

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

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## SCHOOL COLORS

An FCI Fashion School presentation held on Oct. 10 at Phlym Studios in Los Angeles unveiled recent collections from student designers, such as this Jane Wu style, in addition to former pupils who are now frequently featured on international runways. For additional coverage, see pages 6 and 7.

TIM REGAS

### TRADE SHOW REPORT

## CALA Winds Down Its 2019 in San Francisco

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

While the November San Francisco edition of the CALA trade show isn't its final event of the year, it is the final installment in the city where it began, and event organizers are looking to finish 2019 strong as buyers and exhibitors become excited about opportunities that lie ahead in 2020. Hosted Nov. 5-6 at San Francisco's **Fort Mason**, the penultimate event of the CALA calendar was held following a June edition that saw record-breaking high temperatures and the launch of a Las Vegas edition of the trade-show brand in August.

Following this installment of CALA, organizers will head to Denver, where they will produce the brand's final show Nov. 11-12. Despite the shift to a 10 a.m.-7 p.m. schedule for its September edition in San Francisco, CALA organizers decided a return to a 9 a.m.-6 p.m. schedule would benefit

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### SURF REPORT

## Surf Rides Into Uncharted Waters After a String of Consolidations

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

When it was announced on Oct. 29 that **Nike Inc.** had sold the influential **Hurley International** brand, it was the latest deal that had many surf watchers questioning the direction of the surf industry.

"The last, true, privately held surf companies have all been basically sold off in one shape or form," said Greg Weisman, a lifelong surfer and an attorney with the firm **Ritholz Levy Fields LLP**, who has advised surf and action-sports companies throughout his career.

The Costa Mesa, Calif.-based Hurley was acquired by the branding-and-licensing house **Bluestar Alliance LLC** for an undisclosed sum. In April, **Authentic Brands Group**, a marketing, entertainment and branding company, acquired **Volcom**,

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## Boardriders Contain Cyberattack

**Boardriders Inc.** confirmed that its computer systems were attacked recently. The Huntington Beach, Calif.-based action-sports juggernaut did not identify the nature of the tech attack or when it happened. In a statement, the company described the attack as one that was quickly contained.

"Recently, Boardriders Inc. was exposed to an increasingly common computer virus that impacted some of our systems in some regions," the statement said. "Our IT teams have been working to quickly restore our systems to support our operations, which are now largely transacting and shipping normally. We are proud of how our teams have responded to this challenge, and we are incredibly grateful for their hard work. We also greatly appreciate our customers' and vendors' patience and support during this brief interruption." News of the attack was first reported on the Shop Eat Surf website.

Companies, municipalities and consumers are increasingly being attacked by cybercriminals who hijack computer systems

for ransom, said Shahin Kohan, president of the Los Angeles-headquartered **AIMS360** company, which makes software such as enterprise resource planning systems for the fashion industry.

Cybercriminals often want to be paid in bitcoin, which cannot be traced, Kohan said. "Some companies buy bitcoin and keep it around so they can resolve situations right away," he said.

Kohan recommended a few steps companies can take to prevent cybercrime. One is to place their systems on a secure cloud.

"They have comprehensive tools to look at every request coming into a system," he said. Another similar step is to use an artificial intelligence program to look at every request coming into a system in order to guarantee that the requests are legitimate.

"You also have to train your staff to not click on phishing emails," Kohan said. Opening an email requesting a company or a personal password, for example, can expose a company to cybercrime.—*Andrew Asch*

## Crocker Exits Bldwn

It was announced on Nov. 1 that Johnathan Crocker has left the **Bldwn** label, said Tommy James, the executive vice president and chief financial officer of the denim and lifestyle brand, which maintains its headquarters in Los Angeles. Crocker's two-year contract expired on Oct. 31, James said.

"Johnathan envisioned a relaunch of the brand as a modern American fashion brand, and he recruited and hired an excellent team to create and deliver his vision," James said in a statement. "The relaunch has generated

very positive reviews, and we look forward to continuing to build on the initial success that he achieved."

James will assume Crocker's duties, said a Bldwn representative. As of press time, there were no plans for a replacement. Crocker will pursue other endeavors, according to the company statement.

Bldwn has roots in Los Angeles and Kansas City, Mo., where brand founders Matt and Emily Baldwin started the company.

—*A.A.*

## Peck Exits Gap

After an almost 15-year run at **Gap Inc.**, which included four years as its president and chief executive officer, Art Peck is leaving the giant specialty retailer. The San Francisco-based company's board of directors announced Nov. 7 that Peck will step down from his leadership position and from the company's board.

Peck will leave the company after a brief transition, according to a Gap statement. Assuming responsibilities as president and chief executive officer on an interim basis will be Robert J. Fisher. He is the company's current non-executive chairman of the board and son of Gap Inc. founders Donald and Doris Fisher. Peck helped pave the road to Gap's future, Robert Fisher said.

