Mall Debuts, Another Mall Remodels

By **Andrew Asch** Retail Editor

A new retail center has opened in Long Beach, Calif., as another mall is scheduled to wrap up the first phase of a \$20 million remodel in Santa Barbara, Calif.

The Oct. 14 debut of the **2nd & PCH** retail center in Long Beach and the Nov. 15 unveiling of a remodel of the main section of the **Paseo Nuevo** center in Santa Barbara, are two of a small group of mall-development hot spots in California, which was once one of the hubs of mall development in the world.

Only a couple of new malls were built from the ground up in California this year, and 2nd & PCH was one of them.

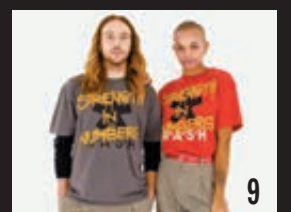
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INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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Hurley Acquired by Bluestar Alliance

Nike Inc. announced that it has sold the Costa Mesa, Calif.-headquartered **Hurley International** to **Bluestar Alliance LLC** for an undisclosed sum.

Hurley's new owners plan to look for increased licensing opportunities for the brand, said Joey Gabbay, Bluestar's chief executive officer. "This is a transformative acquisition for Bluestar as Hurley's international footprint will enhance Bluestar's reach around the world," he said in a statement.

"We look forward to building upon the existing Hurley network and expanding to additional countries with the deep relationships that already exist within the Bluestar portfolio of brands," he said. "We see Hurley continuing to evolve into a 360-degree lifestyle brand with action sports playing a key role."

Bluestar is a brand management company based in New York City. Its family of brands includes **Bebe**, **Tahari**, **Kensie**, **Limited Too**, **Brookstone**, **Nanette Lepore**, **Catherine Malandrino**, **Joan Vass** and **English Laundry**. On Oct. 30, **B. Riley Financial** announced that it would join Bluestar as an investor in the Hurley brand. The Los Ange-

les-headquartered B. Riley announced that it had established a brand-investment portfolio and would hold the majority ownership of the assets and intellectual property of **Catherine Malandrino**, **English Laundry**, **Joan Vass**, **Kensie Girl**, **Limited Too** and **Nanette Lepore**.

The sale ends Hurley's 17-year run at the footwear-and-apparel giant. Nike acquired the influential action-sports brand for an undisclosed amount in 2002 but had been investigating a sale of Hurley since July.

Bob Hurley, the founder of his self-named brand, was considered a pioneer in action-sports styles. Before starting a clothing business, he worked as an innovative surfboard shaper. In 1983, he acquired the U.S. rights to the Australian surf brand **Billabong**. After guiding Billabong to domestic popularity, he started Hurley International in 1999. It became noteworthy for working with popular rock bands such as **Blink-182** to change the perception of the label into a lifestyle brand, according to media reports. Hurley also created a high profile in the surf world for sponsoring surf competitions. From 2009 to 2012

it was the major sponsor of the **U.S. Open of Surfing**. Since 2013, **Vans** has served as the major sponsor.

The Hurley deal has similarities to **Kering's** sale of the action-sports and lifestyle brand **Volcom**, said Greg Weisman, an attorney with **Ritholz Levy Fields LLP**, who works with action-sports brands. He said that Nike's support and sponsorship of surf competitions was appreciated by the wider surfing community, but Nike's relationship with Hurley never entirely fit. Most surfers ride boards barefoot. Unlike skateboarding, there is no technical footwear made for the sport.

"I hope the new buyer keeps all of the interesting and creative people that made up the DNA of Hurley," Weisman said. "But multi-brand houses like **Iconix** and Bluestar may be looking to cut overhead. Time will tell."

Hurley also made a splash with the design of its performance boardshort, the Phantom and has worked on and sold collaboration lines such as **Hurley x Carhartt**. The collection with the workwear brand Carhartt was released recently.—*Andrew Asch*

IMPORT / EXPORT

USTR to Consider Extension of Tariff Exclusions on \$34 Billion of Chinese Imports

As the leaders of the United States and China continue to negotiate new trade terms and navigate through tariff increases implemented on imported goods, the office of the **United States Trade Representative** made an announcement on Oct. 28 regarding exclusions. On Nov. 1, the USTR will begin a process to consider an extension on exclusions that were

granted in December of 2018 on July 6, 2018, tariffs. The exclusions are scheduled to expire on Dec. 28, and comments regarding exclusions may be submitted until Nov. 30.

