

CALIFORNIA Apparel News

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 75 YEARS

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02 show: Glynn Barrish Carroll and Poncho the Artist



Label Array show: Ivy



Brand Assembly show: T-shirts from Half United



02 show: Mike Vensel

OFF TO MARKET

The March edition of L.A. Market Week signaled one of the final opportunities for buyers to place orders before COVID-19 threats drove the apparel industry to cancel or postpone events for at least a few months.



Lynn Girard Showroom at The New Mart Building



Brand Assembly show: Half United

ECONOMY

Retailers Temporarily Close Stores, Due to Coronavirus Outbreak

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Retailers and malls joined in the effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic by temporarily shuttering stores this week as the economies of California and the U.S. moved into a recession, said a report from the **UCLA Anderson School**, which was released on March 16.

Scaling back economic activity pushed the nation and the state into a recession, the UCLA Anderson Forecast said. The U.S. economy enjoyed a solid start in 2020, but the drop in economic activity pulled back growth for the first quarter. First-quarter growth is now scheduled to grow by only 0.4 percent, according to the forecast. The economy is expected

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TRADE SHOW REPORT

L.A. Market Gets In Under the Wire Before Multiple Trade-Show Cancellations

By Andrew Asch and Dorothy Crouch

As the world continues to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of apparel-industry trade shows and markets have announced that they will be postponed or canceled. Last week, **Dallas Market** announced the postponement of its March event until June as producers of the April **Atlanta Apparel** revealed they would do the same.

Making the cut right before the final wave of trade-show cancellations were announced, meeting places were closed or limited, and social distancing became part of daily life, **L.A. Market Week** was hosted March 8–11 in the city's downtown area. With major shows held at the **California Market Center**, **Cooper Design Space**, **Gerry Building** and **The New Mart**, buyers descended upon the neighborhood in an attempt to stock up on product prior to the coronavirus crush.

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Apparel-Industry Trade-Show Organizers Realign Dates Due to COVID-19

With the cancellation of the April Amsterdam edition of **Kingpins** earlier this month, it seemed to be only a matter of time until other apparel-industry event producers would begin to consider doing the same in the United States to help thwart the spread of COVID-19. As a final push before shelter-in-place mandates were implemented in certain cities, along with the closure of entertainment venues, bars and restaurants, **L.A. Market Week** turned out to be a final buying opportunity during its March 8–11 run. Not long after the event's close, an announcement was made by the **California Market Center** in Los Angeles that it would bypass the April 1–3 **Majors Market**.

Originally planned to take place May 12–14 in Atlanta, Ga., sibling **Messe Frankfurt**—produced shows **Techtextil North America** and **Texprocess Americas** were canceled, with next editions scheduled for Dec. 15–17 at the **Georgia World Congress Center** in Atlanta.

On March 12, the **International Market Centers**, which was scheduled to host the **Atlanta Apparel & Accessories Market** April 14–18, announced the next market would be June 10–13. In addition, all other shows that had been planned for dates through May 5 were also canceled until their next editions. IMC Chief Executive Officer Bob Maricich extended well wishes to his industry peers through a statement.

"We hope that this pause in our market schedules will ensure the safety and allow for the normalcy to return to our industries," he said. "In the meantime, **IMC_di**, our newly formed digital-innovation division, is exploring digital solutions to help our customers stay in contact while the physical market schedules are in flux."

Following this statement of commitment



George Gati and Danielle Stang of The Miss Group at New Mart from October 2019 L.A. Majors Market show.

to optimizing **IMC_di** during this challenge to the industry, on March 18, IMC announced new hires of professionals to cultivate this new digital tool. These appointments included Marisa Garcia as the senior director of customer success, Andrew Meeks as the director of marketing and, as a consultant, Mary S. Moore, who owns Atlanta's **Cook's Warehouse** stores.

On March 12, Jeremy Buonamici, CEO of the Dallas-based **Fashion Industry Gallery**, released a statement regarding the cancellation of the market that was on the calendar for March 25–27. The organization's next market will be held June 24–26.

The following day, on March 13, the **Dallas Market Center** announced the cancellation of its March markets and **April Design Week**, but event organizers revealed new dates for the next **Apparel & Accessories Market** and **Dallas Western Market**, which have both been scheduled to take place June 2–5.

A few days later, organizers from the **Dallas Fabric Show**, which was on the calendar for March 25–26 at the Dallas Market Center, revealed that this edition of the show would

be canceled until the show's next edition.

Originally set to host their event March 31–April 1 at the **Fort Mason Center**, **CALA** organizers Gerry and Robert Murtagh announced on March 16 that the show would be canceled until its next edition.

"Regarding the ever-increasing developments of COVID-19 and on the advice of the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, we have made the difficult decision to postpone the April CALA San Francisco show until June," they said in a joint statement. "We apologize for the inconvenience this will cause; however the health and safety of our buyers, exhibitors and staff are of the utmost importance, and we feel this step is absolutely necessary to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19."

On March 17, The **International Fashion Jewelry & Accessories Group** announced the cancellation of its upcoming show, which was scheduled to take place in Orlando, Fla., May 13–15 at the **Embassy Suites By Hilton Orlando**.