"On behalf of the entire board, I want to thank Art for his many contributions to Gap Inc., spanning a nearly 15-year career with the company," Fisher said. "Under Art's tenure as CEO, we have made progress investing in capabilities that bode well for the future such as expanding the omni-channel customer experience and building our digital capabilities."

Peck's tenure was marked by the skyrocketing success of the company's **Old Navy** division. It was announced earlier this year that Old Navy will be spun off into a separate, publicly traded company. The past four years also were marked by sales for the Gap and **Banana Republic** divisions seeming to settle into a permanent state of doldrums. Paula Rosenblum, managing partner of market researchers **RSR Research**, said that while Peck was a distinguished executive he did not have what Gap Inc. needed.

"The guy's background is in management consulting. What Gap really needed was a merchant," Rosenblum said. "They needed to reduce stores. That wasn't rocket science. But it is a specialty store, and when a specialty-store product doesn't look much different than **Target**, you have to ask, 'Why does this exist?'"

Gap recently observed its 50th anniversary. When it started business in 1969, it embraced the hippie style of its hometown San Francisco and soon became known as a jeans-focused retailer.—*A.A.*

## Guess Announces New CFO

Katie Anderson was recently named chief financial officer for denim and contemporary lifestyle brand **Guess?, Inc.**, which is headquartered in Los Angeles. She replaces Sandeep Reddy, who will serve Guess until Dec. 1. Anderson will assume the brand's CFO responsibilities on Dec. 2, said Carlos Alberini, Guess's chief executive officer.

"We are very excited to welcome Katie into our company to lead our global finance, accounting, treasury, tax and strategy functions," Alberini said. "She brings great strategy and retail experience, strong leadership skills and tremendous passion to the role. I am very confident that Katie is the right leader and business partner to drive our team and our business to the next level of growth and profitability."

Before Guess, Anderson served in various financial jobs including at **California Pizza Kitchen** and rose to chief financial officer of the fast-casual chain. She also worked as CFO for **Sprinkles Cupcakes** and started her career in investment banking.

Guess currently runs 1,162 stores around the globe. Partners and distributors operate 562 additional retail stores worldwide. In August, the company released results for its second fiscal 2020 quarter. Its revenues increased 6 percent to \$683 million, according to a company statement.—*A.A.*

## Week in Review

**Galleries Lafayette** will open a new Paris department store, according to a statement from the retailer. On Nov. 12, it is scheduled to debut an 8,000-square-foot shop in the Panoramic building at Beaugrenelle, a shopping center in the French capital. The department store will offer styles for women, men and children. The merchandising mix will include established, premium and emerging brands. Nicolas Houzé, Galleries Lafayette's chief executive officer, said that 2019 was a busy year. "This new location in Paris, the third this year after we opened Galleries Lafayette Champs Elysées and Eataly Paris Marais, will enable us to better serve our clients in the west of the city in a setting that perfectly reflects the premium positioning of the Galleries Lafayette brand," he said in a statement.

**Bangladesh's High Court** recently imposed a six-month ban on Nirapon, an alliance of brands that oversees the monitoring of apparel factories in that South Asian nation. It's the latest story in a struggle on the direction of Bangladesh's giant apparel industry. Recently, the American Apparel & Footwear Association delivered a request to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed to support Nirapon and protect the safety of workers. In the letter, Rick Helfenbein, the president and chief executive officer of AAFA, urged the prime minister to recognize AAFA's position that Nirapon's work does not conflict with government objectives and stakeholder interests. In 2013, 1,134 Bangladeshi garment workers died in unsafe factories in the Rana Plaza fire.

**Zac Posen**, a wunderkind New York designer and "Project Runway" judge, closed his House of Z and Z Spoke brands, according to Posen's Instagram and media reports. The fashion brands' backers, including Ron Burkle of the Yucaipa Companies, had been trying to share their stake of the company for a while and found no takers. Posen's 60 employees are now out of jobs. Posen has received accolades for his red-carpet designs for stars such as Natalie Portman, Rihanna, Sofia Vergara, Princess Eugenie and Beyoncé. Posen still works as a creative director for the Brooks Brothers Women's Collection.

**Gert Boyle**, the public face and former chief executive officer of Columbia Sportswear, passed away Nov. 2 at the age of 95. Boyle gained notoriety for turning Columbia from an outfit that had sales of \$800,000 a year to one with revenues of \$2.8 billion in 2018, according to the *New York Times*. She not only possessed business smarts but, in 1984, was the star of a Columbia Sportswear advertising campaign in which she played the role of a "Tough Mother." She would talk about how Columbia's products were as tough and as durable as she is.

