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With the upcoming debut of her d'Offay brand, Kristen d'Offay is setting a new standard for women to feel beautiful in luxurious garments that trace their lineage to rich American glamour.
Find more styles on page 6.

LAURI LEVENFELD

RETAIL

A Unique Blend of Community, Commerce at The Shops at Sportsmen's Lodge

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

A historically rich Studio City, Calif., site will experience a renewal as **The Shops at Sportsmen's Lodge** welcomes visitors during late summer or early fall 2021 following a \$100 million redevelopment. The 95,000-square-foot space will replace the property's formerly occupied meeting-and-convention area.

Much effort was also dedicated to preserving the site's history. Dating back to the 1800s, it served as a refuge for many well-known personalities, including those from the golden era of Hollywood in the 1940s. Parent company **Midwood Investment & Development** has preserved its ties to the area
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FINANCE

Etsy to Acquire Depop in Deal Valued at Over \$1 Billion

By Noe Garcia *Assistant Editor*

In a multi-billion-dollar agreement, e-commerce giant **Etsy** will acquire peer-to-peer social shopping application **Depop**. The deal will see Etsy, the two-sided online marketplace with millions of buyers and sellers from around the world, acquire 100 percent of Depop's share capital in exchange for \$1.625 billion. The transaction is expected to close during the third quarter of 2021.

"We're on an incredible journey building Depop into a place where the next generation comes to explore unique fashion and be part of a community that's changing the way we shop," said Depop CEO Maria Raga. "Our community is made up of people who are creating a new fashion system by establishing new trends and making new from old. They
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Where fashion gets down to businessSM

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Lightspeed Agrees to Acquire Commerce Companies Ecwid, NuOrder

The merchant-focused platform **Lightspeed** announced on June 7 that it has entered into agreements to acquire two global leaders in digital commerce, **Ecwid** and **NuOrder**.

"By joining forces with Ecwid and NuOrder, Lightspeed becomes the common thread uniting merchants, suppliers and consumers, a transformation we believe will enable innovative retailers to adapt to the new world of commerce," said Dax Dasilva, founder and chief executive officer of Lightspeed. "As economies reopen and business creation accelerates, we hope to embolden entrepreneurs with the tools they need to simplify their operations and scale their ambitions."

Lightspeed, which describes itself as a "one-stop commerce platform," is focused on helping businesses both new and established. Ecwid, a U.S.-based global e-commerce platform, helps further that goal by allowing customers to create standalone businesses in minutes. The integration is expected to create new flexibility when it comes to reaching customers.



The merchant-focused commerce platform Lightspeed announced that it has agreed to acquire the digital-commerce leaders Ecwid and NuOrder, which will aid businesses in solving the challenges of aligning online tools with bricks-and-mortar.

"The distinction between online and bricks-and-mortar retail has disappeared. Lightspeed and Ecwid, two best-in-class platforms, will unite to truly empower businesses.

By eliminating the barriers merchants face when selling online, we will more rapidly achieve our common vision of democratizing retail for independent businesses worldwide and enrich the communities they serve," said Ecwid CEO Ruslan Fazlyev.

NuOrder, which connects businesses and suppliers through its digital platform, will enter the deal by helping to simplify product orders for retailers and offering better insight into companies' products and how they sell.

"At NuOrder, we have been on a journey to revolutionize retail by building a global network for brands and retailers. The coming together of Lightspeed and NuOrder accelerates that vision exponentially. The power of connected commerce comes to life now," said NuOrder co-founders and co-CEOs Olivia Skuza and Heath Wells. "We are thrilled to join forces with Lightspeed to unlock transformative value for brands and retailers globally. This represents an inflection point in the history of retail."—Noe Garcia

SUPPLY CHAIN

Canopy Adds 29 Brands to Its Pack4Good Initiative to Save Forests

With 29 new brands joining Pack4Good, the goal of saving the world's ancient and endangered forests took another step in the right direction. Pack4Good, an initiative by the environmental nonprofit organization **Canopy**, is focused on eliminating controversial forest fibers from packaging such as take-out containers, shoeboxes and various other paper goods.

The 29 brands that joined the movement include sustainable luxury-clothing brand

Another Tomorrow, **Ugg**, **Forever New** and **House of Baukjen**. They have all committed to eliminating the aforementioned fibers from their packaging and finding alternatives such as agricultural residues.

