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WVN TOGETHER

Approaching sustainable-clothing manufacturing with greater commitment, industry veteran Kate Fisher recently launched WVN through an eco mindset and appreciation for garment artistry.

SUSTAINABILITY

WVN Launches With Eco Focus on Responsibly Made Fashion

By Dorothy Crouch *Managing Editor*

Connecting her clientele with quality products made from artists located in India and Nepal has defined the career of Kate Fisher, who began collecting goods during her travels in 1993 and then reselling the textiles and clothing upon her return to the United States. This wasn't an intentional path for Fisher, who notes that her feelings of admiration for the work of artists in these areas simply led to an entrepreneurial pursuit that would develop into a career.

"It went from being a globe-trotting hobby to a full-fledged clothing business and me getting involved in clothing and starting to do trade shows several years into it," Fisher said. "I started building some wholesale accounts throughout the United States in addition to selling at local street festivals and

➔ **WVN** page 3

TECHNOLOGY

Rakuten Reports Success With Personalized Rewards

By Tyler Shultz *Assistant Editor*

In just a little over a year after its announcement, the Personalized Rewards platform by **Rakuten** has demonstrated success for both the e-commerce site and the retailers using its technology, the company recently reported.

The Personalized Rewards capability allows brands to deliver cashback offers on a one-on-one basis, with initial campaigns showing an average 128 percent increase in new shoppers and a 125 percent increase in sales. Rakuten Advertising and Rakuten Rewards teamed up to create Personalized Rewards in 2020 to help affiliate marketers with audience targeting by offering strategies and media placements. The platform helps shoppers by giving them more-relevant cashback offers,

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INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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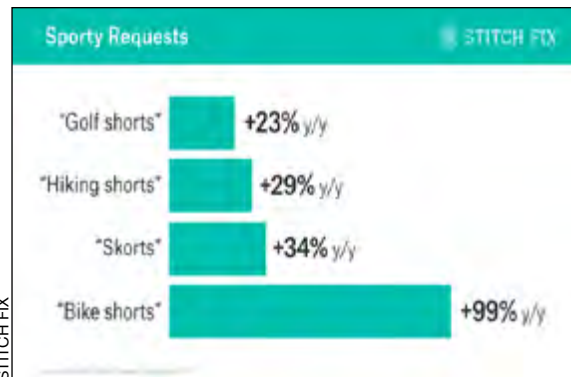
Stitch Fix Predicts 2022 Styles and Shopping Trends in Inaugural Forecast Report

By Tyler Shultz Assistant Editor

Stitch Fix, a leading online personalized-shopping company, has released its inaugural Style Forecast report, which reveals key trends for 2022 including a category called “Business Comfort” as the new workwear.

Style Forecast uses data from Stitch Fix sales as well as shopping insights from 4.2 million clients and thousands of Stitch Fix stylists, consumer surveys and industry data to predict what is going to be trending in the next year. The comprehensive report predicts growth in versatile athleisure styles, bold colors and patterns, and the resurgence of categories like jeans, heels and dresses. The report also mentions some of the issues shoppers have with traditional online shopping, such as scrolling through pages to find what they’re looking for to not truly knowing how an item will fit.

“From the very beginning, Stitch Fix has brought together advanced data science and a human touch to transform the way people find the clothes that help them look and feel their best. From these data, we also gather insights into broader style trends in the market and what’s motivating these trends—which has been particularly important over the last two years to navigate changing consumer preferences in an uncertain time,” said Elizabeth Spaulding, chief executive officer of Stitch Fix. “We hope the Style Forecast offers fashion perspective beyond the runway trends to help people and our brand partners better understand what’s trending in everyday life as we head into the new year and embrace a ‘new normal’ together.”



Athleisure remained the fastest-growing category on Stitch Fix as the popularity of sports like tennis, hiking, biking and golf continues to rise.

According to Style Forecast, 67 percent of consumers plan to replace one-third of their wardrobes, while 33 percent plan to replace at least half. Nearly four out of five Millennials are likely to refresh their entire wardrobe, mainly due to style preferences changing due to the pandemic, with 58 percent of Stitch Fix’s women clients and 53 percent of men saying their looks changed and expect those changes to continue in the near future.

