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HOPE RISING

Embracing the possibilities of progress through collaboration, the fashion industry is creating hope through manufacturing personal protective equipment and leading philanthropic efforts for COVID-19 relief.



MADE IN LOS ANGELES

Apparel Industry Finds Opportunities to Do Good Making COVID-19 Masks

By Andrew Asch *Retail Editor*

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, scores of Los Angeles designers and apparel companies have shifted gears and started making nonmedical face masks. Many of them found new business leads as well as new purpose, and in the case of independent designer Mario De La Torre he forged a partnership with a group connected to a major retailer.

The **Walmart Foundation** donated \$50,000 on April 24 to fund work for De La Torre's Masks4Farmworkers campaign. With his wife and business partner, Evette Smith, De La Torre started the campaign in early April. They made face masks to protect farm workers from the elements and from the spread of COVID-19. Masks4Farmworkers was developed with the nonprofit organizations **Hispanic Heritage Foundation**, **Justice for Migrant Women** and the **National Center** ➔ **Masks** page 3

FASHION

Fashioning Beauty for the Frontline, Kevan Hall and Malena Ruth Find a New Mission

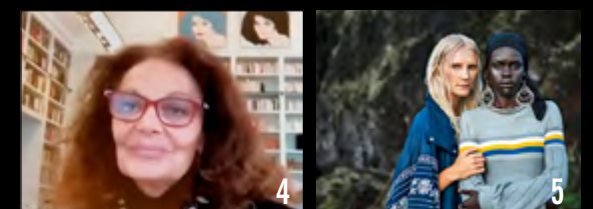
By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

For Malena Ruth, working with fellow Los Angeles designer Kevan Hall is part of her design evolution. While Ruth counts Hall among the mentors who have helped forge her path, the two luxury designers have come together on one of their most-important collaborative projects. Hall and Ruth are making protective masks for consumers in addition to creating these crucial pieces for workers in the healthcare industry by enhancing existing products to provide greater protection against COVID-19.

"Malena got a call from a doctor at **UCLA**," Hall explained. "They had hospital gowns, but they had short sleeves." ➔ **Fashion** page 6

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Ross Makes \$1.5 Million COVID-19 Relief Donation

Ross Stores, Inc.'s fleet of 1,566 off-price apparel emporiums are temporarily closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Dublin Calif.-headquartered retailer's philanthropy is active.

On April 24, the retailer and its **Ross Stores Foundation** jointly made a commitment to donate \$1.5 million to COVID-19 relief services, said Barbara Rentler, Ross's chief executive officer.

"During these unprecedented times, Ross Stores is committed to supporting our asso-

ciations and our neighbors in the communities where we operate," she said. "These funds will assist those in critical need of relief due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Donations will be made to nonprofits such as **Boys & Girls Clubs of America** and **First Book**, which provides new books, educational resources, as well as coats, snacks and hygiene kits to educators serving children in need, according to a statement from the organization.

Additional donations will be made to food banks in California and New York. Another

Ross donation will fund the distribution of personal protective equipment to healthcare workers.

Ross Stores, Inc. had revenues of \$16 billion in 2019. It runs 266 stores under the nameplate of **dd's Discounts**, which offers off-price apparel and homewares for 20 percent to 70 percent off retail prices. Its **Ross Dress for Less** stores are offering apparel and homewares at 20 percent to 60 percent off retail prices, according to a company statement.—*Andrew Asch*

President Signs COVID-19 Relief Bill, Fed Expands Main Street Program

President Donald Trump signed a \$484 billion COVID-19 relief package into law on April 24, which was intended to fund programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program, meant to help small businesses continue paying employees through the COVID-19 pandemic. On April 30, the Federal Reserve expanded its Main Street Lending Program to allow midsize businesses to participate in the \$600 billion program.

Matthew Shay, the **National Retail Federation's** president and chief executive officer, said that these programs offered important lifelines.

"Expanding eligibility for this [Main Street Lending Program] will provide much-needed support for some of America's most recognizable brands and their workers, who have been severely impacted by the pandemic," Shay said on April 30.

The Paycheck Protection Program had been heavily criticized for not reaching small businesses. A lot of the funds were gobbled up by sizable businesses because of a loophole that said big businesses with subsidiaries

employing 500 people or less could qualify for funds. In an updated guidance published on April 24, the U.S. Treasury Department encouraged well-financed public companies to return PPP loans by May 7.