"Our practices have been aligned with Pack4Good since our inception, and we thought it was important to join the chorus of brands that were really making forests a priority," said founder and CEO of Another Tomorrow Vanessa Barboni Hallik. "Nature-



Canopy now has 156 brands—with revenues totaling more than \$78.5 billion—joining its Pack4Good initiative, which is focused on eliminating forest fibers from packaging.

based solutions are a huge part of combating climate change."

With the June 2 announcement, Canopy now has 156 brands onboard with Pack4Good. The revenues of these brands total more than \$78.5 billion.

"Ugg is proud to partner with Canopy, championing the continued importance of protecting the world's forests to ensure a healthy planet and a healthy future for the generations that follow us," said Andrea O'Donnell, president of the Ugg and **Koolaburra by Ugg at Deckers** brands. "With this partnership, we are vowing to further our commitment to sustainable practices across forest-related sourcing, taking steps to protect our endangered forests."

Pack4Good is only 18 months old, but it is focused on working with large industry players in the fashion, food-and-beverage, and beauty-and-care industries to speed up the implementation of next-gen solutions for the nearly 3 billion trees that are cut down every year for paper packaging.

"The companies that are joining Pack4Good are the out-of-the-box thinkers we need—leaders ready to transform paper-packaging supply chains and scale up solutions to save forests and our climate," said Canopy Executive Director Nicole Rycroft. "We have so many solutions just waiting to be implemented, it's time to take them from the margins to the mainstream. This announcement will help us do just that."

Pack4Good partners are also committed to ensuring all of their packaging bypasses ancient and endangered forests, is designed to reduce material use, maximizes recycled and alternative next-generation fibers, and uses FSC-certified wood.—N.G.

Inside the Industry

Applied DNA Sciences, Inc., and **American & Efird** have unveiled a new thread technology that can authenticate products and their materials as the demand for greater transparency for sustainable goods continues to increase. With this advancement, ADNAS' molecular-based CertainT and A&E's Integrity advanced-identification technology were integrated into A&E's sustainable thread, Integrity ECO100. The thread, which is made from 100 percent recycled fiber, is going to be incorporated into the Australian footwear brand Sara Caverley. "During my time as a designer, one of the biggest lessons I've learned is the importance of supply-chain security," Caverley said. "A&E's ECO100 recycled sewing threads provide tangible proof of the one-of-a-kind leather and luxury trimmings used in our products."

Reporting on imports for April and May, the National Retail Federation and Hackett Associates released results from the monthly Global Port Tracker report. Imports at the largest retail container ports in the United States saw their busiest April on record. The report revealed that May could yield a new all-time record as COVID-19 vaccines have become more available. April figures were reported as 2.15 million TEU—a 20-foot container or its equivalent—in the U.S. ports observed by the GlobalPort Tracker. This is an increase of 33.4 percent from one year ago. Figures for May were not yet reported at the time of the report's release. Global Port Tracker projects May will see 2.32 million TEU—an increase of 51.1 percent over the same time the previous year.

The Robert brothers, owners of the winter-coat brand Quartz Co., announced their acquisition of the Canadian luxury brand WANT Les Essentiels, which is designed and manufactured in Québec. "Under our vision, the two brands will be developed so that each can express itself clearly and freely," Jean-Philippe Robert said. This acquisition by Jean-Philippe, François-Xavier and Guillaume is part of the group's recent growth. Since 2015, the Robert brothers have tripled their sales, growing 40 percent year over year. Mark Wiltzer, managing partner of the Mark Edwards Group and co-founder of WANT Les Essentiels, said, "Their solid expertise in the fashion and luxury industry will allow them to propel the growth of this iconic Montréal brand, recognized all over the world."

The American Apparel & Footwear Association published the 22nd edition of the Restricted Substance List, which serves as a guide to identify banned and restricted substances for finished apparel, footwear and home-textile products. Comprising 12 categories and more than 250 chemicals, the list provides information regarding the most-restrictive regulations worldwide in addition to an Appendix on Reporting, identifying U.S. states that require chemicals to be reported for children's products as well as European reporting rules. "It is with great pride that we continue to support product safety around the world with this tool, our regular Product Safety & Compliance seminars and webinars, and via priority initiatives led by AAFA's dedicated Product Safety Council and the RSL Task Force," said AAFA President and CEO Steve Lamar.



