

# CALIFORNIA ApparelNews

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR 77 YEARS

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## BACK TO THE FUTURE

In its summer collection, iconic '70s brand Bila77 reimagines the roots of its beginnings to embrace the California lifestyle for today's generation. What has been reborn is pure sunshine. For more looks, see page 3.

BROOKE BERRY

### TRADE-SHOW REPORT

## L.A. Turns It Up for August Market

By Betsy Zanjani *Contributing Writer*

At **Los Angeles Market Week**, held July 31–Aug. 4, all that shimmered was not just gold but also colorful jewel-encrusted mesh, bedazzled lace and a kaleidoscope of bright prints.

In the city of celebs and influencers, brands presented a season bursting with red carpet-ready styles and a new array of A-list treatments for buyers.

The hub of the **Los Angeles Fashion District—The New Mart**, the **Cooper Design Space** and the **California Market Center**—worked on a series of initiatives to elevate the uniquely L.A. buying experience—a little bit of Hollywood and a lot of California cool.

Mornings began with relaxing environments to enjoy a shot of java and get ready for the day ahead. Local restaurants participated with great eats in buyers lounges, and hectic days filled with hundreds of new fashion brands ended with cocktail receptions for designers and buyers to meet and greet outside the showrooms.

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### INDUSTRY VOICES

## Personal Threads: The FIDM DEBUT Show

By Nick Verreos *Contributing Writer*

Fashion has always been personal. Whether it is a vintage item handed down to you from a family member, a special purchase for yourself or a gift from a friend, what you choose to wear can be unique to you, or you can make it distinctive depending on how you wear it.

Fashion is also very personal to the designers themselves and has become more so in these past few years. When reading collection statements from designers across the globe, one finds less and less generic inspirations such as architecture and nature and instead more individualized expressions such as a cherished photo of their mom or the park they used to play in when they were children.

A common important fashion trend for the post-COVID era is: Make your designs more personal.

Designers and creatives have certainly always been in-

➔ **FIDM** page 6

### INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to business<sup>SM</sup>



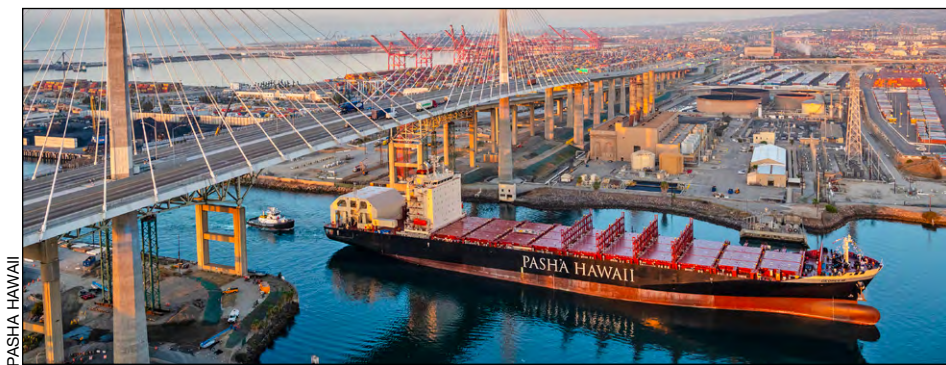
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George III strengthens the port's commitment to the Green Port Policy and San Pedro Bay Ports Clean Air Action Plan.

## Port of Long Beach Welcomes First Environmentally Sustainable Ship

You may have heard of the madness of King George—there's a superb 1994 biopic about it—but that's certainly not the case with this George III, who's not a monarch but a cargo ship.

On Aug. 17, the **Port of Long Beach** gave a king's welcome to **Pasha Hawaii's** MV George III, the first container ship powered by liquefied natural gas to refuel on the West Coast. The ship's engines are dramatically cleaner than those of a traditional cargo ship and are thus a great effort toward restoring environmental sanity. Following George's regal visit to Long Beach, the 774-foot-long ship will begin its maiden voyage back to its home in Honolulu.