After 28 shows, the Guatemala City, Guatemala-based **Apparel Sourcing Show** was canceled after its producer, the **Apparel and Textile Association in Guatemala (VESTEX)**, made an announcement that the May 12–14 event at the **Grand Tikal Futura Hotel and Convention Center** would not occur. The 29th installment of the show will now take place in 2021.—*Dorothy Crouch*

Retail Trade Groups Urge Suspending Chinese Import Tariffs

On March 19, members of the retail industry's leading trade groups joined in a letter asking President Trump to suspend U.S. tariffs in place on Chinese imports. The tariff suspension would serve as a tool to blunt the economic downturn from the coronavirus pandemic, they said.

Making this joint statement were representatives from the **National Retail Federation**, the **Retail Industry Leaders Association** and the **American Apparel & Footwear Association**. The letter noted that America's trading partners needed to be held accountable for intellectual property theft and other trade violations. However, tariffs and the continuing trade war have taken a great toll, said Rick Helfenbein, the AAFA's former president and chief executive officer.

"Tariffs are a hidden tax on Americans, plain and simple. More than 41 percent of clothing, 72 percent of footwear and 84 percent of travel goods sold in the U.S. are made in China. A tariff on these products would be a tax on every American," Helfenbein wrote. "In addition to increasing costs for American families, this action could result in retaliatory tariffs that target American businesses, resulting in job losses. At the end of the day, this could be disastrous for American families, American workers and American businesses."

Matthew Shay, the NRF's president and CEO, forecasted that American consumers might see price increases.

"We agree it's time to address China's unfair trade practices, but we have to do so in a way that doesn't destroy jobs, create uncertainty for businesses and increase every American's cost of living," Shay said.

While the Trump administration signed Phase One of the trade agreement between the U.S. and China earlier this year, the Trump administration has held firm on other tariffs.—*Andrew Asch*

Inside the Industry

Under Armour, the Baltimore-headquartered sportswear, footwear and casualwear label, announced that it would make donations to organizations affected by the coronavirus. It has donated \$1 million to Feeding America to support hunger-relief efforts due to school closures and quarantines. Feeding America works with students and their families whose school-meal plans have been disrupted. Donation efforts will take place where Under Armour team members live and work, including Baltimore, San Francisco, Nashville and Portland, Ore. Under Armour also said that it would donate up to \$1 million in money and product to support Good Sports, a nonprofit that supports the distribution of sports equipment and footwear to kids. The effort is connected to Under Armour's 30-day Healthy at Home fitness challenge under the MyFitnessPal and MapMyRun platforms, which encourages people to remain active.

NuOrder and **Tukatech** technology companies announced they would be offering complimentary access to their products during the coronavirus crisis. NuOrder said that it would offer brands and retailers complimentary versions of its Digital Catalog platform, which it said digitizes the market-to-order process. The Digital Catalog helps buyers and brands work in real time online, without having to meet in person. Tukatech is offering a complimentary cloud license to CAD program users who are equipped with dongle license keys. Tukatech founder Ram Sareen said that the complimentary license will assist people working outside of their offices.

Lifestyles in 360, an Orlando, Fla.-headquartered technology company, produces virtual tours of retailers such as Whole Foods. With the current coronavirus pandemic, Lifestyles in 360 said that it has been approaching retailers on developing virtual-reality tours of their shops where consumers can make purchases. Lifestyles in 360 plans to hire up to 1,000 new employees by the end of 2020.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Massachusetts senator and former Democratic presidential candidate, is keeping her promise to remain an active presence in national progressive politics. On March 20, Sen. Warren will join Amazon and Walmart associates on a media call produced by the United for Respect labor organization. These workers will talk to reporters on universal paid leave, which is a point in a third stimulus bill to assist employees on the frontline of the coronavirus pandemic. A United for Respect statement said that Congress exempted the country's largest retailers from a mandate to provide emergency paid leave for workers. United for Respect contends that Congress's next stimulus bill must include comprehensive paid family and sick leave for workers.

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LA Textile Provides Opportunities for Sourcing Amid Supply-Chain Challenges

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

While the **California Market Center** has been undergoing a major renovation, **LA Textile** show producers still made space for its biannual trade show. During its March 4-6 run, exhibitors noticed attendees were interested in sourcing fabrics and notions to remain ahead of the coronavirus threats to the supply chain.

For Commerce, Calif.-based **Fabric Selection**, the show afforded an opportunity to introduce its new Matisse Studio collection following a successful **Sourcing at MAGIC** show during February in Las Vegas. Manager Sean Zarini was excited to expand upon the momentum generated during last month's trade show, which signaled the beginning of regulations implemented due to the threat of COVID-19 when a travel ban on travelers from China was announced by the Trump administration.

"It was very good in Las Vegas. We were in the tent, it was cold, there was coronavirus and the Chinese vendors didn't come. I thought it would be bad, but it was good. The first shipment came in and sold out in Las Vegas," he said. "We had so many more items. We changed the design 50 to 60 percent into a new, younger look with more novelty."