In a Federal Register notice, the office of the USTR established guidelines for the decision-making process regarding exemption extensions.

"The USTR will evaluate the possible extension of each exclusion on a case-by-case basis. The focus of the evaluation will be whether, despite the first imposition of these additional duties in July 2018, the particular product remains available only from China," according to the notice by Joseph Barloon, general counsel for the USTR. "In addition, the USTR will continue to consider whether the imposition of additional duties on the products covered by the exclusion will result in severe economic harm to the commenter or other U.S. interests."

This announcement followed a decision by the White House to not implement an additional 5 percent tariff, from 25 percent to 30 percent, on \$250 billion in goods imported from China, which was originally scheduled to be enacted on Oct. 15. According to the **Associated Press**, this decision was made after China agreed to purchase between \$40 billion and \$50 billion in agricultural products from the United States.—*Dorothy Crouch*

RETAIL

Barneys *Continued from page 1*

"It's still a relevant business," Ben-Avraham said of Barneys. "A lot of people depend on business with Barneys. A lot of its employees still go to work. They are confused by the fake news. It is very irresponsible to make the announcement." Ben-Avraham did not return a *California Apparel News* request for comment after the hearing.

Former Barneys owner David Jackson also was putting together a bid for the company.

Saks Fifth Avenue is scheduled to become a retail partner for Barneys in the U.S. and Canada. The ABG statement said that it will selectively license the Barneys name around the world. While this agreement will allow the luxury destination to remain in business, some in the industry fear the transition is going to end Barneys reputation as an enclave for a discerning consumer.

"We will mourn the loss of Barneys as one of the last places one could investigate new brands, new lines and new ideas at the couture level," said Ilse Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association**.

—A.A.

Week in Review

Von Maur Department Stores announced that it will open its fourth location in Michigan. Scheduled to open in fall 2020, the two-story, 122,000-square-foot Van Maur will be located at The Village of Rochester Hills in Rochester Hills, which is a 40-minute drive from Detroit. Located in a former Bon Ton space, the store is forecasted to employ 150 associates. Von Maur is on a growth spurt. In early October, it opened a location in Grand Rapids, Mich., and is scheduled to open a store in Madison, Wisc., in fall 2021.

Black Friday is forecasted to enjoy an uptick of shoppers going to physical stores, according to a survey from Genesys, a customer-service, business-consulting and professional-services company that offers products such as PureCloud. The survey found that 39 percent—2 percent more than the 2018 survey—intended to shop in physical stores on Black Friday while 37 percent did not want to go Black Friday shopping because the stores are too busy.

Hemster recently introduced on-demand tailoring services to retailers. Diane von Furstenberg, Outdoor Voices and Alo Yoga have partnered with the New York-based Hemster to provide altering to their customers. On Oct. 16, Hemster announced that it raised \$4 million in post-seed funding. Bullpen Capital led the funding round. Also participating were Hustle Fund, Oyster Ventures, The Fund and FJ Labs. Hemster's total funding has reached \$5 million with the recent round of financing. The on-demand tailoring company will use the investment to expand markets, increase staffing and operations.

Coach will be the first luxury brand to produce a float in Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, it was announced Oct. 30. For the 93rd annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, scheduled to take place Nov. 28, Coach will produce a float called Remy in the City. The float will feature Coach's mascot, the dinosaur Remy, said Susan Tercero, executive producer of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. "On Thanksgiving Day, Remy, the fearless fashion dino, will capture the imaginations and hearts of millions as she makes her glittering way down the streets of Manhattan," Tercero said. Coach also will produce a Remy-themed collection featuring leather goods, footwear and T-shirts, which will be available at Macy's and *Macys.com* on Nov. 15.

Eva Chen is Instagram's head of fashion partnerships and a children's book author. Call it synergy—Chen has published a children's book titled "Juno Valentine and the Fantastic Fashion Adventure." The picture book follows the fashion crisis of the plucky girl Juno Valentine. It's a school-picture day and her mom and dad have opposite ideas of what they want her to wear in the photo, according to a synopsis from publisher Macmillan. Juno also has to find her brother, who has disappeared into a magical hall of shoes. While looking for her brother, Juno receives guidance from gymnast Simone Biles, former first lady Michelle Obama, as well as actress Audrey Hepburn and renowned markswoman Annie Oakley. The book was released on Oct. 29. On Nov. 1, Chen and illustrator Derek Desierto are scheduled to make an appearance and sign books at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, Calif.