"Reducing ship emissions will have a significant and positive impact on the region's air quality," said Port of Long Beach Executive Director Mario Cordero. Added Harbor Commission President Sharon L. Weissman, "This is another positive step toward the widespread adoption of alternative fuels in cargo shipping and

using cleaner technology to do business at the port."

And what did the royal family have to say? "As we mark our 75th anniversary and welcome George III to Long Beach, we are proud to continue my family's legacy of innovation and environmental stewardship," said George Pasha IV, President and CEO of Pasha Hawaii. The vessel was named after George Pasha IV's late father, who, needless to say, is not the 18th-century English monarch though he shares the same name and numeral.

The new ship strengthens the port's commitment to the Green Port Policy and San Pedro Bay Ports Clean Air Action Plan enacted 15 years ago. Earth-saving actions since then have led to unprecedented reductions in emissions connected to goods movement, as the port continues to work toward meeting a goal of deploying all zero-emissions cargo-handling equipment by 2030 and zero-emissions drayage trucks by 2035.—*Christian Chensvold*



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## Inside the Industry

**Cone Denim** has announced an expanding partnership with hemp-processing innovator **BastCore**, an announcement that came on the heels of Cone's recently launched U.S. Hemp collection. "This evolving partnership continues to open new opportunities for collaboration between like-minded companies, providing increased sustainable-denim offerings to customers while increasing our support of American agriculture," said Cone in a release. BastCore's innovations include patent-pending technology that produces clean hemp fiber at its headquarters in Montgomery, Ala. It was recently selected as a Top 50 Startup Finalist at the WorldFestival 2022 Startup Awards. "With a shared goal of pushing new sustainability levels, our partnership with BastCore is creating exciting opportunities that support U.S. agriculture and its use of world-class practices and responsibly sourced products," said Cone President Steve Maggard.

**Fashion brands Yarn Movement and MYM ORGANICS** have birthed a collaboration called the YM X MYM ORGANICS Fiber Collective with a mission to help protect artisans, tradition and culture by actively resisting fast fashion, plastics and chemicals, and working toward sustainable-fashion solutions. Under the hashtag #100KDreamGirls, the collaboration's Colorful Dreamer initiative, with third partner Believe in What You Dream, hopes to empower 100,000 women and girls over three years with a fund-raising goal of \$2 million. The program helps low-income girls "discover their superpowers" by sharing the power of social-emotional learning tools and sustainable-fashion techniques through environmental awareness and conscious consumption.

**Huue**, a pioneer in sustainable bio-based dyes and the winner of *TIME* magazine's Best Invention of 2021, has secured \$14 million in funding to launch the world's first clean indigo dye. "The world can't wait for sustainable solutions, and consumers are starting to hold their favorite brands accountable to using eco-friendly materials," said Michelle Zhu, CEO and co-founder of Huue. "We've developed a way to tap into biology's artistry to create clean color solutions without the environmental impact and harmful chemicals." Textile dyeing is the second-largest polluter of water globally, and for the past century dyes have been made with harsh chemicals such as cyanide and formaldehyde in the case of indigo. Huue's enzymatically produced dye mimics how colors are produced in nature.

**Apparel Textile Sourcing Canada**, the country's largest apparel and textile-sourcing event, has rescheduled its show from Aug. 22–24 to Nov. 7–9. The additional time will allow Canadian offices worldwide to process all visa applications. Delays in the current processing of travel visas into Canada is a widespread issue affecting all international travelers. The change was finalized after consulting with international governments, industry partners and exhibitors. "Our commitment is to bring the world's apparel and textile sources back to Canada in 2022," said spokesman Jason Prescott, "with 150 factories from at least 15 countries plus dozens of speakers, matchmaking and networking [offerings]. We did what was best

for the show, the factories and the attendees." More than 3,000 attendees are already registered for the event.

