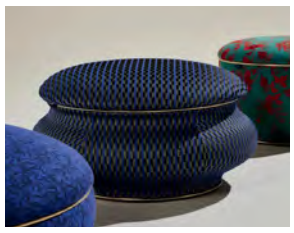
WWD
Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Storied Waters
Louis Vuitton will host its pre-fall runway show on a bridge in Seoul, with director Hwang Dong-hyuk as creative adviser. **Page 2**

Stock Struggles
THG, formerly The Hut Group, has seen shares plummet as losses widen, and has received a bid from a private equity firm. **Page 3**



New Leap
Kering-owned Ginori 1735 has partnered with Luca Nichetto to debut furniture.
Page 12

Design Gurus

What is design? That's the ultimate question echoing throughout the bustling streets of Milan this week, where Salone del Mobile and FuoriSalone are in full force. Grouped by Louis Vuitton, some of the most creative minds shared their definitions of the term with WWD as they unveiled their latest efforts for the brand's Objets Nomades collection. From the perfect blend of shape and function to a tool to tell a story or simply something that's never been done before, it turns out that design can reveal itself in many forms. *For more, see pages 5 and 6.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY **DANIELE MANGO**

BUSINESS

Brunello Cucinelli Plans New Factory

- The company revealed its plans as it reported 34.7 percent increase in sales in the first quarter of the year.

BY **LUISA ZARGANI**

MILAN – Brunello Cucinelli closed another quarter of strong growth and is gearing up for additional gains by setting up a new manufacturing plant in Penne, Italy.

Located in the central region of Abruzzo, Penne is historically a production hub that specializes in sartorial menswear. It is home to the storied Brioni brand.

During a call with analysts, chief executive officer Riccardo Stefanelli said the plant will be built by the company and begin operating in the last quarter of the year.

Stefanelli was speaking from Dallas, where he was accompanying Brunello

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BEAUTY

As NACDS Marks 90th Year, Mass Beauty at Crossroads

- Brands and retailers are expected to address thorny issues, as well as emerging opportunities.

BY **FAYE BROOKMAN**

As the National Association of Chain Drug Stores prepares to celebrate its 90th anniversary, the mass market is gearing up for what could be its most pivotal juncture in the beauty business in the past decade. The NACDS Annual Meeting kicks off at The Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida, on Saturday.

Beauty is at a crossroads. While the mass market accounted for the majority of sales in the $93 billion beauty industry, according to Circana (formerly IRI and NPD), the $27 billion prestige segment has been growing faster than mass while also experiencing lesser price increases.

Whether the mass market will benefit from what many believe is a looming recession will be among the biggest topics

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

WWD

EXCLUSIVE

‘Squid Game’ Director Will Help Set Scene for Louis Vuitton’s Show in Seoul

The Jamsugyo Bridge in Seoul.

- The April 29 pre-fall event will take place on the Jamsugyo Bridge that spans the storied Hangang River.

BY **MILES SOCHA**

Nicolas Ghesquière’s first pre-fall runway show for Louis Vuitton will take place on a bridge over storied waters.

The April 29 display in Seoul, South Korea, will unfurl after sunset on the Jamsugyo Bridge that spans the Hangang River – and with “Squid Game” director Hwang Dong-hyuk acting as a creative adviser on the show scenography.

It marks the first time the double-decker bridge will host a fashion show, and kicks off a series of initiatives between the luxury goods giant and local and national governments to promote Korea and exalt the waterway, one of the most beloved and scenic elements of Seoul and a lifeblood for millions of South Koreans.

It also represents one of the first splashy initiatives of new Louis Vuitton chairman and chief executive officer Pietro Beccari, who made spectacular fashion events in impressive locales a hallmark of his tenure at Christian Dior. He started at Vuitton on Feb. 1, and brought Ghesquière on board to add a new itinerant runway show to Vuitton’s playbook.

Beccari called Seoul a “cultural hub that continues to draw global attention” and a cosmopolitan city that “shares a common spirit with Louis Vuitton for pioneering the future, reimagining creativity and nurturing savoir faire.”

Disclosing details of the runway showcase exclusively with WWD, Louis Vuitton billed the event as global in reach, yet inclusive, engaging local talents and communities.

The brand characterized Ghesquière’s collaboration with Hwang as being “in the spirit of creative collaboration” dear to the fashion designer, and reflecting “the will of Louis Vuitton to highlight and showcase local culture and artistic excellence on a global scale.”

Hwang’s “Squid Game” became one of Netflix’s most watched shows in history when it came out in 2021.

For his recent Paris shows, Ghesquière, Vuitton’s artistic director of women’s collections, has collaborated with French artist Philippe Parreno.

Vuitton’s pre-fall show will be livestreamed on its social channels and on outdoor screens across Seoul. In addition, the brand plans to invite 100 local fashion students to be among the 1,600 guests.

The government in South Korea has declared 2023-24 the Visit Korea Year, with the Korea Tourism Organization orchestrating various events, travel packages and promotional campaigns over the next two years.

For its part, Vuitton has signed a strategic partnership agreement with Seoul Metropolitan City and the Korea Tourism Organization. The French luxury goods house plans to work closely with the city government to promote Hangang River.

For example, it plans to add river attractions to the Seoul edition of its Louis Vuitton City Guide; install a book kiosk during the Jamsugyo Bridge Walking Festival, and participate in various short-term and long-term projects to preserve natural resources and improving biodiversity.

Once an important trade route to China, the Hangang River today provides water to millions of South Koreans and is an epicenter of leisure activities in Seoul, its banks lined with pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths, public parks and restaurants. Locals call it the Han.

In tandem with the Korea Tourism Organization, Vuitton plans to collaborate on a number of projects to promote Seoul and revitalize tourism, including a photo exhibition.

Kim Eui-sung, deputy mayor of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, said the city is gunning to attract as many as 30 million overseas tourists this year.

“The partnership agreement is a great opportunity to share the beauty of the Han River, Seoul’s representative tourism resource with infinite potential, with the world,” he said.

Kim Jang-sil, president of Korea Tourism Organization, noted that K-pop and other cultural exports are capturing fans all over the world.

“The various cultural and artistic events held during the Visit Korea Year will showcase Korea’s cultural identity and sincerity,” he said. “The three-party partnership with Louis Vuitton and Seoul City is an excellent opportunity to promote Korea’s charm to the world, and we hope to garner meaningful results from this partnership.”

Louis Vuitton has a long history with South Korea.

It opened its first boutique in Seoul’s Gangnam district in 1991 and constructed a bigger, full-fledged maison in the same location with an otherworldly facade by architect Frank Gehry in 2019. The unit showcases all of the brand’s categories and boasts an exhibition space and buzzy restaurant pop-ups from the likes of Pierre Sang and Alain Passard.

Vuitton’s roving “Volez, Voguez, Voyagez” exhibition landed in Seoul in 2017, the same year Ghesquière conscripted Ho Yeon Jung to model for Vuitton. Jung would go on to become a breakout star of “Squid Game” and become one of Vuitton’s global ambassadors. Korean actress Donna Bae has also appeared in Vuitton campaigns.

The brand also recently published a book from its Fashion Eye series about Seoul, with Dutch photographer Sarah van Rij capturing fleeting moments of everyday life around the buzzing city.

Today, Vuitton operates 35 stores in South Korea, including 18 in Seoul.

The brand has a long history of staging fashion shows at architecturally significant landmarks around the world. It staged a spin-off cruise 2020 fashion show in Seoul in a setting inspired by Gehry’s bold and experimental architecture.

The Jamsu bridge, completed in 1976 and only a few meters above the waterline, connects the districts of Yongsan-gu and Seocho-gu. A second and higher level, more secure during periods of high rainfall, was added in 1982, according to Wikipedia.

FASHION

Prada and Miu Miu Top Hottest Brands List

- Versace saw the biggest jump in ranking this quarter, boosted by the brand's fall 2023 show in L.A. on Oscars weekend.

BY **TIANWEI ZHANG**

LONDON – Prada remained at the top spot in the latest quarter of the Lyst Index’s hottest brand list, while its sister brand Miu Miu climbed to second for the period between January to March, which is that brand’s highest ranking since the list began.

According to data gathered on the London-based shopping platfrom, searches for Prada went up 22 percent this quarter, with sunglasses being the biggest category increase as searches jumped 56 percent over the quarter.

The rise in popularity for Miu Miu can be largely attributed to the high demand for the pocket bag, a second collaboration with New Balance and a trend-setting Paris Fashion Week show featuring Emma Corrin, Zaya Wade, Mia Goth and Ethel Cain on the catwalk.

Versace saw the biggest jump in ranking this quarter, landing in eighth place. It was boosted by the brand’s fall 2023 show in Los Angeles on Oscars weekend, and subsequent red carpet appearances from the likes of Lady Gaga, Ariana DeBose and Kerry Condon.

Meanwhile, with a creative director reshuffle, Gucci’s ranking dropped to ninth place, the lowest in history. Balenciaga, which has still not recovered from a slew of controversies last year, was in 18th place in the ranking.

Newcomers on the list included Skims and JW Anderson, landing at 17th and 20th place, respectively. In the period, searches for Skims on Lyst increased 30 percent. Anderson became the third designer, after Virgil Abloh and Miuccia Prada, to have two brands on the ranking in the same quarter.

In terms of the hottest products ranking, Uniqlo’s shoulder bag, which retails for under $20, snatched the top spot. As the least expensive product to ever be featured in the Lyst Index, the style went viral on TikTok, generating more than 59 million views on the platform.

Enhyphen attends Prada men’s fall 2023 show in Milan.

Rick Owens’ Kriester sunglasses was the second most in-demand item in the quarter, as it was worn by the likes of Shannon and Shannade Clermont and Lotta Volkova, while Skim’s sculpt bodysuit was the quarter’s third hottest product.

WWD

BEAUTY

THG Losses Widen in Fiscal 2022 as Apollo Global Makes Preliminary Bid

● Losses widened to 540 million pounds in fiscal 2022 as the company sought to soften the blow of inflation on customers and restructure.

BY **SAMANTHA CONTI**

LONDON – Shares in online beauty retailer THG, formerly known as The Hut Group, fell nearly 20 percent on Tuesday after the company saw losses widen to 540 million pounds in fiscal 2022 due to inflationary pressures and write-downs.

The share price fell to 0.77 pounds at the close of trading, after having rallied on Monday following THG's confirmation that private equity firm Apollo Global Management Inc. had made a preliminary bid. THG described Apollo's bid to acquire the entire issued share capital of THG as "highly preliminary" and non-binding.

Apollo needs to make an offer by 5 p.m. on May 15, or walk away, according to THG, which has struggled on many levels since it listed on the London Stock Exchange in September 2020.

THG owns online retailers including Cult Beauty and Lookfantastic, and brands such as Perricone MD and Espa. It published its 2022 results on Tuesday, showing that group revenue rose 2.7 percent to 2.24 billion pounds.

Losses for the financial year widened to 540 million pounds from 138 million pounds.

THG said losses increased for a variety of reasons, including its efforts to limit customers' exposure to commodity cost increases, and its 275.4 million pound write-down of the software it uses to operate third-party websites.

It also listed a series of non-recurring costs in the period, including 32.4 million pounds spent on a strategic review; 18.5 million pounds on international deliveries, predominantly in Asia, and mainly linked to COVID-19 restrictions, and 14.8 million pounds in administrative costs following a company reorganization and related layoffs.

Matthew Moulding, cofounder and chief executive officer of THG, said that while adjusted EBITDA, or earnings before taxes, depreciation and amortization, in 2022 "was not where we planned at the start of the year, this was largely the result of our strategy to minimize the impact of inflation upon our customer base."

Moulding said the outlook for fiscal 2023 was "much improved" due to declining input costs, and said that THG's Ingenuity division, which operates websites for third parties, has been repositioned and reorganized.

"It is now paying dividends, evidenced by recent announcements and a strong 2023 pipeline," he said. Earlier this month, THG Ingenuity inked a 10-year partnership with the beauty e-commerce retailer Maximo Group, which owns sites including Allbeauty.com and Fragrancedirect.co.uk.

THG Ingenuity said it will become Maximo's "key U.K. operational partner," providing warehouse and fulfillment services from second quarter 2023.

Following a three-year infrastructure investment program, Moulding said THG has "the technology infrastructure and the global fulfillment capability" to ensure that it's "well positioned to capitalize on this path of growth."

In fiscal 2023, THG said it is expecting low- to mid-single-digit growth. The group added that "profitability and cashflow improvements" in the first quarter point to "significant margin recovery through the year."

The company said it is working toward recovering historical adjusted EBITDA margins of around 9 percent during the medium term. By comparison, adjusted EBITDA margin for fiscal 2022 was 2.9 percent.

Given its declining share price, structural and management woes, THG has been no stranger to unsolicited bids.

Apollo is one of many private equity firms to have made a run at the company.

Last April, Moulding said the board had received "indicative proposals from numerous parties in recent weeks," but they rejected them all because they didn't reflect the value of THG.

Moulding did not elaborate on who the suitors were, what price they offered, or even how serious those offers were.

According to British press reports at the time, the top suitors were American private equity giants Leonard Green & Partners; Advent International, and Clayton, Dubilier & Rice. They all declined to comment at the time.

Despite a blockbuster IPO, THG had a rocky start on the public markets with investors questioning Moulding's oversight of the company, and the value of the Ingenuity platform, which licenses end-to-end e-commerce solutions to brand owners, provides various other digital services and undertakes beauty product development and manufacturing for third parties.

The Hut Group's cofounder and CEO Matthew Moulding.

THG has since taken steps to rectify those issues, with Moulding stepping down as joint chairman and CEO, and giving up his golden shares in the company, which gave him special veto powers and the ability to block takeover attempts.

Shares in THG are currently trading well below the float price of 5 pounds.

FASHION

Sports and Fitness Industry Continues Growth in 2022

● A new report from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association finds participation continues to increase, albeit not at the same rate as during the pandemic.

BY **JEAN E. PALMIERI**

While sales may have cooled from their pandemic-fueled fever, the sporting goods industry is still holding its own.

After jumping a record 15.8 percent in 2021, the industry still managed to post a 4.3 percent growth rate in 2022, the second-largest increase since 2010, wrote Tom Cove, president and chief executive officer of the Sports & Fitness Industry Association in the organization's new 2023 State of the Industry report. The figures include sports, fitness, outdoor and active athletic apparel, footwear and equipment.

Cove attributed the uptick to the continued growth of physically active Americans, a number that grew for the fifth consecutive year, with 77.6 percent of all Americans taking part in one of the 124 sports and fitness activities the group tracks. This figure represents 15.3 million more people than pre-pandemic.

One potential pitfall, however, is that the gap between dedicated and casual participants continued to widen over the past three years. The number of casual participants has grown from slightly over half of all Americans in 2013 to 56.4 percent in 2022.

Pickleball is America's fastest-growing sport.

"While a positive trend in recent years, it also poses a considerable challenge to the industry going forward," the report said. "These casual participants as a group, who are more likely to be impacted by rising costs and mounting pressures on their time, will need to be engaged regularly by the industry to grow, if not maintain, their strong participation levels going forward."

Looking at the industry overall, Cove said, "supply chain hangover, rapidly rising inflation, and the looming threat of recession made for a complicated operational year for many companies and individuals." Rising prices of staples such as gasoline and groceries influence consumer inclination to purchase sports-related products "which generally are discretionary," he said.

One lingering issue facing the industry is navigating inventory levels. A major headache for many companies in 2021 when goods were hard to come by, the situation has improved, Cove said, with 67 percent of responding companies reporting higher inventories last year. But now the issue is one of oversupply, which has led to increased promotions to clear goods as well as order cancellations. Some 37.8 percent of respondents reported they were "very or somewhat uncomfortable" with the state of their inventory. The report projects that equilibrium on this issue is not likely to be resolved until at least the third quarter of this year.

Despite the macro-economic issues, profitability improved for a majority of firms last year, with 55.2 percent saying they increased their profits last year – the second best showing since 2015 – although a significant 28.4 percent reported profitability levels below pre-pandemic levels.

By category, the rising popularity of pickleball helped participation in racquet sports to increase last year for the first time in seven years. In fact, over the past three years the sport has grown by a whopping 158.6 percent, the SFIA said.

In addition, outdoor sports, the second most popular category, increased by 1.1 percent. This category includes trail running, hiking, bicycling and camping. Golf also maintained its strong showing, rising 9.7 percent last year.

In terms of income, participation from all levels has grown, with the $25,000 to $49,999 group increasing the most last year to 71.8 percent of the total from 65.3 percent. The under $25,000-a-year group also increased, rising to 60.6 percent last year from 55.4 percent in 2017. Higher income levels held steady for the most part.

Turning to distribution, 61.1 percent of respondents said sales on their own websites increased last year while 62.2 percent said sales in their own stores stayed basically the same as the prior year. Sales at specialty retailers increased 54.3 percent last year, indicating companies were "putting more emphasis on their digital channel and wholesale partners," the report said.

In conclusion, the report said the outlook for the sports and fitness industry "remains strong," and the demand for "new, innovative products remains high. But there is work to be done." The industry needs to "reenergize its commitment" to team sports, the running industry must continue to introduce new products and technologies, and the fitness segment must "shift to allow participants to work out wherever and whenever they want."

Key to growth in 2023, the SFIA believes, is building relevant brands, highlighting sustainability, embracing nearshoring, or sourcing closer to home, and continuing to court private investors to support expansion.

WWD

BUSINESS

Mytheresa Sees Potential to Double Business From the Middle East

- CEO Michael Kliger said a focus on high-end customers in Saudi Arabia will drive growth in a market that deserves more attention.

BY **RITU UPADHYAY**

Michael Kliger, chief executive officer of Mytheresa.

DUBAI – Mytheresa chief executive officer Michael Kliger admits the luxury retail platform has been slow to engage in the Middle East until now.

"Today the region is 4 percent of our business. But when I speak about it, people say, 'But it should be double,' and I agree. For our brand partners, like the Cartiers and Van Cleefs, this region has always been a big focus."

The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are the biggest regional markets by spend, according to Kliger, who was in Dubai meeting clients. "We have a loyal high-end customer base from the Middle East, but we have been serving them more in their Paris or London residences. But there is a clear momentum back into the region. The pandemic showed us that potential because so much was spent at home by them."