The new category Business Comfort shows how workwear has changed to reflect how the work environment has changed during the pandemic. With the rise of working from home, many people have opted to ditch the business clothes and turn toward comfort. The aptly named category features



Using data from Stitch Fix sales, the online personalized-shopping platform recently released its inaugural Style Forecast report.

style and comfort options that provide a more sophisticated look than business casual and is exemplified in the rise of oversized blazers, elastic-waist bottoms, sweater dresses and “Knoven”—knit and woven—tops.

Nearly one-third of consumers said they would rather take a 10 percent pay cut than have to dress up for work every day, and nearly four out of five Americans have sworn off some business clothes for good. Over half of Boomers said they would never wear a business suit again.

While workwear has become more about comfort, 55 percent of consumers said they are excited to get dressed up to go out again, with nearly half planning to replace their festive clothes. Stitch Fix saw sales in its special-occasion category increase 50 percent year over year, showing that people are attending events again.

Jeans saw a 30 percent increase in sales on the platform year over year, with women’s wide-leg sales increasing 70 percent, and, after being negatively talked about on TikTok, the growth rate of skinny jeans declined in the same time frame. Stitch Fix clients are increasingly using social media and influencers for style guidance, with client-request notes increasing 75 percent year over year.

Athleisure remained the fastest-growing category on the platform as the popularity of sports like golf and tennis and other socially distanced outdoor activities have seen the rise in bike shorts, hiking shorts, performance polos and skorts.

Consumers are increasingly looking for more-personalized shopping experiences that align with their values and provide good products. A majority of consumers said they would like a better way to find clothes that fit them and their lifestyles when shopping online so they can avoid traditional online shopping problems. Stitch Fix also reported a 22 percent increase in client requests for sustainable and organic materials since 2020, indicating consumers are more aware of and prioritizing social and environmental impact when making purchases. ●

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Inside the Industry

Boardriders Inc. has announced the selection of Longbow Advantage, the brand behind The Rebus Platform, for its new warehouse-visibility and labor-management solution. Rebus is a unified supply-chain-visibility platform that provides real-time views into the warehouse for distribution teams and can connect to any supply-chain-execution software. Warehouses and distribution centers are increasingly under pressure to optimize warehouse processes amid increasing retail demand and a smaller labor market. “Rebus will provide us with unprecedented access into what is really going on in our warehouse—up to the minute—with real-time knowledge of what we are receiving or sending out of our warehouses,” said Cory Durrett, director of inventory control at Boardriders.

Italian denim brand Diesel has announced its foray into the resale market with Diesel Second Hand. The denim brand started a buyback program in July 2021 that collected pre-owned jeans and shipped them to a facility within 200 miles of Diesel’s Breganze, Italy, headquarters, where they were treated with Polygiene’s ViralOff and OdorCrunch technology, a combined treatment featuring antimicrobial and odor-resistant properties the brand began using during the pandemic. Both technologies ensure each product stays fresh and hygienic. The new collection is available in Italy in Milan, Florence and Rome as well as worldwide on Diesel’s European website. Pieces retail between USD\$150 and USD\$917. A rating system provides insight into the condition of each pair of jeans ranging from a 1, or “slightly worn,” to a 3, or “like new.”

Better Cotton has announced the launch of its new climate-change-mitigation target and set a bold goal of reducing its greenhouse-gas emissions by 50 percent by the year 2030 from a 2017 baseline. Since its inception in 2009, Better Cotton has worked toward making cotton production more sustainable around the world. The company released its first study on greenhouse-gas emissions in October 2021 and found significantly lower emissions from Better Cotton—licensed farmers cotton production. Along with its partners, Better Cotton has trained 2.5 million cotton farmers on more-sustainable cotton production. Four additional targets covering soil health, pesticide use, small-holder livelihoods and women’s empowerment are expected to be announced by the end of 2022.

Kontoor Brands, Inc., a global lifestyle apparel company with a portfolio led by Wrangler and Lee, released its 2020 Sustainability Report, which detailed Kontoor’s progress in advancing sustainability goals focused on the triple bottom line—people, product and planet. Highlights of the report include Kontoor reducing its water consumption by over 8 billion liters since 2008 by using water-saving and recycling technologies and sourcing half of its cotton sustainably for products manufactured in 2020, with plans to achieve 100 percent sustainable cotton in all products by 2025. Kontoor also initiated community-development programs in factories in Bangladesh that provide clean water, sanitation facilities and education to help benefit 1,200 local workers.