The **Women in Retail Leadership Circle** announced a re-branding campaign that includes a new logo and a redesigned website that it hopes will increase its membership. The Philadelphia-headquartered organization produces the Women in Retail Leadership Summit. The 7th annual summit is scheduled to run April 27-29, 2020, in Miami. More than 400 attendees are expected.

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# L.A. County Sees Uptick in Vacancy, Says CBRE Report

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

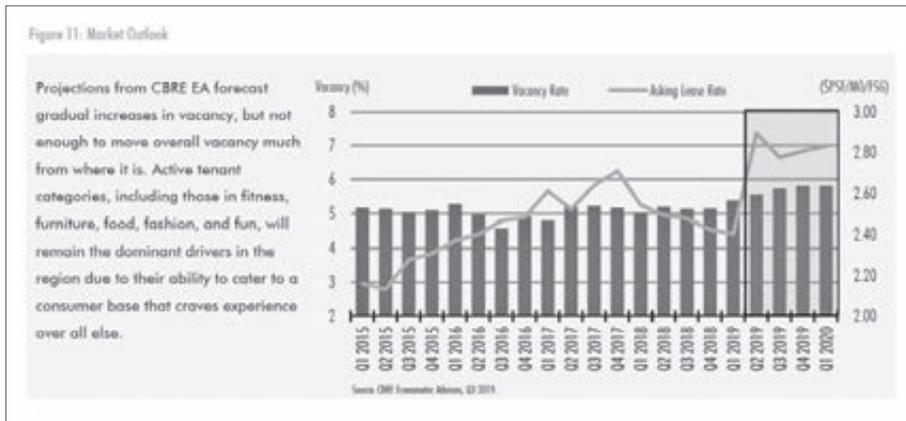
Vacancy for commercial properties hit 5.7 percent in Los Angeles County during the 2019 3rd quarter, according to a report released on Oct. 28 by commercial-real-estate services and investment firm **CBRE**.

It was a slight increase from the previous quarter, when vacancy was 5.4 percent, and the first quarter, when vacancy was measured at 5.1 percent. Closures of big-box stores such as **National Stores Fallas** and **Sears** contributed to vacancy in the county, previous reports said. While L.A. County is the address for world-renowned shopping districts such as Rodeo Drive, it also hosts malls such as the former **Westside Pavilion** that have been repurposed into creative office space.

Recent retail bankruptcies might bring more vacancies in the near future. Los Angeles-headquartered **Forever 21** declared bankruptcy in September. According to a Nov. 6 *Wall Street Journal* article, the fast-fashion retailer will close 88 U.S. stores. Forever 21 runs 20 locations in Southern California, though it is currently unknown if any of the stores in this region will close.

The CBRE report said that the majority of the Forever 21 stores are located in neighborhoods with low vacancy rates. Possible closures will give opportunities to new retailers who have not been able to move into areas that have experienced tight real-estate markets. Other spaces occupied by high-profile retailers will soon hang out “For Lease” signs. When it was announced that **Barneys New York** would be acquired by the **Authentic Brands Group**, the luxury retailer also revealed that it would close its bricks-and-mortar stores, including its Los Angeles location in Beverly Hills, Calif.

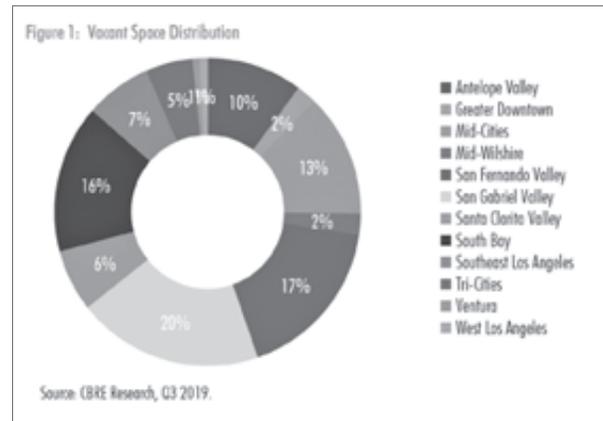
More commercial space became available this year when



**LF Stores** announced that it would shutter its fleet of 26 bricks-and-mortar stores. The store closures included locations in retail neighborhoods such as Robertson Boulevard and Larchmont Avenue in Los Angeles, as well as in Manhattan Beach, Calif.

The report was not all bad news, however, as there are opportunities in the Los Angeles County retail-real-estate scene, according to CBRE. Most leasing activity was marked by grocery stores and fitness centers. During the 3rd quarter, space totaling 20,000 square feet in Los Angeles County was leased by **Whole Foods**, **Gold’s Gym** and **Planet Fitness**. The report also looked forward to a number of new projects opening in Los Angeles’ northern districts, including the San Fernando Valley.