**B2B fashion wholesale marketplace FashionGo** held its fifth annual online trade show, FashionGo Week Online, in July with a focus on combating inflation and a possible looming recession. FashionGo.net bills itself as the No. 1 B2B fashion wholesale e-commerce marketplace, connecting the fashion industry to buy and sell the latest trends on a one-stop platform. Founded in 2002, it boasts 1,400 sellers and 740,000 buyers, provides powerful tech tools, insightful data and best-in-class service to empower the industry to shop smarter and grow faster. At its recent edition, FashionGo Week Online saw a volume of buyers who were more cautious but with brands positively offering a wide diversity of products, 0 percent commissions and a user-friendly platform.

**After two years of postponed nuptials**, people are tying the knot again as evidenced by the success of the International Market Center's three recent shows—Atlanta Apparel, VOW Bridal & Formal Atlanta and World of Prom & Social Occasion—held Aug. 1–6 at the AmericasMart in Atlanta. "The bridal and social-occasion industries are booming right now," said Caron Stover, IMC senior vice president of apparel. "Business is back and better than ever, with Atlanta Apparel offering buyers a one-stop-shop across categories like bridal, prom, accessories, children's, resort and, of course, general apparel." Steady attendance from the combined apparel, bridal and social-occasion markets drew retailers from nearly all 50 states as well as 26 international countries.

**The Dallas Men's Show** is coming off the biggest show in its history as buyers from coast to coast descended upon the Lone Star State. Held July 30–Aug. 1 at the Dallas Market Center, organizers say the show broke records for the number of brands participating—750, to be precise—and the number of new buyers. Retail decision-makers from 30 states visited the show, and more than 10 percent of buyers were first-time attendees. "We appreciate the support of so many retailers who visited our expanded show," said Cindy Morris, president and CEO of the DMC. "The 2022 Men's Show truly set a new standard in Dallas and elevated the quality and diversity of products available here. We have tremendous momentum going into 2023."

**Emerald Holding**, owner and organizer of NY NOW, the wholesale retail market, has announced the acquisition of Bulletin Inc., a wholesale marketplace connecting 3,000 independent brands with over 26,000 retailers. All Bulletin employees will join Emerald as part of the acquisition, including co-founders Alana Branstion and Ali Kriegsmann. The acquisition will elevate the experience for wholesale buyers to discover a broader array of innovative brands and makers through a fusion of in-person and e-commerce offerings. The merger will also infuse the iconic NY NOW Gift and Home Show with Bulletin's entrepreneurial spirit, industry expertise and extensive customer base of brands and retailers, as well as help small businesses fuel innovation and design and provide buyers with year-round inspiration and discovery.

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BROOKE BERRY

## Bila77 Re-emerges With New California-Lifestyle Look

By Christian Chensvold *Contributing Writer*

Two interesting things rocked the fashion world in 1977. On the East Coast, the film “Saturday Night Fever” was released, spreading New York disco style to the world. And on the West Coast, a small psychedelic fashion label was born in San Francisco called **Bila77**. And just as the film lives forever as an iconic slice of American life, so has Bila77 found new life with a summer 2022 relaunch.

The look is as far from the Brooklyn disco scene as you can get, and even the San Francisco counterculture vibe is gone. What remains, or has been reborn, is pure sunshine.

“I think there’s currently a void for the California-lifestyle look we’re going after,” said Omar Dittu, son of the brand’s founders.

And in case any Golden State residents need a reminder, what exactly is the California-lifestyle look? “Clothes that will take you from the city to the beach,” said Bila77 designer Melissa Leon. “There’s definitely an ease of wear to our pieces, which carry from the beach to work and to a dinner date.”

The cohesive collection, which reentered the market in June, features comfortable, flowing silhouettes. Soft pants and jumpsuits were reordered by new accounts almost immediately. Prints are completely exclusive, based on copyrighted artwork, with some drawing on company archives from the ’80s and early ’90s.

Everything is designed in-house, down to laces and eye-lets, which is unusual, Leon said, for a brand priced in the \$50-to-\$200 range. “Everything is uniquely ours. We’re also very deliberate about what we produce and don’t really buy into the churn-and-burn, fast-fashion pieces. We want pieces to live for years, to be cherished and kept in closets. And we’re definitely not trying to just chase after trends,” Leon said.