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In Los Angeles, Shima Seiki Seeks to ‘Knitify the World’

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Within its new space, which opened in March, Japanese machine manufacturer **Shima Seiki** hosted its second G3D seminar in its fresh showroom. The first event in the Arts District space was held earlier this year, focused on a “Yarn to Shelf” manufacturing approach to apparel, while the recent session, hosted Oct. 23 and 24, adhered to the theme “Knitify the World.”

“This time we wanted to focus on our theme ‘Knitify the World,’ which we announced at the **International Textile Machinery Association** in Barcelona earlier this year,” Sales and Senior Business Development Manager Hayato Nishi explained. “We wanted to recap that in our L.A. showroom for the U.S. customers who couldn’t make it to Barcelona. Before, we were focusing more on apparel brands, but this time we had more research and development and yarn mills.”

While many people perceive knitting to simply be related to sweaters, Shima Seiki has been focused on showcasing the ways in which knit practices can be applied to a variety of apparel items, including safety apparel and footwear, but also across other industries including architecture.

Not resting on their laurels, the company’s event organizers are already planning for a spring 2020 event and noted that interest in sustainability continues to grow with each meeting as more emerging brands and industry leaders are adopting greener practices. This trend became apparent as speakers and attendees during this recent event shared information to improve manufacturing.

“Our G3D seminars are a little more casual and broken down so we can have these in-depth sessions and networking times to interact and become one Shima family, sharing Shima stories to gain real-life perspective to plug into their next development or become inspired for a new business endeavor,” Nishi said. “We want to lower the barrier to entry to this knitting industry.”

One of those attendees was Stevan Stephan, a **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College** graduate who was interested in haute couture but left the industry behind 10 years ago.



Lysanne Latulippe of String Theory



Andre West of the Zeis Textile Extension program at North Carolina State University's Wilson College of Textiles

For Stephan, the event served as an opportunity to consider returning to the industry as he listened to presentations from industry experts such as **String Theory’s** Lysanne Latulippe and **Parkdale Mills’** Cheryl Smyre.

“I have an idea and am trying to meet a manufacturer to produce in limited quantities,” Stephan said. “It’s more about integrating cultural and folkloric patterns into a garment to make it more interesting but more wearable. Before, I was more interested in men’s clothing, but a lot of women’s clothing, particularly knits, are more interesting.”

During her presentation “String Theory: Sustainability in Knitwear,” Latulippe discussed creating classic pieces through quality craftwork, materials and more-efficient manufacturing. A knitter for the last 20 years, Latulippe founded String Theory 10 years ago with a focus on creating patterned textiles such as those used in her Supersymmetry scarf design. The product is a sharable single scarf that can be split into two for sharing between two people.

“With more growth in sustainability, it’s about knitting on demand. We are not doing mass production. I knit what I need and don’t waste a lot of yarn. With the whole-garment tech-

nology I really don’t cut any fabrics,” she said. “With the Supersymmetry project, it’s about bringing meaning to a product. You can customize the pattern on it and share it with someone you love.”

By agreeing to speak at the Shima Seiki event, Latulippe felt that she was able to connect with others who are passionate about textile and apparel. Through sharing information, attendees and speakers could inform and learn from each other regarding solutions to reduce waste.

“The focus for the sustainability was about less is more. You don’t really need to buy all these things,” she said. “If there is cotton waste created from my cotton yarn, it is sent to a lady who transforms it into paper. If there is enough, I have it sent back and I can wrap scarves in my own paper or write these notes to my customers.”

Attendee Terrica Preston agrees and was interested in exploring how her peers are adopting eco-friendlier practices. As a tailor at **Levi’s Tailor Shop**, Preston is pursuing higher education at Los Angeles’ **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** to achieve her goal of becoming an environmentally friendly textile designer. In addition to the sustainable sessions from the first day, she was also pleased with the presentation from Andre West, the director of the Zeis Textile Extension program at **North Carolina State University’s** Wilson College of Textiles.