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SUSTAINABILITY

WVN *Continued from page 1*

at Grateful Dead shows. That was the first marketplace where I first sold a product.”

Recently Fisher announced the launch of **WVN**, a brand of stylish classics that draws from her East Coast roots and current California lifestyle blended with certain elements of India and Nepal. Launched in August, the company, which is a venture that the entrepreneur runs with her husband, Henry Schwab, has retained the B Corp certification of Fisher’s previous brand, **Synergy**, and is created according to principles of ecological conscientiousness, fair-labor practices and elevating women.

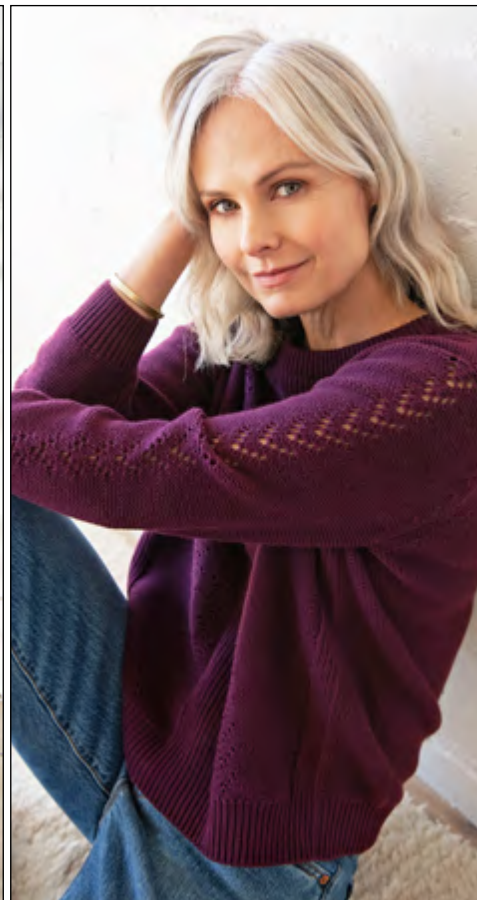
“The world has changed a lot since the ’90s, and we are experiencing firsthand people fearing what is happening to our planet,” Fisher explained. “I think that the fashion industry realizes it, and to their credit there are a lot of people now who genuinely care. There are also some people probably green washing, trying to have their slogans of how they are socially and eco conscious and responsible, and some of it might not be authentic but a lot of it is authentic, and I think that is wonderful.”

WVN’s pieces are made in three factories located in India and Nepal. There is a heavy reliance on organic cotton and GOTS-certified sourcing. In addition to the arduous process connected to becoming B Corp certified, Fisher remains committed to maintaining an ethical, sustainable approach to production. Focused on continuing the responsible manufacturing she has prioritized during her career, Fisher knows her factories and had visited them often to see them firsthand prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I make sure that I visit the factories, and I know the factory owners and what their working conditions are and feel that the values align with what our values are,” Fisher said. “It’s something I could feel a long time ago visiting factories where there was no way I was going to work on that factory floor and make our clothing there.”

Within the ethos of WVN is a sense that the brand has been created in recognition of the many facets of women’s personalities. The WVN woman is chic yet sporty; strong yet feminine; and unique yet opens her arms to community.

“I think that people who identify as women tend to have some closet staples that they have in heavy rotation,” Fisher noted. “One thing that inspires me is reinventing really classic pieces in a sustainable way that feel they can be worn season after season.”



Building on her nearly 30-year career in fashion, Kate Fisher recently launched WVN, a responsibly made sustainable brand that focuses on artistry.

Available online at shopwvn.com and at select boutiques—averaging 80–100 stores per season—WVN is available in XS–XL and priced from \$48 for a camisole to \$288 for a woven organic-cotton voile dress with a hand-painted vine-block print design. Both rely on organic cotton and are GOTS certified. There is also a more affordable line called WVN for You that is sold at 450 **Whole Foods** stores throughout the United States and Canada at price points ranging from \$28 for accessories to \$68 for clothing.