Outrage at the program's shortcomings were acknowledged on an April 28 conference call hosted by Congressman Jimmy Gomez, a Democrat who represents California's 34th District, which includes downtown Los Angeles as well as the adjacent neighborhoods of Westlake and Highland Park.

"We wanted to push for resources to protect as many small businesses as possible," Gomez told constituents participating on the phone call. "There were a lot of questions on how this program was being run. I asked for full transparency for the PPP loans. We wanted to know who was getting what money."

The City of Los Angeles offers a small-business emergency microloan program. The County of Los Angeles has produced a Business and Worker Disaster Help Center to help companies navigating the COVID-19 crisis.

During the call, Gomez forecasted that ad-

ditional aid packages would be approved by Congress. "Small businesses will be a priority for myself and the caucus," he said.

Businesses should continue to apply for the PPP loan, said Robert Greenspan, founder and president of the Los Angeles-area **Greenspan Consult Inc.** "I told my clients, the first round of money was distributed fast. In the second round, there seems to be money available. More small businesses should do it. The backup documentation can sometimes be difficult to access, but you should submit and hope for the best," he said.—*A.A.*

L.A. Companies Make Face Masks Using Sustainable Practices

Tour Image dba **UStrive** received a Global Organic Textile Standard certification in November, which gave the Los Angeles-area factory one of the highest ranks in sustainable manufacturing.

However, when UStrive got procurement contracts to make face masks from **Kaiser Permanente** and the State of California in late March, the factory had never made organic face coverings, said Scott Wilson, the business's president.

"At first it was hurry up and make masks," Wilson said. "But as soon as we got into production, we wanted to create a better organic mask for the planet and for your face."

The first delivery of organic face masks was shipped this week to UStrive's partners, including Kaiser Permanente, the State of California and the communications company **Spectrum**. The general-use masks are given to nonmedical staff at Kaiser Permanente as well as to Spectrum employees and state workers. The organic masks will not be made available for wholesale. Since late March, UStrive has manufactured 1.1 million masks. From late April and into the future, UStrive will only make organic face masks.

UStrive's reusable two-ply masks feature a woven outer layer made out of a poplin fabric, and a cotton jersey is used for the inner layer. It also features non-latex elastic or cotton/spandex straps. The masks feature a black color made from organic dyes. UStrive's general-use masks are machine washable and can be used multiple times.

On April 27, Los Angeles-based **Texol-lini** introduced a T19 protective mask, which is designed, knitted, dyed, sewn and packaged locally using ethical and sustainable methods, said Sherry Wood, Texollini's director of merchandising. The company's vertical mill adheres to more-sustainable practices, while knitting and dyeing machines use less energy and water-soluble formulas.

The mask is made out of neoprene-style fabric, Wood said, and its design covers more of the face compared to other masks. It also features an antimicrobial **Bac-Shield** finish to prevent odors. The T19 comes in several prints and is machine washable and reusable. The company is selling masks through www.T19mask.com. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the **American Red Cross**.—*A.A.*

Inside the Industry

Resale marketplace StockX is expanding its bidding-based selling-and-buying concept into philanthropy with a fund-raising initiative called "Campaign for a Cause," benefiting the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization, powered by the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation. The charitable event began April 29 and will continue through May 3. Contributors can visit the <https://stockx.com/charity/who-covid19> page and make a donation of at least \$10 on the Detroit-headquartered reseller's most alluring pieces, including items donated by celebrities including Sarah Andelman, Don C, Karlie Kloss, Futura, Usain Bolt, Lionel Messi, Hasan Minhaj, Steve Aoki and Ludacris. Items include sneakers, clothing, art and collectibles. By press time, more than \$200,000 had been raised.

HanesBrands is following up its production and delivery of over 60 million cloth face coverings for the United States government by committing to making more than 20 million long-sleeve, splash-resistant, washable, reusable medical gowns, which will be distributed by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency to hospitals and healthcare facilities to help protect staff against COVID-19. The Winston-Salem, N.C., company also announced that it was ahead of schedule to deliver more than 320 million washable, three-ply-cotton face coverings. Hanes is also aiming to meet the mask and protective-garment demand from consumers, retailers and business-to-business customers by securing additional manufacturing capacity.

Spanish brand Mango announced the launch of its first capsule collection under its Second Chances project, which was created in 2016 to build a circular economy by using fibers created with resources from repurposed post-consumer clothing. Since the project's launch, Mango has collected more than 35 tons of clothing filling 420 containers located at all of its stores in Spain in addition to locations in France, Portugal, Germany, Croatia, Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom. Pieces in the collection comprise 20 percent recycled fibers and 80 percent sustainable cotton. The dye process for the collection resulted in a water savings of 85 percent.