“In Los Angeles, fashion connoisseurs need to see that there is more that we can do to reduce waste. We waste so much. With this area so close to Skid Row, you can see so many garments on the ground. Stop the waste going to landfills,” she said. “Involvement is key, and there is a lot of knowledge here. They brought good speakers who had a lot of information to share.” ●

REAL ESTATE

Malls *Continued from page 1*

Another was the **One Paseo** retail center in Del Mar, Calif. It opened in March. Only a couple of new malls were opened because there is less of the raw material that new projects need to get developed.

Large tracts of open land are a rare find in crowded coastal California, said Larry Kosmont, president of **Kosmont Companies**, a Los Angeles–headquartered real-estate and economic-development-services firm. Also, consumers’ shopping preferences have changed, and digital commerce has taken market share away from malls, Kosmont said. The shift has cut into the demand for malls.

But opportunity remains for retail centers, said Jean Paul Wardy, president of **CenterCal LLC**, the El Segundo, Calif.–based company that developed 2nd & PCH. CenterCal also developed **The Veranda** mall in Concord, Calif. It was one of the few new malls to open in California in 2018. Another one was **Palisades Village**, the **Caruso** mall in Los Angeles’ Pacific Palisades neighborhood.

Residents of well-to-do areas of Long Beach such as the Belmont Shores and Naples neighborhoods have to make long drives to shop at traditional malls such as **Lakewood Center**. Shopping for much of these affluent Long Beach neighborhoods is served by boutique districts such as 2nd Street in Belmont Shores or retail centers with supermarkets, big boxes and cinemas, such as the **Marina Pacifica Mall** and **Marketplace Long Beach**.

Wardy said that the absence of traditional malls in that area attracted CenterCal.

“There was a lot of data that showed the customer was there. But there were no stores serving these customers,” he said. “There was a long list of retailers that had never landed in Long Beach for one reason or another.”

Fortunately, some property was becoming available. Raymond Lin and his family were seeking to redevelop the **Seaport Marina Hotel** in Long Beach, which happens to be located by the corner of 2nd Street and Pacific Coast Highway.

For four years, CenterCal was in talks with Lin on bringing a retail center to the space. Negotiations were successful. In 2017, the hotel was demolished, and the 215,000-square-foot



2nd & PCH



Paseo Nuevo rendering

retail center was constructed in its place. Wardy declined to state how much money it cost to develop the center, but a 2017 *Los Angeles Times* story said it was \$100 million.

2nd & PCH is anchored by a **Whole Foods** supermarket, which opened on Oct. 23, but fashion will be a big deal at the space. Fashion retail is anchored by an **Urban Outfitters** and a **Lululemon Athletica** that also opened on Oct. 24.

Other fashion retailers include **Johnny Was**, **Free People** and a location for **Linne’s**, which is a Seal Beach, Calif., boutique. Surf brand **Vissla** is also scheduled to open a boutique, according to the retail center’s website.

Wardy said that 2nd & PCH is about 95 percent leased. He forecasted that the majority of the people going to the mall will be Long Beach residents. Other shoppers will be drawn from around the region. CenterCal is not taking customer traffic for granted.

Along with seeking out new retailers, 2nd & PCH will be producing events to draw in customers. “There will be movies in the park, concerts and art activities. We do a lot to create a place where customers can be with loved ones and enjoy themselves. We like to try a lot of things and see what resonates. There’s a lot of trial and error,” Wardy explained. “We’re being guided by what the customer wants.”

Owned by **Pacific Retail Capital Partners**, Paseo Nuevo will be completing the first phase of a \$20 million remodel for a center that was introduced in 1990, said Mary Lynn Harms-Romo, Paseo Nuevo’s senior marketing manager.

A lot of the remodeling costs have paid for new brick pavers in the open-air mall as well as a new infrastructure for utilities such as cables that provide networking for the retail center in downtown Santa Barbara.

The remodel will also create common areas where shoppers can hang out. These lounges will feature a fire pit, outdoor seating as well as places to play games such as the traditional Italian bowling game of Bocce.

“Creating a nicer environment will attract better retailers,” Harms-Romo said. “Shopping centers are changing, and we’re trying to be ahead of the curve. It’s going to be more of a destination for multiple things, not just a shopping center.”