Mytheresa's increased offering across categories has also been attractive to Middle East customers. "As a luxury retailer we offer women's fashion, but we also have menswear and kidswear. This region already over-indexes in kidswear, for example. We do double the business here compared to other markets with high-end luxury brands like Loro Piana kids and Brunello [Cucinelli] kids. The amount of money and appreciation in this region is high. Now we also have home and lifestyle, so it opens a lot of opportunity."

He added that rapid societal changes, specifically in Saudi Arabia, will continue to drive demand. "Saudi is in a very dynamic period. Things as simple as more fine dining restaurants opening up, means more people are out, driving wardrobe needs."

Kliger said the strategy for the region will include improving logistics, like making the delivery and returns process smoother. However, the most important driver for growth will be understanding the customer intimately well.

"We really need to show up in the region more and bond with the customers. This means more events, more PR, more personal shoppers."

Kliger has personally made three trips to the Middle East in the last year for customer-focused events. Anticipating their needs, he said, will enable them to grow and keep customers. "When we hear our customers tell us, 'I was thinking about something and then your newsletter came in the morning it offered me that,' well, that's magic."

The investment in developing relationships builds long-term loyalty. "When I was in Riyadh early this year, clients were telling me they always go to Courchevel at the end of January. That tells us we should push our ski edit at that time in the region, which might not have been what we are doing globally."

They have the inventory, he said, "but the time customers might want it is different in France, different in the U.S. and different in Saudi."

"The biggest cost in e-commerce is customer acquisition – if you acquire customers that have loyalty. What we have seen since last summer is the aspirational customer is cutting back whereas our high-end customer, there has been no dent whatsoever. Growth with this top-end customer is 26 to 28 percent year-on-year."

Kliger doesn't believe in localized edits or special selections for the Middle Eastern customer.

"This is a very knowledgeable and very elevated customer base. We have an offer that appeals globally, so it's not as if we need specific product that is different in the Middle East."

What's vital, he said, "is to respect the culture and understand the occasions." He explained, "that means knowing when the timings of regional wedding seasons, holidays and festivals are because these drive their wardrobe needs. Fifty percent of our business is ready-to-wear, so we focus on understanding their needs and delivering in that category."

Mytheresa has steadily been delivering solid growth and profitability globally, during a time when luxury e-commerce has been struggling to show profits. One of the keys to that success, said Kliger, is keeping its eye on core clients. "I think the secret sauce is our focus on who we are aspiring to serve. Broadly in luxury you have the aspirational customer that purchases one or two items, usually handbags. Then there is the wardrobe builder. This person has a luxurious lifestyle. We have always focused on that wardrobe builder.

"Our model with 50 percent of our business in ready-to-wear and 20 percent overall in handbags means we do, of course, offer and sell bags, but we don't sell bags to people that only buy bags. In e-commerce this is more resilient and more profitable."

Aside from the Middle East, Kliger said the company is also focused on the U.S. "We were not that present there five years ago, but are now increasing the efforts," he said. "The U.S. is still an amazing opportunity because it's also so diverse. We have recently had events in markets from Arkansas to Aspen. We head soon to L.A. in May. The U.S. is so big, and we think they are underserved, especially markets not on the East and West coast."

EXCLUSIVE

Pamela Anderson Signs With The Society Management

- The talent management company will handle her fashion ventures.

BY **RYMA CHIKHOUNE**

Pamela Anderson has signed with The Society Management.

The talent management company, the U.S. division of Elite Model Management, will handle her fashion ventures.

"The Society Management is honored to welcome Pam Anderson to our roster," the agency told WWD in an exclusive statement. "Pam is a viral industry icon and has resonated across generations and audiences globally with her iconic roles over the years, recent documentary and New York Times best seller. We are thrilled to join Pam's team and build upon her presence in the fashion industry and new business ventures as she continues to add to her legendary career."

Anderson – a model, actress, author and activist – is best known globally for her role as "C.J." Parker on the television series "Baywatch" and starring in the 1996 action-sci-fi film "Barb Wire," while posing for more than a dozen Playboy magazines and other cover shoots through the years.

Fans got to see a different, more personal side of Anderson earlier this year in Netflix's documentary "Pamela: A Love Story," which received praise and reignited the world's fascination with Anderson.

Anderson opened the Hugo Boss spring 2023 show in Miami, was featured in the Heaven by Marc Jacobs fall 2022 campaign and recently graced the cover of WWD, as well as Variety, Vogue Czechoslovakia, T Magazine Spain and Dazed and Confused.

On stage, Anderson has appeared as Roxie in the musical "Chicago." She is the author of "Love, Pamela." A longtime ambassador for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Anderson launched The Pamela Anderson Foundation, dedicated to human, animal and environmental rights.

The 55-year-old, originally from Canada, is a mother of two sons, Brandon and Dylan Lee. She currently resides in Vancouver Island, Canada.

Launched in 2013 – merging fashion, beauty, pop culture and digital media – The Society Management has worked with Karlie Kloss, Kendall Jenner, Irina Shayk, Angus Cloud, Josephine Skriver, Jaden and Willow Smith, Amber Valletta and Liu Wen.

Pamela Anderson attends the premiere of Netflix's "Pamela: A Love Story" at Netflix Tudum Theater on Jan. 30 in Hollywood, California.

WWD

LIFESTYLE

Louis Vuitton Objets Nomades' Class of 2023 on New Pieces, Defining Design

Marcel Wanders and the Capeline lamp.

Humberto Campana

The Cocoon chair by Studio Campana.

● Ask a pool of talented creators in the discipline to define the term "design" and you won't find two similar answers.

BY **SANDRA SALIBIAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **DANIELE MANGO**

MILAN – What is design?

The perfect blend of shape and function, a tool to tell a story, pure spirituality and joy or simply something that's never been done before: Ask a pool of talented creators in the discipline to define the term and there won't be two similar answers.

It's the ultimate question echoing throughout the bustling streets of Milan this week – where the Salone del Mobile and FuoriSalone are in full force and the whole city is invited to investigate the topic and offer their interpretations of it. The query also resonated loudly at Louis Vuitton's annual presentation of its Objets Nomades furniture and design collection, first launched in 2012.

Presented in the frescoed halls of Palazzo Serbelloni, this year the line has been enriched with 11 new creative and functional items, realized by the likes of Atelier Oï, Raw Edges, Atelier Biagetti, Marcel Wanders, Zanellato/Bortotto and Studio Campana, who on Tuesday were asked to elaborate on their creative process, inspiration and overall vision.

"I love the investigation, the experimentation. I love to do things that haven't been done. It's basically what I do, it's my passion in life... It's not always a major invention but I really enjoy doing the undone and with the right people surrounding me, that becomes feasible," said Dutch designer Marcel Wanders, whose wavy lamps, Capeline, delicately floated from the ceiling of one hall.

In describing the beginnings of the creative process, Wanders said that the brief from the luxury brand traced back to a long time ago, when Louis Vuitton's initial mission was to have a collection hinged on the nomadic concept of mobility. "It was difficult to wrap my hands around it because it's a strange concept," recalled Wanders with a smile. "But in a way we found a way to talk about transformers, things that have movement inside them. And here we have a dancing glass piece, and we make light visible through glass. It's a stunning piece. It's a flower. It's a dance."

Wanders underscored the design conceals technical challenges in terms of having "glass sit on glass" in such an effortless way and required two years to perfect the result. Hence he praised the joint effort and Louis Vuitton's craftsmanship behind the project, additionally formulating his personal definition of design.

"Design is not pretty things. They might be pretty things, but it's not about doing pretty. There are a lot of pretty things that have no novelty in them, that they have no investigation or experimentation or no ideas inside, no culture. I think design is culture that speaks about itself in terms of things that haven't been done. You can make beautiful objects without being a designer. A designer makes things that are different, just more personal and more than pretty," he said.

A first look at Studio Campana's pieces might have deceived a not-so-trained eye of otherwise. The work of the Brazilian studio – which was established in 1984 by brothers Fernando and Humberto Campana – opened the whole Objets Nomades showcase with a bang via a glitzy rendition of the iconic Cocoon chair. This year, the design was rendered in the new Disco Ball version bedecked with silver mosaics, and flanked by the cloud-shaped Bomboca sofa in a striking metallic version.

"It's a celebration, and it has become like a new object," said Humberto Campana about the Cocoon chair, whose original shape took three years to develop. Yet there's much more than meets the eye when it comes to the Brazilian studio's work. The new version was intended to bring a message of "joy and visual comfort because the world today needs it," noted Campana.

"For me design stands for dream. It's joy and spirituality, because it ultimately belongs to people's home and has to be something with a good energy," he added, underscoring he found a partner in this quest in Louis Vuitton as the brand left him complete freedom.

"And that's wonderful, because I try to give the best of me when that happens. It's extremely important for me to start designing without any rule, also because I love to create a bridge between design and art, taking people in a surreal, dreamy world," said Campana. "I make the poetry and [Louis Vuitton] returns to me with technique; it's a constant dialogue."

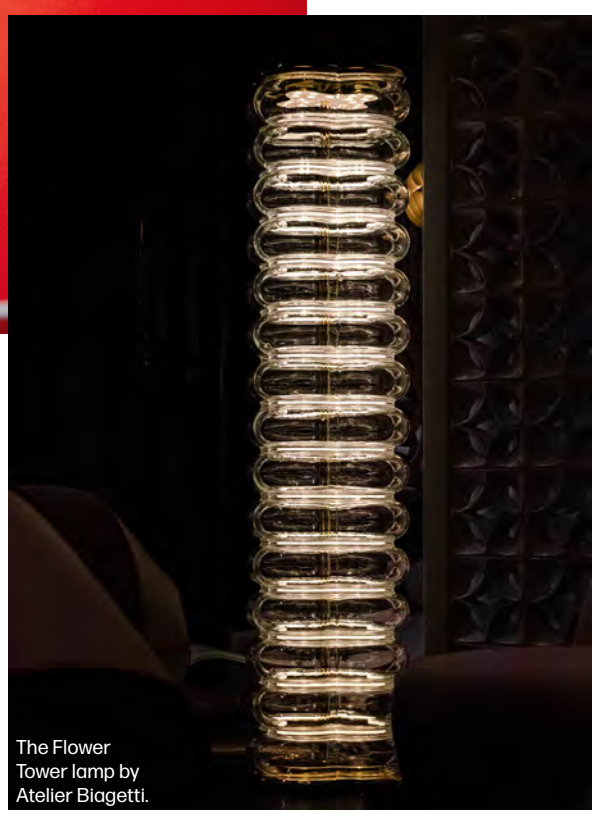
"When we started collaborating with Vuitton we thought we'd find ourselves in a room in Paris with a mega, extra-long brief [expecting us]," recalled Alberto Biagetti, one half of Atelier Biagetti, looking at his partner Laura Baldassari. ▶

Giorgia Zanellato and Daniele Bortotto of Zanellato/Bortotto.

WWD

Israeli designers Shay Alkalay and Yael Mer of London-based Raw Edges.

Atelier Biagetti's Alberto Biagetti and Laura Baldassari.



The Flower Tower lamp by Atelier Biagetti.

"Instead, we found ourselves with a team asking us what was best to do. They left us complete freedom even in the choice of the category."

To wit, the seminal design piece Atelier Biagetti developed for the brand was a sculptural table – not quite the first item that pops to mind when thinking about nomadic adventures. "It was a disruptive approach, but a table is also something bringing people together, and invites people to converse, share and exchange ideas," noted Biagetti.

For this year's collection, the duo opted for symbolically embodying the starting point of a journey through the new Flower Tower glass lamp or, as Baldassari put it, a "totem of light."

"We liked the idea that a house doesn't develop from walls but from a center, like sort of what fire was in the primitive era. You start to build and imagine a home, a city, from there," she said. In sync with Campana's spiritual approach to design, the duo also wanted to bank on lighting to metaphorically "remind us that our center is in our home but also in our first habitat: our body."

"We wanted to be a message of light, because we imagine a bright, positive future," said Biagetti.

"Every object is a tool to tell a story, in some way. The stories around objects are much more interesting, because our houses are full of objects; we have everything, what are we missing? We miss those items that actually trigger our psychology, our dreams and tell much more about us, even something we don't know yet."

Her partner considers the design as "the continuous curiosity of trying to understand how anything around you, any object can also be a tool for interacting with others or a political one for sending messages also using irony... So we can say that it's a perfect balance, which is embedded in the history of Italian design: a balance between people who create and people who make, with the joint goal of creating excellence. Without this there would be no design."

"Something that clicks" was the definition offered by Israeli designers Shay Alkalay and Yael Mer of London-based Raw Edges. "When you put together shapes and function and you create something that is inspiring: I know it's very broad, but I think design is all about this. Everything needs to kind of click," said Alkalay.

For their fifth design for Objets Nomades, Raw Edges developed the "Binda" armchairs and a sofa in velvet and glossy leather, standing out for their sculptural appearance, inspired by the curved lines of a tennis ball. The duo started from a study on geometry casually realized through a small, paper prototype before a pitch was even made to Louis Vuitton.

"We don't have a passion in tennis, we have it in geometry," said Mer, underscoring that the duo was intrigued by how flat materials could be turned into volumes. The challenges in actually developing the furniture resided into bringing the concept and paper model into reality, so using different materials, real size and function like comfort "while keeping the geometry there and not losing the charm."

"For us it is always really important to come up with something that is new. This is our quest, it's our mission... That feeling of 'I came up with something': this is design for me," added Mer.

"For everyone it is so personal, but for us design is giving shape to a research and a story," echoed Daniele Bortotto, who founded the Treviso, Italy-based Zanellato/Bortotto studio with Giorgia Zanellato 10 years ago.

The duo was first called upon by Louis Vuitton to interpret the nomadic concept in 2018. First, they developed a fascination for yurt tents and weaving techniques, starting to experiment with these with leather in the Mandala and Lanterne designs. This year, they designed Basket Table, available in two sizes and made of three leather bands woven into a honeycomb metal base, which was capped by a glazed stone top.

Finding the right balance across the different materials was among the key challenges of the project, according to Zanellato, who underscored that another layer of complexity is given by Louis Vuitton's quest for perfection. "Their attention to detail is unique and very exciting for us... The quality and know-how is top notch and enable you to experiment to the extreme, differently from other companies."

Beyond the collaboration with the French luxury brand, designers referred to disparate sources of inspiration in their work, mentioning specific peers and collections from the past.

For Campana, Italian-born Brazilian Modernist architect Lina Bo Bardi was key in his professional journey, as he said he "always tried to see things through her eyes when I first started." Incidentally, Campana moved to design from a career as a lawyer, after having "learned to see things at 20," including Bo Bardi's projects in Brazil.

As for his own journey, Campana is working on a project to be unveiled next year to mark the 40th anniversary of Studio Campana: opening a botanical park in his hometown in Brotas that merges art, design, architecture and nature. Campana and his brother inherited the land and planted 20,000 native trees in past years with the intention to turn the space into a destination for the local community and to educate younger generations about biodiversity and respecting the environment.

Atelier Biagetti also looked at Italian designers as a source of inspiration, naming Ettore Sottsass, Alessandro Mendini and Andrea Branzi, among others. "And of course Gaetano Pesce, who today everybody seems to love much more than in the past but for us has always been an incredible legend. He has done amazing, unusual objects."

The duo said they had an affinity for radical design and for the term itself, underscoring the importance of it in this particular era. "We come from years in which this industry phagocytized everything and hasn't allowed designers to express themselves due to marketing directors who have tried to adopt their intentions to trivialize people's homes," said Biagetti.

"There are a lot of heroes in the world, if you want to listen and learn from those heroes," added Wanders. "There are also some superheroes, some people that have changed not only an object, but that they've changed our world, like Charles Eames and Philippe Starck. Philippe Starck on his own changed the world multiple times. I think he really invented quite a few things and he's an all-time hero for me. I hope to be in that list one day," concluded Wanders. ■

WWD

BUSINESS

‘No Longer a Dated Mall Retailer’: Signet CEO Outlines Progress

- CEO Virginia C. Drosos recapped the effects of transformation strategies, dispelled "misconceptions" about the jewelry retailer and said there's much room for growth.

BY **DAVID MOIN**

In its three-to-five-year transformation strategy, Signet Jewelers is hitting targets ahead of schedule, has updated financial goals, and expects engagement-related jewelry purchases to rebound beginning in the fourth quarter of this year.

"We are setting a $9 [billion] to $10 billion revenue target, which we're confident we can achieve, particularly as engagements return to normal levels, and as services and accessible luxury, including our digitally native brands, contribute greater and faster growth," Signet chief executive officer Virginia C. Drosos said at the jewelry retailer's investor day held Tuesday in New York. Midsingle-digit growth is seen for the near term. Signet considers accessible luxury jewelry – sold at its Jared, Blue Nile, James Allen and Diamonds Direct – as generally in the $1,000 to $3,000 price range.

Signet, which operates Zales, Kay, Jared, Blue Nile, James Allen, Diamonds Direct, Banter by Piercing Pagoda, Peoples, H. Samuel, Ernest Jones and Rocksbox, reached more than $7.84 billion in sales last year. Sales are projected at $7.67 billion to $7.84 billion for this year. Signet's transformation strategy began in 2019.

"We expect approximately $600 million from the engagement tailwinds which will begin in Q4 of fiscal '24 and continue through fiscal '27," Drosos told investors. "A large portion of this growth will come in our 'big business' banners, Kay and Zales. As we’ve positioned these two banners to target different customers, we’ve also differentiated their assortments, marketing, digital and store experiences and loyalty offerings, enabling us to grow both simultaneously."

Among the goals cited by the CEO: continuing to deliver double-digit non-GAAP annual operating margin, with an updated range of 11 to 12 percent; growing U.S. market share to 11 to 12 percent, from 9.7 percent currently; and annual earnings per share in a range of $14 to $16, which contemplates continued investment in the business and dividend growth but does not include the impact of share buybacks.

Last year, Signet earned $12.28 per share and reported non-GAAP operating margin at 10.8 percent. Fourth-quarter comparable sales declined 9.1 percent to $2.67 billion and operating income slipped to $404.7 million from $411 million in the year-ago quarter.

Drosos said Signet intends to continue using share repurchasing "as a healthy part of our capital allocation given our remaining authorization of approximately $765 million."