Simon Properties revealed its plans to reopen certain locations in some states starting May 1. Of the 49 properties that will reopen through May 4, locations in Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas will open first. On May 2, stores in Indiana will reopen, and on May 4 locations in Missouri will open. In a statement, John Rulli, president and chief administrative officer, said that the company is taking precautions to ensure employee and customer safety with shopping hours limited. According to the company, employees, contractors and vendors are required to screen themselves prior to arrival at the workplace and stay home if they register a temperature of more than 100.4 degrees or experience symptoms. Personal hygiene, including hand washing and sanitizing, as well as social-distancing guidelines will be enforced.

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Supply-Chain Executives Forecast How Technology Amid the Pandemic Can Transform Businesses

By Andrew Asch Retail Editor

The COVID-19 pandemic turned the fashion business upside down and is putting supply chains through a giant stress test, said Neil Soni, vice president of business development and strategy for **Omnichain**, a Los Angeles-headquartered supply-chain company.

"I think that there is a silver lining to this," Soni said. "It will stress-test your current operations. The hidden inefficiencies within your operations have inevitably and rapidly surfaced."

With challenges and bottlenecks coming into full view, supply-chain executives will be compelled to fix the business's logistical problems and brainstorm ways to serve a fashion business that is rapidly changing, Soni and other supply-chain executives said.

Omnichain has been seeking to change supply chains by advocating the adoption of supportive intelligent technology such as distributed ledgers or blockchain. This technology, which includes artificial intelligence, will improve efficiencies and help make locating goods spread across the globe easier, Soni said. Omnichain also unveiled an update of its platform's user interface, which makes the platform more user friendly, he said.

"No one can predict a pandemic. But AI can rapidly spot unanticipated changes in trends or a disruption in demand flow," Soni said. "AI can help shift organizational strategies."



Neil Soni

AI and machine learning can help with issues that were building before the pandemic. Tariff wars with China made headlines before the COVID-19 pandemic. Many companies have started looking for places outside of China to make their goods since the U.S.-China trade war started in 2018. Since supply chains are planting flags in more-distant places, supply-chain companies need to build even more sophisticated systems, said Robert Krieger, president of the freight forwarder **Krieger Worldwide**.

"There has never been a more critical time for a company to take control of its supply chain," Krieger said. His company recently unveiled a proprietary system that he says offers superior tracking.

"We have built a robust web-based purchase-order-management system that fully integrates with our clients' enterprise resource-planning systems. It gives importers visibility and control of their global supply chains, even in places as far away as Bangladesh," Krieger said. He said that his company's purchase-order management system allows for a wide range of people involved in a venture, from customers to chief financial officers, to track goods.

Logistics companies may be one of the beneficiaries in the anticipated changes for retail. For example, digital retail and e-commerce are forecasted to enjoy more growth in an era during which physical contact is discouraged, Omnichain's Soni said.

"If organizations are going to develop more e-commerce, they're going to put more resources in their own logistics," Soni said. "Organizations may begin asking strategic questions to help them transition, such as how can they procure a fleet to make more deliveries? What will they allocate to fulfill more logistical requirements?"

Supply-chain practices such as drop shipping will see a growth spurt, said Leandrew Robinson, co-founder and chief executive officer of **Hingeto**, a business-to-business marketplace headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area. Drop shipping is a supply-chain management system that affords freedom for retailers to forego keeping goods in stock. Instead, a retailer takes an order and transfers order fulfillment to the manufacturer. The brand ships an item to the customer. It will be up to logistics companies to make sure that products are delivered properly.

A heavier reliance on drop shipping could change the way retail is organized. Retailers won't have to stock as much inventory. "Drop shipping will turn a traditional retailer into a marketplace like **Amazon**," Robinson predicted.

Despite the global economy being turned upside down by the pandemic, businesses around the world have continued to use supply chain-influenced initiatives to improve the economy.

The Milan-headquartered company **Virgo** recently unveiled a platform that uses blockchain and other technologies to help manufacturers certify their goods. Virgo also said that its platform can be integrated with ERP systems to help track an entire lifecycle of a product. ●

MADE IN LOS ANGELES

Masks *Continued from page 1*

for Farmworker Health, Inc.

De La Torre and Smith started the project after their business dried up in late March due to the pandemic's economic freeze. They financed the project from their own savings to maintain the employment of their sewers.