At this Los Angeles show hosted within the CMC, Zarini mentioned that designers and manufacturers were not as demanding as they had been during previous editions. With uncertainty regarding the supply chain and shipments from overseas, he was able to provide alternative solutions to customers.

"People are hungry for fabric because fabric is not coming from China," he said. "They are buying whatever they can. Nobody said, 'I want this or that' or 'You don't have this fabric.'"

Visiting the show from the downtown Los Angeles apparel manufacturer **Tramever**, Revi Green-Johnson was one of the visitors who was searching for sourcing partners who could provide alternatives to her current supply chain.

"New resources from different countries to diversify our reach for fabric. We do orders from China, so I want to know from where else I can source," she explained as she searched for plaids, knits and ecologically sound options. "[Eco friend-



Kalimo booth at LA Textile

ly] is a growing factor in our industry."

The eco-friendly boom was trending high, according to **California Label Products** Account Executive Deserie Balades. She also revealed that the uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus led attendees to consider products that are made in the United States.

"More people are concerned about our environment and eco-friendly products in sustainable materials," she said. "[They are also] Made in U.S.A.-driven, trying to bring back the work here. Not having to rely on freight coming in from China with everything going on."

At the **Kalimo** booth, Julia Abrahamian and Dalena Bui were promoting their biodegradable textile offerings, which were checking high at the show.

"This is one of our best shows here," Bui said. "We have a biodegradable fabric—soon we'll have recycled **Lycra**."

As one of the last events to be held before producers began canceling trade shows and fashion-week productions, LA Textile provided an opportunity. It was important to be in attendance, mentioned Abrahamian.

"It's evolving. This edition was better than the last, and we look forward to the next. Regardless of the coronavirus, we are here and we did well," she said. "There is a higher demand

for ecological, eco-friendly styles."

For her Valencia, Calif., dressmaking business, Maria Hoffens of **Danu Original Sewing** was searching for partners who could help her emerging brand thrive by considering small quantities.

"It gets challenging because most of this is wholesale. I talk with them and see if anyone does lower quantities," she said as she considered fabrics that were plain in addition to special products featuring embroidery. "It's a fantastic place to connect with different people. Everybody gathers here. It's nice to network."

Able to accommodate any size business, J. Chandresh, executive producer of Chennai, India's **Subbarow**, mentioned that his jacquard options were gaining a lot of traction.

"We do everything," he said. "It's a range of everybody. You also have the big labels going for sampling averages. For us, this is our bread and butter. We do well here."

First-time attendee Sheer Sebag of the Calabasas, Calif., dress brand **Sheer** was impressed with the show and reported that her existing partners were pleasantly surprised with the traffic.

"Some of the feedback from one of our mills that is here is that she was surprised about the foot traffic with the coronavirus," she said. "It exceeded her expectations."

For Sebag, having a show close to home was important as she enjoys having the option to travel less but not compromise on quality goods.

"The show is great. I am happy to see a lot of ethical, sustainable options and new innovations on the market. I am happy to see a lot of Made in America," Sebag explained. "There is a diverse amount of textiles, whether it's different countries or types of textiles. It's a great place to come find everything all in one spot. It's a wonderful resource right here in the city of L.A."

On March 18, the CMC revealed that while they are thinking ahead to the next edition of LA Textile, which will be the show's relaunch in Building C's new space named The Loft, event organizers are prioritizing public safety. Once a clearer picture of a timeline is available regarding reducing the threat of the coronavirus, the show's producers will confirm dates for the next event. ●

ECONOMY

Retailers *Continued from page 1*

to shrink by 6.5 percent in the second quarter and 1.9 percent in third quarter.

The forecast predicted a rally by the 2020 fourth quarter, when a normal pace of economic growth resumes. Gross domestic product for the 2020 fourth quarter was forecasted to grow by 4.0 percent. For the full year, it was forecasted that the U.S. GDP would decline by 0.4 percent.

Employment in California will take some big hits, according to the March 16 forecast. Unemployment is forecasted to climb to 6.3 percent by the end of the year. The state will lose 280,000 jobs by the first quarter of 2021, and more than one-third of these jobs will be in leisure, hospitality, transportation and warehousing.

The forecast also noted that all of its predictions hedged on the toll that the coronavirus epidemic takes. If the pandemic is much worse than economists expect, the forecast will be considered to be overly optimistic. If the pandemic subsides quickly, the forecast will be considered pessimistic, according to a caveat included in the forecast.

The March 16 forecast was a revision to a regularly scheduled quarterly forecast that the UCLA Anderson School released on March 12. It was the first time in the 68-year history of the forecast that the UCLA Anderson Forecast published an updated forecast between its regularly scheduled quarterly releases.

The forecast was released during a week when lights were dimmed on American public life. In Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti ordered the closing of bars, dine-in restaurants and gyms in the city's boundaries until March 31.

Workers stayed home to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Election rallies were canceled. Seasons for major league sports were put on hiatus. The **Disneyland Park** was closed until March 31.