Much of her presentation centered on Signet's financial condition and dispelling what she said were "misconceptions" about the company, in particular that its portfolio of jewelry brands aren't differentiated enough, and that Signet is a dated, mall-based jewelry retailer.

"Perceptions don't always reflect the reality," Drosos told investors. "There's a belief that Signet is a short-term COVID[-19] beneficiary and not a long-term growth story. The reality is that while we did benefit in 2021 from COVID[-19] related stimulus, largely in lower-price fashion, we also experienced significant headwinds in bridal, first in weddings and now in engagements," as a result of lockdowns and reduced dating during the pandemic. "Our primary COVID[-19] benefit will come as engagements begin recovering in Q4 this year."

"Signet is no longer a dated mall retailer," Drosos told investors. "In the past five years we optimized our fleet, closing more than 1,000 doors and reducing our footprint 21 percent primarily in lower-grade malls. Today, 40 percent of our doors and more than 50 percent of our sales are off-mall. Fifty percent of our doors are in A and B malls and 10 percent in C malls that are highly productive. We have no exposure to D malls. Twenty percent of our sales are from online, up from 5 percent prior to [starting] our transformation.

"When we began our transformation, we had considerable overlap and were reaching approximately 37 percent of the available market. Today, through our portfolio differentiation and expansion, we are reaching 80 percent and are expanding the market as we appeal to younger, more diverse, more affluent, and more digitally savvy customers."

Virginia C. Drosos

Apparently, investors liked what they heard as Signet's stock price rose 3.6 percent, or $2.72 to $78.12 at the closing bell Tuesday.

Drosos characterized jewelry retailing as "much less cyclical than most of retail. Half of our merchandise sales are in bridal, which has a long, sustainable history of stability and predictable growth that we're confident will return after a short-term COVID[-19] impact.

"We've been modernizing our company in every way, including talent. The average tenure of our senior leaders is 4.5 years. We bring a diverse mix of industry and technical expertise in areas that are important competitive advantages. Together, we've not only established our growth trajectory but have also systematically disposed of the overhangs previously holding Signet back, including litigation, high debt leverage and cultural issues.

"From fiscal 2019 Signet's financial health has gone from being an impediment, preventing appropriate investments in the businesses and talent, to becoming a significant a competitive advantage. In times of market growth or decline, we are investing to advance our capabilities further," Drosos said.

Recapping accomplishments during the transformation so far, Drosos said that from fiscal 2019 to fiscal 2023 the company invested more than $750 million in capital to fuel strategies; that the company returned $1.4 billion in cash to shareholders through share repurchases and dividends and paid $900 million in cash for two acquisitions, Blue Nile and Diamonds Direct. Drosos also said the company paid down more than half a billion in debt, reducing leverage from a high of four times earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, to a "very healthy" two times. Liquidity, she added, has tripled from $880 million to $2.6 billion.

Two years ago, Drosos disclosed Signet's transformation priorities over the next three to five years. She cited initiatives in product innovations, services, supply chain and marketing, connecting physical and virtual operations.

"We want you to have the same confidence in Signet's growth potential that we have," Drosos told investors. "We are a differentiated retailer with scale and competitive advantages in an attractive and fragmented market."

The company expects engagement purchases to grow 25 percent by calendar year 2026, returning to prior engagement levels.

The Kay Jewelers division of Signet.

WWD

BUSINESS

China GDP Grew in Q1, Retail Sales Up

People line up at the Louis Vuitton store at the Taikoo Li Qiantan Mall in Shanghai.

- In March, growth continued to gain momentum, as retail sales rose 10.6 percent.

BY **DENNI HU**

SHANGHAI – China logged 4.5 percent year-over-year GDP growth in the first quarter of 2023, beating market expectations.

According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday, the world's second-largest economy expanded to 2.84 trillion renminbi, or $413.15 billion. A pool of analysts surveyed by Reuters previously set an estimate of 4 percent growth.

Compared to the fourth quarter of 2022, the Chinese economy logged 2.9 percent growth.

From January to March, retail sales of consumer goods totaled 1.149 trillion renminbi, or $167.17 billion, up 5.8 percent compared to the same period last year. For the month of March, growth was 10.6 percent increase year-over-year.

According to Iris Pang, chief economist of Greater China for ING, better-than-expected first-quarter results meant the Chinese government would likely hold back extra stimulus plans to boost the economy.

"But the government will probably keep its infrastructure investment plan as a supplementary growth engine as we expect the external market to deteriorate further in 2023," Pang said. China's battered real estate market, high youth unemployment rate, and weak export growth also pose uncertainty for the economy's future.

Compared to the first quarter last year, apparel sales rose 9 percent; cosmetics sales rose 5.9 percent, and gold, silver and jewelry sales registered 13.6 percent growth.

E-commerce sales grew 8.6 percent year-over-year in the first quarter, accounting for 24.2 percent of total retail sales.

According to Lingjun Fu, spokesperson for NBS, consumer service sectors, such as tourism, dining and the box office, has been a bright spot in the first quarter, as Chinese consumers unleashed pent-up demand for offline experiences post-reopening.

"Growth momentum will gradually regain strength in the next stage," said Fu, citing the importance of consumption-led growth for the economy. Beijing eyes modest 5 percent GDP growth for 2023, the lowest target in decades.

Fu expects second-quarter growth to be "significantly faster" than the first quarter, considering a low base due to COVID-19 disruptions in the second quarter of 2022. "However, the third and fourth quarter growth rate is expected to be lower due to a higher base in the same period last year," Fu added.

BUSINESS

Galia Lahav 'Deeply Sorry' for Distress Among Chinese Customers

- The brand's China distributor ran into financial trouble, and customers are demanding compensation for unfulfilled orders.

BY **TIANWEI ZHANG**

LONDON – Israeli bridal label Galia Lahav said it is "deeply sorry for any distress caused to our valued customers in China," as the brand's China distributor ran into financial trouble and customers are demanding compensation for unfulfilled orders.

According to posts on Xiaohongshu, angry customers and regional distribution partners who paid big deposits never have not had their orders fulfilled since 2022.

Xiaohongshu user Cielote, who shared her unfortunate experience in a series of posts, said "after spending over 100,000 renminbi and waiting for eight months, I thought I would get my custom-made wedding gown this weekend, but I was told that due to a dispute between the China distributor and the headquarters in Israel, Galia Lahav's store in Shanghai has been forcibly closed by the mall and all the employees were forcibly dismissed."

"As for my wedding dress, the salesperson told me that there would be no delivery from Israel at the moment. I don't know if it is not done or if they don't want to send it to the country," the user said, adding that she is gathering evidence and has made an appointment with an attorney.

She later updated that she was offered to take two gowns from the Galia Lahav store at the Bund Finance Center as a temporary solution, but the samples were too big for her wedding next month.

It's understood that more than 50 customers and regional partners of Galia Lahav are joining forces to defend their rights.

In a statement sent to WWD, the brand said, "Our attention was recently drawn to these concerns, and we are handling them with utmost care and urgency. The lack of service provided by our China distributor has led us to stop our business operations with them, as we do not feel that their standards are aligned with those of Galia Lahav, which has high-end values."

The brand added that it is taking "immediate steps to rectify this situation. Our headquarters teams are working diligently to reach out to each impacted bride to provide assistance and support during this challenging time and establish a new partnership with a reputable distributor in China.

"We at Galia Lahav remain committed to delivering our customers the highest-quality products and services worldwide to ensure that our valued customers receive the same exceptional service and attention to detail that we are known for worldwide," it said.

The high-end bridal brand, which counts Paris Hilton, Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé and Christine Quinn among its fans, operates five flagships worldwide. They are in Shanghai, Miami, Los Angeles, New York and Tel Aviv.

The Shanghai one is operated under Galia Lahav (Shanghai) Business Management Ltd., a company that's registered under Zhongwei Wang, who has not been able to be reached since the brand got into financial trouble.

A spokesperson from the Bund Finance Center, which is owned by Lanvin Group's parent company Fosun, told WWD that Galia Lahav's China partner has been unable to pay rent in a timely manner since the beginning of 2023, and it is in touch with the distributor to find ways to alleviate the situation.

In response to the demands of consumers, BFC said it immediately communicated with the brand's China distributor and urged it to comply after discovering the abnormal operation of the store, and also coordinated with consumers' demands.

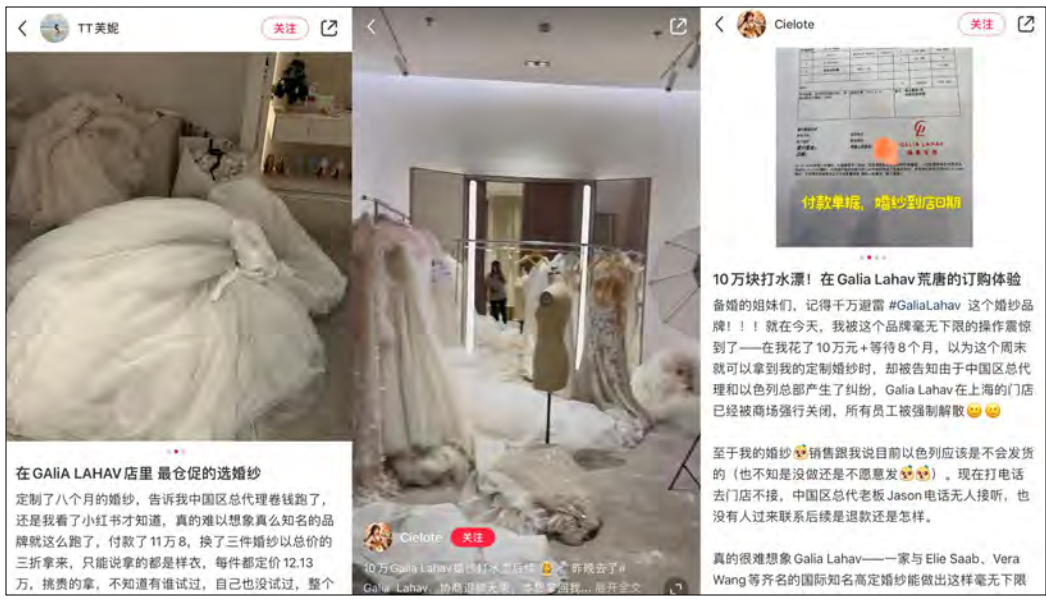
"Since the brand had a good reputation as the first store in China in BFC for three years, we actively communicated with the brand to find ways to relieve the situation....After communication, the brand gave a solution: a discount for sample wedding dresses, and priority for consumers with complete documentation. In this process, our company also actively coordinates and urges the brand to deal with relevant follow-up matters after internal coordination and decision-making to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of consumers," said the spokesperson.

The brand's distributor in Hangzhou, who goes by the name Fiona, told local business media Jiemian that the collaboration with the China distributor went well until 2022, when the brand stopped fulfilling orders.

The Hangzhou distributor also revealed that a manager from the brand in November updated them that none of the orders had been submitted to headquarters because of financial problems, and she was promised to get a refund by March 15. But no money has been received so far.

According to users on Xiaohongshu, the brand told them that its headquarters had not received any orders from the Chinese distributor for two years. The reason given was that "weddings are forbidden during the pandemic."

Angry customers shared their experience with Galia Lahav on Xiaohongshu.



WWD

EXCLUSIVE

The Brooklyn Circus Opens Manhattan Store

- "The Space" is a gallery format retail concept in SoHo that will offer a rotating assortment of brands and experiences.

BY **LAYLA ILCHI**
PORTRAIT BY **LEXIE MORELAND**

Ouigi Theodore

The Brooklyn Circus is expanding its retail footprint to another borough.

The prepwear brand is setting up shop in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood, opening a new retail concept called "The Space" on Friday at 361 Canal Street. The 1,100-square-foot gallery-style store is meant to be different from the brand's Boerum Hill storefront, in that it will offer a rotating curation of products and will closely work with friends of the brand on partnerships and in-store experiences.

"It's for people to discover and also rediscover what The Brooklyn Circus is and what the global village is about," said founder and creative director Ouigi Theodore. "We are constantly evolving, constantly trying to learn more about what we can contribute to not only our community, but also to fashion and design. So, it's constantly changing."

The store's rotating experience is seen in the product lineup. The location offers core styles, recent collections and unique pieces from The Brooklyn Circus – including some archival styles – as well as a rotating assortment from other brands and designers that have worked with Theodore and The Brooklyn Circus. This includes South African menswear designer Wanda Lephoto and Amsterdam-based genderless fashion label Jouez Les Enfants, for example.

Products sold also include books, furniture, art and home decor. The Manhattan store additionally offers select pieces from The Brooklyn Circus' recent Gap collaboration, as well as its newly launched BlaKc Wash collection made in collaboration with Art Comes First.

"It's about the global village and how we leverage the people and the amazing talent we have in the village," Theodore said about the store's collaborators. "It's how we leverage their ability to not only create beautiful product, but also to create beautiful experiences. Now we have more space to be able to give them the keys and the steering wheel to do things, so we're going to constantly change and let the space grow with the community."

The new store is similar to the Brooklyn storefront in that Theodore aims to use it to bring people together. Theodore has plans to host events in the storefront celebrating art, music and culture like he's been doing in Brooklyn for the last 16 years.

This is the second time the brand has expanded its retail footprint beyond Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Circus previously operated a store in San Francisco for 10 years, which closed down in 2019.

To celebrate the Manhattan store's opening, The Brooklyn Circus is displaying a portrait series that spotlights "25 thinkers, creators, dreamers, fighters, movers and collectors" modeling the brand's BlaKc Wash collection.

The new storefront will also continue The Brooklyn Circus' vintage business, with plans for a dedicated section currently underway.

"My goals for the new store are to absolutely shape the store's image to be its own," Theodore said. "To allow the Brooklyn store to continue to thrive and be its own and to continue to add more experience. In the time that we were working and building the store, we've met some folks that are on the road on Canal Street. Canal between Wooster and West Broadway is quite the mix. It's New York at its best."

BUSINESS

Perfect White Tee Opens First Store on Elizabeth Street in NYC

- The shop carries women's, men's and unisex clothing.

BY **LISA LOCKWOOD**

Perfect White Tee, cofounded by Lisa Hickey and Jen Menchaca, has quietly opened its first store at 262 Elizabeth Street in New York. The grand opening is planned for Thursday.

The shop is approximately 500 square feet and sells the company's lineup of T-shirts, French terry and fleece sets, sweatpants, sweat shorts and dresses. The store carries women's, men's and unisex apparel.

Hickey and Menchaca, who have 30 years of experience in the fashion industry, started the business in 2020. Menchaca previously founded a T-shirt brand, Nation Ltd., in the women's contemporary market, and Hickey owns a multiline showroom, Showroom Delfina, in New York City in this category and co-owns two retail locations in New York and has a franchised one in New Jersey selling women's upscale casual basics called Fado. Perfect White Tee is represented by the Delfina showroom.

The two executives launched Perfect White Tee coincidentally on National White T-Shirt Day on Feb. 11, 2020, and were able to ship their first orders before the pandemic hit. They shut down one month later and began repurposing the fabrics to make masks and kept their employees working. They slowly went back to manufacturing a small line.

Perfect White Tee, which is made entirely in the U.S., sells to 60 boutiques nationwide. Prices in the boutique range from $58 for a tank or T-shirt up to $168 for a hoodie.

Menchaca said they plan to open more stores and are looking at such places as Malibu/Brentwood in Los Angeles, Chicago and Austin.

"With our partners Leap Retail, they're able to identify our hot spot markets through our Shopify e-commerce, and really geo-locate where our large customer base is, and New York City was our number-one spot," said Hickey, who is originally from New York.

The store opened March 24. "It's going really well. Once we announced it through our email marketing and e-commerce, it was a mixture of new customers, old customers and returning customers. Because we have a large boutique business as a brand, a lot of boutique shoppers were really excited to come," said Hickey.

Menchaca described the duo as "T-shirt junkies."

"We have worked together for a very long time – business-wise and we're also very good friends. We love T-shirts. We have always wanted to start a T-shirt line. After I sold my last brand, I always had this idea for a perfect white T with Lisa."

Hickey identified a hole in the market for T-shirts in the better contemporary space, Menchaca said.

"We decided to do the perfect crewneck, the perfect V-neck, the perfect tank top, the perfect raglan sweatshirt and the perfect loose jogger. What we're trying to do is just create that one essential that everybody needs in different categories," she said. "We're staying in our lane."

Lisa Hickey and Jen Menchaca, cofounders of Perfect White Tee.

She said she's noticed with a lot of brands, that the T-shirt is the afterthought. "We are not reinventing the wheel. We have a crowdsourcing way to design. We listen to our customers." She said their three top styles are the ones they started with – the Harley crewneck, the Hendrix V-neck and the Blondie tank.

Hickey said they take their top sellers and offer two new color drops every single month. In April, for example, they're introducing pink punch and apple mint, and for May, they'll add sunset and sailor blue. In June, for Blondie season, they'll launch five colors.

The women have partnered with a local mill in Los Angeles for production. "Everything's made here in Los Angeles and we source locally, and because we're so nimble, we're vertical, and so we can respond and react to the marketplace very quickly," said Menchaca. "It's data in and T-shirts out. We know what are the top sellers, and we expand them. If the crew neck is the best seller, we add sleeves for fall," she said. "We get the best dibs on the best fabrics," she said.

Hickey said the company projects for the first year of business at the New York store to break event. "It's more about establishing a flagship somewhere and putting our roots down in a city than we love than it is about a financial gain."

Menchaca said she's enjoying meeting the end consumer.

"We're really trying to shift the focus from big branding conglomerate company to our customers and our end consumer. We have all ages and all socioeconomic levels coming in," said Menchaca.

A display of the T-shirts at Perfect White Tee.

"Anybody can wear this garment," she said. The dressing rooms have, 'You are perfect,' [the brand's tag line] on the mirrors.

"The store was a perfect opportunity to close that loop and have conversations with the customer," said Menchaca. "We get feedback every single night from our partners Leap."

What Hickey said separates them from the competition is the emphasis on fit. "Our fit is spot-on for all ages. We spend a lot of time on fit, making sure it can fit all ages and all body types and making sure it still looks super-elevated, and then our fabric and our quality.," said Hickey. "

"The price point and value you get for the quality we're giving is really great. A lot of times, our girls love our tee and buy it in every single color drop that we do," Hickey added.