"With this injection of capital, we're going to put out tens of thousands of masks," De La Torre said of the Walmart Foundation news. "I thought that we were only going to be able to do 10,000."

Instead of merely employing 10 people, he'll be able to employ 35. He also found a new direction for his company. Until recently, it did private-label lines for retailers and also produced runway fashion and office wear for the **Mario De La Torre** fashion label.

"Our new social responsibility will be to take care of farm workers. I'm going to continue to make masks as long as I have a career," De La Torre said. "That is what we can do to play our part."

Protecting L.A. from health and financial risks

On March 27, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced the **L.A. Protects** program, which saw the city of Los Angeles partnering with **Kaiser Permanente** and the sustainable brand **Reformation**. L.A. Protects provided designs to companies, allowing businesses to make nonmedical face masks for people who work in jobs that require dealing with the public, such as grocery-store staff, as well as members of the general public.

Approximately 433 companies and designers joined L.A. Protects, which had the goal of making 5 million masks, according to a city spokeswoman. No city funds support the campaign, but companies participating receive leads that identify groups looking for masks. It's still possible to enroll, according to a representative from the mayor's office, and companies continue to join the campaign.

About a month after L.A. Protects started, the Los Angeles area has become a center of design for making nonmedical face masks. Price points for masks range from \$10 to more than \$27. Despite reports from these businesses that they are unable to match the revenue that they earned before the crisis, the nonmedical face masks are giving fashion companies new business opportunities as well as a head start on serving a new market. It also gives brands a chance to help the public and support other philanthropic projects.

Apparel brands big and small lend a helping hand

Other big companies within the apparel industry have embarked on mask-production projects to fulfill the need for



PLEASE DO NOT ENTER



MARIO DE LA TORRE

these goods. The **Vans** apparel-and-footwear brand partnered with the **Hedley & Bennett** workwear and kitchen label to make more than 250,000 face masks out of canvas used for Vans shoes. The masks will be made in Hedley & Bennett's facility in Vernon, Calif., just south of downtown Los Angeles. Masks will be donated to organizations around Los Angeles. Vans also has partnered with designer Michael Schmidt to produce medical face shields. Vans 18-inch shoelaces were supplied to fasten the shields.

Boutique retailers also have gotten into the campaign to make face masks. **Please Do Not Enter** has sold art-inspired fashion in downtown Los Angeles since 2014.

"In Asia, it has been an everyday accessory for years. It has become a statement and a fashion accessory," Libert said. "You have to wear it for health reasons. It's so visible. But you also have to express something."

His brand started developing prototypes for face masks prior to the coronavirus outbreak. By the time the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Please Do Not Enter had a mask with the shop's logo placed over the mouth, Libert said.

"Please Do Not Enter has an added meaning when you put it on a mask. You're warning the virus not to enter," he said. The first run of masks sold out in two days. They are made of American cotton and manufactured in Los Angeles. Proceeds are donated to the nonprofit **Baby2Baby**, which gives supplies to families affected by COVID-19.

Maya Reynolds, an independent downtown-Los Angeles designer, started brainstorming face-mask designs after reading news about the need for masks. She wanted to give masks to friends, but she also saw a business opportunity.

"There's a ton of demand out there. We don't know how long this thing is going to run," Reynolds said. "Masks will be required for a long time, and people will need some variety in their lives."

Medical professionals she consulted wanted a product similar to the N95 mask used by surgeons. Masks had to be form fitting. She created a design that she calls the Breathe mask. A feature of the mask simulates a dome around the mouth, keeping fabric away from the area for comfort. She has been

selling them on her **Maya Reynolds Etsy.com** page. Donations are made to the reforestation nonprofit **One Tree Planted**.

Making a new product requires a lot of trial and error, said Tony Shamtobi, president and co-owner of **Labeltex**. The company just started shipping face masks made from his Los Angeles-area factory. They were produced after about a month

of shifting the factory's capabilities, which included mechanics modifying Labeltex looms to make the masks. It was frustrating having to wait while demand was exploding.

"I never lost hope," he said. "We had to do something that would help, so everyone would have masks."

Once Labeltex started distributing masks, orders came in, allowing the company to rehire 15 workers.

Shamtobi's modified looms make tightly knit polyester material and workers apply antibacterial liquid onto the fabric. Labeltex also prints company logos on the three-layer masks or icons such as the United States flag and peace signs.

Making masks has required manufacturers to follow a lot of new safety rules, which include social distancing between workers. Shamtobi said that workers are kept 20 feet apart at the Labeltex factory.