Cargo traffic at Los Angeles County ports was hit by the crisis. Cargo traffic for the **Port of Los Angeles** dropped by just under 23 percent in February due to efforts to curb the spread of the pandemic from Asia, according to a note from the **Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation's** Institute for Applied Economics. Cargo volume is expected to drop more in March.



Vans and Urban Outfitters stores temporarily closed on Broadway in downtown Los Angeles, which was empty due to coronavirus closures.

Malls and non-essential retail ordered to close

On March 19, Los Angeles County and city officials announced a new order directing all indoor malls and non-essential retail businesses to close. L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger said, "We won't have to maintain these restrictions forever, and they will have an invaluable long-term impact."

Days before the order was issued, prominent malls across the state voluntarily went on hiatus. They included, **South Coast Plaza**, based in Costa Mesa, Calif.; **Beverly Center**, in Los Angeles; and **Westfield Century City**.

The **Simon Property Group** announced that it would close all of its retail properties including its **Premium Outlets and Malls** locations from March 18 to March 29. Simon runs California malls including **Fashion Valley** in San Diego; the **Brea Mall** in Brea, Calif.; and the **Del Amo Fashion Center** in Torrance, Calif.

Parks and green spaces in **Caruso** retail properties such as **The Grove** will remain open, according to a statement from Rick Caruso, founder of his self-named Caruso company. Caruso encouraged the public to visit his properties' parks as long as they observe social distancing. Hand-sanitizer stations will be made available at all park entry points.

The biggest specialty retailers also announced that they would temporarily close their doors. On March 19, **Gap Inc.**

closed its entire North American fleet of **Old Navy**, **Athleta**, **Banana Republic**, **Gap**, **Janie and Jack** and **Intermix** stores across North America, said Sonia Syngal, Gap Inc.'s incoming chief executive officer.

"Our focus remains on supporting the health and livelihood of our employees while caring for our customers and communities," Syngal said. "We will provide our impacted store employees with pay continuity and benefits during this two-week period. And, together, we look forward to welcoming our customers back in our stores soon."

Other retailers going on hiatus included **Tilly's Inc.**, **Urban Outfitters**, **Vans** and its parent company **VF Corp.**, **Nordstrom**, **Macy's** as well as smaller retailers such as the Los Angeles-based businesses **M.Fredric** and **Buck Mason**.

The turn of events is unprecedented, said Jeff Van Sinderen, a retail analyst for **B. Riley FBR**.

"No one has ever seen anything like it," he said. "I can't think of a time when retailers said that we are closing all of our stores due to a virus."

Any retailer with a bricks-and-mortar division would take a big hit. "You can shift some sales online, but they won't match the sales that you missed," he said.

Small businesses must navigate this crisis by exploring financing options and communicating frankly with their customers, said Syama Meagher, CEO and founder of the consultancy **Scaling Retail**.

"First, it's time to be actively accessing lines of credit. It's also time to access loans from the **Small Business Administration**," Meagher said. "Look to leverage relationships to get extended terms for vendors. Now is a good time to negotiate on raw materials. Buy yardage when prices are low. If you are planning on a shoot, see if you can negotiate better rates."

In its research note, the LAEDC's Institute for Applied Economics said that specific economic policies should be put into play to help businesses and individuals. They include short-term universal basic income, a moratorium on rent and mortgage payments, a temporary suspension of evictions and foreclosures, and, when possible, zero-interest loans or, minimally, collateralized loans should be offered to vulnerable businesses such as those recently announced by the Small Business Administration's emergency loan programs. ●



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Port of Oakland

Port of Oakland, Oakland International Airport Deemed Essential and Will Remain Open

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

As regions of Northern California, including six Bay Area counties, prepared for shelter-in-place orders, the **Port of Oakland** announced on March 16 that it would remain open for business. The port and **Oakland International Airport** were exempted from the order as the services they provide are deemed “essential activities.”

“Our operations are critical to the health, safety, infrastructure and economy of our region,” Port of Oakland Executive Director Danny Wan said in a statement. “We will continue to function as a vital gateway for global trade and transportation while doing everything possible to protect our employees, customers and business partners.”

Described as one of the United States’ 10 busiest seaports, the Port of Oakland is responsible for the handling of more than 2.5 million cargo containers per year. This volume contributes to more than \$100 billion in global trade.

With nearly 14 million passengers flying

through Oakland International Airport, this location is the third-busiest airport in Northern California.

Port officials are determined to take precautionary measures to maintain the safety of airline passengers and terminal operators who engage in seaport operations.

On March 12, **Port of Los Angeles** Executive Director Gene Seroka released a video statement in which he communicated a message that the port was operating its business as usual but canceled its upcoming public events. He emphasized that the health and safety of stakeholders was the priority of the operation.

“To minimize risks, the Port of Los Angeles is coordinating with our federal, state and local partners including the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, the **United States Coast Guard**, the **United States Customs and Border Protection**, the **Los Angeles County Department of Public Health** along with other emergency and public-health agencies.”