Sizes are XS to XL in their essentials, and that size range will be throughout the entire collection for fall.

The customer is generally 25 to 45 years old, but it goes way beyond that on both sides, said Hickey.

The store will also carry underneath products of underwear and lounge, made of sanded Supima. "We get to garment dye our pieces," said Hickey. It has the label, "Perfect Underneath."

The entire store contains solids and stripes; there are no prints or graphics. "We are doing a special embroidery at the grand opening," said Menchaca.

WWD

ACCESSORIES

Marlene Dietrich's Ruby and Diamond Cuff Bracelet Heads to Auction

- The bracelet is the star of Christie's "The Magnificent Jewels of Anne Eisenhower" June 7 auction in New York.

BY **LILY TEMPLETON**

PARIS – A Van Cleef & Arpels "Jarretière" ruby and diamond cuff bracelet that will go up for auction at Christie's in June has the kind of pedigree that gets collectors hot under the collar.

Not only was the cuff made by Louis Arpels in 1937 for Marlene Dietrich out of several jewels she owned, but it was immortalized on the silver screen in Alfred Hitchcock's 1950 murder mystery "Stage Fright." After the actress' 1992 death, it belonged to interior designer and philanthropist Anne Eisenhower, who was also the granddaughter of 34th U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower and Mamie Doud Eisenhower.

The cuff is part of the "The Magnificent Jewels of Anne Eisenhower" collection, which goes under the hammer on Jun 7 in New York as part of Christie's Luxury Week. Other pieces from the group will be shown in Paris in April as part of a worldwide tour before the auction.

"When you discover the pieces someone collected throughout their life, you're delving into their inner self," said Violaine d'Astorg, head of the jewelry department at Christie's France. "Through the soul of a collection appears the soul of the collector."

The "Jarretière" cuff bracelet once owned by Marlene Dietrich and part of Anne Eisenhower's collection.

Eisenhower, who died in 2020 at the age of 73, was "a woman of taste" who was named among Architectural Digest's Top 100 designers in 1990 for the residential interiors she imagined. Of the 30 jewels offered in the June 7 sale, it's the late designer's refinement and taste that shines through but also her knowledge of jewelry history.

Case in point: a Cartier Panthère brooch in colored diamonds and onyx with emerald eyes, estimated between $100,000 and $150,000.

According to Astorg, this "piece is very important because it shows that she went into the history of jewelry to choose meaningful designs," particularly as the panther represented Cartier director of fine jewelry Jeanne Toussaint.

"It shows she had knowledge that went far beyond purchasing sizable pieces, important diamonds and cascades of rubies and sapphires," said the expert. That said, there is a D-colored internally flawless 20.54-carat diamond, estimated between $1.2 million and $1.8 million.

Anne Eisenhower

As for the ruby and diamond "Jarretière" cuff bracelet, it is a sculptural design that captured the actress' larger-than-life presence. "Marlene Dietrich had the whole of Hollywood at her feet, men who gave her many jewels but here, it is she who is ordering. That's no doubt why [the cuff] is so impressive," said Astorg.

The combination of the "Jarretière" design, already famous in Van Cleef & Arpels' history since Wallis Simpson wore a sapphire and diamond version for her wedding to the Duke of Windsor, with the double provenance of Marlene Dietriech and Anne Eisenhower is "the perfect equation to get the best sale and a future record," for Astorg.

Purchased anonymously by Eisenhower at auction at the dispersion of Dietrich's estate for $990,000, three times its then-estimate of $300,000, it is now estimated between $2.5 million and $4.5 million.

At a moment where consumers are looking for "more stories, more meaning" in their purchases, "history, rarity are things that don't have a price tag today," said Astorg. "People don't want to have pieces coming from retail, that have they want to buy a piece with history, a piece of history and that reaches unimaginable sums."

Other highlights in the sale include a Van Cleef and Arpels sapphire and diamond "Waterfall" necklace Eisenhower commissioned and a supple Tiffany & Co. diamond and multi-gem "Moonlight Rose" bracelet, dated around 1925.

The "Jarretière" cuff bracelet will be among pieces on display in Taipei, Taiwan on April 22 and 23, while other pieces from "The Magnificent Jewels of Anne Eisenhower" will be exhibited at the auctioneer's Paris outpost at 9 avenue Matignon until April 25. The collection will then be shown in Geneva between May 14 and 17; Hong Kong from May 24 to 27, and finally New York from June 2 to 6, ahead of the June 7 auction.

A further 25 pieces from Eisenhower's collection will be featured in the auctioneer's Jewels Online sale from May 30 to June 8.

FASHION

Aubade Unveils More Inclusive, Realistic Visual Brand Direction

- With the tag line "live your desire," the French lingerie brand wants to highlight female empowerment as it eyes international expansion.

BY **LILY TEMPLETON**

An image from the new Aubade campaign.

PARIS – French lingerie specialist Aubade wants consumers to "live your desire," the slogan that accompanied the visual brand direction unveiled Tuesday.

"Sexy is the new cool," said the company's brand and product director Samar Vignals at a presentation. "Our mantra is about liberating the sexy in each woman and reveals itself in very different ways but with a lot of sincerity."

Gone are the body shots that highlight the product. In their place are portraits of women wearing the lacy and occasionally racy designs, with most making bold eye contact in the debut images for spring 2023.

The moment felt ripe for a refresh as "femininity, seduction and sexy no longer have anything to do with the way they were expressed a few years ago," said Vignals.

This comes as the brand – whose sales came to 74 million euros in 2022 with 63 percent of its business done in France where 54 of its 57 stores are located – is stepping up its global expansion. The U.S. is in its sights, with the opening of a New York-based subsidiary last year.

For Vignals, "American [consumers] are often a step ahead [in] movements of emancipation, of empowerment," she said, adding major inroads had stemmed from the U.S., such as #MeToo.

In keeping with its "sexy confident" product core, Vignals said the brand would be expanding on its underwear-as-outerwear segment – its nightwear category grew 42 percent last year, according to company figures – and continue to develop its higher-end offering through designer collaborations as well as craftsmanship such as French Leavers lace.

A key notion in this new chapter is "empleasurement," a portemanteau of empowerment and pleasure, that covers the idea that "seduction is no longer an outside injunction, it's a personal decision and it's taken by the women themselves," driven by the compounded effects of the digital revolution, the #MeToo movement and a leaning toward comfort brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and its ensuing lockdowns.

Folded into this new term is size and shape inclusivity. Aubade will continue to extend its sizing range, going up to a G or H cup in bras and a XXL in bottoms. Vignals said this was "an investment rather than something with immediate returns" but a necessary step to move toward being as inclusive as it can.

"Few brands offer [such a range] and our challenge is to make this visible through our images," said Vignals. In keeping with the brand's focus on seduction and sexiness, it will be developing its male offering, adding more revealing styles that make use of its signature lace and transparencies from June.

According to Vignals, male consumers were more present for occasions such as Valentine's Day or the holiday season, going up to 20 percent of its clientele on such periods and purchasing mostly online.

Another evolution is that retouching would now be kept to a minimum, to match a more realistic outlook on the body, and casting would reflect "more voluptuous" silhouettes.

"The brand needed to evolve from that point of view and accompany [societal] evolutions to ensure today's women recognized themselves more in the image offered by Aubade," she continued. "The idea for Aubade is to reconcile body and soul."

In conjunction with the new campaign, the brand outlined how it has been stepping up its overall diversity, inclusion and sustainability efforts across its supply chain but also its organization. It revealed 93 percent of its workforce and 69 percent of its management are female.

By 2026, it aims to have 50 percent of its collections made following eco-design principles, although she pointed out that in the 20 components of a bra, elements like foam used in padding, underwires and elastics remained challenges to date.

In the meantime, it is pursuing a "zero destruction" goal by donating its offcuts, unsold merchandise and prototypes. Vignals said the brand and its Switzerland-based parent group Calida were making steps to be in line with the goals outlined in the U.N. Global Compact.

From summer 2023, all Aubade products will carry a QR code that will lead to a traceability page outlining the information on suppliers at each step, developed with French start-up Fairly Made.

WWD

FASHION

Georgiana Huddart Is Winning Against the Strong Current

● Hunza G's creative director discusses the brand's first pop-up store in London and the growth of the business.

BY **HIKMAT MOHAMMED**

LONDON – Just in time for the London sunshine.

Sustainable swimwear brand Hunza G is opening its first pop-up store, in the Seven Dials neighborhood in Covent Garden.

The 1,583-square-foot space will open its doors on April 29 stocking the brand's swimsuits, apparel, kid's range and accessories, as well as exclusives such as its heart collection, stripes, a small ready-to-wear collaboration with Liberty Ross' Flipper's and pieces in black Lurex, which is a new fabric for Hunza G.

The pop-up store comes off the back of successful setups inside luxury department stores such as Selfridges and Harrods, where Hunza G sold more stock than any other brand in the category and the company had to pay for the space it occupied.

"It was a clear indication that our customers want to go into the Hunza G world and we don't have a physical presence in London, so a stand-alone store would be the next thing as a London-based brand. Obviously with swimwear you don't immediately think of London," Georgiana Huddart, creative director of the brand, told WWD on a Zoom call.

She relaunched the '80s swimwear label in 2015, which also had a shot of fame in the '90s with Julia Roberts wearing its white and black cutout dress in "Pretty Woman."

The interior of the store will take inspiration from Art Deco and Mexican luxury boutique hotels with artwork from artist Alba Hodsoll, who specializes in line drawings of nature and the body. The walls will be pink with navy velvet curtains inside.

Huddart's ambitions for Hunza G are ambitious and realistic at the same time. The brand has been growing by 100 percent year-on-year and during the second half of the pandemic it grew by 200 percent without any digital marketing, which the brand only delved into six months ago.

Thirty percent of customers are from the U.S. with another 30 percent from the U.K. – the remaining 40 percent come from Europe and the rest of the world.

Hunza G makes 400,000 units a year at the moment, which is the maximum the company can produce with the manufacturer it works with, despite a demand that's triple of what's being made.

"With growth we have come into production issues, which everybody has, so we've just been managing our back of the house basically for the last two years to try and get ourselves ready to see what potential there is," said Huddart, hinting that the brand will have two upcoming collaborations with people, one launching in June and another in October.

Her focus is set on cementing the U.S. market and even though the idea of diving into the men's category has come up, it's still very much a thought rather than reality.

The strongest arm of the business is swimwear, which Huddart said she won't steer away from even with an apparel line integrated well into the brand.

"With the ready-to-wear, it feels a little bit more intimidating, maybe a little bit more scary or a little bit more specific. It still does well, but I'd say the average customer buying from us is coming to us for our swimwear," added Huddart, explaining that the ready-to-wear business had been growing strongly but since the recession it has plateaued. Meanwhile, swimwear continues "to grow at a rapid rate of knots."

The woman who relaunched Hunza G: Georgiana Huddart.

FASHION

Alberta Ferretti to Hold Resort Show in Rimini

● The event is planned on May 26 and will pay tribute to Federico Fellini.

BY **LUISA ZARGANI**

MILAN – Alberta Ferretti is planning to hold her resort 2024 show in Rimini on May 26 to pay tribute to legendary director Federico Fellini and Italy's Romagna region, home to the designer and the headquarters of her signature brand.

The show will be held at the Fellini museum at Castel Sismondo in the city's historic center.

"We had planned to celebrate the Romagna region and Federico Fellini during the centenary of his birth, in 2020, but the pandemic that hit the world drastically changed our plans. But now we are finally ready to tackle this project with great enthusiasm," Ferretti said. "When I think of Federico Fellini, one of his quotes comes to mind: 'A different language is a different vision of life.' I really believe that these words perfectly summarize the meaning of my creative work: if I think about my path and my career, for me creating clothes and images with wonderful photographers have always been a way of expressing myself. My work has always been my voice, it has enabled me to give shape to my dreams and aspirations. Surely this show - which will be possible thanks to the support of institutions that I thank from the bottom of my heart for the trust they have placed in me and in my brand as an ambassador of the Made in Italy in the world – represents a further piece of the mosaic that I have built with passion and love."

To stage the show, Ferretti has partnered with the Ministry of Culture together with Cinecittà, the Ministry of Tourism, the Emilia-Romagna region, the Municipality of Rimini and the Convention Bureau Italia.

Ferretti underscored the "great artistic and cultural value" of Castel Sismondo, and "the goal to support the promotion of Italy with its many facets through a unique, shared vision. Relevant tourist destination, beating heart of the creative and manufacturing industry, historical and cultural heritage of inestimable value, the Romagna region is the ideal setting for a global event celebrating fashion as an incredible expression of the Made in Italy excellence."

The Minister of Tourism Daniela Santanchè said "Fashion and cinema are two Italian excellences that have made and make us great in the world." She added that not only do they express the best of the country but are a fundamental drive for tourism.

Ferretti's last resort show dates to pre-COVID-19 in 2019 at the Musée Océanographique de Monaco, a marine science museum founded in 1889 by the late Prince of Monaco Albert I.

The resort calendar is quickly filling up. As reported, Chanel is headed to Los Angeles on May 9 and Louis Vuitton will be showing its cruise show at Isola Bella, the small island located on Lake Maggiore, about 33 kilometers from Milan's Malpensa airport, on May 24 after an important pit stop in Seoul at the end of April to parade its pre-fall collection. Max Mara has earmarked June 11 in Stockholm for its own resort show.

Castel Sismondo in Rimini, Italy.

Georgiana Huddart photograph by Shaun James Cox

WWD

Ginori 1735 poufs designed by Luca Nichetto fashioned with Rubelli fabrics.

Ginori 1735 lamp designed by Luca Nichetto in collaboration with Venetian glassmaking firm Barovier&Toso.

DESIGN

Ginori 1735 Leaps Into Furnishings With Luca Nichetto

- The historic porcelain-maker teamed up with a Venetian trinity that includes Rubelli, Barovier&Toso and Nichetto for the Domus Collection.

BY **SOFIA CELESTE**

MILAN – Founded in 1735, before the American Revolution and before the Unification of Italy in 1861, Ginori 1735 plates were among the most famous in the modern world. Marquis Carlo Andrea Ginori's porcelain was collected by most of Europe's nobility, among his greatest fans was said to be Napoleon I's wife Marie Louise of Austria.

After Richard Ginori was acquired by Kering in 2013, it ventured into home decor, fragrances and tableware to adapt to a digitally frenzied era. Today, nearly 300 years after its inception, it's taking a bold step into the world of furnishings with Venetian designer Luca Nichetto and the Domus collection of statement pieces – coffee tables, lamps, chairs, poufs and accessories.

The company feted the occasion with a dinner at Milan's upscale Moebius Milano restaurant on Tuesday, followed by a concert by the Italian pop band Disco Club Paradiso. The Domus collection will be on display starting Wednesday at the Ginori 1735 flagship at Piazza San Marco, 3 in Milan's Brera district.

Nichetto's design aesthetic and ethos have evolved over time – influenced by his travels and famous collaborations he's inked since starting Nichetto Studio firm in 2006 – but his creative vision and fate was sealed since birth. A native of Venetian island of Murano, Nichetto was practically raised around the kiln – his grandfather made Venetian glass chandeliers and his mother was glass decorator.

A former semi-pro basketball player, Nichetto traded the court for university where he studied industrial design, a school of thought in Italy which has led to iconic pieces in home, decor and furnishings.

"In American Anglo-Saxon world, when you say industrial design it usually refers to tech or consumer electronics, but in Italy, when I translate industrial design, we say disegno, which in Italy is connected with an artisan and that makes all the difference...because the industry is artisan."

To his credit, the number and breadth of his collaborations are tantamount to that of great legends like Gio Ponti, among the most famous – Hermès, Cassina and most recently, Steinway & Sons – for which he designed a grand piano last year inspired by the production of the gondolas sailing around his island home as a child. Side note: He's never played the piano. "I told Steinway & Sons, 'It's a lot like being a car designer, you never touch the engine,'" Nichetto. "They really liked that answer."

He extends that sort of same nonchalance and confidence in his work with Ginori 1735, for which he designed the Domus home collection for Ginori with glassmaker Barovier&Toso and Rubelli fabrics – both fellow Venetian firms steeped in history. The latter famously made the soprarizzo velvet fabric that covered the inside of the carriages that transported the Italian royals of the 19th century.

"By collaborating with them, we have been able to express the same artisanal sensitivity, creating products that combine the DNA of three historic companies, expertly merged by the creative force of a renowned designer such as Luca Nichetto," said Ginori 1735 brand and product director Annalisa Tani.

Nichetto laughs at the comparison, likening Ginori 1735's venture into furniture to the bold foray high-end accessories-makers have made onto the red carpet haute couture scene over the last decade. A challenge, indeed.

"My idea regarding the Domus collection was 'How can I translate that statement that they have long made in tableware into a home or furniture collection?'" he said during a conference call from his eclectically furnished "Pink Villa" studio. He lives with his wife and two small children just outside of Stockholm.

"I decided, let's do a collection that can work together, pieces that complement and that elevate this perception of the space," he added, noting that the process took about three years.

Ginori 1735's foray into furnishings includes statement pieces like LaVenus lounge chair, the Dulcis armchair and pouf, the LaTour cabinet and the Optique coffee table. Rubelli provided jacquard fabrics with wanderlust names like Oriente Italiano, Sagitta, Saia and Ondori conjuring images of the silk trade and the Renaissance that contributed to Ginori 1735's historic rise. Barovier&Toso collaborated for the Conterie floor lamp and Trinitas and Sideris table lamps. Nichetto worked to render the collection a reflection of modern life with convivial, work-at-home pieces that are meant to be functional, luxurious and versatile, all at the same time.

Ginori 1735 chair and pouf designed by Luca Nichetto.

"Domus fully expresses the unfailing capacity for evolution of Ginori 1735, whose objective is to purse the exploration of worlds near and far, also by experimenting with new challenges, moved by a desire to dialogue constantly with new markets and new clients," said Ginori 1735 chairman and chief executive officer Alain Prost.

Domus, Ginori 1735 said, represents the natural development of the maison's focus, from tableware and giftware to the luxury lifestyle world, with products that have the potential to penetrate a new generation of consumers whose tastes and lifestyles are in constant evolution.