The focus on longevity starts with the fabrics, which consist of low-impact recycled polyester, organic cotton and sustainably sourced rayon, all of which require less water consumption and produce fewer greenhouse gases. “When we decided to relaunch, we definitely wanted to make better choices for our earth,” said Dittu, “and that really starts at the fabric level.”

Bila77 has been continuously active since its founding in 1977 but had taken something of a backseat to the family main line, **Bila**, a mass-market misses brand that is being phased out. A web presence has finally been created, **bila77.com**, with e-commerce and sun-drenched photo shoots done in Hawaii.

“We’re ready to bring things to the next level for the next generation,” said Dittu. “We’re taking a new focus that wasn’t there before, a boutique and sustainable focus, and it’s younger so it reaches a broader customer base.”

But if “77” refers to the year of the brand’s founding, what does “bila” mean? “That’s actually a very good question,”

laughs Dittu. “According to my dad, it can either be a blue-eyed cat or a blue-eyed boy.”

That father, Reyman Dittu, is of Kashmiri heritage and left Pakistan for London, where he designed and sold apparel in a booth on King’s Road and met Marybeth Dittu, a native of Missouri. In the ’70s they moved to San Francisco to live the quintessential counterculture life, making tie-dyes out of their apartment in the famed Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. They are still active with the brand though have turned over its operations to son Omar and stepped back to focus on the big picture.

At age 38, Omar has worked in the family business, presently based in Los Angeles, all his life. He developed a cult following for Bila77 in Japan, where he successfully sold reproductions of the brand’s vintage looks before COVID threw the venture for a loop.

Contacted the week before showing at the **MAGIC** trade show in Las Vegas, Omar Dittu was full of the excitement of a new brand showing its wares for the first time. “This great team has been through a lot with COVID,” he said, “and just to come through it all with this new, inspirational line is key to the success I know we’re going to have. We’re a small team but work hard.”

Bila77’s manufacturing is done in India with factories the Dittu family has worked with for over 30 years, proving that “family business” can sometimes mean a global family. ●



BROOKE BERRY



## L.A. Market *Continued from page 1*

### New Mart takes it a step further

The Resort/Early Spring '23 market at The New Mart, held Aug. 1–4, welcomed buyers with its new VIP treatment. Attendees were greeted by a step-and-repeat area at the entrance for photo opportunities and were treated to a luxurious buyers lounge offering complimentary food and beverages, just two of a host of new experiences introduced this market.

General Manager Tom Keefer went a step further, bringing together a Showcase of Luxury European Brands. “We are thrilled to have these collections presented in one space,” said Keefer. The labels were displayed at **FashionLink**, where President Peter Jacobson welcomed the crème de la crème of boutique buyers. “We have been much busier than we expected. Buyers from all over were leaving paper.” **Insanity, Palm Desert, Covered from Denver** and **Barbara & Company** from Santa Barbara, Calif., were among those who shopped the showroom.

**Mucho Gusto**’s exclusive handmade scarf-print apparel from the Netherlands had a designer ’80s vibe with prices from \$100 up. **Unbreak.It** from Italy showcased vintage Hollywood film prints on silk separates ranging from \$150 to \$300, and **Indies**’s collections reinvented retro sports as well as high-fashion denim.

At **J.Moore Sales**, the multi-line jewelry showroom was all about fashion must-have pieces. Hot items this season included **Martha Duran** hand-crafted beaded cuffs, stretch crystal stackable bracelets from **Marlyn Schiff** and gold-link necklaces by **Marcia Moran**. Showroom owner Janelle Moore was pleased with the turnout. “Buyers are writing more consistently than this time last year.” Lisa Yates, owner of **Erba** in San Clemente, Calif., said, “It’s fun to actually be here in person to touch and feel the product.”