Elaine Tran, owner of the **Dippin' Daisy's** swimwear brand, has been making face masks out of swimwear fabric. Along with social distancing, workers have to sanitize their stations twice a day with alcohol wipes. She said that 70 of her 100 workers make face masks. It's worth the extra effort.

"I had to furlough a lot of office staff," Tran said. "I did not want to furlough in-house sewers. I'm their only source of income."

Tran and other manufacturers said that they forecast they will be in the face-mask business for a while. Dov Charney of **Los Angeles Apparel** makes masks out of a thick jersey material. He said that the mask business is here to stay. "These masks are now part of American culture," he said.

The broad initiative to make more nonsurgical face masks continues to build momentum. **Brother International Corp.** recently announced the donation of approximately 100 industrial sewing machines to domestic manufacturers who are making personal protective equipment, including **Beverly Knits, Inc.**, **SanMar**, **Brooks Brothers** and **Los Angeles Apparel**. Charney said that his sewers have been using the Brother machines to make masks. "Every little bit helps," he said. "We're very thankful." ●

Kingpins24 Launches as Virtual Complement to Kingpins Brand

After producing a reported 88 shows together in 10 cities including New York, Amsterdam and Hong Kong, **Kingpins** founder Andrew Olah and the show's managing director, Vivian Wang, introduced the brand's first **Zoom**-hosted digital event April 22–23. Taking place during the dates that were originally intended for the Amsterdam edition of Kingpins at **SugarCity**, the virtual event adhered to the city's local time beginning at 9 a.m. CET. According to Olah, the entire Kingpins team pitched in to produce the virtual show within a four-week time frame following the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Andrew Olah



Vivian Wang

"We learned a lot through this. There was a tremendous amount of learning that goes in and we wanted the experience. That is the reason we signed onto it so quickly and aggressively. We said, 'Let's do something for our community, but let's also learn something and see what is here.'"

In addition to interviews with denim experts such as Stefano Aldighieri of **Another Design Studio** and **Lycra**'s Jean Hegedus, Kingpins also afforded opportunities for partners who would have exhibited at the physical show to present their brands and mission through presentations. There was also room to have a bit of fun with vintage commercials from denim brands including **Lee** and **Levi's** and a virtual happy hour to close the first day.

"The exhibitors were happy that we did something for the industry and let them participate and talk to their community," Olah said. "Everybody got some energy from that because they had a project to do and the project was talking to customers,

which is what we all want to do. This was a mass event. This was something that we could all do together."

The show afforded opportunities for denimheads to examine how the business will change as companies find new ways to conduct business. Priorities will also shift with consumer demands changing to ensure health and safety.

"When we traveled to China, Japan and Korea, most people were wearing masks when going out. To us, it was a little bizarre, and now the mask is going to be the number-one thing people will be buying," Aldighieri said. "It will be a different landscape."

One of the largest topics of conversation during Kingpins24 was sustainability, a timely subject considering the shrinking carbon footprint of the apparel industry as many professionals work remotely.

During a panel led by Kerry Bannigan, founder of the **Conscious Fashion Campaign** in collaboration with the **United**

Nations Office for Partnerships, panelists discussed the future of trade shows. While this industry that relies so heavily on tactile experiences will need on-site events, panelists envisioned fresh approaches, such as Adam Taubenfligel of **Triarchy Denim**, who recognized an opportunity when his budget opened up following event cancellations starting in March.

"We look at how we spend to go to these events that could be digital and how we could take the extra resources and invest them into the companies that are trying to make our lives easier," he said. "It creates an eco-system where the denim brands are helping the companies that are trying to make our lives easier and the planet better."

For Olah, the denim industry needs a physical space to come together, study fresh methods in production and examine new product, but, in the meantime, his team is planning to host a June virtual edition around the time when **Kingpins New York** would have taken place June 2–3 at **Pier 36's Basketball City**, though details have not yet been announced. Despite denim's reliance on physical trade shows, he feels smaller conferences and seminars could be more useful in a digital format.