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Show Founders Collaborate on New CALA Men's Trend Show for August

By Dorothy Crouch Managing Editor

The latest partnership to hit the trade-show floor is the **CALA Men's Trend Show**, a project announced by founder Ken Haruta of the **West Coast Trend Show** and founder Gerry Murtagh of **CALA**. Blending Haruta's deep roots in men's events with Murtagh's expertise in delivering a buyer-and-exhibitor-focused atmosphere, the duo are developing a destination for serious business at an affordable rate. The event will run Aug. 15–17 at the **Marriott Hotel and Spa** in Newport Beach, Calif., a property that provides a safe, alluring atmosphere for visitors.

"My goal is to have an affordable show for designers and for reps so they can actually make a profit by coming to our show," Haruta said. "That is the main focus for me. The key point is a return on investment. I want the retailer to be comfortable in an open-booth environment."

After 14 years producing the West Coast Trend Show, a hotel-suite-style event hosted at the **Embassy Suites** near **Los Angeles International Airport**, Haruta has built a network of power players in the industry. These connections have afforded a list of venerable brands that are now CALA Men's Trend Show sponsors including **34 Heritage**, **Robert Graham**, **True Grit** and **Saxx**. Additional brands on the robust roster, which can be found at calatrend.net, include **Bowie & Co.**, **Bugatchi**, **Grayers**, **Hansen**, **Haupt**, **Hudson**, **Joe's**, **Johnston & Murphy**, **Lauren by Ralph Lauren**, **Liverpool Los Angeles**, **Mavi**, **M. Singer**, **Patrick Assaraf**, **Paige**, **Privé**, **Robert Barakett**, **Sperry**, **Toes on the Nose**, **Tommy Hilfiger** and **Trinidad3**.

"It was all because of Michael Kofoed, who is a partner at True Grit," Haruta said. "He has been asking me for the last year and a half, 'Why don't you partner up with Gerry to do a better show?' It's been the perfect marriage between the two of us. He gives me my space, I give him his space, and we do our jobs. I know what he is good to do and I know what I can do."

Traditionally a show producer for women's contemporary apparel and accessories, Murtagh is gaining fresh experience joining Haruta in producing a men's show. CALA has experienced immense growth in the last months with the brand's productions in Salt Lake City; Scottsdale, Ariz.; and Seattle. After expanding into new cities, Murtagh is ready to expand



MARRIOTT



From left to right: The CALA Men's Trend Show will make its debut at the Marriott Hotel and Spa in Newport Beach, Calif.; the show will be co-produced by Ken Haruta, founder of the West Coast Trend Show, and Gerry Murtagh, founder of CALA.

into the men's category with his event formula, which caters to the needs of buyers and exhibitors to ensure everyone can get down to business in an inviting atmosphere.

"We're bringing shows to buyers' backyards, and they are appreciating it," Murtagh said. "The Scottsdale show was phenomenal, and the buyers can't thank us enough. We had a show at the **Hotel Valley Ho** resort. Having a show at the resort creates this great energy. It puts everybody in a good mood. We were sold out in three days."

In addition to blending CALA's attentive, intimate atmosphere with West Coast Trend Shows' legacy, Haruta and Murtagh will provide amenities to create a more comfortable and enjoyable business atmosphere. For exhibitors, the show will provide breakfast and lunch. Retailers who are staying at the Marriott will receive a \$75-per-night reimbursement, good for up to a two-day stay. One of the most-exciting amenities is a launch-night cocktail reception that will be hosted on Aug. 15 at **Gary's**, the John Braeger-owned fine-goods men's retailer located at **Fashion Island** in Newport Beach.

"We're having a great cocktail party at Gary's. They are a wonderful store," Haruta said. "Those are the types of rela-

tionships you build over time. It doesn't happen overnight."

While business is the priority for the CALA Men's Trend Show, Haruta and Murtagh wanted to also choose a location that would allow guests and exhibitors to enjoy their surroundings.

"We're putting a show on in the middle of August, when kids are out of school," Murtagh said. "It's close to the water. Someone could couple a business trip with a family vacation."

This new CALA Men's Trend Show is already serving as a point of momentum for the producers. Following the show, Murtagh will host his branded women's show Aug. 18–20 at the Marriott in Newport Beach. There are also plans to build the CALA Men's Trend Show into a biannual event, with discussions focused on February 2022. The pair could also eventually combine the men's and women's categories for a show that affords greater opportunities.

"People are waiting for an open-booth show to open up, and ours is the perfect vehicle," Haruta said. "It is in a nice city. If people want to take an extra day off, they can do it. We're attracting all the good brands. It's all set up to be a success." ●

RETAIL

Sportsmen's Lodge *Continued from page 1*

through the roots established by its founder, Samuel Lemberg, and also included the **Weintraub Real Estate Group** on the project.