At the **Joken Style** showroom, owner Eme Mizioch and a brand rep for **Wild Paris**, said happily, “L.A. is back! There was more foot traffic, and buyers are definitely in the mood to buy.” Wild Paris is a colorful collection of retro styles inspired by travel around the world. From Flower Power tees to ’90s throwback denims, the line ranged in price from \$50 to \$120.

### Fashion renaissance at the Cooper

At the August 2022 Market Week at the Cooper Design Space, held Aug. 1–4, relationships were created to generate enthusiasm and a renewed interest in returning to in-person. The Los Angeles Fashion District has formed alliances with hotels, restaurants and retail, all working in unison to reimagine the experience buyers will have when shopping L.A.

Mito Aviles, marketing and communications manager for the Cooper, foresees a comeback to downtown as “the fashion destination” for retail buyers. Aviles added, “I have such a passion for bringing fashion back.”

There’s no question that the California vibe can’t be duplicated in other cities. As fashion trends have shifted toward relaxed dressing, local brands have benefited. The West Coast DNA has always been grounded in casual meets edgy.

In the **Findings** showroom, **The Great** brand spoke to the comfy cool-girl lifestyle. Designers Emily Current and Meritt Elliott, formerly of **Current/Elliott** jeans, presented their Urban Pilgrim collection. The mix between femininity and utilitarian was their playful message. Buyers from **Petite & Olson** and **Jack & Millie** were reviewing Holiday and early Spring. Showroom rep Mollie Crandell reported that “maxi dresses as a category are hot for us this market.”

At the **Ginny Wong** showroom, the glitzy side of the city



Buyers Maria Goffredo and Lisa Yates visit the Erba showroom at The New Mart.



Peter Jacobson and D.J. of the FashionLink showroom at The New Mart



The Santa Brand at the Ginny Wong showroom at the Cooper Design Space



The Bella Dahl showroom at the Cooper Design Space



GiGi Moda at the California Market Center



Stoneage at the California Market Center

was on display, where sexy and glam mixed into everyday wardrobes. **Santa Brands** presented a line of ’70s disco dressing in chain mail with rhinestones ranging from \$120 to \$650. **Oops Cool** presented its new line of vivid, exclusive printed pieces from resortwear to home goods from Turkey. Buyers previewing for 1/30 delivery included **Neiman Marcus**, **Intermix** and **Nordstrom**. A sexy, super-chic, body-con collection of dresses from **Mother of All** in double-faced scuba ranged from \$120 to \$590.

Kasey Mitchell, West Coast sales manager for the **Bella Dahl** showroom, saw “a consistent stream of buyers ‘to shop the line’s newest division, Bella Dahl Swim.’ The contemporary brand is known for its unique prints with a SoCal motif in easy-fit shirtings, separates and now swim, all with its signature soft hand.

### CMC premieres transformation

The CMC unveiled several changes to its multi-use creative complex at its LA Market, held July 31–Aug. 3. Among the transformations, which are almost complete, are easy access to showrooms, new restaurants and outdoor spaces such as the ultra-modern plaza, designed to host special events.

According to the CMC, “August LA Market proved successful for contemporary women’s brands with prebooked buyer appointments. Showrooms met with buying teams from **Revolve**, **Dillard’s**, **M.Fredric** and **Kitson** ahead of Las Vegas marketplaces. We look forward to a very exciting calendar this October.”

At the **Fern Liberson & Co.** showroom, buyers could expect quick turns as most styles were in stock. For **GiGi Moda**, buyers were reordering everything from a crinkled stretch crop pant in an assortment of patterns and florals to menswear in cotton/spandex and 100 percent silk slipdresses. “Buyers come to us for style with an edge,” said Liberson. They can find what’s happening at really great prices.” **Adore**’s cropped jackets and coats with a twist in denim, mesh and lace mixes were selling for \$59 to \$65. **W.A.Y.**’s sequined pieces, ranging from \$12 to \$45, were working with brushed plaid shackets at \$20.