Paseo Nuevo is anchored by a **Nordstrom**. Other tenants include a **Gap** and a **Pacific Sunwear**. Much of the center has been leased, Harms-Romo said, because the center offers short-term leases. A couple of years ago, a puppet theater leased a storefront for 90 days. Santa Barbara–based **Deckers Inc.** also has produced pop-up shops at Paseo Nuevo. ●



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TRADE SHOW REPORT

Returning to Los Angeles, Vegan Fashion Week Goes Ethical and Green

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

The second edition of Emmanuelle Rienda's **Vegan Fashion Week** took place in downtown Los Angeles under the theme "Fashion Is Activism," which not only focused on cruelty-free fashion but also examined the apparel industry's impact on the planet's ecological systems. Held Oct. 10-15, Vegan Fashion Week coincided with Los Angeles' mainstream fashion-week productions and **L.A. Market Week**, affording access to an expanded audience. It was also during this time that the office of California Governor Gavin Newsom announced on Oct. 12 that he had signed into law AB 44, which banned the sale of new fur—a first for any state in the United States.

"Being vegan is not about the clothes you wear or the food you eat. It's a real lifestyle and understanding of values to create a cruelty-free world," explained Rienda as she addressed the audience on Oct. 10. "We can evolve as a society and try to be compassionate to all species. This is something that is very real."

An opening-night celebration was hosted at the **Theatre at Ace Hotel** on Oct. 10, which included performances by artists such as Kate Nash and an awards ceremony for the most influential vegan creative leaders. Receiving the award for best vegan designer was Nicole Blue, while Constantin Le Fou, the **Vegan Club** founder, won for best artist.

Los Angeles-based designer Chloe Trujillo co-hosted the opening event and noted the evolution toward sustainable manufacturing methods.

"Even larger commercial brands are recognizing the importance of this path, especially when it comes to trade programs, manufacturing methods and conditions," she said. "As public support for these initiatives continues to grow, we'll continue to see more leaders step up globally and make bold deci-

sions to make sustainability the norm, not just the aspiration."

The event continued at the **California Market Center** Oct. 14-15 under a traditional trade-show model as **Vegan World**, a destination in which vegan apparel-and-lifestyle brands exhibited their goods. On the night of Oct. 14, Rienda hosted a fashion show with many designs relying on upcycled and recycled materials.

At the booth for the Los Angeles apparel brand **Blue District**, founder Cici Voise was excited to introduce attendees to her brand. Using nontoxic dyes, recycled polyester and nylon, as well as more-natural options including cotton, Modal, viscose, ramie, and **Tencel**, Voise noted that she approaches manufacturing with green intentions but she is always searching to progress further into sustainable apparel.



"My footwear is polyurethane, but hopefully for next spring I am going to do cactus leather," she said. "The

supplier says it's as durable as any other faux leather, but it's also green. Footwear is difficult because you need it to be strong, waterproof, and I want to prove that you can have high-quality footwear."

As a Vegan World attendee, **Coalition Apparel Inc.** Public Relations Manager Nicole Lau appreciated the various panels that were featured. She found time to explore these options despite planning for the Los Angeles-based cruelty-free brand's own celebration with an event on Oct. 16. The focus on sourcing vegan materials was particularly helpful, according to Lau, yet she noted that sustainability doesn't rely solely on creating new products with green materials.

"Sustainability is an overarching point. It's about recycling clothes," she said. "Sustainability is also about the ability to be able to recycle materials. In the fashion show, there was a piece made out of a mattress. They repurposed the entire product into a wearable style."

Calendar

Nov. 4

Coast
Moore Building
Miami
Through Nov. 5

Nov. 5

CALA
Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
Through Nov. 6

Outdoor Retailer Winter Market
Colorado Convention Center
Denver
Through Nov. 7

Nov. 11

CALA
Denver Merchandise Mart

Denver
Through Nov. 12

Nov. 13

Performance Days—Functional Fabric Fair
Messe München
Munich
Through Nov. 14

Nov. 19

Kingpins New York
Pier 36 Basketball City
New York
Through Nov. 20

Nov. 20

Texfusion London
Business Design Centre

London
Through Nov. 21

Nov. 24

DG Expo Fabric & Trim Show
San Francisco Hilton Hotel
Financial District / Chinatown
San Francisco
Through Nov. 25

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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2(X)1st



Anthony Rubio



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Chavez

Art Hearts Fashion Sets the City Beat During Los Angeles Fashion Week

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

From the edgy to the ethereal, designers hailing from different style backgrounds unveiled Spring/Summer 2020 designs during **Art Hearts Fashion** at Los Angeles event space the **Majestic Downtown**, a 30,000-square-foot space that dates back to 1924. With Erik Rosete at the helm, this season's production was hosted Oct. 17–20

and featured Los Angeles–based designers and international clothiers.