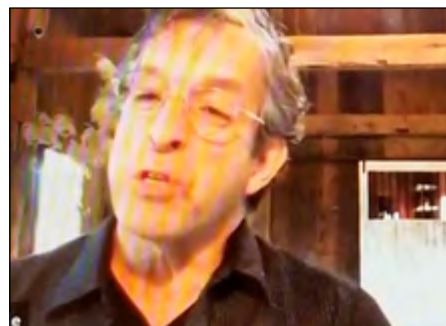
"Most surprising for us was how we could do more with our seminars with people from all different countries to put on a great seminar. It was a lot easier for us to put on a great seminar. Moving forward, I think it's something we can do frequently and do really well digitally," he said. "We can go all over the world."—*Dorothy Crouch*

Fashinnovation's Virtual Event Cultivates Mindfulness in the Garment Industry

Launched April 20–21, during the first days of **Fashion Revolution Week**, **Fashinnovation's** Worldwide Talks 2020 was held in a virtual forum covering themes including sustainability, social impact, entrepreneurship, business and, of course, innovation. The impressive roster of more than 80 speakers during the **Zoom**-hosted event included fashion-business royalty such as Nadja Swarovski, Mara Hoffman, Kenneth Cole and Diane von Furstenberg.



Diane von Furstenberg



Kenneth Cole

"It's something that was so needed. Many people had questions and doubts, but the fashion-industry supply chain and focusing on the sustainability aspects can have a chance in all of this," Fashinnovation co-founder Jordana Guimarães said. "It was diverse as far as the types of people we had speak. That has been the key to our success over the last two years. We were able to get the whole world to participate without making people travel."

During the event, speakers noted how this time of isolation spent at home could be used as a time of examination for a fresh business approach. Reminding attendees that the most challenging life experiences are often viewed in hindsight as those that also afford opportunity, von Furstenberg spoke during a session called "Creating a Legacy via Design, Business

& Empowerment."

"You can't go with the old playbook. Start fresh. When you build a community, you build power. When you lose the community, you lose the power," she said. "You have to own it—this is my reality and how am I going to deal with that? Because of this reality, you may change your life. You may switch things or take an opportunity you would have never taken."

Through a discussion titled "Fashion Is 'Here ... for Good,'" Cole echoed these sentiments. He advised against seeking solutions through "belt tightening," saying answers can't be found simply by shifting the financial practices of a business. For Cole, the shift in consumer mindset will lead

to more-mindful decision making in business, which he hopes will yield greater environmental consciousness and empathy.

"We are going to be a different population when we get through this. We're going to be different in the way we think about our lives, the way we consume, the way we transact," he said. "We'll come through it. We'll talk. We have a reset. We have a chance to redefine and reposition ourselves, which our industry so badly needed. This could turn out to be a blessing if we approach it the right way."

A discussion on "Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Fashion" led actor and **BaYou with Love** founder Nikki Reed to challenge

corporate executives to use this time in isolation to think deeply about sustainable changes. Her hope was that by thinking about small changes, these large companies could eventually make a big, positive difference.

"What I hear from a lot of big companies when I reach out to open up talks about sustainability is, 'You don't understand, it's like removing one piece of the **Jenga** puzzle—we can't rebuild the entire company from scratch.' Incremental change deserves applause," she said. "You can make small changes within your company, no matter how big that company is, without having to level everything from the ground up."—*D.C.*

IMPORT-EXPORT

Certain Tariffs to Receive 90-Day Postponement Due to Pandemic

Importers faced with financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic can request a 90-day deferment in payments on certain duties, taxes and fees, according to an executive order signed by President Trump on April 18.

The order postpones deadlines for fees and taxes on goods that were taken from warehouses in March and April. This move was applauded by retail trade groups including the **Retail Industry Leaders Association**, but executives of these groups requested that the deferral of taxes and duties be extended.

Brian Dodge, RILA's president, said that the deferment of some duty payments should be stretched out to 180 days.

"Millions of jobs are on the line, and we urge the administration to consider further duty relief to help retailers put

workers back on the payroll when this crisis abates," Dodge said on April 20.

A week later, a coalition of more than 470 companies urged the president to extend the due dates for imports coming in May and June. The coalition also requested that the deferments be extended to all duty payments.

"Combined, these two actions would immediately free up billions of dollars of working capital for American companies, like those listed below, to pay suppliers, employees, service providers and other critical stakeholders. This cash is even more important for companies that have had to close their doors because of stay-at-home orders, leaving them with little to no revenue to make ends meet," the letter, dated April 28, pleaded. It was signed by companies including **Adidas Amer-**

ica, Alice + Olivia, Cult Gaia, Gap Inc., JCPenney, Levi Strauss & Co., Kohl's Corp., Trina Turk, PacSun LLC and trade associations the **American Apparel & Footwear Association**, the **National Retail Federation** and the **Retail Industry Leaders Association**.

Duties can cost companies hundreds of thousands of dollars for a single shipment, said Robert Krieger, president of **Krieger Worldwide**, a customs broker and freight forwarder. "For some companies, this will make them or break them," Krieger said of the deferment of some fees. "This is big news."