At the longtime multi-line showroom **Sharon Koshett Sales**, Koshett found that “this market buyers were looking for slogan tees that are made in the U.S.” A new body introduced this season is the hi-lo in heirloom cotton featuring screens of vintage cocktails at \$15.

Morgan Ariane, owner of the **Susa Boutique**, said, “I buy four to five lines from Sharon’s showroom. She always knows what her customers need.” The Lana collection, a line of bohemian hand-embroidered dusters priced at \$30 to \$40 were being snapped up by high-end boutiques.

Stepping into the world of artist Claire Desjardins, each style in her collection captured one of her original paintings.

Paris Hilton’s Iconic collection was wildly received by everyone at the show, from boutiques to luxury department stores. A return to the trends of the early 2000s has reignited the popularity of the track suit. This signature collection featured candy-colored luxe velour. Hoodies were bedazzled with rhinestones featuring Paris’s catchphrases such as “That’s Hot!” and “Boss Babe.” Prices ranged from \$36 to \$50. ●

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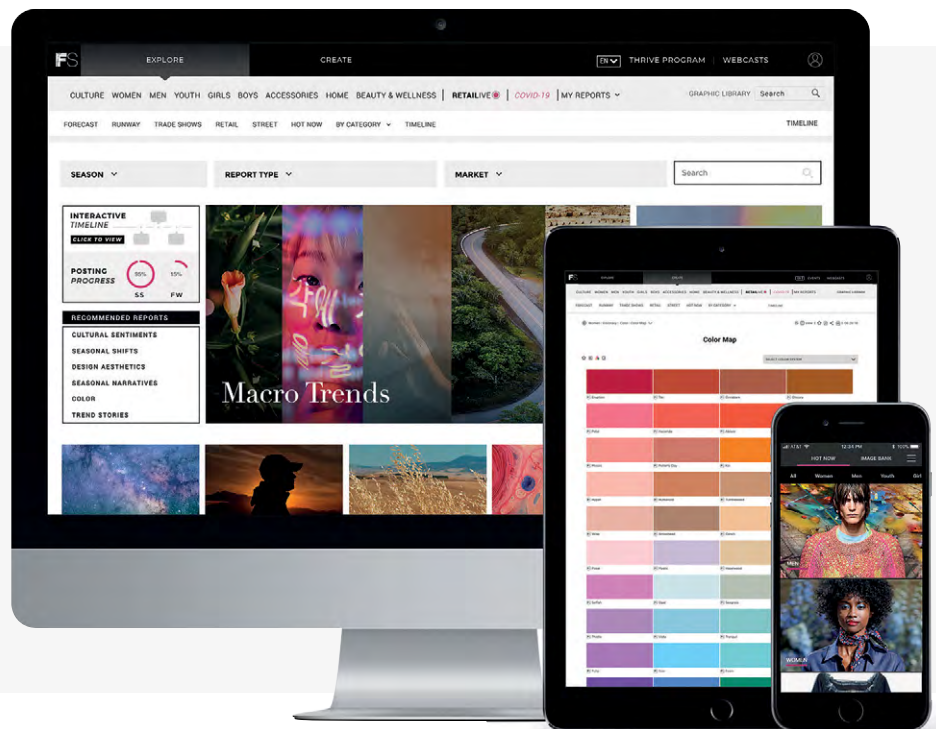




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# FIDM Graduates Embrace Personal Journeys in Their Designs



Cole Moscarel



Esther Gaor



Ethan Martin



Joel Elliott



Sasha Swedlund



Susan Lizotte



Thierry Kepgang Nana



Yubin Min



## INDUSTRY VOICES

### FIDM *Continued from page 1*

spired by their own upbringing and cultures, but from my perspective, as the Co-Chair of the Fashion Design Program at **FIDM/ Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising**, I have noticed a shift with our students in making their designs a more personal journey. Admittedly, along with my fellow Co-Chair, David Paul, we have implemented a more introspective thought process in our fashion-design curriculum, especially when it involves the more creative-based classes, and it seems this move is taking effect. These young creatives are embracing the importance of self-reflection, individual experiences, surviving the tumultuous world around us, as well as inclusivity and cultural diversity.