Looking ahead, Fisher hopes that the sustainable mission of the fashion industry is one of camaraderie. For her part, Fisher takes every opportunity to promote collaborative messaging.

“One of our hashtags is #WVNTogether, because I feel we are all in this together—even people who are our competitors. People who are our customers. We’re all in this together,” Fisher said. “Everybody in the apparel industry is in it together—from the supply chain to the trade shows to the media.” ●

TECHNOLOGY

Rakuten *Continued from page 1*

increasing the likelihood of them using those offers.

Personalized Rewards combines the technology of Rakuten Advertising with the reach and influence of Rakuten Rewards and allows brands to use proprietary data rather than relying on data from cookies, from their customer-relationship databases and Rakuten Rewards data to recognize consumers in real time. The platform allows marketers more control over reward strategies by enabling optimized outcomes, improved campaign performances and better understanding regarding the effectiveness of their spending.

With greater control over the customer base than traditional dynamic commissioning, marketers can target individual consumers with products and offers based on their customer status and shopping preferences.

“Traditional cashback and affiliate approaches that provide a uniform offer across an audience set are tried-and-true tactics,” said Amit Patel, chief executive officer of the San Mateo, Calif.–headquartered Rakuten Americas. “Now, by pairing together two of Rakuten Americas’ strongest platforms, we can help brands engage with consumers at a one-to-one level and build a lifetime relationship that increases marketing performance and drives incremental sales.”

Customers already experiencing the positive effects of using Personalized Rewards include **Saks Fifth Avenue** and the footwear company **FitFlop**. FitFlop turned to Personalized Rewards to attract new customers to its footwear products, and, with Rakuten, launched targeted offers with varying levels of cashback rewards to select customers. The campaign helped FitFlop achieve its month-over-month goals and see a nearly 150 percent increase in new-to-file buyers, 83 percent of whom were new to FitFlop. FitFlop achieved an overall increase in shopping trips by 195 percent.

As one of the world’s largest e-commerce companies, Rakuten has built a portfolio of assets that can enable marketers to leverage customer intent and purchase data to influence

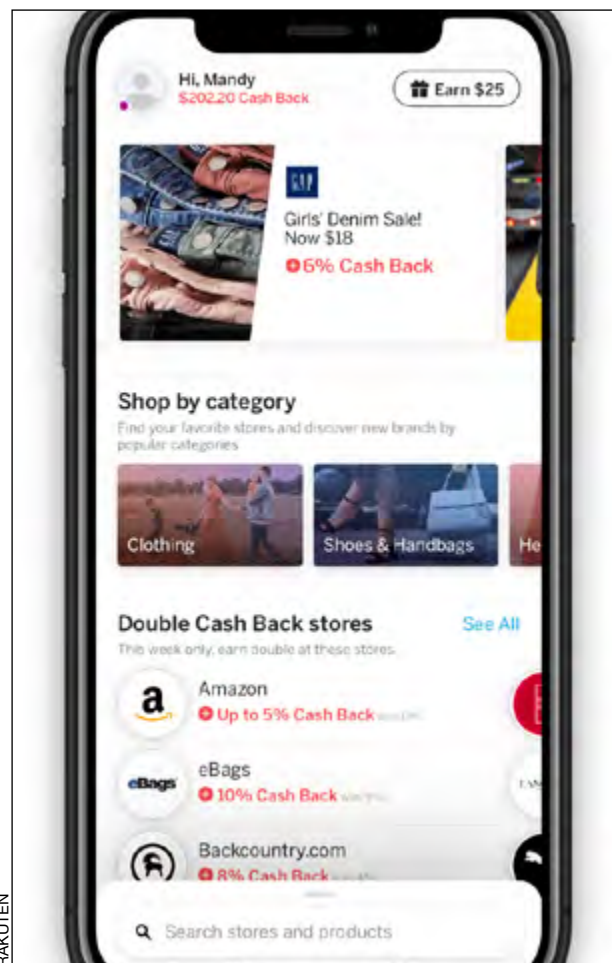
consumer behavior. Through Rakuten Advertising, a division of Tokyo’s Rakuten Inc., Rakuten is able to use its assets to create conditions that reach new customers and foster an environment for customer loyalty.