"Midwood was started in 1925 by the current CEO's grandfather, and, in addition to being a real-estate developer, he was also a financier. He financed the original development of the hotel that sits on the site now," explained Lease Director of Midwood Ron Bondy. "As part of the structure of that deal, he kept the ownership of the land underneath the hotel. It was a portion of the current nine-acre site."

Eventually the land surrounding Lemberg's parcel was put up for sale—a prime opportunity for Midwood to expand yet also maintain the legacy of the area through the purchase.

Situated centrally within the San Fernando Valley at the intersection of Ventura Boulevard and Coldwater Canyon, The Shops at Sportsmen's Lodge will focus on providing retail, dining and wellness experiences to its visitors. Anchor tenants include the wellness-focused market **Erewhon** and the fitness giant **Equinox** with additional spaces occupied by businesses including **Civil Coffee**, **Free People Movement**, **Madison Reed**, **Myodetox**, **Roberta's Pizza**, **Salt Optics**, **Tocaya**, **Tuesday's Sweet Shoppe**, **Ushi Ushi**, **Van Leeuwen** and **Vuori**.

It is Bondy's hope that this space will become a daily destination for residents, students and those who work at nearby studios. By highlighting California brands—specifically those from the state's southern and Los Angeles regions—an opportunity arose to create genuine connections within the community.

"We didn't want this project to feel commoditized," Bondy said. "There are brands like Civil Coffee out of Highland Park; Tuesdays Sweet Shoppe, a local candy store out of Los Feliz; Tocaya, which is an L.A. brand; and Vuori, the athleisure brand—when we made the deal, it was still a Southern California brand. They had not gone national yet."



The Shops at Sportsmen's Lodge, a 95,000-square-foot space in the San Fernando Valley formerly occupied by a meeting-and-convention facility, will welcome visitors during late summer or early fall 2021 following a \$100 million redevelopment.

The opportunity to expand its local presence as part of a unique project aligns with Vuori's plans. While the Encinitas, Calif., brand had been preparing for a nationwide rollout, it also wanted to continue fortifying its presence in Los Angeles when planning for The Shops at Sportsmen's Lodge began.

"At the time, we had our little Manhattan Beach store. We now have Malibu, but we were really looking for unique opportunities in the Los Angeles market with new projects," said Vuori Senior Director of Retail Catherine Pike. "We loved the co-tenants and were super excited about Erewhon. The community in Studio City—people being outdoorsy, loving to get out and be active and into fitness—it's a really cool opportunity."

Sharing a space with a unique roster of businesses and co-anchor Equinox was attractive to Erewhon Chief Development Officer Yuval Chiprut, who was also drawn to the Studio City area.

"Studio City is a robust market. Our customers and our demographics are in that area," Chiprut said. "We know that some of those customers come to our other stores, and we wanted to service them in the Valley."

The work of Midwood's architectural partner **Golin** and landscape-architecture firm **Olin** also informed Erewhon, as the natural elements and consideration for the existing environment speak to the brand's mission. Olin's focus on maintaining the natural surroundings—such as retaining the property's redwood trees—afforded a design foundation for Erewhon.

"We paid homage to the rich redwoods that are there and made our store out of walnut to accent them," Chiprut said. "All the decisions were so well thought out, they seemed to be obvious."

Through creating a special approach to a retail and service destination, there was room for cultivating relationships among businesses, yielding an atmosphere of camaraderie.

"We formed very close relationships with everyone that we put into the project. During COVID, it was tough for everybody. It was tough for us, it was tough for the retailers, and we all said we're going to get through this and the future is going to be better, so we developed close relationships," Bondy said. "There was a lot of give and take."

While the light of hope exits at the end of this dark COVID-19 tunnel, those involved in The Shops at Sportsmen's Lodge hope that this spirit of community remains as normalcy returns.

"Something I want to set as an intention is that our store leadership really gets to know very early on the other members of leadership within the center so we can support one another," Pike said. "Every person who comes for an individual thing is going to discover a lot of other brands because of that." ●

Goodbye, Pajamas ... Hello, Fabulous!

By Nick Verreos Contributing Writer

Throughout these past 15 months, many people have been asking for my 2 cents on the state of fashion post-COVID. For most, during these **Zooming**-from-home pandemic times, the dress code has been pajamas, athleisure, sweats—you know. If you keep up with retail-fashion news, you have seen the headlines: “Sweats are selling like crazy,” “It’s all about comfy clothes,” “Pajamas, pajamas, pajamas!”