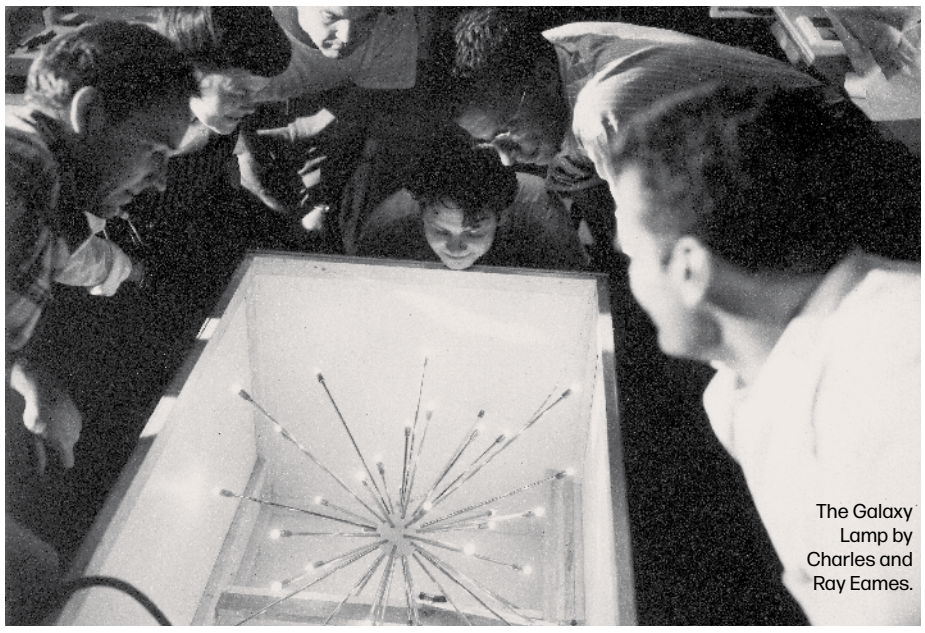
As he wrapped up the interview, Nichetto noted that the Ginori 1735 collaboration is unique because it was heavily influenced by a trinity of Venetian forces, noting that Rubelli and Barovier&Toso – like Ginori 1735 – have centuries of tradition resulting in a landmark collaboration. His own brand began in 1976, when he was born, he said.

"Me seeing an object become a decoration was like witnessing flour becoming a piece of bread. I was lucky enough to be surrounded by art from the start."

WWD

EYE

Patricia Urquiola Opens Cassina's Echoes Exhibit



The Galaxy Lamp by Charles and Ray Eames.

● The exhibit will be open to the public at Palazzo Broggi until Friday.

BY **SOFIA CELESTE**

MILAN – Induction into the Cassina iMaestri realm of design masters is an honor. There's one catch: you can't be living.

Bygone greats and 20th-century masters like Charlotte Perriand, Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Ico Parisi have all had their work crystallized in time by Cassina's iMaestri universe, which was first presented to the public in 1973 with icons by Gerrit T. Rietveld and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Since then the upscale furniture company has used the project to fuel the research behind some of the most significant pieces of furniture by leading figures of the Modern Movement.

At Milan's Design Week, the brand unfurled "Echoes, 50 Years of iMaestri," curated by its art director Patricia Urquiola with Milan-based curator and design adviser Federica Sala. The exhibit will be open to the public at Palazzo Broggi until Friday.

A celebration of the past with a new vision for the future, the exhibit is also a physical preview of the upcoming book "Echoes," overseen by contemporary design producer Ivan Mietton and published by Rizzoli, to be released in fall 2023.

Inside a cavernous basement, an exuberant Urquiola took journalists on a tour in three languages: Italian, Spanish and English.

"Mira!" she exclaimed, telling journalists to look up at floral Liberty-era elements dispersed to enhance the dreamlike theme. In a hidden compartment under a staircase, she pointed to some prototypes of the Midway Z, a chair first designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1914. "We don't have the rights to these, but that's OK. We need to just embrace it," she said, adding she "nearly had a heart attack" when she first saw the Palazzo Broggi basement, the stage of the exhibition that unfurled in a Surrealist dream, where visionary works are hidden in compartments like secret corners of the subconscious.

"The vault is a metaphor for the legacy of Cassina," she pointed out.

Awash in red lights, the soundtrack unfolds in random exerpts of old speeches, chilling echoes and radio static. At a certain point, the lights flicker and then go out.

"I love this, you never know what's happening next," Urquiola enthused before guests, who perhaps wondered if a fuse had been blown.

This year the Cassina iMaestri Collection welcomed new names Vico Magistretti, Gio Ponti, Carlo Scarpa and Charles and Ray Eames into this exclusive universe. The Eameses work also served as the genesis of the Cassina Lighting Collection, which was inspired by the duo's innovative creations.

A prototype of Galaxy, an aluminum pendant lamp designed by the Eameses and which was first shown at Detroit's "An Exhibition for Modern Living" in 1949, was developed especially for the exhibition – this time showcased with photos and letters explaining how it was made out of a variety of unexpected materials like automotive parts and brass tubes.

Cassina has recently expanded its vision of the home with a new lighting collection unifying works by Tobia Scarpa and Philippe Starck, Linde Freya Tangelder and Paolo Ulian in a collection dubbed "The Cassina Perspective" in an effort to complete its home decor offerings. Its cofounder Cesare Cassina was a pioneer in the field and joined forces with designer Dino Gavina in 1962 to establish high-end Italian manufacturer Flos. The first Eames Lighting Collection by Cassina will be launched in 2024, in partnership with the Eames Office, the company said.

Elsewhere, vaults celebrated some of Cassina's most renowned products including the 699 Superleggera chair created by newly inducted maestro Gio Ponti and the 4 Chaise Longue à Réglage Continu by Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand.

The Cassina factory is brought into focus by photographer and visual artist Mattia Balsamini, whose shots capture aspects of the carpentry workshop while manufacturing materials such as red industrial machinery belts are attached to one of Gio Ponti's chairs hung in one corner. On the ground level, black-and-white images show Ico Parisi dancing and tossing rose petals, before an image of his famed angular table.

As the tour came to a close, Urquiola contemplated the definition of Cassina maestro. "For me these maestros were people who lived their life in a natural way. They fought for their fantasies and their ideas, and they created pieces that serve as victorious energies for the future."

The process behind the iMaestri collection began in 1964 with the acquisition of the worldwide exclusive rights for the serial production of the first four models designed by Le Corbusier, Jeanneret and Perriand.

To perpetuate its legacy, Cassina continues to work closely with designers' foundations and their heirs to propel the discovery of the lives of key figures and the research behind the intricacies of the most representative and innovative models in the history of furniture making.

"The important evolution highlights the company's ongoing exploration of and respect for the past to create and develop its future," explained Cassina's chief executive officer Luca Fuso.

FASHION

Tod's Launches 'Art of Craftsmanship' Partnership With Tim Walker

● The project shines the light on the ever-important artisanal skills of the company, and bows during Milan Design Week.

BY **LUISA ZARGANI**

MILAN – Tod's has partnered with Tim Walker on a new project called "The Art of Craftsmanship" to be unveiled Wednesday during Milan Design Week.

"Italian lifestyle and exceptional craftsmanship are core values for Tod's and having them interpreted by Tim Walker allows us to convey these values also to the young generations, speaking their language," said Diego Della Valle, chairman and chief executive officer of Tod's Group.

Della Valle has long voiced his belief in Italian craftsmanship, a founding value for Tod's.

The partnership resulted in images and videos that emphasize the phases of the creation of the brand's signature products, from the Di Bag to the Gommino – the brand's storied pebble motif – with a touch of irony and in a surreal way.

Walker played with the proportions of the objects and the tools used by the artisans to cut the leather, stitch and brush it, shining the light on the hands and the skills of the people who create the products.

"In this increasingly digital world, where so much is being created on an industrial scale by machines and robots, the value of craftsmanship is increasingly precious," said the British photographer. "Detecting the hand of a skilled craftsperson in a product gives it a unique quality and very particular beauty."

Walker said spending a day at the Tod's factory with his set designer Gary Card, they both were inspired by the craftsmanship that goes into the products, while adding a touch of the unexpected. "We wanted to let the specialist tools and methods play a starring role in the photographs – the artisan tools are so specific to the creation of Tod's iconic products – we wanted to find a way to celebrate them in a slightly surreal way in the photographs, playing with perspective, and hopefully some with some wit."

Walker is known for his extravagant, artistic images that often encompass elements of the natural world. In 2010 Walker's first short film, "The Lost Explorer," premiered at Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland and went on to win best short film at the Chicago United Film Festival in 2011.

In 2012, Walker's "Storyteller" photographic exhibition opened at Somerset House, London. In a 2013 collaboration with Lawrence Mynott and Kit Hesketh-Harvey, he also released "The Granny Alphabet," a collection of portraiture and illustration celebrating grandmothers.

In 2012 he received an honorary fellowship from the Royal Photographic Society, and the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Portrait Gallery in London both have Walker's photographs in their permanent collections. Walker shot the 2018 Pirelli Calendar.

Last year, the Tod's brand recorded growth in all geographical areas, both in shoes and in the new families of leather goods and accessories, reporting a 19.1 percent increase in revenues to 510 million euros.

In March, commenting on the Tod's Group 2022 financial results, Della Valle said it "is equally important to protect both our supply chain, which guarantees us the best possible quality, much appreciated by our consumers all over the world and which reinforces the desirability of our Italian lifestyle products. Great emphasis is also given to the world of sustainability, solidarity and welfare, in which our group has been active for many years."

From Tod's "The Art of Craftmanship."

WWD the sustainability scene

‘Center the Human Impact,’ Says Activist, Influencer Aditi Mayer

In a special Earth Month series, each week WWD will profile the Gen Zers who are seeking to demystify climate change, refashion influence and mobilize the masses. Introducing Aditi Mayer. BY **KALEY ROSHITSH**

Posing with hands framing her face or with a soft gaze angled toward the camera as if lit from within, climate activist Aditi Mayer never misses a moment to spotlight artisanal talent.

Mayer has been at the intersection of sustainable fashion since learning of the Rana Plaza factory collapse that killed 1,134 garment workers 10 years ago come April 24. Her photojournalism work has been spotlighted by National Geographic (where she is a 2022 fellow), and her writings appear on Adimay.com, Vogue and many other outlets.

“My origin in the space, Rana Plaza, came from a place of a very dark reality of the dominant fashion model. Being a South Asian woman, it affected me in a different way,” she said over a Zoom interview. “My work has evolved in the last decade to embed art, beauty and culture to reimagine this new reality as well.”

Putting her journalism degree from the University of California Irvine to work, Mayer walks the tightrope of fashion, influence and activism.

“For me, I always say I see fashion as my Trojan horse to talk about climate justice,” she said. “My origins from fashion came from a lens of labor justice. Sustainability for me is an interrogation of power. And fashion is my chosen lens to unpack that.”

She’s sought to push the boundary for years, documenting firsthand the growing demands for labor rights in Los Angeles’ garment district that began with organizing at the Ross headquarters and wound up in the passage of SB62 (the Garment Worker Protection Act passed in California in 2021).

Aditi Mayer speaks onstage at the Green Carpet Fashion Awards 2023.

Today, she’s striving for the balance between driving the discourse and also funding the work.

“I think there has been, in my own experience, a shift in the past year, [with brands] approaching us to consult internally about supply chains or holistic education,” Mayer said.

She’s indeed shifted gears back to her roots, focusing more on journalistic storytelling which re-centers artisans and farmers in the conversation. Her family comes from Punjab (the region that is responsible for around 80 percent of India’s agricultural export earnings). Her mother’s side of the family were farmers and her father’s side were artisans.

“When we think about sustainability in a lens of [Indian] culture, that’s something that I’m really trying to home in on this year.”

The past year that Mayer spent in India was largely unplugged. “I was very intentional on not being on social media to instead orient myself in the community and build relationships….We need that time to digest and build relationships with communities. It’s the nature of the storytelling that’s really important to me.”

Mayer’s sweet spot is one that unpacks the nuanced apparel supply chain, layered nature of oppression and, perhaps most preeminently, the makers behind a product. Now, as she’s back in Los Angeles combing through her stories from her reporting trip spent studying India’s artisanal revival, she’s quick not to tie herself to an “unrealistic expectation of constant output.”

Labor practices, degrowth and the very nature of the “consumer” are fair game for conversation. Her recent opportunities and appearances spanned something of a New York Fashion Week (and Ivy League) tour talking all things fashion from a lens of South Asian culture and sustainability at Harvard Business School, before heading back to Los Angeles, where she is based, for the Green Carpet Fashion Awards.

“The work of climate justice is to engage in reimagination,” she continued. “We talk a lot about diversity. It’s 2023, diversity is literally a modality for sustainability. We’ve been fed a very narrow narrative of what an environmentalist is and what sustainability is in terms of culture and origins.”

She’s reimagining the role of influencer too, recently penning an op-ed on “deinfluencing” (a trending term referring to influencers telling followers not to buy a product) and toying with the idea of making a guide to “influencer ethics,” which is a timely need given the European Union recently drafted propose guidelines for influencers. “So much of the content creator landscape is here’s a product, and here’s what to say.”

Her main advice to the folks in the C-suite: “We need to transcend sustainability discourse beyond quantifying carbon emissions and center the human impact.”

SHORT TAKES Inside Zara, Lululemon Drops for Earth Month, Circular Fashion Policy News

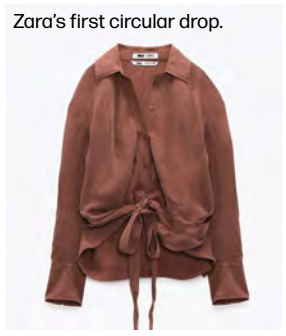
Zara, Lululemon muse plant-based inspirations while fashion coalition makes a stamp. BY **RHONDA RICHFORD** AND **KALEY ROSHITSH**

A ZARA FIRST Zara dropped its first collection with Circ, the brand’s first capsule using recycled poly-cotton blends after parent company Inditex invested in the fiber-to-fiber recycling company in July.

Circ’s tech tackles the long-standing problem of recycling poly-cotton blends. It’s the only platform to successfully separate poly-cotton blended textile waste and recover both cellulosic cotton and synthetic polyester. It then turns them into new fibers and textiles.

The company aims to reduce the need for virgin textiles in the supply chain. Currently, only 1 percent of poly-cotton blends are recycled.

Zara’s Circ capsule features four pieces — a short, a halter top, a blouse and wide-legged trousers — using lyocell made of 50 percent recycled poly-cotton, and polyester made with 43 percent recycled poly-cotton. The pieces are in a lightweight, earthy burgundy.



Zara’s first circular drop.

It’s the first project coming to fruition for Zara and Circ. Zara invested in Circ back in July as part of a $30 million series B funding round that also included Bill Gates’ Breakthrough Energy Ventures and American textile manufacturer Milliken & Company, among others. Circ then closed a $25 million round of funding backed by European online fashion giant Zalando, global materials science company Avery Dennison and Korean manufacturer Youngone on March 1.

According to Breakthrough Energy Ventures, the textiles industry is estimated to account for more than 1 billion metric tons of carbon emissions, the largest portion of which comes from raw materials.

T-SHIRT TEASE For Earth Month, Lululemon debuted its first products made with a plant-based nylon: appropriately green T-shirts with a twist.

The drop is part of a multiyear commitment with materials maker Geno, which employs sugar cane and industrial corn (among other inputs) to make a bio-nylon. The drop includes a men’s “Metal Vent Tech” shirt ($78) and women’s “Swiftly Tech” shirt ($68), both utilizing Geno’s plant-based nylon material, available online starting Tuesday.

The material content varies between the styles, but the products contain more than 50 percent plant-based nylon, at least 40 percent recycled polyester and 3 percent elastane (which contains 30 percent plant-based content), according to the brand.

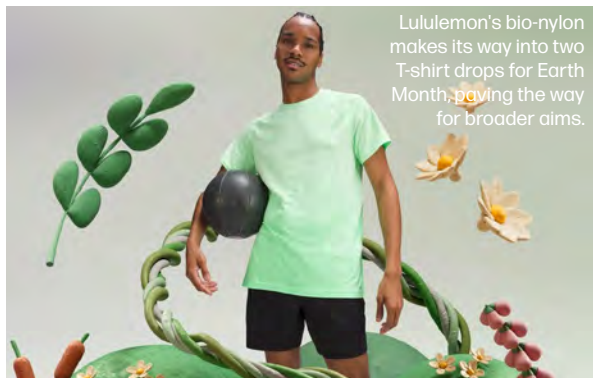
Across its portfolio, Lululemon relies on nylon (37 percent), polyester (25 percent) and cotton (15 percent) as chief materials in its mix. This latest drop signals the brand’s aim to reduce its impact by sourcing more renewable inputs including the goal to make 100 percent of its products with “sustainable materials” with “end-of-life solutions” by 2030.

“As we look to our 2030 goals, by transitioning our nylon to renewable content, we will impact the largest volume material we currently use,” said Esther Speck, senior vice president, global sustainable business and impact at Lululemon, to WWD. Speck called the material a “game changer for the industry.”

Meanwhile, new B Corp brand The Fision experimented with farm-to-factory traceability tool FiberTrace for its T-shirt launch debuting Friday. The certified-“Good Earth” (meaning regeneratively grown cotton) men’s and women’s shirts are embedded with FiberTrace tech at the raw material level and retail for $99 in three colorways on the brand’s website.

Exclusively to WWD, The Fision’s chief executive officer Josh Gelder said he hopes the launch showcases the “future of fashion being transparent.”

ACT ON FASHION American Circular Textiles (ACT) group, a coalition of circular companies, released its first white paper Wednesday for U.S. policymakers addressing circularity gaps.



Lululemon’s bio-nylon makes its way into two T-shirt drops for Earth Month, paving the way for broader aims.

The founding members span Circular Services Group (which assembled the group last year), Rent the Runway, The RealReal, Arrive, Fashionphile, Recurate, Supercircle and Thrilling. H&M, Reformation and Debrand newly joined as members.

The paper covers these strategic areas: fostering green jobs and economic development (through a circular tax incentive); protecting domestic supply chains; offering both value and sustainability to consumers; achieving scale, and prioritizing the waste hierarchy (via extended producer responsibility laws) with incineration and landfill only as a last resort.