One of the notable projects forecasted to be completed in 2020 is **NoHo West**, a 570,000-square-foot mixed-use development in North Hollywood, Calif., located on Laurel Canyon Boulevard between Erwin and Oxnard streets. According to the property’s website and media reports, the 190,000-square-foot campus will feature a gym, a supermarket and a multiplex cinema. NoHo West is a joint venture between **GPI Companies** and **Merlone Geier Partners**, which has worked on properties such as the former **Laguna**



**Hills Mall**, currently being redeveloped in Laguna Hills, Calif.

Other major developments, according to the report, are the **Promenade 2035** in Woodland Hills, Calif. Currently under environmental review, the proposed development could feature 244,000 square feet of retail shops, restaurants, hotel space, 1,432 residential units and a 15,000-square-foot sports-and-entertainment center. If this project’s plans are approved, construction is forecasted to start in 2021, according to media reports.

Demolition also started at the **Sportsmen’s Lodge** in Studio City, Calif., during Labor Day weekend. For this project, look forward to more fitness centers and high-end supermarkets. Scheduled to move into the more than 80,000-square-foot site are 22 shops, an **Equinox** fitness center and an **Erewhon** supermarket. The project is scheduled to be open to the public in fall 2020.

CBRE also released a report for commercial real estate in Orange County. Vacancy rates inched up to 3.5 percent in Q3 2019 from 3.4 percent in the previous quarter. Demand for space was led by boutique fitness companies, medical health clinics and small-format grocery stores such as **Bristol Farms**. ●

## TRADE SHOW REPORT



Lori Markman Showroom Booth



CALA show floor



CALA show floor

### CALA *Continued from page 1*

attendees following the daylight savings time change.

“It’s been good,” said show owner and President Gerry Murtagh. “The atmosphere is good, and everybody is excited to wrap up the year.”

While summer heat was not a factor, this time of year includes the California fire season, an unpredictable few months when the disasters can prove devastating. As San Franciscans remain cautious about the Kincaide fire, which was contained at 88 percent by press time, CALA show organizer Robert Murtagh said the event was hosted without incident.

“People were worried about the fires, and that has kept some of the buyers from attending, particularly due to the Kincaide fire, but thankfully it hasn’t been too bad,” he said. “We haven’t been affected by power outages or smoke.”

At the booth for the San Francisco-based **Lori Markman Showroom**, which represents ethically made brands, owner Lori Markman agreed with Murtagh’s assessment regarding the fires, noting that retailers are recovering after a week that left some businesses closed and without power, but quality buyers were still in attendance.

“The fires have had an impact on people. Their businesses were closed last week, and a lot of people didn’t have any power,” she said. “That has made an impact, but we’ve seen some really good stores. Overall, people are being a bit more cautious because we’ve had crazy hot weather and fires—things that don’t promote great retail for fall.”

Representing **JVL Los Angeles**, a new brand for the showroom, Markman noted that buyers were not investing in too many Immediates but might order smaller items such as fingerless cashmere gloves or small handbags and pouches. Looking toward Spring, she noted the beauty of the space created an atmosphere of happiness among attendees as they looked to place orders for pieces that were available in season-appropriate colors.

“They are looking for a lot of great color and good fabrications,” she said. “People are looking for things that feel good and have a great fit. It’s all about comfort and easy dressing and luxurious fabrics, colors and more-simple styling in luxurious fabrications.”

In business for 40 years, Markman revealed that the CALA show offers an alternative to larger shows and buying seasons that are difficult to navigate.

“People like coming to this show. It’s convenient for people to shop. The better stores are coming,” she explained.

Show regular **Michael Stars** also had a booth at this recent CALA edition, where most buyers were looking for Spring goods as they looked toward 2020. Account Executive Claudine Han has worked the wholesale space for four years and saw this as an opportunity for the Hawthorne, Calif., brand to see accounts that don’t travel to larger events.

“Typically, we have our accounts that come to the CALA shows to see the line. With our accounts, a lot of them are coming to see Spring, and if they have seen the line for Spring they are adding onto orders or doing Immediates business,” she said. “It’s a really easy show to come to. A lot of the vendors that you typically wouldn’t see in Los Angeles and New York come here, so we get a great flow of exhibitors and vendors. It’s an easy one-stop shop.”

With accounts from Marin County and San Francisco, Han noted the show was popular with Northern California buyers. In addition to spring colors, she saw a demand for trends that have enjoyed strength over the past few seasons in addition to interest in apparel manufactured using natural fibers.

“They are into the new colors that we have,” she said. “Novelty has been huge with our animal prints, tie-dye is still huge for us, and they are interested in eco-friendly fabrications in natural fibers such as our woven linens and gauze in 100 percent cotton.”

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## MANUFACTURING



## Scrubs Manufacturer Figs Sued by Competitor

Medical-uniform company **Figs** started business in 2013 and made a splash by injecting fashion and contemporary styles into scrubs for medical personnel. Since its launch, it has grown into a company with 100 staffers and recently moved into a 27,000-square-foot headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif.