In my case, I have not had the pleasure of working in my pajamas as my position as co-chair of fashion at the **Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising** has required me to continue to work on campus. In doing so, I dress up every day in a jacket, dress shirt, tie and **YSL** boots to complete the look. I receive major stares as I walk to pick up my **Subway** lunch in downtown L.A. among the hoodie-and-jogger-wearing crowd, standing out like a throwback from another era.

Southern California is known for its laid-back style. Heck, we *invented* it! But we are also the home of luxe red-carpet style (remember that?), and for the last several years we have patented the streetwear and luxury-streetwear fashion moods that have now become a go-to style mantra from **Balenciaga** to **Shein**. So, where are we going—especially here in Southern California—when it comes to post-COVID style? It depends on whom you ask.

While I bet that most folks may want to stick to comfy athleisure, most of the top arbiters of style are definitely taking a stand: *Go big or go home*. Taking a quick look at all of the recent collections, forecasting what fashionistas will wear come next fall and early next year, many designers are saying, “Bye, pajamas! Hello, fabulous!” Shoulders are getting so big in many collections that Joan Collins is blushing somewhere. XL-sized puffers are getting the XXL treatment from **Thom Browne**, **Balmain** and **Rick Owens**. Vibrant, bold colors are ubiquitous at **Miu Miu**, Jeremy Scott at **Moschino** and Riccardo Tisci at **Burberry**, and there are so many sequins you would think we were

heading into cocktail hour every hour come September.

I love Southern California designer Mike Amiri’s latest offering for Fall 2021: gorgeous, elegant, sumptuous menswear suits and outfits that are the farthest thing from Zoom comfy. I’m ready for that! It is not by accident that one trend is apparent: the Roaring Twenties—and I mean the 1920s of course—such as silk dresses and oversized draped coats with a dash of glamour. The idea is that when we slowly come back to life we will have our own Roaring 2020s when it comes to fashion. We shall see.

Here in downtown L.A., beyond all the joggers-and-hoodie-wearing people zipping by on their e-scooters, I do see some glimmer of fashion lights as some people are finally getting to go out to eat at newly opened restaurants, wearing that outfit they bought pre-COVID and

never got to showcase. I have even seen some members of the younger set dressing up to meet a friend for coffee or cocktails.

It brings tears to my eyes seeing the sloppiness this pandemic brought into our style lives. I am personally ready for the go-big-or-go-home style mantra post-COVID.

We need to—at the very least—show some visual clues that we are going to get through this and we will be all right...and fabulous! I believe that as much as we want to be wrapped up in comfort, we can still have a bit of those elements and be stylish too. While the whole world looks to us to define what’s next in denim, streetwear and red-carpet style, let’s do our part and show them that we can ditch our PJs and get back to *fashion*. ●

Nick Verreos is co-designer of the Los Angeles brand NIKOLAKI, which has been worn by Katy Perry, Carrie Underwood and Beyoncé. He is also co-chair of the FIDM Fashion, Theatre Costume, and Film and Television Costume Design programs. In addition, he is the consulting producer for Bravo’s “Project Runway”; an author of fashion, patternmaking and sketching books; and the face of the popular YouTube channel “Fashion School With Nick Verreos.”



Nick Verreos

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LAURI LEVENFELD

d'Offay Debut Elevates Responsible Design for Discerning Women



Kristen d'Offay

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Blending her love of fashion with a lineage of garment making, Kristen d'Offay set out on a new career when she began development of her **d'Offay** line two years ago. On June 15, d'Offay will launch as a luxury women's brand created using dead-stock textiles that provide the foundation for more-responsible fashion.

"Since I was a young child, I was always inspired by fashion. My grandmother Mimi was a clothing designer in Dallas. She made ready-to-wear fashion right off the Paris runway for all the Dallas socialites," d'Offay said. "When I would visit her as a young child, I would look around at all the beautiful dresses, and her studio was full of sequins, silks, and I remem-

ber thinking, 'This is what I want to do one day.'"