With some 30 billion pounds of textile waste annually, per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (and New York’s clothing waste alone the height of the Empire State Building) the problem is in dire need of solving. “We are filling that void and hoping to launch a discussion about solutions,” said ACT and Circular Services Group founder Rachel Kibbe in a statement.

Aditi Mayer photograph by Getty Images for Green Carpet Fashion Awards

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PEOPLE

Monica Is an 'Open Book'

After surging into the music scene at the age of 12, the Grammy Award winner is at work on new country and R&B albums.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

In advance of being honored as one of the "Fashion Icons of Atlanta" by the Fashion Group International of Atlanta on Wednesday night, musician, actress and philanthropist Monica Arnold, who millions know simply as Monica, opened up about her style, activism and the importance of bedrock communities.

The multiplatinum-selling and Grammy Award-winning singer is working on a new country album "Open Road," and her next R&B one "Trenches" will be released this year by the independent record label MonDeeMusic that she colaunched in 2019. The mother of four is developing "Mo Talk" with Apple Music and she hosts VH1's "Celebrity True Crime Story."

At home in Atlanta, the multitalent brought WWD up-to-speed with her endeavors. She said, "I let how I feel affect how I look. Authenticity has always been key for me and my audience. They know that I tell the truth. I talk about the good and the bad of love, relationships and life. It's not anything contrived. I don't let people come in and make something up. It's really me."

WWD: Is being a musician more demanding than other entertainment industries?
Monica: I don't slight anybody else's plight, but it's no joke. It's demanding on the body, and on the mind because you are using your creativity constantly. But it also offers a sense of peace, when this is something that you truly love. People don't realize the wear-and-tear that it can put on your body – traveling, performing and dealing with seemingly simple things like allergies that can affect performances. But it's definitely freeing of the mind.

WWD: How important is fashion to everything you do?
Monica: It's 50 percent because it speaks for you before you say a word. You look at someone and you can almost get a vibe from them in how they carry themselves and how they're dressed.

WWD: How would you describe your style?
Monica: It's very round-the-way chic. I love runway, but I also love where I am from – the south side of Atlanta, Georgia. A lot of the things I wear are indicative of that urban lifestyle. I love Milano Di Rouge, Marni, Dolce & Gabbana and Christian Dior. On stage, I love to be very dramatic and over-the-top.

WWD: Nineties fashion has made a comeback. What do you make of your teenage style?
Monica: I was very different from most of the girls who were out at that time. Our styles defined us. That's how you told us apart – by the way that we dressed. Brandy had a beautiful style and her braids were a part of it. Aaliyah was very cool, but sexy – crop tops with larger pants. I always loved oversize coats and over the-knee-boots. I still wear them and have an affection for them that I cannot explain. On my first album cover "Miss Thing," I have over-the-knee boots on. My short hair in the early days was one of the things that signified [to people] "Oh, it's Monica."

WWD: Were there any other signature looks?
Monica: I snuck out and got a tattoo at 13. My mother wanted to annihilate me. If you go back to my early videos, I have an armband. In my heart of hearts, I didn't want people to feel that that was what they should do, because I did it. The tattoo was my name, believe it or not. As if I don't know my own name. That is exactly why you should not be tattooed until you're an adult [laughs].

WWD: Are you interested in getting into fashion?
Monica: I would love to develop it with someone who is already in business and has a brand that they love. I love the collaboration Kim Kardashian did with Dolce & Gabbana. It was indicative of the things that she loves – high glam, sleek. Or Rihanna with Fenty. I've worn several of her things that you know she has added her touch to. I would want to do something that spoke to people, who see me as an artist, a fashion person and someone who is OK with doing what I love even if it isn' the current thing.

WWD: Are there people who inspire you, in terms of style?
Monica: Rihanna is consistently an inspiration, because you can tell she is doing things her way and on her time. But she is still impacting the culture so significantly. I love her and what she's done. Beyoncé – without a doubt – she has [transformed herself] over and over again. But she also has a fashionable mother, Ms. Tina Knowles-Lawson is a very special woman. I also absolutely adore Whitney [Houston], not just because she was my friend and mentor. When I started to look for glam gowns, that's who I looked at and looked to.

WWD: What did you think of the depiction of her in the "Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody" film?
Monica: They did a great job of being respectful to her and the memory of her. I only support things that are supported by her family. I feel that's what she would want me to do to honor her. Her family invited me to host a screening in Atlanta so I did.

WWD: What don't people understand about Whitney?
Monica: Early in her career they didn't understand that she was really a round-the-way girl from Newark, New Jersey, who just wanted to laugh, be loved, give love and have a good time. If you saw her smile, it made you automatically smile. Those are the things people don't see, when you perform. Public perception can take on a life of its own, when you read articles that were written by people who don't know us. It can be really tricky.

WWD: With 13 million Instagram followers, how do you deal with the constant scrutiny of social media and mainstream media?
Monica: I do not follow it closely. It is a tool that can take on a life of its own. I try to keep it all in perspective. I tell my children, "We know who we are and whose we are." Everyone is not going to like you. Every comment will not be a nice one. Once you learn and accept that, you can navigate properly. I know that I am in control of what I say and do, and nothing outside of that. I try to give as much as I can to the people, who truly support me, and not pay any attention to the negativity. That is just a part of fame.

WWD: Are your responsibilities as a role model greater now?
Monica: I feel that way, because I've watched my children grow, and understand that other people's children are watching us. I constantly remind people that I can be the messenger for a great message, but I am still a human being, who is flawed. So yes, I may make some mistakes and do some things that you dislike. But I do hold myself accountable, because they're watching.

WWD: Given the division in the country, is that more magnified?
Monica: For sure, but all things are. When you talk about the country, you still have to break it down and talk about the communities within it, and the people and politicians within them. We talk about everything from love and relationships to the importance of voting, and why you should remain active even when you feel the disparity. I am very much an open book at home with my kids. We talk about everything. It's the same with my audience especially with "Mo Talk."

WWD: What's next project-wise?
Monica: I'm most excited about my country album "Open Roads" and my R&B album "Trenches." Growing up, my stepfather was a Methodist minister, but also a bus driver. We rode with him on a lot of his trips. He took us to Tennessee at a very young age and that's how I fell in love with country music. When I signed as an artist, that wasn't something you typically saw a lot of Black women or artists do. Period. I didn't venture into that space until I got a bit older and started singing it to my kids. They motivated me to make a country album. Things truly aligned when Brandi Carlile agreed to executive produce the album. "Trenches" has been long-awaited. In our family, our closeness comes first. I lost my uncle and two aunts on the same day. A lot of things happened that forced me to take long breaks.

WWD: What is the new Apple project?
Monica: "Mo Talk" is television and radio. It is an open space and open place for people to share their true feelings and the story as it happened. We don't have as many journalists as we used to in the '90s. If you create a blog or space with enough traffic, then people listen. It was created by me, Larry Jackson and my first cousin, who manages me. I enjoy speaking with people, picking their brains and sharing things I've learned. That's why I am called "auntie" in this industry. Shaquille O'Neal recorded the first episode with me.

WWD: How do you create your image?
Monica: Cyndi B shoots me based upon my mood. Often my stylist Jerry and I will pick clothes based on the city I'm going to and the relationship I have with that city. My second home is New Orleans and I have an extreme love for Los Angeles, Chicago and many other cities. Cyndi has been with me for more than five years. We've come a long way, because we have grown with each other. We didn't study anyone else. She studies the way that I move, things I like to do. She knows when I am in a super joyful mood or a mood that is more indicative of my song "So Gone." That is definitely a place I have found myself multiple times with relationships.

WWD: How might an outfit in Los Angeles differ from one in New Orleans?
Monica: In Los Angeles, I might go more runway chic. That's a place where people study fashion. A lot of [designer] brands have even had shows there. We're definitely ripping the runway, when we're in L.A. In New Orleans, there are thee most genuine, loving, festive, fun people that you will ever meet in your life. We dress accordingly. We have a ball. It's important to embrace people for who they are and what they stand for in each of those different cities.

WWD: As activism has become more of a priority with consumers, how does that impact what you do?
Monica: Activism has always been important to me. Growing up in a church that only holds 100 people, a big part of what we do is to give back and stay active in communities. I started the BeHuman Foundation in Atlanta to take care of families consistently, not just for a holiday. We have worked with American Cancer Society. I recorded a record ["Pink"] for breast cancer awareness with some legends like Rita Wilson and Miss Dolly Parton. BeHuman enables me to give back however I want to. The name BeHuman means loving your brother, your sister as yourself. That means being there for people in their times of need.

WWD: As a lifelong Atlantan, you've seen the city's resurgence. What's fueling its future?
Monica: The reality is a lot of people, who live here and are from here, that have been influential in creating a great space for us to work in [are fueling it]. Tyler Perry's movie studios [located on 330 acres] changed a lot for a lot of people. He is really committed to serving the community by creating jobs and opportunities.

WWD

Brunello Cucinelli Plans New Factory

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Cucinelli, who was not on the call. After receiving the Neiman Marcus Fashion Award for Distinguished Service in the field of Fashion for the year 2023 in Paris on March 5, Cucinelli was in the Texan city attending another event for the award.

Stefanelli touted the "rich culture and craftsmanship" of the artisans and tailors in Penne and said the company was creating a "bella fabbrica [beautiful factory]," in sync with Cucinelli's belief that it contributes to give moral dignity to work and improve the quality of the products.

Asked by analysts to reveal the investment, Stefanelli demurred, saying the project is in line with Cucinelli's long-term strategy, and that it will be gradually developed, without changing the company's business model.

This move telegraphs the brand's belief in the growth potential of the tailoring segment and it is in sync with the acquisition in 2013 of the production division of the prestigious "Sartoria D'Avenza" in Carrara, another example of Made in Italy excellence in the production of men's suits.

After the pandemic, when brands and retailers saw tailored clothing sales plummet as men worked from home in casual gear, there has been a rebound in sales of sports jackets and suits – but not the traditional versions. Instead, suits now are more versatile and for fall are more relaxed, can be in unusual colors and often are worn over sweaters or turtlenecks.

Luca Lisandroni, who shares the CEO title with Stefanelli, confirmed Cucinelli's previous expectations of 15 percent sales growth in 2023 and of a 10 percent increase in revenues in 2024 and said that in the three months ended March 31, sales climbed 34.7 percent to 265.3 million euros. This compares with 197 million euros in the same period last year.

In a statement, Cucinelli said "there is no doubt that we are reaping the fruits of the positive period that our brand is experiencing for the style it represents and perhaps also for the way we share our ideas with all of our counterparts. As regards our market segment of absolute luxury, we continue to have a very positive vision for the entire coming year."

Lisandroni said the company saw sales accelerate since Cucinelli was revealed as the recipient of the Neiman Marcus award.

In the first quarter, sales in Italy rose 13.8 percent to 27.6 million euros, representing 10.4 percent of the total.

The company converted two wholesale stores to directly operated: in Rome and in the luxury resort beach town Forte dei Marmi in April. The new Roman boutique is located on Via dei Condotti and spans four floors.

Lisandroni touted the "excellent" performance of Asia and America, and "very solid" business in Europe, where sales were up 16.6 percent to 67.9 million euros, accounting for 25.6 percent of the total. In the region, revenues were boosted by both local customers and tourists, including customers from the East returning in the first quarter.

Sales in the Americas climbed 42.9 percent to 95.5 million euros, accounting for 36 percent of the total.

Revenues in Asia soared 56 percent to 74.3 million euros, representing 28 percent of the total. "The decidedly positive trend in China continues, recording very encouraging signs in the period," Lisandroni said. He has recently returned from a 10-day trip in China, and said the country was brimming with projects.

While China represented 12 percent of sales in 2022 and there are only 17 directly operated stores in the region, it is "becoming increasingly important," said Lisandroni, adding that 2023 will be "a golden year" in China.

He also touted the "strong energy and program of cultural activities" in Hong Kong, and the solid performance of Taiwan and Macau. "We have a big opportunity in ready-to-wear in China, but we don't want to force an acceleration," he said.

He also believes "it will be an extraordinary year" for the company in Dubai, where Cucinelli just opened a second store.

In the first quarter, retail revenues jumped 63.7 percent to 164 million euros, representing 61.8 percent of the total. The gains were driven by strong like-for-like growth, with a significantly higher sell-out of spring collections and a network expansion, although the company noted that the comparison is favored by the fact that last year the retail division was affected by the COVID-19 restrictions in the first quarter.

As of March 31, there were 122 retail boutiques compared to 115 in the same period last year.

Sales in the wholesale channel rose 4.7 percent to 101.3 million euros, accounting for 38.2 percent of the total. Over the past six months, the wholesale channel grew 22.2 percent.

E-commerce growth was in line with expectation, Lisandroni said. The direct e-store segment accounts for 6 to 7 percent of sales, while in total e-commerce represents 13 or 14 percent of sales.

Lisandroni also spoke of the launch of the two new fragrances that were presented in the first quarter in Milan on March 28.

The fragrances "Brunello Cucinelli pour Femme" and "Brunello Cucinelli pour Homme" are the result of a collaboration with EuroItalia, owned by the Sgariboldi family, and with experienced perfumer noses Daphné Bugey and Olivier Cresp.

Retailing at 180 euros for a 100-ml bottle, the fragrances were launched in the Brunello Cucinelli boutiques in Milan and Solomeo, where the company is based, and will be rolled out in May. They will be available in the U.S. in October and in Asia in January next year.

The first sun and prescription eyewear with EssilorLuxottica will bow in the early months of 2024.

In line with the pact established 15 years ago, whereby executives are expected to leave their role at the age of 70, chief financial officer Moreno Ciarapica will pass on the baton to deputy CFO Dario Pipitone after 12 years in that position and 30 with the company. Ciarapica will remain an adviser as a senior co-CFO.

Brunello Cucinelli, spring 2023

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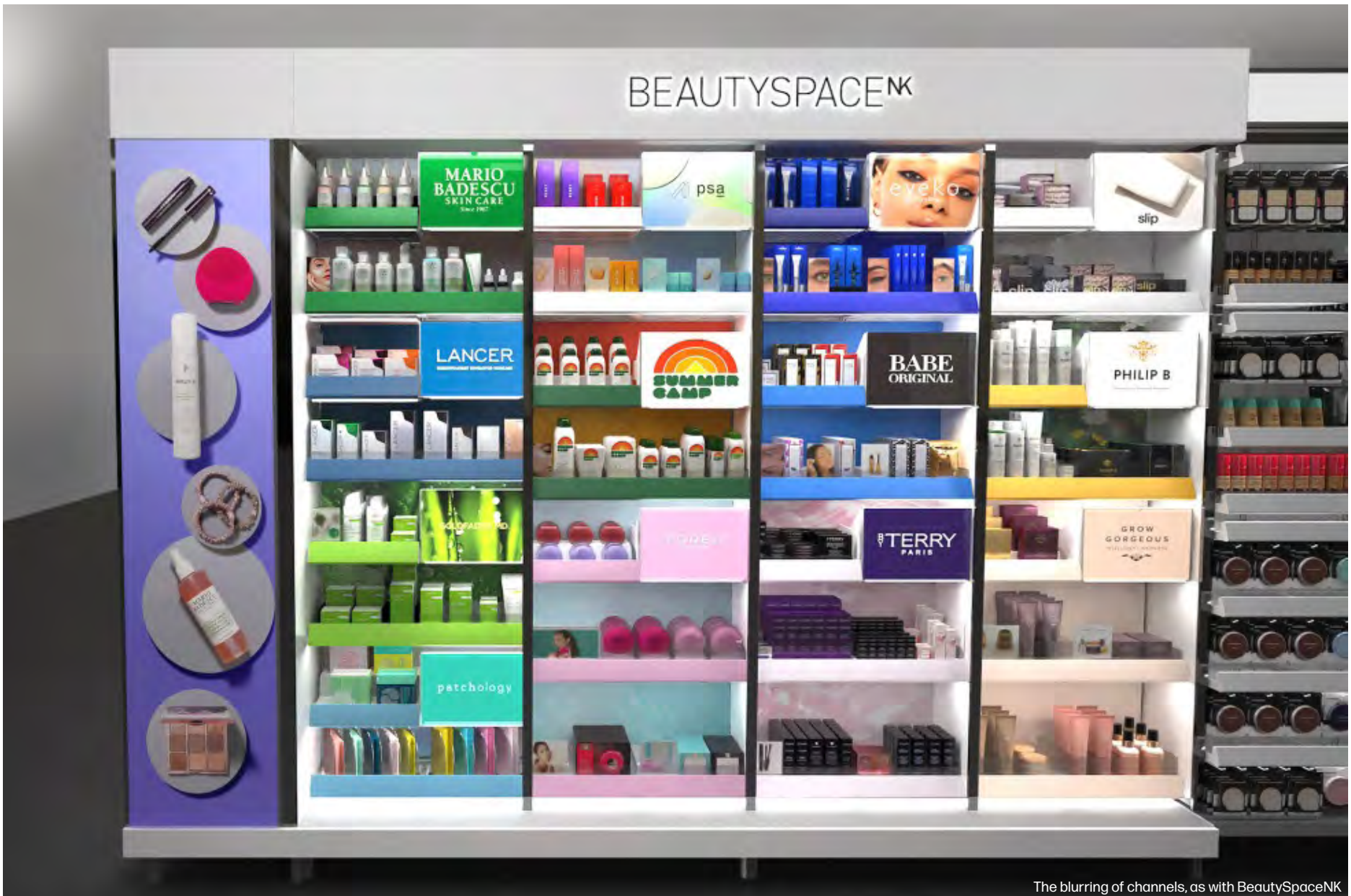

The blurring of channels, as with BeautySpaceNK at Walmart, is expected to be a hot topic at NACDS.

As NACDS Marks 90th Year, Mass Beauty at Crossroads

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

when leaders from brands including Coty, L'Oréal, Markwins, Unilever, Maesa, Kiss and Revlon meet face-to-face with representatives of more than 50 retailers. The meeting will offer a chance for Revlon executives to present their reorganization plan following its exit from bankruptcy. Also included on the roster is Amazon – a formidable competitor to both mass and class – and one that will surely be part of discussions.