Calendar

March 24

Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market ****Canceled—next show 6/2–5****

Western Market Dallas ****Canceled—next show 6/2–5****

Dallas Total Home & Gift Market ****Canceled—next show 6/2–5****

Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through March 27

March 25

Dallas Fabric Show ****Canceled—next show 6/2–5****

Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through March 26

Fashion Industry Gallery (FIG)

****Canceled—next show 6/3–5****

Dallas Market Center
Dallas
Through March 27

March 26

LA Fashion Week ****Postponed****

Petersen Automotive Museum
Los Angeles
Through March 29

Los Angeles Fashion Week **powered by Art Hearts Fashion** ****Postponed****

Majestic Downtown
Los Angeles
Through March 29

March 31

CALA San Francisco

****Canceled—next show in June****

Fort Mason Center
San Francisco
Through April 1

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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Fashion Week Events in Los Angeles Postponed as Coronavirus Fears Grow

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

From fears of a halted supply chain in apparel manufacturing to retailers assuring consumers they are taking precautions to protect shoppers in their stores, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an uncertain future for the garment industry. Recent announcements from within the industry have revealed that major Fashion Week events in Los Angeles will be postponed.

In a March 13 email, **Art Hearts Fashion** producers explained that the Fall/Winter 2020 shows scheduled for March 26–29 at the **Majestic Downtown** would be postponed.

“We are working diligently to reschedule for a future date once we are allowed to gather safely,” a representative said.

Additionally, in an email sent later on March 13, **LA Fashion Week** Executive Producer Arthur Chipman explained that the health of all involved in the production of the show and guests was the priority of organizers. He revealed the March 27–29 shows at the **Petersen Automotive Museum** would not go on.

“Unfortunately, due to the recent developments regarding the coronavirus, we’ve decided to officially postpone the shows until further notice,” Chipman explained. “[The] health and safety of the designers, our staff and guests take precedence over everything else, and, while we would have loved to have our shows continue, things will be put on hold for the time being.”

Threats from COVID-19 also took a toll on more-intimate events such as the Autumn/Winter 2020 **Heidi Merrick** fashion show, which was scheduled to take place on the designer’s own property in Ojai, Calif., on March 14. While Merrick found this format to be successful last season, she alerted invited guests to the postponement of this edition through an



THE HENDRYS
Vegan Fashion Week October 2019

email sent March 13.

“Out of caution, and following the advice of public health officials, we have decided to postpone Heidi’s Autumn/Winter 2020 fashion show scheduled for tomorrow, March 14,” she wrote. “We had been looking forward to celebrating with all of you and intend to reschedule when it’s safe to do so.”

After the announcements that Art Hearts Fashion’s Los Angeles event and LA Fashion Week’s March edition would be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **Vegan Fashion Week** founder Emmanuelle Rienda remained steadfast that the April show would go on. Following the March 16 announcement that the May 4 celebration on one of fashion’s biggest nights, the **Met Gala**, would also be postponed, plans

to hold VFW remained, but Rienda said she would shift the format of the event.

“I am trying to still share a message while putting the security of everybody as a first priority. As of now, the event will be streamed online with no audience and behind closed doors,” she said. “It is so important to create a positive message of hope. As an activist, I cannot stay silent.”

Originally scheduled for April 3–4 at **The Void** in the Los Angeles Arts District, this edition of VFW was planned to explore the theme of “Expansion,” which would examine environmental challenges through fashion, ethics, sustainability and animal rights. The event would

have included a designer showroom, panel series and fashion show.

While some facets of the show will be bypassed, with the larger event postponed until October, Rienda is determined to relay the message of her organization, which she feels is timely due to the spread of the coronavirus in addition to similar illnesses that have threatened the global human population in the past.

“This situation is directly linked to animal exploitation, like all the virus outbreaks the world is experiencing—Ebola, mad cow, swine flu [as examples],” she explained. “The social injustice happening in our country is also a very big topic to discuss in an artistic way.”

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f t i in

L.A. Market *Continued from page 1*

While many postponements and closures were announced within the last seven days, buyers and showrooms during the market made preparations for hitting the sales floor after the dust settles.

CMC introduces new trade show

A new trade show called **O2** made its debut on the 13th floor of the California Market Center during market. Produced by fashion veterans Eveline Morel, Lisa Elliot and Garrett Gooch, the show focused on sustainable fashion, accessories and homewares brands.

"It's our way to do something about climate change," Morel said. "It is time that we have a place that is exclusively focused on sustainable brands."

One O2 vendor, **Kindom**, applauded the show for creating a sustainable forum. "It was well curated. We met some amazing, like-minded people in the sustainable world," said Glynn Barrish-Carroll, Kindom's operations and merchandising director. Also at the show, she conducted talks with eight new retailers who were located in the Los Angeles area in addition to buyers from Idaho and Chicago.

The **Label Array** trade show also made a run during Market Week. Produced on the 2nd floor of the CMC, it exhibited a range of goods such as footwear, jewelry and apparel.

Tamara Conti exhibited the **OTBT** footwear brand. "I saw customers, I wrote orders," she said. The first day of the show was solid, but rain put a damper on the other days of the show, she explained.