Hitting the runway were California-based Art Hearts veterans including swimwear brand **Argyle Grant**, **Fernando Alberto Atelier**, Kenneth Barlis, Kentaro Kameyama, Merlin Castell, Nathalia Gaviria and **Venus Prototype**, which featured structured vinyl creations. A strong California presence was also found through presentations from **Dulce Bestia**, Giovanni

Testi, Tony Iniguez, Michael Ngo, Rosete's **Mister Triple X**, Puey Quiñones, **Sarmy** and Usama Ishtay.

Creating an artistic experience, the Art Hearts Fashion producers blended contemporary works of art with clothing that ranged from classic, tailored pieces to avant-garde designs. Los Angeles designer Michael Costello closed the final night, showcasing flowing gowns and intricately designed formal-wear featuring delicate embellishments. ●



Cross For God



Dair Design



Dulce Bestia



Endure. Defy. Rise



Exes Italia



Fernando Alberto Atelier



Giovanni Testi



Kahini



Kenneth Barlis



Kentaro Kameyama



Lila Nikole



Lulu Et Gigi

FASHION



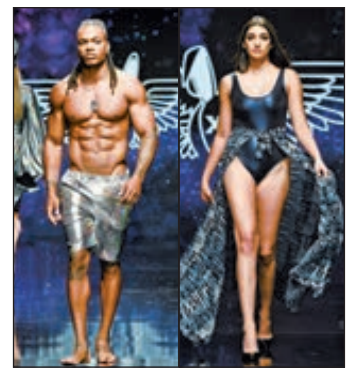
Merlin Castell



Michael Costello



Michael Ngo



Mister Triple X



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ACTIVEWEAR



After Charting a Course With New Tech, Cute Booty Lounge Tries Bricks-and-Mortar

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

If there's a new way to spread a message about fashion or develop a new sales channel, Kelly Nishimoto has been in the vanguard.

In 2008, Nishimoto shifted all sales of her lifestyle-and-active brand **Cute Booty Lounge** to e-commerce, much of it sold on her direct-to-consumer channel, *cutebooty.com*. A few years later, she started communicating to her customers primarily through social media. And she was a host of TLC channel's bridal-dress makeover show "Something Borrowed, Something New" from 2011 to 2014.

The inspiration for Cute Booty Lounge started in 2003. Nishimoto was designing her now-defunct, self-named **Kelly Nishimoto** line. She was shopping for leggings and sweatpants, but everything she tried on seemed to flatten curves rather than accentuate them. To experiment, she took a pair of sweats and added a piece of elastic on the back seam. The elastic gave more room for curves. She later experimented with placing scrunchy pockets around the back seam of her leggings. These details accentuated the curves even more.

Nishimoto liked what she saw, but she didn't know if anyone else would. Her sweatpants remained at the back of a closet for a year. One day, she was in a rush to drive to the gym and she put on the sweatpants she had ignored. During her training session, she got a lot of compliments from women who asked her where she had purchased her sweats.

She made more sweatpants for herself in different colors. She was getting enough interest where she was confident in taking a risk on developing some activewear styles. Adding a new feature, Nishimoto designed a rounded pocket placed at the bottom of the pant seat. She said that it gives the illusion of a more toned bottom. "There's nothing lifting it up or pushing it up," she said. "It's just a strategically placed pocket."

During a 2005 **Mercedes Benz Los Angeles Fashion Week** runway show for the Kelly Nishimoto brand, she introduced the active styles with ruched pockets and a curvy silhouette. Sales for the activewear pieces began to outpace her contemporary line. When a partnership with an investor for the Kelly Nishimoto line was not renewed, she chose to focus on activewear styles and call the effort Cute Booty Lounge.

For her next move, Nishimoto is making the counterintuitive choice to open a bricks-and-mortar store in a mall. The Los Angeles-headquartered Nishimoto is scheduled to open a 3,500-square-foot shop, which also

will be called Cute Booty Lounge, on Nov. 7. It will be located at the **Westfield Topanga** mall in Los Angeles' Canoga Park section.