An established competitor, **Strategic Partners, Inc.**, recently sued Figs for false advertising and unfair business practices in Los Angeles Superior Court. A similar suit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. A class-action suit against Figs also was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California by Aveigail Torres, a registered nurse from Ontario, Calif. SPI is headquartered in Los Angeles' Chatsworth neighborhood and started business in 1995. It designs, manufactures and distributes medical garments for the **Cherokee, Dickies, HeartSoul, Elle, CodeHappy, Disney** and **Sapphire Scrubs** brands.

Currently in the discovery phase, SPI asked for unspecified compensation for damages as well as a jury trial. In the complaint for the superior-court case, SPI alleged that Trina Spear, Figs' co-founder and co-chief executive officer, stole trade secrets from SPI while she was working as an associate for private equity firm **The Blackstone Group, Inc.** Blackstone was privy to SPI's trade information because the equity group

was considering handling an SPI transaction. After allegedly becoming privy to the confidential information, Spear left Blackstone and started Figs with Heather Hasson, who now serves as the company's co-CEO. Hasson said that the lawsuits had no merit.

"By bringing innovation to a long-stagnant marketplace, we knew we might draw fire from legacy competitors who resist change. SPI's litigation attacks against Figs, including Ms. Torres's suit, is a desperate bid by an entrenched rival to protect its market share," Hasson said in a statement. "These lawsuits are meritless, and we won't let them distract us from doing what we love—making premium medical apparel and continuing to serve those who serve others."

The suits not only allege that Spear and Hasson took confidential information and breached fiduciary trust with SPI and Blackstone, but the suits also contend that Figs has made false statements about the antimicrobial properties of its scrubs. The suits allege that Figs scrubs do not offer the high protection against hospital bacteria that it advertises. The complaint also states that Figs' false advertising cut into SPI's market share and business.

"We have not filed a counter suit in any of these cases," Hasson said. "Rather than prolonging this meritless litigation with more litigation, we are focused on proving the suits against us are nothing more than attempts to slow us down."—*Andrew Asch*

## Calendar

### 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

### Dec. 2

**WWSRA Montana December Show**  
Brick Breeden Fieldhouse  
Bozeman, Mont.  
Through Dec. 4

### Dec. 3

**Denim Première Vision**  
Printworks  
London  
Through Dec. 4

### WWSRA Rocky Mountain

**December Show**  
Denver Merchandise Mart  
Denver  
Through Dec. 5

There's more  
on ApparelNews.net.

For calendar details and contact information, visit [ApparelNews.net/events](http://ApparelNews.net/events).

Submissions to the calendar should be emailed to the Calendar Editor at [calendar@apparelnews.net](mailto: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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# A Wave of Fantasy at FCI Student Show

At the Oct. 10 FCI Fashion School student show, there was a wide exploration of fantasy-inspired looks. The event took place at the **Phylm Studios** event space near downtown Los Angeles and showcased styles of 11 students from the private fashion school, which teaches accelerated courses in fashion design and merchandising.

The show started with five looks designed by Kentaro Kameyama, the winner of "Project Runway" season 16, who also serves as fashion design chair for the FCI faculty. Kameyama said that the looks had been inspired by sleep and the realm of dreams. A couple of his looks featured a headpiece made from pillows. Another look featured pillows as front and back panels of a dress. A cupid figure was printed on the piece's front pillow.

Karen Yoshida made nine looks that she said were inspired by a possible afterlife. The styles featured loose-fitting white clothes. One of Yoshida's coats featured large Japanese lettering whose English translation means, "Life goes as fast as an arrow."

Riley Okamoto showed a few styles inspired by horror movies. Tops featured holes that resembled slashes created by a knife. One of the several looks that he showed included a relatively restrained skirt style featuring a design of red roses.

Simay Belur showed six looks that included pieces to adorn the head, constructed out of materials such as horse hair, fabric and flowers.

➔ FCI page 7



TIM REGAS

Karen Yoshida

Winona Luk

Laila Eshan

Nikole Nesterenko

Nikita Prasad

Riley Okamoto



Kentaro Kameyama

Ariel Webley

Cha Cha

Davonte Calbert

Ghena Nasser

Simay Belur

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**FCI** *Continued from page 6*

Ariel Webley made a line dreaming up new cowgirl looks that included lace prairie dresses and Western-themed jumpsuits.

Many of FCI's students grew up overseas, leading them to put together looks that mixed Western styles and Asian traditions.

Nikita Prasad grew up in India and used traditional Indian fabrics in an FCI student show that was produced in May. During the Oct. 10 show, Prasad showed some looks that had some South Asian influences as well as a suit made with black sequins.