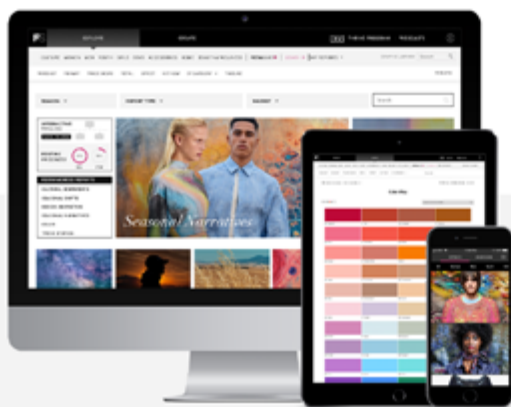
While the Houston native worked with San Francisco designer Isda Funari following her graduation from the **University of Texas at Austin**, d'Offay's professional pursuits led her to corporate recruiting, where she flourished, and eventually to motherhood. After 10 years of raising her children, a profound life shift led her to reevaluate and revisit her fashion ambitions.

"About three years ago I got a divorce, and it really forced a big question of what am I going to do next?" d'Offay recalled. "I had always wanted to start a fashion line, and I thought, 'I am in my mid-40s; if I don't do it now, I am never going to do it.' I just don't want to look back one day and say, 'Why didn't I ever try it? I knew I could do it.'"



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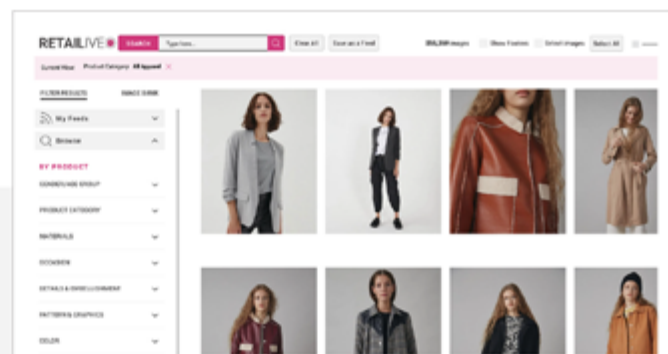
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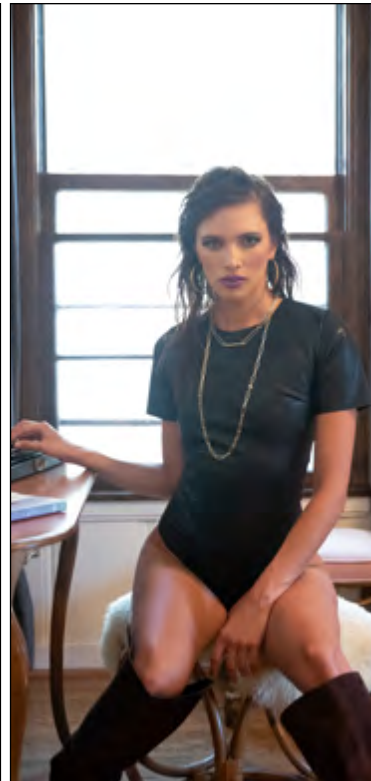
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LAURI LEVENFELD

Beginning as a direct-to-consumer business, through *doffaycollection.com*, d'Offay will begin appearing at trade shows this fall. The XS-L pieces are priced from \$400 to \$1,200. Inspired by her grandmother, who was a self-taught designer, and envisioning the styles she believes her friends would want to wear, d'Offay designs to make women see the best versions of themselves through her garments.

"I really love the draping process, and when it's cut correctly it can celebrate your curves instead of making you feel frumpy," d'Offay said. "My inspiration draws from so many of my beautiful friends. I think about what they would like to wear out and what would make them feel good. That is always in the back of my mind when I am designing and sketching."

The designer relies on dead-stock fabrics in faux fur, wool and recycled fibers that would otherwise be waste, yet they are also luxurious textiles from some of the most renowned mills in Italy and France. Relying on her fabric source in downtown Los Angeles, d'Offay uses these discarded textiles to create pieces in small runs. As the collection grows, d'Offay will explore additional textiles that afford greater ecologically sound options such as pineapple and mushroom leathers.

"It's important to try and work with fibers that are renewable, can biodegrade and use less water. My debut collection consists mostly of silk, which is a natural fiber and can biodegrade," d'Offay explained. "Since I am doing smaller production runs, it fits perfectly with my business model, and the price is great, too. Those are the key sustainable elements at

this point."

Another important component of the d'Offay mission is manufacturing in Los Angeles, as the designer fell in love with the city's rebirth that had been occurring prior to the challenges of COVID-19. In a post-pandemic fashion world, d'Offay feels a responsibility toward helping the industry rebuild through her partnership with a woman-led production operation.