Rakuten recently teamed with **Afterpay**, a leader in buy-now, pay-later payment options to help customers shop and spend smarter by allowing retailers to combine the incentives of cashback offers with the flexibility of buy now, pay later. Shoppers enrolled with both platforms who make purchases from one of the thousands of participating retailers can earn cash back when opting to use buy now, pay later for their order in four interest-free installments. Afterpay released insights on consumers that showed a boost in the platform’s use as buy-now, pay-later spending increased in the United States by 230 percent over the past year, with a 34 percent increase during this holiday season compared to last year.

Rakuten is also increasing its cashback offerings for its Canadian consumers. Rakuten Rewards Canada, the leading cashback-rewards company in Canada, partnered with the loyalty program **Scene** as part of its expanded Scene+ program. With the partnership, Scene+ members can get an additional 20 percent cash back when using Scene+ Rakuten.

“Partnering with Rakuten is a natural fit. Our mutual goal of bringing ease to the customer experience led us to a seamless partnership,” said Matthew Seagrim, managing director at Scene+. “There’s a real trend in the loyalty space toward everyday interactions. Members want to earn points in ways that are convenient for them, and this partnership helps our members do that.”

Loyalty programs across all industries have increasingly become more commonplace to help drive customer engagement. According to the Global Customer Loyalty Report 2022, published by solutions-as-a-service loyalty technology provider **Anavo**, over 60 percent of survey participants reported their loyalty program kept customers engaged during the pandemic. ●



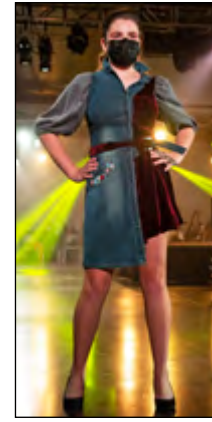
Rakuten’s Personalized Rewards service helps marketers provide better reward strategies by enabling optimized outcomes, improving campaign performances and better understanding their spending.



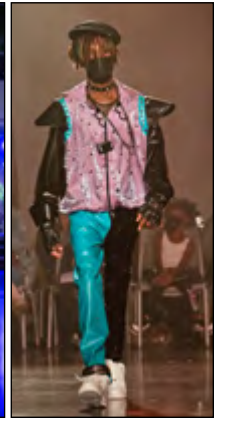
Ara DeVolle



Arezu Aframian



Christy Trask



Christy Trask
recreating
Grandmaster Flash

Gold Thimble Fashion Show at LATTC Showcases Fresh Designs

Now in its 68th year, the semiannual **Gold Thimble Fashion Show** at **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College** returned to campus on Dec. 10 to unveil the latest creations of the school's student designers who comprised the Fall 2021 Gold Thimble class. In addition to special projects that fit into the show's theme of "The Golden Age of Hip Hop," designers unveiled garments reflecting athleisure, avant-garde, childrenswear, day-dress redesign, eveningwear, menswear and swimwear.

Thirteen students were included in the class: Arezu Aframian, Jack Bessette, Cinthya Brizuela, Ara DeVolle, Gonzalo Gutierrez, Serly Kaprelian, Hyewon Kim, Sirra Njie, Llovana Ochoa, Julian Picasso Rodriguez,

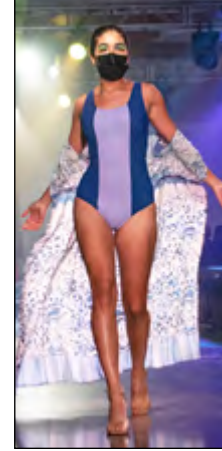
Christy Trask, Pha Le Vo and Yelena Yushenko. Carlos Alcala served as the Gold Thimble fashion-design instructor, and Ana Duarte was the event's show-production instructor.

The award winners competing for the coveted Gold Thimble were:

For the athleisure category, Pha Le Vo placed first; Llovana Ochoa, second; and Christy Trask, third. In the avant-garde category, Pha Le Vo gained first place; Arezu Aframian, second; and Jack Bessette, third. The day-dress redesign, which required designers to upcycle and transform garments to create new designs, saw Ara DeVolle awarded first place; Sirra Njie, second place; and Christy Trask, third place. Following the eveningwear presentation, Christy Trask was

awarded first place; Serly Kaprelian, second; and Sirra Njie, third. For menswear, Yelena Yushenko secured first place; Serly Kaprelian, second; and Jack Bessette, third. In swimwear, Llovana Ochoa secured first place; Pha Le Vo, second place; and Gonzalo Gutierrez, third place.