The March L.A. Market represented the first time that many veteran CMC showrooms introduced their new spaces on the



Romy Migliazzo, of Romy M Showroom



Totem Salvaged at Designers & Agents

fourth floor of the CMC's C building.

Ernesto Mantilla of the **Betty Bottom Showroom** said that the new showrooms were a success. "We were busy," he said. His showroom enjoyed a lot of traffic during market, but appointments slowed down on the last day. Overall, business was solid, he said.

There is a range of opinions at every trade show, and the March L.A. Fashion Week was no different. Rose Marie Migliazzo introduced a new space for the **Romy M Showroom** on the CMC's 4th floor. She said traffic was down because some buyers were confused about the location of the new showroom wing and where they could park their cars around the CMC. "Also, a lot of people don't want to travel with everything going on in the world now," Migliazzo said.

Cooper caters to conscientious buyers

In town from Birmingham, Ala., for the **Manhattan South** boutique, Lesley DeCastro Vedel and Nancy Jones were shopping

the Cooper for **Immediates**, Fall and Holiday. For Fall, they wanted tailored garments including blazers and visited **Place Nationale**, the **Sabrina Showroom** and **Anonymous 213**.

"I did my opening buy here in 2006," explained DeCastro Vedel, president of the business. "I still do New York and all of that, but I like coming here because I can find some of the smaller brands that can't spend \$50,000 on a booth."

At the **Bella Dahl** showroom, Kasey McKenna and Piper Bue had buyers visit with interest in Fall pieces in animal prints, tie-dye and camouflage in addition to copper tones and merlot hues.

"Our Fall collection expanded into other categories that we haven't always had," McKenna explained. "The layering pieces—sweaters, coats and jackets."

For market, some clients canceled their visits to Los Angeles. Not shying away from a challenge, the women met with their buyers through other methods such as **FaceTime** meetings.

"They're still buying Fall," Bue explained. "They are cautious about the whole situation."

The **Brand Assembly** show brought out brands such as **Souvenir**, whose Los Angeles-based founder, Stefanie Anderson, saw buyers from coastal California regions including San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Newport Beach to examine garments made with partners from around the world.

"With China, it slowed things down, but we do things in India, which hasn't been impacted yet," she said. "The people we work with are accommodating, and we do small production, so that helps."

Shopping for her recently launched e-commerce boutique **Sundrift**, buyer Elaine Sakaue made the shift from a denim-merchandising role to helping consumers find brands that are rooted in sustainable, ethical or charitable missions. For Fall, she wanted easy knits in browns and ecru that she could price between \$100 and \$200. Sakaue was excited to see **Whimsy + Roe** and **Thatch** jewelry.

"I am visiting vendors I am working with now and new ones that have the same ethos I have in my store," she said. "It's great to be part of that change that is happening. People are starting to demand it, so companies are starting to change their manufacturing processes."

Bringing the socially conscious message from her North Carolina-based business **Half United**, Carmin Black exhibited her ethically handmade goods, which retail between \$34 and \$300 and whose proceeds fight child hunger.

"Our products have to fit the aesthetic of a buyer's retail location. If it fits and the story resonates, that is even better," she said. "We are great for a West Coast buyer and West Coast customers."

Confidence high at New Mart

At The New Mart, visitors were ready to buy accessible lines. Locally made pieces

were checking with buyers who wanted to avoid any extensive delays, according to Florence Ratzsch of the **Lynn Girard Showroom**, where she sold **Immediates** for the Los Angeles-made **Eva Varo** line.

"They can turn it around in three to four weeks. It's all made here in L.A. and custom made to order. People are pretty spoiled with that line," she said. "They don't use zippers or buttons from China. For some lines, even if it's made here, the zippers and buttons are made in China. We don't have that issue."

Visiting the **Designers & Agents** show from Westport, Conn., Rachel Shapiro was standing in for her mother, Kitt, who didn't want to travel during the outbreak but wanted to buy for her **West** boutique, which is an East Coast shop that sells West Coast styles. Shapiro noted that the pieces sold at the boutique transition well between seasons and obligations within daily life.

"We are excited to continue working with the brands that we know because even if its delayed the stuff has sold so well," Shapiro explained. "Because of the weather in Connecticut, it lasts a while when it gets there. If it takes a minute to get our orders in, it will still be just in time."

At the **Totem Salvaged** booth, founder Stephanie Larrowe described the week as "the weirdest market ever." Buyers were visiting her booth where sweet spots averaged \$125 wholesale, and while there was business to enjoy she noticed that the quick turnarounds she could offer were resonating more with buyers from Colorado, Arizona and the Bay Area.

"Sustainability is important and made in L.A.," she said. "Quick turnarounds are important to people. There is novelty in my line."

For Susan Testa, owner of **Romantiques** in Los Gatos, Calif., continuing to serve as a trusted local retailer and remaining relevant was important to her business, which has been open since 1994. The threat of the coronavirus was leading Testa to update her website, whose e-commerce presence she feels will help as the reach of the pandemic continues to expand.

"I've been thinking about how to promote our website more," she explained. "We are a small boutique, but as things get more intense people might not come in, so we're going to prepare our site."