"Most people are not opening retail stores," she conceded about a market where physical retail remains important but has faced declining numbers.

But her business partner and significant other, Anthony Harris, suggested that the brand develop a flagship that would support social media. The brand will make content for its digital sites at the shop. Social-media influencers will be invited in to create content too.

"It's an experience for customers," she said of the shop. "We don't want people to just walk in and then leave with clothes. We want to provide a Cute Booty experience. It's not just for us. It's for the social-media influencers. They can pass along content to their followers."

The upcoming Cute Booty Lounge store will be located in a space across from a **Louis Vuitton** shop and a **Jimmy Choo** boutique. "We're rolling into a luxury section," she said of the new space. "To me we're the rebels moving into the luxury-goods area."

Along with frequently scouting new trends and technology, Nishimoto hopes to provide an alternative. With her current project, the moniker Cute Booty Lounge was meant to make people smile, make a statement and offer some truth in advertising.

"One of the things I hated about fashion is that people took it too seriously," she said. "They looked down on people who did not design like them. I told myself that when I have my own line I would always keep it fun, and I want to use real women for fit models. I always try to use a curvier girl. On social media and in stores, you want to have images that you can relate to."

Cute Booty Lounge employs 19 staffers and is made in Los Angeles. Nishimoto is the sole owner and creative director. She and her staff design prints for the line, which include florals, camos, animal prints and houndstooth with other looks available in solids.

Pieces are often assigned humorous names, such as a camouflage legging called Love Is a Battlefield. A legging with a floral pattern is dubbed A Rose I Suppose. The line also makes sports bras, sleepwear, thongs, jumpsuits and dresses. Styles are made in an extended size range that spans from XXS to XXXL. For the holidays, the line will introduce curvy sizes that feature clothes with more room for women with larger busts and hips and small waists.

Retail price points range from \$49 for a basic lifestyle legging with no scrunchy pockets to \$149 for elevated leggings and \$200 for jumpsuits and dresses. ●

W-A-S-H Makes a Statement While Flexing Its Creative Muscles

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

The lifestyle brand **We Are Simply Human** mixes cut-and-sew T-shirts and a punk, agitprop-style of graphics. It made a debut into the wholesale business at the **LA Men's Market**, which ran Oct. 15–16 at the **California Market Center**. The brand started in March and is primarily sold on its direct-to-consumer channel, wash-clothing.com.

The Los Angeles–headquartered W-A-S-H is helmed by fashion veterans Ido Gondelman and the husband-and-wife team of Jason and Denise Verhoeven. They manufactured the brand to make a statement and to flex some creative muscle, Gondelman said. The brand's graphics, such as in its Strength in Numbers T-shirt, evoke a shared humanity among people.

"People are stronger together than alone," Gondelman said. "Together we have power to make change."

Jason Verhoeven designed the now-defunct **Brown Label** denim brand in the mid-2000s and continues to work in product development for other brands. He and his manufacturing partners developed W-A-S-H's cut-and-sew crew-neck tees.

"It's not trendy or super baggy," he said. "It's a little wider



than the average T-shirt silhouette." They define the whole collection, which includes hoodies, sweatpants, jackets and knit caps, as gender neutral.

Jason Verhoeven and Gondelman both grew up in Canada, but they met each other in Los Angeles. Gondelman was trained as an artist and an animator. He started designing fashion as a hobby. When Verhoeven was selling Brown Label, Gondelman developed his own brand, **Kings of Glory**, which

also has ceased production. They partnered on trips across the United States looking to sell their brands to independent retailers.

While Gondelman continues to make digital and broadcast commercials for his company **CitizenIdo**, he has also continued to make fashion. In a studio in Burbank, Calif., Gondelman and the Verhoevens make custom dyes for their collection. The team also collaborates on graphics for the tees, which are intended to have a worn, vintage look.

Different categories of the brand's tees include the head of the Statue of Liberty depicted under a backdrop of an overcast sky. The graphic is mixed with the W-A-S-H logo, and the brand's motto, Strength in Numbers, is placed on the shirt in a graffiti-style font.

Other styles include a pocket tee with a stencil of a woman's lipstick-accentuated face bounded by the angry words "No One Really Cares." Another look features a raised fist bearing the brand's name, "We Are Simply Human."