The question of whether shoppers will trade down or even trade out of beauty will be one of the hot topics during the four-day gathering that will feature an address from Dr. Anthony Fauci, whose call for vaccinations drove shoppers to pharmacies in droves. NACDS will be missing the nation's largest drug chain (based on store count). CVS executives will be absent following the retailer's exit from NACDS last summer, a loss of almost 10,000 doors. CVS did not comment on the departure, but industry sources speculated it was linked to NACDS support of the regulation of Pharmacy Benefits Management practices.

Also gone this year are lavish parties once associated with the annual gathering that have been eliminated or pared down for 2023. The industry is ready to get down to business and there is a lot at stake.

"At the annual meeting, we look forward to having meaningful conversations with key players in the personal care, health, wellness and beauty industry to bring additional digital/e-commerce capabilities to life, find ways to lead in channels of the future, and continue to drive supply chain practices with a key focus on sustainability," said Esi Eggleston Bracey, president of Unilever USA and chief executive officer of personal care. "We'll also be sharing how brands like Dove, Vaseline and Degree are contributing to people's wellness. We stand committed to overserving the underserved and driving inclusivity through our purpose initiatives laddering up to each brand's mission."

Coty U.S. managing director Debbie Erickson plans to highlight the company's ongoing turnaround exemplified by its 10th consecutive quarter of growth with strong performance in both the Prestige and Consumer Beauty divisions. "We are very proud of sustainability initiatives announced this year from product packaging and formulation to fulfilling our gender pay gap commitment," she said. The company will also tout its #UndefineBeauty campaign, which focuses on changing the perception of beauty. Coty has asked leading English dictionaries to update their definitions and has launched a global petition to generate support.

No matter how it is defined, beauty is the third largest producer behind pharmacy and over-the-counter medications for most drug chains, producing anywhere from 6 percent to 10 percent of total sales. The category ranks within the top five priorities at Walmart, according to Creighton Kiper, vice president beauty. A lesser factor in grocery stores, it is increasingly important, with chains like H-E-B, Hy-Vee and Wegmans opening beauty departments that rival specialty stores. For those retailers, beauty gross margins help offset razor-thin profits in food.

The race for market dominance will be closely monitored and could determine how much attention the category gets at mass in the future. While it is important, slow inventory turn has always put beauty on the hot seat to perform. And competition from prestige retailers remains fierce, a dynamic expected to continue. "Among beauty shoppers who reported reducing their overall spending due to inflation, seven out of 10 said they were not cutting back on their beauty spending," said Larissa Jensen, beauty industry advisor at Circana. "Consumers have shown us that when economic sentiment gets shaky, they turn to prestige beauty products for an emotional lift. This 'treat mindset' is a big piece of what ties the complete beauty industry picture together."

Scott Emerson, president of The Emerson Group, concurred that the mass/prestige ratio will remain static. "The people buying $200 serums will still buy $200 serums despite a troubled economy," he said. "During economic uncertainty, beauty becomes an accessible indulgence, and shoppers typically don't trade down their beauty products."

At the same time, retailers like Walmart, CVS and Walgreens have upgraded their beauty departments, while Walmart and Target are also partnering with specialty retailers to bring prestige to their aisles.

Vennette Ho, managing director global head of beauty and personal care at Financo Raymond James, portends a shift. "We believe that there will be some migration from mass to prestige, driven not simply by price but also by people emphasizing 'quality for value.'"

Ashley Helgens, vice president of Jefferies, doesn't rule out a trade-down. "We are seeing beauty get more promotional, but I don't think we will see any massive trade-down until this quarter or next. I do believe beauty is something you buy regardless if you are in a recession or not. If you look at the data from the last recession, there definitely was a trade-down going on."

She singled out mass brands that are well-positioned to attract shoppers. E.l.f., for example, operates at lightning speed and benefits from a strong social media presence. "They have the ability to innovate quickly and get products on shelves in as little as nine weeks," Helgens said, noting the brand is attracting both prestige and mass shoppers.

The mass versus class distinction is extinct, suggested Scott Kestenbaum, chief growth officer for Maesa. "Most modern beauty shoppers do not make this distinction. For many years, we have seen a blurring of the lines between these two channels," he said. He noted that prestige retailers like Sephora, Ulta Beauty and SpaceNK have diversified their footprints by forging partnerships with retailers like Kohl's, Target and Walmart. Meanwhile, mass market retailers are continually expanding their masstige offerings with brands like Kristin Ess Haircare, Naturium and Being Frenshe, which look, communicate and perform like prestige brands but at more accessible prices.

"In an inflationary economy, when consumers have less discretionary income, it may be intuitive to anticipate consumers trading down," Kestenbaum said. "However, history suggests that beauty ▶

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does not follow this trend."

While there is chatter about shoppers going downscale, there are indications mass retailers can sell pricier beauty. Sales in 2022 from Ulta Beauty at Target were more than four times higher than in 2021 and the growth was almost entirely incremental, according to Christina Hennington, Target's chief growth officer. Beauty is delivering the highest growth rates of any category in the store.

In announcing another 250 Kohl's stores that will add Sephora, bringing the total to 850, the company said the partnership has been "mutually" beneficial. Kohl's projects that Sephora at Kohl's will grow to hit $2 billion in annual sales by 2025. Last year, nearly 8 million Kohl's customers purchased beauty products at the Sephora shops at Kohl's. In the fourth quarter of 2022, total beauty sales increased 90 percent.

Walmart's Kiper said the partnership with SpaceNK is going well from a performance and learning standpoint. "What we've been talking about recently is how many of our $100,000 [income] are coming into our stores and staying. We're learning what works and what doesn't. There isn't really a price ceiling," he said during a recent CEW event. He noted that the store continues to test and learn. There are a handful of Walmart stores dubbed Beauty Shop, where Walmart is tinkering with the beauty department. "I always say there is no finish line, you have to continue to improve," Kiper said.

Another issue sure to be on the agenda is price hikes. The industry can't count on price hikes to grow anymore, insiders said. "How can we work together to execute price decreases? We need to start measuring units, not dollars," said Emerson. "Within the past five months, we've seen the gap between dollars and units rise from 5.2 percent to 9 percent, and now, we're at 13 percent.

"There are still many more issues to come that we haven't thought about," he said. "So, how can suppliers and retailers work together to meet these challenges?"

Emerson believes prices have hit a ceiling. "Most brands took meaningful price increases in 2022 to offset supply chain costs; we don't think many brands have many opportunities left in this regard as consumers are feeling the pinch across all categories."

Eric Weeks, president of sales at Markwins Beauty Brands, said his meetings will delve into the impact of inflation and average unit price growth versus units decline with a goal of finding ways to mitigate that trend and take costs out of systems.

Innovation, better service and elevated experiences will drive the industry's growth, said Wendy Liebmann, chief executive officer of WSL Strategic Retail. "We are hearing a lot of discussion about selection and merchandise mix. How much is too much? Is more always more? A lot of retailers are looking to reduce stock keeping units to create a better experience," she said. "They are reorganizing stores to make them more open and easier to shop."

Tighter departments could make it more challenging to add new items that have unknown potential. Weeks said there is a delicate balance between established brands and emerging contenders. "Legacy brands are rather stable and somewhat predictable versus new market brands that are short-term winners but are largely uncertain two or three years after they are initially set [in planograms]," he said.

One segment where retailers plan to add new items is wellness. "We're looking for our supplier partners to help us deliver health and well-being-led assortments to our patients and shoppers," said Heather Hughes, group vice president of beauty, personal care and seasonal, at Walgreens. Bridging the gap between health, well-being and beauty is at the top of her to-do list. Skin care continues to be a "huge focus" for the chain, especially brands bringing professional quality products with ingredients such as retinol, salicylic acid and vitamin C.

Wellness was redefined post-pandemic, said Kestenbaum. "It has evolved towards a multidimensional approach to holistic well-being, including mental and emotional health. Consumers are looking for community, experiences and products that make us look as good as we feel," he said

"Retailers have taken notice of this and have rushed to capitalize, many with mixed results," Kestenbaum continued, noting that retailers like Whole Foods, CVS and Thrive Market, that were born with health and wellness as part of their DNA, are connecting well, but others, who historically have not focused on health, are finding it a bigger leap. "Customers find it challenging to understand how a retailer selling cigarettes and sugary food can offer guidance on a healthy lifestyle," he said.

Dove Body Wash Reusable Bottle + Concentrate Refill

Emerson said wellness is a whole-body beauty experience that benefits brands like Dr. Teals and Lumify and that they are becoming part of the daily beauty routine as shoppers seek to look and feel well-rested. "The healthy skin revolution is only becoming more significant," he said. "Last year, dermatological skin care was the most prominent beauty trend. Now shoppers are adding sun protection, daily supplements and hydration products like Liquid IV to achieve healthy skin from the inside out."

Eggleston Bracey added that well-being goes beyond products. "A key component is giving back to the community. Doing good makes you feel good," she said. "People want to vote with their dollars by purchasing products that offer superior quality and value and do more by doing good. People want to live long, healthy lives, making choices that are better for their bodies and for the environment. Wellness is moving beyond just what people eat, to how the products we love make us feel and what we are putting on our bodies for that all-encompassing sensorial experience."

She cited SheaMoisture as an example, noting it reinvests at least 1 percent of net sales directly into economic opportunities for underserved entrepreneurs and Black business owners.

It has been seven years since Unilever purchased SheaMoisture's parent Sundial Brands and for many entrepreneurs, it is a case study in building and selling a brand. Just when it seemed M&A activity was cooling off, Procter & Gamble snapped up Mielle Organics and most recently L'Oréal purchased Aesop for $2.5 billion.

Nascent brand founders hope there are still deals in the offing. "We are excited about the potential for more transactions in mass beauty and personal care this year. Historically, there have been fewer transactions in mass given that the barriers to entry for independent brands are generally higher at mass than in prestige. However, we're now seeing more independent brands break out, which drives M&A opportunities. We expect to see more as independent brands continue to scale nicely," Ho said.

As NACDS celebrates its history Liebmann noted the presence of future leaders on the attendee list. "A next generation of leaders is emerging including a lot of women," she said. "There is a generational shift that is important. There is also an interesting mix of companies from Amazon to smaller brands."

Perhaps the entertainment at the meeting illustrates the direction with a young pop trio called AJR opening the conference and the legendary Gladys Knight in the starring role as closer. ■

E.l.f. Cosmetics Power Grip Primer has been a big win.

WWD

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In Focus Business Insights

FASHION

Adrianne Ho Launches The Farmers Market Global Capsule Collection

- The model-turned-entrepreneur launches the company's first activewear capsule collection and its online platform.

BY **KANIKA TALWAR**

The L.A. brand takes inspiration from Ho's personal lifestyle of shopping at farmers markets and merges it with the wellness and lifestyle space.

Two years after its initial launch, The Farmers Market Global is unveiling its inaugural women's activewear capsule collection and new online shop. The Los Angeles brand takes inspiration from founder Adrianne Ho's personal experiences shopping at farmers markets and merges it with the wellness and lifestyle space.

The company's brand logo skillfully combines the "Rx" prescription symbol with a tennis racket, which can be seen on a wide variety of its clothing pieces: biker shorts, sports bras, leather totes, garden totes and more. A brand tag line "sports is medicine" can be seen on their hats and sports bras.

Ho describes the line in her campaign book as "compost the rich," the customer, she said, "knows every promoter but only cares to go to Erewhon."

Here, Ho speaks to WWD about the brand's inception, how she sees the intersection of agriculture space with wellness, paying it forward through working with local L.A. businesses, taking more ownership of her company and more.

WWD: What prompted you to get into the wellness and sports space within fashion?
Adrianne Ho: I've always had a passion for wellness, sport, food and style. As soon as I started modeling internationally, I carved a niche by launching the first blog with merchandise [Sweat the Style est. 2013] dedicated to promoting this unique culture and community. As my audience, experience and technology evolved, I got a stronger sense of the symbiotic relationship these individual interests have as a whole.

When I moved to Los Angeles in 2014, I became very interested in the incredible variety of local farmers markets as my main source of healthy, fresh food. I love everything about them, especially the farmers and purveyors, the super high-quality products and the accessibility. If I'm a global ambassador for Adidas, I can pay it forward by being an ambassador for the local farmers markets.

WWD: What is The Farmers Market Global? How would you describe it to a consumer?
A.H.: Farmers markets represent the best of what the world has to offer. That's the simple ethos of The Farmers Market Global. We're committed to making innovative, desirable and quality products to improve the wellness of people's active lives.

As a concept brand that comes in a range of product offerings from locally sourced cold-pressed Arbequina extra virgin olive oil to buttery soft compression leggings with tennis ball pockets. Traditionally those two products don't have anything to do with each other but in our world, they're synergistic, which is just a fancy way to say they will both bring you joy by helping you perform and live better.

WWD: In your own words, how is The Farmers Market Global unique from other brands in the wellness space?
A.H.: The Farmers Market Global is an extension of my lifestyle. So, it's naturally very authentic. Quality, comfort and timeless style are reimagined for today's unique performance and technical needs.

I've always pushed the envelope with my personal style in a very natural way. Whether it was shooting a Stussy campaign at a hot yoga studio, cutting up a Supreme Kate Moss T-shirt to fit better for Barry's or running the Williamsburg Bridge to Noah's first downtown store with its owner for a segment on my TV show. I've always tried to promote these incredible groundbreaking brands and innovators in my own organic way.

I work and continue to work with so many amazing people and companies in this space and adjacent. I want to engage, promote and collaborate with those with the same values of excellence and vice versa.

WWD: How are you engaging local L.A. businesses globally, specifically those grounded in the agricultural space?
A.H.: We've worked on several special projects with regenerative farms, backyard farmers, mom-and-pop, as well as just-the-mom small businesses in Los Angeles. My goal is to highlight how amazing these small businesses and artisans are and cultivate a new audience for them through my platform, network and creating innovative contemporary collaborations. There is a lot to learn from the local environment and we can move forward together.

WWD: Why were you particularly drawn to the agricultural space? What prompted the intersection within the wellness/lifestyle space? Was this a white space you were seeing?
A.H.: Spending summers in the French countryside as a child with my mom's family and living in California, I've been fortunate enough to enjoy and understand the incredible agriculture community. My mom passed away during the ideation process of the brand. She was a big supporter and I really want to manifest a brand that makes her proud.

I've developed a lot of great friendships with people who grow and prepare incredible food. Basically, what you put in your body is what you get out of your body. For us, there is a direct correlation between agriculture and wellness space.

WWD: How would you describe your target customer? What are they looking for in terms of activewear fashion, silhouettes and fit?
A.H.: We are bringing something fresh and new through innovation and creativity. Elegance, precision and sensibility in the color palette, fabrication and silhouette are very important to us. The activewear feels luxurious yet strong but not too fussy. We are getting incredible performance feedback and feel the entire product range from packaging to branding is mindful and modern. The prescription logo represents what people are looking for in their daily lives, especially those that are open to change and new ideas of what a brand can be.

WWD: Can you tell us about how the collection is being marketed?
A.H.: First and foremost, we're storytellers. We're telling an authentic story that resonates with people through film, photography and design on as many platforms as we can utilize. As a content creator and influencer, it's about finding the balance between marketing and product development. We started by reimagining our version of a traditional pro shop at one of the best tennis stores in the world, The Racket Doctor, which happens to be in Atwater next to one of the best farmers markets on Sunday. Again, we think it's symbiotic, not just a coincidence.

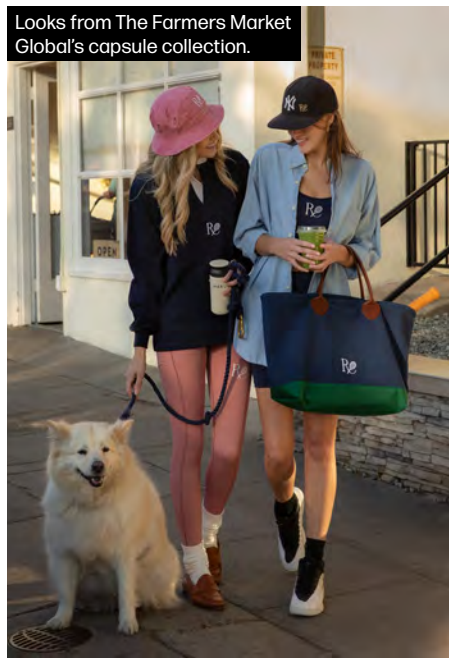
We collaborated with farmers and The Racket Doctor to make a product that celebrates the intersection of California tennis and agriculture. For me, all roads lead to activewear so we're now expanding the product line and offering it on our website for the first time with some beautiful visuals.

WWD: Who is featured in the campaign?
A.H.: In our campaign, we decided to focus on our favorite Los Angeles hot spots. I think I was Maru Coffee's first customer and I was hitting Erewhon before it became the hottest club in L.A. All joking aside, we wanted to have a bit of fun with the look book and have an elevated paparazzi feel.

I've always felt like a bit of an outsider as a model, so it was important for me to shoot a beautiful range of multicultural models for the first women's active collection. I love all my fresh girls and think they all did such an amazing job for our first go at it. We have a bunch of new faces that I think people are really going to love. As a female creator, I understand how important it is to communicate that everyone is at a different phase of their wellness journey and we celebrate that process as a brand.

WWD: Why is now the right time to bring the brand direct to consumers? What are the challenges and opportunities of selling directly to consumers from your site as you see them?
A.H.: I've worked with a lot of different companies over the years in the retail and manufacturing space and thought it was time for me to have more ownership and accountability over that process. I've learned a great deal from those opportunities and now I'm very excited to reach out to my audience and create a premium product specifically for them. We will grow the community as well and learn from them. I look forward to the challenge and embracing the privilege of being a creator with a voice and platform. It's really such an incredible position to be in.

WWD: What is your vision for the future of the company?
A.H.: We're looking forward to growing the community as well as our team. We want to be a leader in the wellness space through innovation, creativity and making luxury yet down-to-earth products. This is my life's work and I have an incredible passion for it. I hope to continue to tell the story and make small improvements every day.


Looks from The Farmers Market Global's capsule collection.

WWD

EYE

Google Design Studio Unveils 'Shaped by Water,' OMA Commissioned for 'Beyond the Surface'

● The thought-provoking installations are among the many at Salone del Mobile.

BY **ROSEMARY FEITELBERG**

A glimpse of "Shaped by Water."

Two contemplative installations that conjure up questions about water and geology are now on view in Milan.