"So many production houses went on hold during the pandemic, and I want to make sure that I am part of the community of designers who are there to support small businesses," d'Offay said. "It's my responsibility as a local designer to work with this community and make sure the fashion business in L.A. not only survives but thrives." ●



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Levi's Katia Walsh Shares Real Insight Regarding Digital, Data and AI

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

A company that has followed a progressive course over its 168-year history, **Levi Strauss & Co.** has played an important role during revolutionary moments within history. From creating an integrated employment force in the mid-20th century or ensuring greater supply-chain transparency in the 1990s to encouraging United States citizens to vote in 2020, the San Francisco-based denim leader has remained committed to progress.

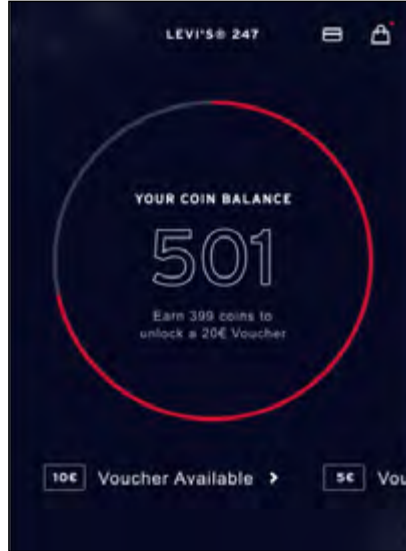
This part of the brand's mission made it a perfect fit for Chief Global Strategy and Artificial Intelligence Officer Katia Walsh, who considers herself to be an unlikely fashion professional but has felt aligned with Levi's principles. As a student journalist growing up in communist Bulgaria, Walsh was reprimanded in school at 15 years old for writing a story that displeased local officials. Despite the disciplinary action that she faced, Walsh recognized the power that lies in sharing information and the fragility of the freedom it can afford. While Walsh didn't grow up to become a journalist, she did begin working with Levi's in April 2019, sharing a commitment to innovation by facilitating how information is shared and the ways in which it can promote the greater good.

"Growing up in communist Bulgaria, Levi's signified so much more to me than a piece of clothing," Walsh explained. "It was a dream, it was a symbol of the unattainable, it meant democracy and freedom. I will never forget this image of Levi's-clad youth sitting on the top of the crumbling Berlin Wall in November of 1989. It is a platform for doing good in the world in more than one industry."

For Walsh, the fact that Levi's is a fashion company—not a financial technology or telecommunications firm—doesn't mean that it cannot find a place at the forefront of innovation surrounding information, data and artificial intelligence. To the contrary, the denim company's background makes it a prime candidate to lead in this space due to its collection of data from its extensive history and innovations launched over the last few years, such as 2019's Future Finish, which relied on laser technology and machine learning with a neural network solution that yielded thousands of finishing options via an artificial-intelligence network. Working from the inside out, Levi's is



Levi's Chief Global Strategy and Artificial Intelligence Officer Katia Walsh cites digital, data and AI as the tools to help the apparel business evolve into a better industry for people and the planet.



Levi's loyalty program, which launched in 2020, has built a customer pool that now includes 5 million members; using AI, this facet of the company's business is more personalized to each client than ever before.

focused on digitizing its entire company to streamline workflows for employees and create personalized experiences for its customers, whom Walsh refers to as "fans."

"We are building a new, cohesive capability that integrates digital data and AI to field the digital transformation of the whole company. The reason I am pointing toward the three subsets of the capabilities of digital, data and AI, is that they are very interconnected," Walsh said. "It's basically a magic flywheel where digital makes data big and big data makes artificial intelligence possible and artificial intelligence makes digital products smarter."

With its loyalty program, which launched in 2020, Levi's built a large customer pool that now includes 5 million members, yet this facet of the company's business is more personal-

ized to each of these clients than ever before. With data protections in place to ensure security, Levi's is continuing to cultivate this offering, which collects client information that is then channeled into creating a tailored direct-to-consumer experience for customers, thereby easing the shopping process and affording greater freedom to its fans. With direct-to-consumer business comprising 40 percent of Levi's revenue, the company is strategizing best practices to cultivate this segment.

"We are attempting to personalize the individual consumer experience online. This is beyond the personalized benefits of the loyalty program. It's about how you see the homepage, the products that are listed there, the product descriptions that are there—even the reviews are all personalized to your needs, preferences and previous browsing behaviors so it's always relevant to you," Walsh explained. "That kind of personalization really helps deepen the connections with our consumers."