Wholesale price points for the T-shirts are \$21.75. Proceeds from the label's sales go to nonprofits such as **DonorChoose**, who provides funds to public schools. ●

FOOTWEAR

House Shoes From Jill Burrows Lend Style to Staying at Home

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Feeling the need to remain fashionable at the most casual moments of her life, including spending downtime at home, Jill Burrows has long experienced a desire to own well-made slippers. Despite her thoughts that it would be easy to find a quality-made, stylish slipper that didn't resemble an accouterment to sleepwear, Burrows couldn't quite locate a proper fit for her vision.

"I wanted house shoes that weren't hot, fuzzy slippers," she said. "Even in the summertime, I wasn't finding something that was really fashionable. I didn't want to feel stripped down to pajamas all the time. It should be something that looked great even when I was at home."

While living in London, Burrows found traditional Moroccan babouches, which caught her eye as a potential design. Once she moved to Los Angeles and had a baby, Burrows became aware of the pollutants that could be tracked into her home and was committed to creating the product for which she had long searched, deciding in 2017 to launch her eponymous line of **Jill Burrows** house shoes.

"I moved to L.A., had a baby and was living in downtown Los Angeles. I stopped wearing shoes inside my house because when I walked inside from downtown it seemed disgusting to bring in these outdoor elements as my baby crawled on the floor," she explained. "I kept thinking, 'Other people must need these slippers as well,' so I looked into having them made on my own."

Initially, remaining true to the origin of the design was important, and Burrows wanted to source the slippers from Morocco, yet after a year of trying to make it work she found that the traditional pieces were cut wide, yielding a different fit than the house shoe she had envisioned. To tell a story of quality work performed by skilled workers who perfected their craft, Burrows decided to manufacture in Los Angeles, partnering with Rouben Thompson and his wife, Gemma.

"It's been wonderful to drive up to North Hollywood to work with them and make sure the fit is perfect," she said. "I love working with craftsmen, and I love to drive up to North Hollywood and work with them."

Using leather sourced from the United States, Italy and South America for the products' uppers, the collection relies on a type of foam for the lining that is often included in athletic shoes. The **Puron** foam affords long wear without breaking down.

"If you wear them on the weekends all day long, which so many people tell me they wear them every moment when they're home, the foams will wear out quickly, so I researched a resilient material," she said. "Puron will not flatten out."

For her winter collection, which is launching Nov. 4, Burrows is adding a new feature to two of her designs. A shearling lining will be included in a black-and-burgundy pair and a style in winter white with peach and tan details.

"They are lined with shearling from South America on the top because I find a lot of shearling slippers lined on top and bottom tend to overheat feet and the bottom shearling starts matting quickly," she explained. "The top is lined and warms your feet. The bottom is still lined with the Italian leather of the other slippers. They remain clean and, still, elegant."

Though these colors are new to the line, Burrows does maintain a few favorite colorways in an indigo blue that features a back of gold and a bright white, which includes a gold front and forest-green back. Her designs are primarily available to women in whole sizes 6–10, but she did create



a limited-edition men's collection in 9–13 for Holiday 2018. Due to her predominantly direct-to-consumer business model, Burrows will bypass repeating styles that don't perform well or will include them only seasonally, yet she will accept custom orders.

"It's demand and the seasonality," she explained. "I am such a small business that I have to pick and choose what is included in my inventory at any one time."

To promote Jill Burrows, the founder is exploring corporate-gifting partnerships that are popular during the holidays—with companies including luxury hotelier **PaliHouse** and British brand **Paul Smith**—and pop-up partnerships

with local retailers. This weekend, Burrows is collaborating for the second time with the Anki Spets–founded bedding shop **Area** in Beverly Hills, Calif., a partnership that will last through November. The showcase will also include products from **Lait** candles by Jennifer Rhee and ceramics artist Raina J. Lee to highlight the work of local Los Angeles design businesses that were founded by women.

"We wanted to create more foot traffic through collaborations because we want to showcase local designers who have a small footprint," explained Leah Cooper, an Area associate. "Jill is the perfect person. She started off with an idea and was so into the design aspect that it kind of made her obsessed, so we could relate to that."

Retailing between \$128 and \$138 per pair, Jill Burrows is available online at shopjillburrows.com and at select pop-up shops. ●

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