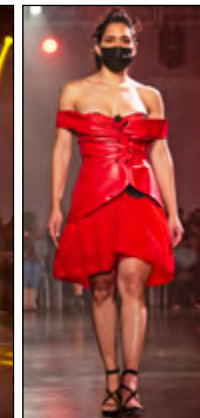
Working under the theme of "The Golden Age of Hip Hop," students recreated styles that were seen on artists of the genre during the 1980s and 1990s including Easy-E, Fresh Prince, Grandmaster Flash, Heavy D, LL Cool J, Queen Latifah and Salt-n-Pepa. Winners in the theme category included Christy Trask securing first place, Sirra Njie in second place and Serly Kaprelian placing third.—*Dorothy Crouch*



Cinthya Brizuela



Gonzalo Gutierrez



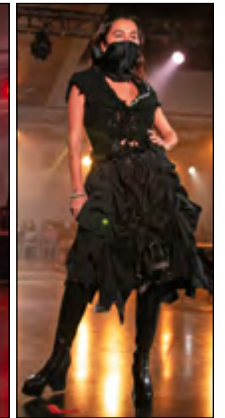
Hyewon Kim



Hyewon Kim
recreating Salt-N-Pepa



Jack Bessette



Julian Picasso
Rodriguez



Julian Picasso
Rodriguez recreating
Easy-E



Llovana Ochoa



Llovana Ochoa
recreating Neneh Cherry



Pha Le Vo



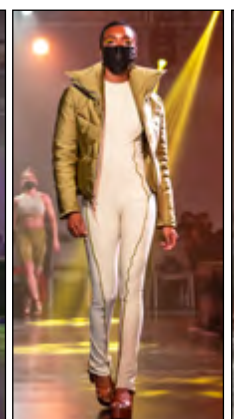
Serly Kaprelian



Serly Kaprelian
recreating Queen Latifah



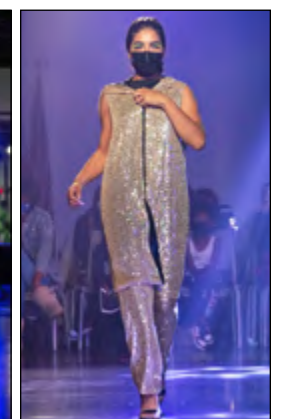
Sirra Njie



Sirra Njie recreating LL
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Yelena Yushenko



Yelena Yushenko recreating
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Ara DeVolle



Arezu Aframian



Christy Trask



Cinthya Brizuela

Student Designers Afford a Glimpse Into the Next Generation of Menswear at LATTC

Among the categories on which students may focus during the **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Gold Thimble Fashion Show**, one area that is showing immense growth and ingenuity is menswear. Building from traditionally masculine foundations, these designers interpreted their fresh looks by drawing on other elements including feminine conventions, streetwear, California surf and notes of tailoring in unexpected places.

Ruffled lace on shirting was paired with tailored wool pants that were complemented by a matching jacket whose lining was designed using a pink-checkerboard fabric. There was also fun to be had during the menswear presentation. A black hoodie with hole-distressing overlain above a red base seemed tough but added jovial elements

with fire engine-hued ears on each side of the hood. Sparkling beading and sheer overlays typically reserved for evening gowns were added to a long-sleeved black sweatshirt and matching knee-length shorts.

Styles that are typically preppy were updated with two-tone pants and looser silhouettes in bottoms and vests with a short-sleeved turtleneck. A faux-fur jacket and striped pant updated the kitschy cool of the 1990s English funk band Jamiroquai.

Button details saw newness with lines of these notions placed diagonally across shirting, off center and securing slash pockets or along the sides of an apron detail covering the front of pants. Accessories saw fedoras, rope belts and floral wrist corsages complementing fingerless gloves.

—Dorothy Crouch



Gonzalo Gutierrez



Hyewon Kim



Jack Bessette



Julian Picasso Rodriguez



Llovana Ochoa



Pha Le Vo



Serly Kaprelian



Sirra Njie



Yelena Yushenko

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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