FCI student Jane Wu also works as an actor. Her résumé includes Chinese action films and a cameo appearance in the 2016 film "Captain America: Civil War." For this FCI show, she put together looks for a futuristic secret agent. All of her models wore sunglasses that had a slick science-fiction look. The line was meant to be unisex.

"I wanted to get rid of barriers between men and women," Wu said of the blazers, big jackets and other styles of her line.

The bodysuit trend took new form during the FCI show. Winona Luk put together styles marked by a white bodysuit and a long-sleeve dress with a plastic panel in the dress's front. Students also brought their own influences on contemporary dressing.

Ghena Nasser's pieces offered ease of movement through light, breezy styles marked by sporty prints. Body-hugging dresses featuring cut-out panels defined Davonte Calbert's contemporary looks.

For Laila Eshan, who was born in Afghanistan, the FCI show was an opportunity to speak to social justice through creating contemporary pieces. Forced into an arranged marriage, Eshan said that part of the mission for her future fashion projects will be to raise funds for girls forced into the same situation.

Many distinctive clothing categories completed Nicole Nesterenko's wide-ranging line for the FCI show. It included swim styles, activewear pieces, a balloon skirt, a see-through robe and 1960s-style mini-dresses.

Wrapping up the show was a guest appearance by Cha Cha, who appeared on "Project Runway" season 16 with Kameyama. Partaking in the theme of the overall show, Cha Cha's styles featured a fantasy element and items made with pieces that resembled pillows.—*Andrew Asch*



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## SUSTAINABILITY



## Contemporary Brand Christina Dienst Forges Its Own Sustainable Path

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

To mark the official start of her self-named **Christina Dienst** label, the designer produced a pop-up shop in downtown Los Angeles' Fashion District last month. The women's contemporary line is inspired by New Wave-era 1980s styles, but she wanted her label's production to be in line with sustainable manufacturing practices, which have been gaining cachet over the past few years. She found that it wasn't easy.

"It was such a hurricane of thoughts, ideas and questions to ask," she said of sustainability. "There's no one right answer."

Despite a tsunami of information, regulations and occasionally conflicting data, Dienst was determined to not become overwhelmed. As a former law student, she was ready to do a lot of research to find out more regarding the growing field of sustainable-fashion manufacturing.

With a career path that veered into design and product development, Dienst had worked with brands such as **Phillip Plein**, **Anna Sui** and **Anine Bing**. These experiences afforded connections to manufacturers who could lead her in the right direction to develop her privately owned line, for which she serves as chief executive officer and head designer.

"When I started, I thought that I'd be completely sustainable and find completely new vendors or I'd inspire the people who work with me," Dienst said, revealing that she ultimately chose to work with the vendors she knew.

"They were interested in what I was doing," she explained. "They were interested in adopting sustainable practices in business. It's a learning process. There has to be more awareness. It has to be constructive. Everyone has to be invited. Everything counts."

Dienst started with easily achievable milestones to start a sustainable line by working with organic cottons and dead-stock fabrics. Whenever possible, she produced clothes in Los Angeles to reduce the carbon footprint attendant to shipping from overseas.

When considering her entire supply chain, Dienst also set guidelines for materials she would use to package her goods. These materials are not only made out of recycled components, but they are also compostable, an option that costs 30 percent to 40 percent more than non-compostable material.

Sourcing fabrics, finding manufacturers and choosing the appropriate packaging were challenging, but looking to make a sustainable line also posed a moral dilemma.

The Christina Dienst line features a collection of leather jackets. While Dienst maintains a vegan diet, she chose to make these pieces from animal skin.

"I don't go for vegan leather. I don't want to use plastic," she said. "When it comes to clothing, I'll always look for the more sustainable items. Plastic items turn into micro-plastics that pollute the oceans. You have to question everything. I'm saying that we have to look at the whole truth. What is the bigger picture? You have to make sure that the alternative is not going to cause a lot of problems for the planet."

However, Dienst said that she will continue to search for vegan leather alternatives, one of which is Desserto, an organic leather made from nopal cactus.

Prior to her adoption of a vegan diet, vegetarianism inspired Dienst to seek alternatives not only in fashion, but also to seek answers on subjects that made people seem uncomfortable. She remembered people being perplexed when she told them that she was vegetarian.

"No one accepted that you should not eat meat. They asked, 'Why are you

doing this?'" she said. "No one would ask questions if I was a meat eater, so it made me ask questions on everything."

Not taking the status quo for granted led to fashion production. "I was working for a luxe fashion brand and we were using a lot of fur and exotic leathers. I asked myself, 'Where do I draw the line? How can we make it better?' Also, how do we make it better for everyone without becoming too extreme, which scares off a lot of people."