Steady at the Gerry

Inside the Gerry Building, buyers were visiting the trusted showrooms with whom they enjoy established relationships. While there was a noticeable effect of reduced traffic from appointment cancellations due to the coronavirus threat, business was still good.

Stan Morris of the **Morris Agency** rented a temporary showroom at the Gerry during the market. He said that business was good despite rain and anxiety over the coronavirus epidemic. "I'm pleased. I worked harder than I expected though," Morris said. He estimated that 20 percent of his appointments were canceled due to coronavirus fears. ●



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SURF REPORT



Billabong Women's Swim Brand of the Year

Billabong Shines at 16th Annual SIMA Awards

The **Billabong** brand took trophies for three of the significant categories in the 16th **SIMA Awards**, the surf industry's premier awards show.

The show was produced March 11 by the trade group **Surf Industry Manufacturers Association** at **The Observatory** nightclub in Santa Ana, Calif., located just a few miles away from Billabong's offices at **Boardriders Inc.** in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Billabong was awarded with honors for Women's Apparel Brand of the Year, Women's Swim Brand of the Year and Men's Boardshort Brand of the Year. It was a similar haul to last year's SIMA Awards, when Billabong took home five trophies.

Billabong has been a leading surf brand for more than 40 years, and it has been on a hot streak recently, according to Patrik Schmidle, president of **ActionWatch**, a market-research company that focuses on action sports.

"Billabong has been on a run for several years," Schmidle said. "It's a well-oiled machine that integrates great design, product development, merchandising, storytelling and a go-to market support for specialty retail."

The show's Breakout Brand of the Year honor is reserved for emerging brands. **Salty Crew**, a subsidiary of **Globe International**, was the recipient of this year's award. Others nominated included **Buell Wetsuits**, **Otis Eyewear**, **Simbi** and **Sistrevolution**.

Independent brand **Roark** was honored with the trophy for Men's Apparel Brand of the Year. Ryan Hitzel, Roark's chief executive officer, accepted the award surrounded by his staff. In his acceptance speech, he urged audience members to take inspiration from some of the pioneers of surfwear such as Jack O'Neill, Bob McKnight and Bob

Hurley.

"I want to encourage all of us to try and be different and go into our heritage and spirit and take everything you can to make great product so consumers will fall in love with us," Hitzel said.



Surf Sessions By Surfline

SIMA also gave awards to core action-sports shops. **Hansen Surfboards** of Encinitas, Calif., was honored as Retailer of the Year on the West Coast. **Island Water Sports** of Deerfield Beach, Fla., was awarded with Retailer of the Year for the East Coast, and **T&C Surf Designs** of Al Moana, Hawaii, won Retailer of the Year for Hawaii. **BC Surf & Sport** of Denver won the Retailer of the Year within inland America.

—Andrew Asch



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Faves Aims To Help Retailers Make Sense of Budgets and Buys

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

Retailers can expect to meet scores—even hundreds—of people when they attend big trade shows and other buying trips. The experience can become a blur when a buyer tries to recall the styles he or she saw during shows, said Ulla Hald of the retail-technology company **Faves Solutions, Inc.**, maker of the **Faves Pro** app for buyers.

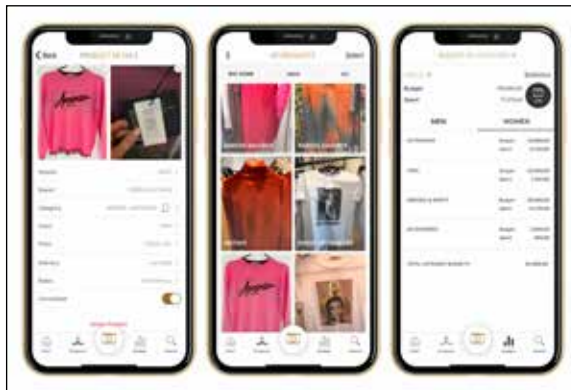
The Danish-born, U.S.-educated Hald wanted to develop an application for fashion buyers after hearing stories about the post-show confusion that often sets in for many attendees. She developed the app when living in San Francisco.

In 2018, she approached pioneering angel investor Jason Calacanis at the **Launch Accelerator** startup incubator, pitching the app as a tech-enabled organizational tool. She received seed money to develop the app from Launch Accelerator as well as from European angel investors. The app could even serve as a replacement for older photo-sharing technologies, notepads and spreadsheets, she said.

“If **Instagram** and **Excel** had a baby, it would be Faves,” Hald said. “You have the visual elements of what you have seen and you have the numbers [for a budget], and they are completely intertwined.”

The app can be used a la carte or in conjunction with other platforms. In February 2020, Faves partnered with the e-commerce platform **Shopify**, allowing the popular site’s buyers to download Faves Pro.

Hald hopes to develop similar partnerships with other retail platforms such as **Brandboom** and **Joor**. She considers the Faves Pro app as a show organizer that could also help with customer relations. Eventually, through technology provided by partners of Faves, Hald would like to afford the ability to



Ulla Hald

place orders for goods.