The new rule will not apply to all imports, such as Chinese imports flagged under the Section 301 duties. Section 301 is a rule used by the U.S. Trade Representative as a tool in the trade war against China.—*Andrew Asch*

Amazon's "Making the Cut" Win Changed Edgy Designer's Style

Downtown Los Angeles designer Jonny Cota won the first season of **Amazon's** reality-competition show "Making the Cut" April 24 with a diffusion fashion line he named **Metamorphosis**. His new company, **Jonny Cota Studio**, made its debut on the Amazon show, which was hosted by Heidi Klum and Tim Gunn. The prize was \$1 million to develop the new brand and to sell **Metamorphosis** in a Jonny Cota Studio store on Amazon. The first delivery of **Metamorphosis** was sold out on its debut weekend of April 25–26, Cota said.

The 25-piece collection carries the name **Metamorphosis** not because it sounded cool, Cota said, but rather because it's an accurate description of what happened to him on the show. His design aesthetic went through a change.

The show's judges, Naomi Campbell, Nicole Richie, Joseph Altuzarra, Chiara Ferragni and Carine Roitfeld, tore down his old assumptions of the types of styles he could create. His first fashion line, **Skingraft**, was best known for motorcycle-inspired detailing and hardware embellishments such as studs.

"There's a hardness to it," Cota said of **Skingraft**, which continues to do business. "It celebrates extreme self-expression."

The look worked for downtown Los Angeles, but the show's judging-panel collective thought he could break out of those boundaries.

"The judges were not impressed by the hard **Skingraft** aesthetic," he said. "I had to break outside myself and explore more-accessible looks for the customer and the judges. I was pulling back layers of leather and DTLA and finding myself as a designer."

During the show, Altuzarra often advised that commercial considerations don't necessarily have to clash with a designer's creative vision. Cota said that **Metamorphosis** was the first time he sought acceptance from a wider public.

"**Metamorphosis** was a perfect storm of creativity and fantasy, but every piece is wearable and sustainable," he said.

The collection features details one could see in other Cota designs, such as cargo pockets and tailored sleeves. The line also features dresses, outerwear, knits and separates. A key point for the line was styles that could be shown on a runway but also be sold at an accessible price point.

However, some items went through a transition from runway to shop. The Poet dress seen on the "Making the Cut" runway was made out of silk, while a style of the same name selling on Amazon was made using cotton. A leopard-print trench coat unveiled on the "Making the Cut" runway show was made out of leather and Italian pony hair. The trench coat selling on Amazon was made out of denim and is priced at a third that of the pony-hair version, Cota said.

Some pieces would fit in well with the **Skingraft** catalog. The



Jonny Cota Studio line features a cropped leather jacket with faux shearling that retails for \$750. There's also a leather utility harness.

Cota hopes to run the Amazon store as long as he is able. He also will continue to run **Skingraft** and the bricks-and-mortar store **Cota by Skingraft** with his brother Chris

Cota. Like other nonessential retailers, the boutique in the **Row DTLA** compound in Los Angeles remains closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.—*Andrew Asch*

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FASHION



From left, Kevan Hall, Dr. Retha Goodglick and Malena Ruth



Malena Ruth masks

Fashion *Continued from page 1*

In order for them to feel safe and have more coverage, they asked her to put sleeves on the hospital gowns. We took that on as an initiative, and we added in the masks. They have nice, protective hospital gowns and the masks.”

Members of the **Black Design Collective**, Hall—who is a co-founder of the organization—and Ruth discovered that the request from **UCLA Medical Center’s** Dr. Retha Goodglick was perfect timing during an imperfect situation. A close associate of the BDC, the **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** had recently supplied fabric to the organization. Through this generous contribution, Hall and Ruth were able to use the donated fabric to create sleeves for existing gowns.

“The timing worked out beautifully. I was able to pick up fabric from the fashion-institute store,” Hall said. “That was a great connection between the BDC, FIDM, and Malena and me, working on putting these pieces together.”

For Ruth, contributing to frontline efforts by helping to protect workers such as doctors, nurses, healthcare aides and maintenance crews was an opportunity to help boost morale. Through enhancing these protective garments and creating coordinating masks with attractive fabrics, she feels that uplifting the mental outlook of frontline workers can yield an additional, positive effect that is often lost when medical staff is faced with a public-health crisis.