Her debut line features 32 items. They include 1980s-inspired leather jackets with bomber-jacket silhouettes and biker-jacket ribbing. Other looks include low-cut slipdresses with side slits, but Dienst insists these styles only "look" dangerous.

"They are sewn in a way to not show anything," Dienst said. "You can be revealing without worrying that you are going to show everything. It's part of my approach to making everything easy to wear and classy."

Other looks include crop tops and T-shirts, and she also designed an athleisure capsule collection called Lazy, which was produced in collaboration with the Los Angeles-based trainer Jolana Nika. Looks from the capsule collection include sweatpants, crop hoodies and V-neck tees.

Retail price points for Christina Dienst range from \$69 for crop tops to \$399 for silk dresses and \$1,500 for leather jackets. The brand is exclusively sold at [christinadienst.com](http://christinadienst.com). ●



# Performance and Active Sourcing Arrive in Portland at Functional Fabric Fair

Launching in Portland at the Oregon Convention Center Oct. 22–23, **Functional Fabric Fair**—powered by **Performance Days** unveiled its performance-specific trade-show model on the West Coast. The United Kingdom–headquartered **Reed Exhibitions** introduced the show to fulfill a need for an event focused on the specific desires of active and performance apparel makers who want a more-intimate space to explore innovation along the supply chain.

As the event manager for Functional Fabric Fair, Stephen McCullough noted that there is a difference between the fashionable-sportswear focus of the New York edition and the priorities of the attendees who visited the first installment of the Portland show.

“In Portland, this wasn’t where people were looking to expand their merchandise plans into performance fabrics,” he said. “Brands such as **Nike** and **Adidas** and all these guys are performance. We provided them with more suppliers, and they loved that we brought this quality of show to Portland.”

For exhibitor and show sponsor David Parkes, founder of the Red Bank, N.J.–headquartered performance-textile manufacturer **Concept iii**, the show was an opportunity to develop the event’s reach within a region that has been committed to outdoor and performance styles for the active consumer.



Archive Museum

During the show, this history of performance apparel was exhibited through an archive displayed on the show floor that included the era-specific designs of different brands such as **Arc’teryx**, **Carhartt**, **CB Sports**, **Columbia**, **Filson**, **Patagonia**, **Rab** and **Sierra Designs**.

“It was exciting because it was focused on performance textiles. Performance Days in Munich has adopted that model very successfully, and now we have our own performance-

textile show in the States,” Parkes said. “The performance-textile industry needs a show of this nature. The outdoor and active industries are huge industries in the States. When you look at brands like **Patagonia**, the **North Face**, **Adidas** and **Lululemon**—it’s huge.”

As sustainability has been trending across apparel-industry categories, McCullough noted that an eco-friendly approach is at the core of the event.

“We always say sustainability is expected,” he explained. “We wouldn’t have you in this show if you didn’t practice sustainability in your everyday life. You have to pass certain criteria to be at the show.”

While this was the first Portland edition of the show, McCullough reported numbers that exceeded expectations. He is already looking to next fall to plan the second installment of the event.

“Doing shows like this should affect the way that you source. The days of going to Taiwan and China for two weeks at a time are coming to an end when shows like this can bring these to your neighborhood,” he said. “Each booth is offering something a little different, unique, and these guys are at the top of the food chain. I built the show that I wanted to go to.”—*Dorothy Crouch*

## SURF REPORT

### Surf *Continued from page 1*

also based in Costa Mesa, from the luxury conglomerate **Kering** for an undisclosed sum. And on Sept. 30, Australia-headquartered surf-industry pioneer **Rip Curl** was acquired by the New Zealand–based outdoor clothier **Kathmandu**, also for an undisclosed amount.

This string of deals follows one of the biggest mergers in surfwear history. In April 2018, **Boardriders Inc.**, the parent company of the pioneering brand **Quiksilver**, acquired its chief rival, **Billabong International Limited**. A **Reuters** article said that Boardriders used \$600 million in loans to acquire its rival and its family of brands to create a super company of the most popular brands in surf, including Quiksilver, **Roxy**, **Billabong** and **RVCA**. These brands manage 7,000 wholesale customers around the world, according to a company statement.

The deals and consolidation of brands have marked the end of an era for a number of companies that were mostly based in Orange County, Calif., and had influenced youth styles for generations of Americans over the last 40 years, Weisman said.

### A legacy lost...?

“Surf, skate and action-sports companies were founded in the ’80s and ’90s by entrepreneurs who themselves were surfers, skateboarders and aficionados of the sports. These were pioneers who rejected a larger corporate culture and wanted something they could call their own that reflected the unique lifestyle they lived in Southern California or coastal Australia,” Weisman said. “Volcom’s primary tagline was, ‘Youth Against Establishment.’ It pretty much says it all right there. Now, all of these legacy brands are reduced to balance-sheet assets of the very corporate umbrella they were formed to eschew.”