During trade shows, buyers using the Faves Pro app will take pictures of trade-show items they are interested in with their phone camera. When the pictures are uploaded into the Faves Pro app, users can tag pictures with notes on how much the item costs, sizing information and what showroom represented the item.

The app also keeps budgets for buyers. It can tell buyers how much money from their season’s budget they have spent. It will then help crunch the numbers and forecast how much the item should be priced at a specific markup. It also has a sales angle. For customer relations, the app can suggest specific store customers to tell about the goods, Hald said.

Faves Pro also can develop look books of items photographed at trade shows. The look books can be printed out and exported into a PDF format. The Faves Pro app is complimentary for individual buyers to use, with a limit of 100 products. Boutiques and multi-store chains can add more users and unlimited storage with a subscription starting at \$29 per month.

Hald keeps a North American office in San Francisco, but her company is headquartered in Copenhagen, where she currently lives with her American husband, Mark Turner, who serves as chief technology officer. The app is used by a number of European retailers in 15 European countries in addition to American brand **The Stylist LA**.

There are, however, challenges for any company offering to digitize work for buyers. Fashion buyers have been criticized for not being as enthusiastic transferring all of their activity online, despite the skyrocketing popularity of e-commerce and inroads made by platforms such as **Joor** and **Brandboom**.

Eme Mizioch, owner of the **JoKen Style** showroom in Los Angeles, said that many deals are made with 1990s technology.

“If they don’t see you face to face, orders are done with emails and PDF line sheets,” she said. Mizioch is currently developing a virtual showroom and e-market called **GrooveNStyle**.

While some buyers have worked slower to adopt new technologies, Hald said they have not been given the appropriate tools. This issue is coupled with the issue of every vendor offering its own platform, expecting buyers to use the proprietary technology, which would mean that buyers would have to learn how to navigate hundreds of wholesale-purchasing platforms to place individual orders with their partners.

“Many of the buyers I speak with are frustrated that they have to spend time learning and relearning how to place orders in the different systems, so often they end up sending an email with their orders and let the vendor deal with inputting the order in their particular system,” she said. “There is a lot of innovation going on in retail but very little specifically helping buyers.” ●

T-SHIRTS

YJack to Launch in U.S. Offering Affordable T-shirts With a Luxurious Hand

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

Following last month’s launch in Korea, the **YJack** brand is preparing to expand into the United States in April. Focusing on fiber and yarns that can be used to create quality product with a soft hand, the brand is bringing to the market men’s and women’s T-shirts manufactured from its proprietary **Exfina** cotton, an extra-long staple-cotton yarn that YJack developed to avoid wear, shrinkage and moisture.

“It’s one of the most iconic pieces but can always be improved upon,” YJack designer Gina Lin explained. “People are becoming more mindful of the durability of clothing and how something falls apart or stays together over multiple washings.”

Through recognizing the need for T-shirts as products that consumers consistently buy, the YJack team is able to provide pieces that serve as a foundation, but the brand wants to ensure its approach results in an elevated product. Owned by Jack Yang, YJack relies on a team of designers that appreciates the beauty of a well-made T-shirt and knows that this basic wardrobe staple can be created at a luxurious level.

“Luxury brands offer great designs, but typically they are expensive,” Lin explained. “The luxury brands are great quality, and they tend to stand the test of time.”

When investing in a quality tee, consumers want to feel



their investments are affording special characteristics. By focusing on the details found in premium T-shirt products, Lin feels the brand can distance itself from fast fashion and reach a level of garment manufacturing that will ensure customers feel they are receiving their money’s worth.

“Luxury brands are more mindful about the finishing as well as the interior finishing, and that is one thing we pride ourselves on. We are finishing the interior and exterior, the way the label is sewn on or printed,” she said. “Every single thing is thoughtfully done—every single placement, button, seam or stitch, and this is something luxury brands do as well.”

As the YJack brand’s stateside launch draws near, there is

also consideration regarding the materials used to make its products. Using 100 percent cotton to create the T-shirts, Lin notes that relying on natural fibers is important to YJack.

“In many cases, we try to be somewhat sustainable, in a sense, and aware of the environment and what it’s doing,” she said. “Adding synthetics, polyesters or rayon into a garment, there is a study regarding microplastics going into the ocean and being eaten by the fish.”

Within this first collection, YJack will release five T-shirt styles. Women’s products will include an open scoop-neck, a crew-neck and a modest V-neck shirt. For men, the brand will launch with two crew-neck styles in a classic and relaxed fit. An initial palette includes

black, white, beige, heather gray, navy and sky blue for men. Women’s T-shirts will be offered in black, white, rose, dust, heather, oatmeal and a red-orange hue.

“We’re going to be expanding on T-shirts and all various types, whether it’s a classic fit, a relaxed fit or a V-neck with a handkerchief hem or a side slit,” Lin explained. “We’ll be accumulating styles every month to make sure we have a collection of all types of tees for both men and women.”

Available in sizes S–XL, YJack will be sold via **yjackusa.com** for direct-to-consumer pricing that is set at \$24 for women’s pieces and \$28 for men’s.—*Dorothy Crouch*

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