“When you look at what Kevan and I are doing to help these communities, because we come from a creative standpoint, we thought that by enhancing the gowns we could put a smile on the faces of those who are on the frontlines and in the midst of so much sorrow,” she said.

In addition to helping frontline workers, Hall and Ruth are creating masks for the public. Their washable, reusable masks are handmade in Los Angeles using 100 percent cotton and include a pocket inside for customers to add a filter. For each mask sold, the

designers are donating one additional mask to a frontline worker in Los Angeles at sites including the **Santa Monica Healthcare Center, The Rehabilitation Center of Santa Monica, Berkley East and West Convalescent Hospitals**, and the **Brentwood Health Care Center**.

“The masks are going to people who are working in senior facilities. They are for people who are on staff taking care of people. The gowns are for nursing-home facilities. They are meant to protect patients and workers who are taking care of the most frail and vulnerable. They are worn by nurses and janitors,” Hall said. “Some aren’t even being paid. They are sacrificing. It was something we could do to support them.”

On her **Etsy** shop, **MR2020US**, and **maskaids.com**, Ruth is selling masks for \$18 to \$45, with more-expensive designs featuring embellishments or lace overlays. Hall is selling masks for \$18 via **KevanCares** on **Etsy**. He has also created a line of women’s tops that complement certain masks. As masks are increasingly being recognized as part of the new normalcy, fashion is adopting these protective pieces as part of their collections as a crucial accessory.

While the mission of Hall and Ruth’s project is to aid frontline workers, another silver lining has appeared through their mission. Hall reports that he was able to invite a portion of his staff to return to work in order to create the masks.

“We let everyone go to shelter-in-place but brought back some workers to do some cutting and sewing of the masks,” he said. “We brought back as many as we could.”

Grateful for the opportunity to contribute to fighting COVID-19, Ruth recognizes that many people remain sheltered in their homes and might feel helpless, but she believes every person is able to help. The seemingly simple gesture of supporting businesses and organizations that aid essential workers can make an enormous difference.

“In so many ways each one of us is confined in our own homes and overwhelmed with the magnitude of it,” she said. “Finding a niche, a place, where you can contribute gives you hope that this will end one day.” ●



Kevan Hall shirt and mask

Go Beyond the News and Behind the Scenes

The editors and writers of *California Apparel News* are blogging at *ApparelNews.net*

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created to service the evolving needs of the clothing industry. The company strives to honor job creation within the U.S.A. Founded and owned by industry veteran, Cyrus Nazari, they cater to various demands within the clothing industry, supplying full-scale production to retailers who produce their own brands; manufacturers who require their own unique styles; individual start-up designers. They have a diverse and highly skilled team of professionals, and provide services to small and large companies alike from consultation and concept development, to full completion with a strong focus on quality for all production quantities.

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market dynamics have resulted in opening up a production center in Tijuana, Mexico. We have also added advanced die cutter technology in our Los Angeles production center to streamline our production efforts and to strengthen our packaging capabilities. A very important part of our business is FLASHTRAK, our online ordering system for price tickets, custom products and care labels. Our mission is to deliver high-quality products at competitive prices, wherever they are needed for production. We understand the rush nature of this industry and strive to meet the tight deadlines facing our customers.

Education
Cal Poly Pomona Department
of Apparel Merchandising &
Management

Dr Peter Kilduff
Professor, Apparel Merchandising & Management
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Products and Services: Hone Your Analytical and Management Skills with a Master's in International Apparel Management from Cal Poly Pomona. Announcing our new Master of Science degree in International Apparel Management, starting August 2020. Offered by the Department of Apparel Merchandising & Management, the program will provide graduates with an exceptional insight into the emerging technologies, consumer trends, companies and issues shaping the global apparel sector. It will increase your capabilities to identify and evaluate business problems, and to com-

municate and implement effective solutions. Opportunity to interact with executives from diverse locations and industry segments, and to develop solutions for issues facing companies, will be a feature of the program. Graduates will be fully-equipped to navigate the complex and changing business landscape, and be prepared for leadership. The program will be taught by our international faculty team who hold advanced degrees from top universities in the US, Europe and Asia, and who combine academic distinction with extensive industry and consulting experience. The program comprises 30 semester units. The core curriculum embraces international consumer behavior, global apparel markets and competition, emerging technologies, information and quantitative reasoning skills, and a seminar providing insights from leading executives and thinkers in the field. Electives include: international market forecasting and product line management; sourcing; supply chain and logistics management; brand management; product innovation; international financial management, and retail strategy. A research project is the culminating experience, and focuses on development of advanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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