While surf brands and surfwear started popping up in American retail in the 1950s and 1960s, the surfwear business enjoyed its biggest ride in the 1970s and 1980s. Entrepreneurs such as Bob McKnight and Bob Hurley took the garage businesses of Quiksilver and the U.S. license for Billabong, respectively, and built empires with them.

Both Quiksilver and Billabong became public companies. In 2006, Quiksilver enjoyed revenues of \$2.4 billion. Quiksilver, Billabong and Hurley expanded their profiles by sponsor-



Vans US Open of Surfing 2019

ing professional surf competitions as well as providing sponsorships and backing to scores of professional surfers.

But all of these companies seemed to wipe out during the Great Recession. Bricks-and-mortar retail locations closed as digital commerce caught the next wave. One of surf’s most important retail accounts, **Pacific Sunwear of California**, went through a bankruptcy in 2016 and pivoted to focus on private-label clothing lines as well as brands with a streetwear look.

Youth fashion styles also changed, with surf no longer capturing as much of the imagination of young people as it had in the past. In 2018, streetwear pioneer Bobby Kim of **The Hundreds** brand gave a speech at a **Surf Industry Manufacturers Association** meeting where he critiqued surf brands for not connecting with a huge part of the fashion market because their marketing and advertising campaigns were not diverse enough.

Also, founders of the companies that had guided surf to stratospheric heights began to retire. After 2010, Bob McKnight, Bob Hurley and Richard Woolcott of Volcom all left the companies they had led. The executives who replaced them weren’t as connected to the surf world and its roots, Weisman said.

“If you are only interested in ROI and you don’t surf, then you don’t care,” he said. “And that will be reflected in the products and marketing that follow.”

After the founding group of executives left, many of these brands stopped producing competition events, Weisman added. And independent styles also suffered.

“I don’t see any one of those brands investing in new technical products and the marketing initiatives these brands did when they considered their authenticity to the sport to be a

driver of sales,” he said.

### ...Or a legacy recaptured?

There are a handful of small, independent surf brands such as **Vissla** and **Roark** making waves. Changes in the surf world come as part of an industry-wide consolidation, said Patrik Schmidle, president of the market-research firm **ActionWatch**.

“It’s a continuation of a consolidation trend,” Schmidle said. “It’s normal when you have a market that is not growing or growing slowly. If the market is not growing, you have to figure out other ways to increase distribution to grow sales.”

Growth is not always smooth. Placing brands in mainstream retailers can offend fans that supported a brand when it was exclusively sold at core surf shops, he said.

Yet Schmidle sees many surf brands exercising independence after they’ve been bought.

“What’s striking is that long after having been acquired, many brands are still operating as independent brands with their own executive teams. In other industries, you don’t see that as much,” he said. “To be independent and have authenticity is part of the culture of the industry.”

The Orange County, Calif.–headquartered **Vissla** and **Roark** have each started opening bricks-and-mortar stores. **Vissla** is scheduled to open its second physical store at the **2nd & PCH** retail center in Long Beach, Calif., later in November. **Roark** opened a shop the first week of November at the **One Paseo** retail center in Del Mar, Calif. It also opened a flagship store on Los Angeles’ La Brea Avenue in September and another store in Berkeley, Calif., last year.

There’s been an uptick in sales for independent specialty shops that **ActionWatch** covers. From January to September this year, core shop sales increased 3 percent compared to the same period in 2018. The uptick represented a seven-year high, Schmidle said. He roughly estimated that independent core surf and skate shops make up between \$500 million and \$1 billion in U.S. sales.

And the star of the action-sports sector, **Vans**, continues to experience major growth. The Costa Mesa, Calif., skate-focused brand enjoys high popularity in the surf world. Its growth has skyrocketed in the past decade. In 2016, revenue reached \$2.2 billion. According to financial documents, the company forecasts that it could reach revenues of \$5 billion by 2023. ●

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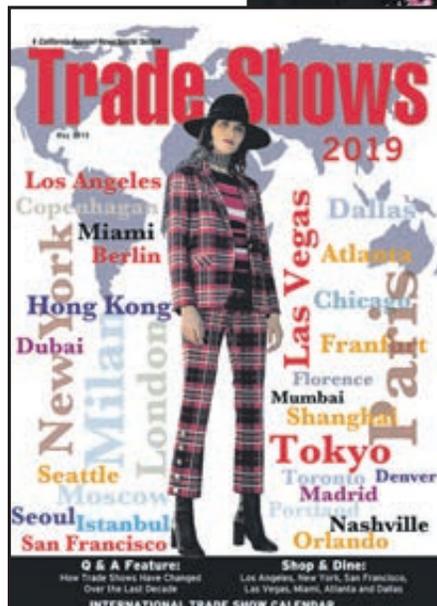
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