This was clearly in evidence with this year's graduates from our Advanced Study in Fashion Design Program and their **DEBUT Runway Show**.

The DEBUT Show is the culmination of the Advanced Study in Fashion Design Program, where a group of graduates from the A.A. Program are handpicked to spend nine months creating their first capsule fashion collection. It is an intense program that involves theoretical exploration, mood boarding, sketching, patternmaking and, eventually, constructing a 10-12-look collection.

Most of this year's eight DEBUT graduates began their studies at FIDM in the middle of the COVID lockdown. Just imagine learning draping, sewing and patternmaking via **ZOOM!** Slowly they were able to transition their studies into hybrid and then eventually on-campus learning. It is a testament to their perseverance, determination and will that they successfully accomplished what they set out to do in creating these collections with all of these unprecedented hurdles.

This group of designers comes from a wide variety of locations including the Philippines, Korea, Cameroon and even an ex-pat raised in France. But among them, there was a common thread—to highlight their culture, and different upbringing, and be more inclusive.



Nick Verreos

The designer's inspirations were as varied as their backgrounds: Graduate Joel Elliot was inspired by shipwrecks as well as bondage, shown through Shibari ropes, while another, Sasha Swedlund, was inspired by Black women's hair. Yubin Min created beautiful handmade Jong-i jeobgi, Korean origami, and 3D flowers that honored the beauty of her grandmother. Esther Gaor created garments that were composed of over 100 pattern pieces that reflected her dream of removing all of the limitations and boundaries that the world has established and letting the inner dreamer experience life to the fullest. Cameroon-born Thierry Kepgang Nana designed a mini-collection inspired by his culture, while Cole Moscarel designed a collection based on World War II and old black-and-white photos of his grandfather.

Categories ranged from Streetwear and Menswear to High-end Eveningwear and Avant-garde. All of this was on fabulous display at the show, which we filmed on the 11th floor of the

**Cooper Design Space** in downtown Los Angeles.

As fashion shows around the world have been finally allowing audiences to return, we were excited to welcome guests, including friends, family and industry influencers, to the front row. We were also thrilled to make our models as diverse as our designers by including student models as well as our first nonbinary and transgender models.

To capture the best natural light in the incredible loft-like location, we decided to film in the late afternoon to early evening. The light coming into the space gave the entire show a transcendental feel, and each designer's collection transported the viewer to a unique and personal place. In addition to the live show, the event was also streamed on **YouTube**, and for another first we held an outdoor screening of the show on the lawn of Grand Hope Park adjacent to the college. Guests who enjoyed the show on the big screen included alumni, local fashion designers, industry insiders, influencers and our surrounding DTLA community.

This year's DEBUT show seemed more personal because it reflected the individuality in design, unique creative dynamism and cultural uniqueness that is representative of our student body and community as a whole. Each of the designer's personal stories and desire for a change was in every collection.

You might not have known this outright from seeing the looks come down the runway, but all those personal touches were woven into the threads, and, I predict, will continue to be so for many years to come.

*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."*



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  - Assess project and resource requirements.
  - Vehicle, licensed and insured, to check on factories.
- Please visit our website for an overview of who we are. [www.evamannndesigns.com](http://www.evamannndesigns.com)  
Please submit your resume to: [careers@evamannndesign.com](mailto:careers@evamannndesign.com).

##### ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT

We are looking for an Accounting Assistant to perform a variety of accounting/bookkeeping and to work on projects/tasks as assigned. Preferably familiar with QuickBooks for Mac and Apparel Magic. Minimum of 3 years' Experience. Email resume to: [hr@blackhalo.com](mailto:hr@blackhalo.com)

##### \* FIELD QUALITY CONTROL \*

Apparel Company looking for Quality Control person with min 5 yrs exp. Knowledge and experience of sewing construction for knits and woven production for garment dye. Car and clean driving record required. Email resumes to: [eflores@linesman.net](mailto:eflores@linesman.net)

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