Citing digital, data and AI potential, which she refers to as the "three Cs—smarter creation, smarter connections and smarter commerce"—Walsh feels that these digital tools can help fashion evolve into a better industry for people and the planet through humanization of the apparel business. While using data to establish a closer, more human relationship within business might seem strange, Walsh believes these processes will help Levi's perform more good in the world.

"We have always been not only advocates of sustainability but real warriors in making sure we are a sustainable company in terms of production and manufacturing, product creation and the sustainability of people," Walsh said. "AI can help companies in that industry do good in the world." ●



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Etsy-Depop *Continued from page 1*

come to Depop for the clothes but stay for the culture. We'll now take an exciting leap forward as part of the Etsy family, benefiting from [Etsy CEO] Josh's and his team's expertise and the resources of a much larger company whose values are so aligned with ours here at Depop."

Founded in 2011, Depop will continue to be headquartered in London as a standalone marketplace with the same brand, same app and same team that is currently in place. This means there will be no immediate or significant changes for users of either platform.

In a presentation prepared for investors, Etsy outlined several reasons how and why the acquisition of Depop will be a positive thing for the company. Depop is similar in its peer-to-peer marketplace approach and will extend Etsy's market opportunity, especially in the fast-growing resale sector and secondhand market—which is projected to grow at a 39 percent CAGR between 2019 and 2024 in the United States—along with adding the Gen Z user base Depop commands.

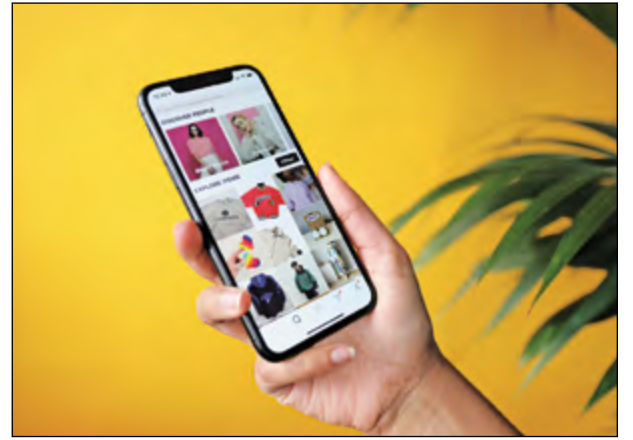
"We are simply thrilled to be adding Depop—what we believe to be the resale home for Gen Z consumers—to the Etsy family," said Etsy, Inc., CEO Josh Silverman. "Depop is a vibrant, two-sided marketplace with a passionate community, a highly differentiated offering of unique items and we believe significant potential to further scale. Depop's world-class management team and employees have done a fantastic job nurturing this community and driving organic, authentic growth in a way that aligns well with Etsy's DNA and mission of 'keeping commerce human.' We see significant opportunities for shared expertise and growth synergies across what will now be a tremendous 'house of brands' portfolio of individually distinct and very special e-commerce brands."

According to Depop's website, the app boasts over 26 million registered users in more than 147 countries with 90 percent of those active users being under the age of 26. The Depop community has made more than \$1 billion to date, and more than 140,000 new listings are posted every day with vintage, streetwear and one-of-a-kind pieces among the biggest categories.

Etsy, founded in 2005, has millions of users visit its website every year for goods including jewelry, clothing, furniture and vintage items. The company's mission is to empower people



Following her company's acquisition by Etsy, Depop CEO Maria Raga spoke about how the social-shopping platform's mission to provide unique fashion experiences aligns with Etsy's values.



Depop's peer-to-peer social app has more than 26 million registered users in more than 147 countries with 90 percent of those active users being under the age of 26.



Depop was founded in 2011 and will continue to be operated as a standalone marketplace after being purchased by Etsy for \$1.625 billion.

and business owners. Etsy, Inc., will now operate three different e-commerce brands including Etsy, **Reverb** and Depop.

"This summer marks exactly 10 years since Depop was founded, and I'm delighted to see it mark this anniversary by beginning an exciting new chapter," said Depop founder Simon Beckerman. "What Depop offers—easy access to unique

fashion and a vibrant creative community—is truly distinctive. It's all about the power of genuine human connection. And it is the people themselves that make being part of the business such a great experience. I'm so proud of our community and our team, and I can't wait to see what the next decade will bring." ●

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