The Google Design Studio is trying to make a splash at Salon del Mobile with "Shaped by Water."

The exhibition was cooked up by Google's vice president of hardware design Ivy Ross, and her design team with artist Lachlan Turczan, who specializes in water, light and sound. The Los Angeles-based artist crafts light artworks, kinetic sculptures and films, including ones that explore natural phenomena and the visualization of sound. Over the past 10 years, he has been developing a water-projection artwork that is meant to relay a similar effect as gazing into a fire or staring up at the clouds.

Turczan has created installations on some prime real estate, such as one in the Dubai International Airport and Singapore Changi Airport. The multidisciplinary creative executes his installations with the help of engineers, designers and musicians.

On view through Sunday at Garage 21, "Shaped by Water" is meant to be an immersive, multisensory experience that draws attention to humanity's connection to water and how it can be a source of inspiration for design.

Like Google, which canvasses the globe, water also covers much of the planet – 71 percent in total. It also makes up 60 percent of the human body, and one in every four people do not have access to clean drinking water, according to the United Nations.

The first part of the exhibition, "Sympathetic Resonance," showcases about a dozen mirrored cylinder-like sculptures that are slightly filled with water and are meant to relax visitors and focus on the sound. Another area "Wavespace," as its name implies, relies on the vibrational energy from music to lull a pool of water into "choreographed" waves that turn the body of water into a kinetic liquid lens.

Visitors are prompted to take a seat and unwind, as music timed with cymatics create wave patterns that are reflected onto large overhead discs that show the mini ripples below.

On what sounds like an exit-through-the-gift-shop approach to art, visitors' final stop involves taking a closer look at water and in how it inspired Google's hardware goods that will be on display. The aim is for "Shaped by Water" to prompt conversations about thoughtful design.

The unveiling signaled Google Design Studio's third trip to Milan Design Week. Its last appearance was in 2019 with a neuroaesthetics installation titled "A Space for Being."

Another installation at the latest edition of Salon del Mobile to note is "Beyond the Surface." SolidNature commissioned architecture studio OMA to design an installation that traces natural stone from its geological formation to a finished product. The two-part exhibition has a subterranean and open-air sections.

Upon entering the space in the 19th-century Casa Maveri in the Brera District, visitors pass through a series of underground rooms that show how stone is formed, extracted and processed. They then continue to the al fresco area where stone furniture adorns the palazzo's garden, which has been designed by select artists. Unlike the slabs of stone seen in the basement, the stone furniture in the garden is being used for different activities during Milan Design Week. To get between the two areas, guests pass through a sky-blue onyx passageway that has a multicolored marble staircase.

ACCESSORIES

Allbirds SuperLight Collection Made With Its Lowest-carbon Foam Yet, Features New Fitness Shoe

● The company has said it's also working on a shoe with an even lower carbon footprint.

BY **PETER VERRY**

Allbirds has once again pushed its own envelope on sustainability with its latest collection, which includes reimagined versions of well-known shoes and a new fitness-focused look. The three styles feature the brand's lightest and lowest-carbon foam to date.

The collection, titled SuperLight, features new iterations of its Tree Runner and Wool Runner shoes. It also will introduce the SuperLight Trainer to consumers.

Each shoe in the collection includes SuperLight Foam, a material innovation from Allbirds. According to the brand, SuperLight is made with carbon-negative, sugarcane-derived Green EVA. This creates a midsole, Allbirds explained, that is roughly 70 percent bio-based.

Allbirds SuperLight Tree Runner in the "Calm Teal" colorway.

"We're constantly working to deliver captivating and comfortable footwear while also reducing the carbon footprints of our products. We want to set the curve on sustainability and innovation. This reimagination of some of our core styles is the manifestation of that mindset," Allbirds cofounder and co-chief executive officer Tim Brown said in a statement.

Aside from the foam, Allbirds employed its other material innovations throughout the collection. For instance, the SuperLight Tree Runner features lightweight and breathable uppers made with Tencel Lyocell, which is made with FSC-certified eucalyptus tree fiber. This material, Allbirds explained, uses 95 percent less water than conventional cotton and has a carbon footprint that is one-third lower than virgin nylon. In a women's size 7, the SuperLight Tree Runner weighs 4.73 oz., and the shoe weighs 5.5 oz. in a men's size 9.

Retail price for the Allbirds SuperLight Tree Runner is $115.

As for the SuperLight Trainer ($120), the uppers feature eucalyptus tree fiber with recycled polyester. The recycled polyester, Allbirds explained, is made with plastic waste, which reduces reliance on fossil fuels "and the risk of that waste ending up in landfills and oceans." The SuperLight Trainer in a women's size 7 weighs 4.25 oz. and weighs 5.07 oz. in a size 9 for men.

Lastly, the SuperLight Wool Runner ($120) is constructed with uppers made with ZQ-certified regenerative wool. Allbirds said the use of this wool aligns with its commitment to transition to all regenerative wool sources by 2025. The shoe weighs in at 4.23 oz. in a women's size 7 and 5.11 oz. in a men's size 9.

In terms of carbon footprint, Allbirds set a new bar for itself with the SuperLight collection. The SuperLight Trainer has a carbon footprint of 2.14 kg CO_2e, which is the lowest of any Allbirds product available. The SuperLight Tree Runner and the SuperLight Wool Runner have carbon footprints of 2.85 kg CO2e and 4.04 kg CO2e, respectively.

"Cutting down on carbon is a game of inches. Every part of the shoe's lifecycle is significant, from materials and packaging, to energy use and shipping," Allbirds vice president of innovation Jad Finck said in a statement. "Every component, feature and detail of the SuperLight collection has been pored over to minimize carbon emissions without sacrificing on comfort and style."

The SuperLight Tree Runner and SuperLight Wool Runner will be available in full sizes from 5 to 11 for women and 7 to 14 for men. The SuperLight Trainer will come in half sizes from 5 to 11 for women and 7 to 14 for men.

Both the SuperLight Trainer and Tree Runner will arrive April 18 via Allbirds.com and the SuperLight Wool Runner will debut in late 2023.

Allbirds SuperLight Tree Runner.

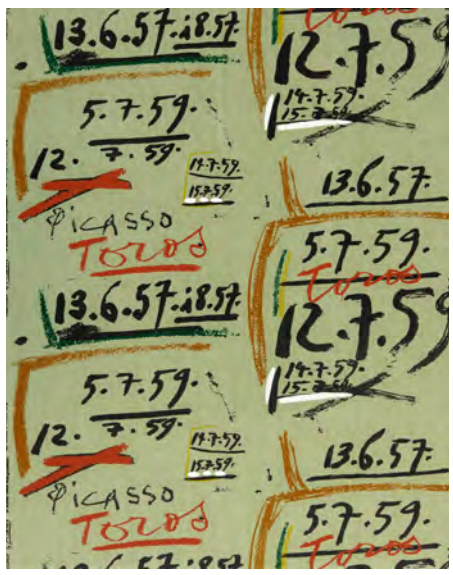
Although SuperLight is made with its lightest and lowest-carbon foam to date, Allbirds announced last month that a net zero carbon shoe is on the way.

In March, Allbirds revealed Moonshot, written by the brand as M0.0NSHOT, which is a shoe with a carbon footprint of 0.0 kg CO2e. The company said this was achieved without relying on offsets. Allbirds' Brown told FN the shoe has been more than two-and-a-half years in the making and is the result of an effort labeled Project Moonshot internally. "It's the theory being, if we can put a man on the moon, we can make a pair of sneakers with no impact," Brown said.

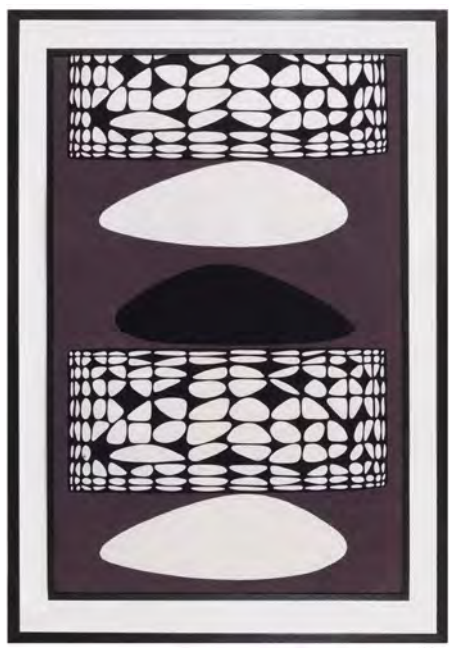
For now, the look of the shoe is still under wraps. Allbirds is only showing a teaser image of the Moonshot until it is revealed in June at the Global Fashion Summit in Copenhagen. At that time, Brown said Allbirds will have a limited number of samples available with a wider commercial release set for early next year.

WWD

"Nude, 1947" by Patrick Heron, a screenprint on silk, part of a new show in London curated by Gray M.C.A.



"Frontispiece, 1963" a screen print on cotton by Pablo Picasso.



"Kernoo, 1962," a screen print on cotton by Victor Vasarely.

eye

When Picasso, Chagall and Calder Collided With Fashion

A new London show highlights a golden moment, just after World War II, when modern art masters created works for Britain's top textile makers. BY **SAMANTHA CONTI**

LONDON – Fashion and art have long had an on-again, off-again relationship, and a new exhibition in London highlights a moment, just after World War II, when they were definitely on – and producing groundbreaking work.

"Styled by Design," curated by Gray M.C.A, the fashion illustration, design and textiles gallery, highlights a colorful moment when British-based textile manufacturers worked with modern art giants to create fashion, home and decorative textiles.

The exhibition, which features rare and limited-edition textile designs by Pablo Picasso, Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and others, opens on Tuesday, April 18, and runs until April 30 at Cromwell Place in South Kensington.

The pioneers of the movement were Zika and Lida Ascher, a husband-and-wife team of textile experts who left their native Prague for England in 1939, shortly after Nazi Germany annexed Czechoslovakia.

Shortly after the war, Zika Ascher began brokering deals with the artists to create designs for textiles. He wanted to leave pain (and dreary aesthetics) of war behind and add a shot of color – and optimism – to people's wardrobes. He also wanted to get the artists working again.

"This was real austerity: the artists weren't finding the commissions and work they had before the war. The marketplace for art had evaporated. The big question was: 'How do you get traction again?' It was the same for fashion," said Ashley Gray, director at Gray M.C.A.

Gray said Ascher and his contemporaries in the textile trade were eager to engage new audiences in Europe and the U.S., and they succeeded by pressing popular artists into action.

"Suddenly modern artists' work was blossoming on the streets. Their art was being worn as clothing, or beautiful scarves. Modern art became democratized," said Gray, adding that the show "celebrates the modernist view that 'a good textile was the equal of a good painting.'"

In the years following the war, the Aschers developed relationships with a number of artists, giving them the freedom to create whatever they wanted. The Aschers then figured out how to make the designs work on a variety of fabrics such as cotton, rayon, silk and woven wool, and to ensure the colors and prints were just right.

The trend for tapping top artists took off, and soon Moore was designing fabrics for costumes in Hollywood films; Claire McCardell was working Picasso's fish prints into her dresses; and top models of the time were posing in Marc Chagall's studio, wearing his dreamy prints and warm colors.

At one point, Zika Ascher even got Lucian Freud on board to design a crêpe de Chine fabric. In the meantime, the Aschers were also supplying fabrics – artistic and otherwise – to the likes of Christian Dior, Balmain and Balenciaga.

The famous Ascher silk squares, which featured original designs by artists including Ben Nicholson, Moore, Hepworth and André Derain, made their debut at the Dorchester hotel in London. They were framed, just like paintings, and made an international splash.

After their Dorchester debut, the silk squares embarked on a world tour, with exhibitions across Europe, South Africa and the U.S. "The series became a phenomenon," said Gray, who has spent years scouring Europe and the U.S. for the textiles that feature in the show.

"Styled by Design" is a selling exhibition with prices ranging between 1,500 pounds and 170,000 pounds.

Among the highlights is a vast 1949 Ascher screen print on linen by Moore called "Two Standing Figures"; Nicholson's 1937 "Vertical" for Edinburgh Weavers, a home furnishings maker near Manchester, England; and Patrick Heron's "Nude" silk scarf, drawn while Heron worked for his father, Tom Heron at Cresta Silks.

Gray said the frenzy of textile research, development – and creativity – in post-war Britain cannot be underestimated.

Ascher and his peers were not only making textiles, they were researching and developing dyes (before the war, most dyes were sourced from Germany) and experimenting with synthetic textiles.

"Machinery and mechanisms were changing quickly, and you could produce fabric economically," said Gray, who described the 1950s as "the furnace of creativity" in Britain.

By the 1960s, that golden age of arty textiles was winding down.

A new generation of textile designers, influenced by abstract expressionist artists such as Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning, were visiting art galleries, looking at museum catalogues in color, rather than in black and white, and creating painterly designs of their own.

"The light goes off the big artists, and the innovation starts to come from the art schools," said Gray.

And – thanks to Zandra Rhodes, Celia Birtwell and others – the relationship between art, applied art, and fashion was evolving once again.

WWD

Fashion Scoops

Daniel Roseberry

Roseberry's Rep

Daniel Roseberry has signed with Creative Artists Agency for representation, WWD has learned exclusively.

The designer, who took the reins at Schiaparelli as artistic director in 2019, is behind a number of memorable cultural looks, including the red, white and blue ensemble Lady Gaga wore as she sang the national anthem at the inauguration of President Joe Biden: a gown and fitted jacket adorned with a large dove-of-peace brooch.

Roseberry has also dressed former First Lady Michelle Obama – who wore a crystal, lemon-colored silk dress to The Smithsonian's American Portrait Gala – and Beyoncé, seen wearing Schiaparelli in her "Renaissance" album art and at a number of award shows, including during her historic music win at the Grammy Awards this year.

Bella Hadid, Adele, Zendaya, Regina King and Nicole Kidman have all worn notable looks by the designer. Hadid turned heads in Schiaparelli on the red steps of the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, while Adele can be seen in his designs on stage in The Colosseum at Caesars Palace during her Las Vegas residency. The singer also wore Schiaparelli for her Hyde Park performance in London.

Born in Plano, Texas, Roseberry moved to New York City to study at the Fashion Institute of Technology. He then joined Thom Browne, becoming a veteran at the label with more than a decade of experience at the company. He rose as its design director of men's and women's collections before heading Schiaparelli.

Roseberry's Schiaparelli designs have been showcased at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, where his work, along with original sketches and video installations, were exhibited as part of "Shocking! The Surreal World of Elsa Schiaparelli."

– RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Cornering Circularity

Selfridges has transformed its Corner Shop store into a Marine Serre atelier.

The luxury department store has invited the French designer to take over the area until May 13 with customization workshops and exclusive pieces.

This is the brand's first pop-up store in London and it coincides with Selfridges' Worn Again, an experimental project focused around second-hand and circularity.

Each time a new brand takes over the Corner Shop, the space is refurbished to match the aesthetic of the guest brand.

"In designing the Corner Shop installation, I wanted visitors to have the opportunity to explore how we place the Marine Serre house holistically within the environment," said Serre in a statement.

Serre's space is an intimate atelier decorated with vintage furniture; two couture dresses on display; an upcycled T-shirt dress from her spring 2023 Hardcore Couture collection, and a denim belt dress from the spring 2023 State of Soul collection.

Each of the dresses will be available for made-to-order requests, taking about one to two months.

The brand's atelier team will be in London from Thursday to April 23, where customers can bring in vintage pieces to be transformed into T-shirts.

Selfridges will launch Marine Serre's first sneaker and on the last weekend customers can bring in their own clothes to be printed with the brand's signature moon crescent.

The department store has set out a 2030 target of reaching 45 percent of circular transactions to come from circular products and services by stocking brands that meet its environmental and ethical standards.

Selfridges has accelerated its net zero goal by changing their deadline to 2040 instead of 2050 as a promise to the Climate Pledge.

– HIKMAT MOHAMMED

Tupac Tears

Denim Tears and Our Legacy are teaming up to honor the late Tupac Shakur.

The streetwear brands are joining forces on the Tupac Tears Legacy collection, an apparel collaboration that was developed with the Shakur Estate. The collection is inspired by Shakur's own style and the hip-hop genre.

"For me, this release is an homage to Takahiro Miyashita's collection that were based on the style and spirit of artists like Kurt Cobain and Axl Rose," said Denim Tears founder Tremaine Emory. "Our Legacy was the perfect partner to do this with because of their love of music and style that permeates in their collections."

The collection looks at Shakur's "laid-back approach to denim" by offering pieces like the Denim Tears and Levi's signature 501 jeans and trucker jacket that are embellished with silver studs. The collection also offers velvet suits, hockey jerseys, leather sets and printed dress shirts. There are also T-shirts that feature Shakur's Euphanasia logo, which he used for his production company that he set up before his death.

"This collaboration is a symbol of authenticity, of rebellion and the sheer power of music," reads a statement from the brands. "Tupac's distinctive and personal identity through clothing has served to influence countless artists and designers during an era that can often appear unkind in commemorating permanence."

This is the latest collection to come from Denim Tears and Our Legacy. Last fall, the two brands teamed up to create a streetwear collection with Stüssy. ▶

Marine Serre at the Selfridges Corner Shop.

ON THIS DAY

After Faye Dunaway made waves with her perfectly balanced monocle in "The Voyage of the Damned," André Leon Talley for WWD could not help but wonder how some real-life fashionables like Elsa Peretti, Norma Kamali and Anna Piaggi felt about the one-eyed accessory, as seen on April 19, 1976.

– Jasper Brown

EYE VIEW

A myopic

Faye Dunaway

ELSA PERETTI: "Yes, I would wear one. Actually, I would love to design one, but something very special. I rejected teh shortsighted and the monocle is not good for that. But still, I would wear one."

TINA CHOW: "Maybe when I'm 70 years old or thereabouts, I'll wear one. But all those trendy things — like Karl Lagerfeld with his monocle, and Bianca Jagger with her walking stick — seem a bit trashy now, don't you think?"

AMINA WARSUMA: "Yes, I would wear a silver monocle at night with very feminine clothes ... one of my Grecian tops-type chiffon gowns. It would be perfect with tiny tight curls, because I would want to look soft and feminine. Nothing dyke-y for me."

NORMA KAMALI: "Nothing is too much for me, but I don't think it's my direction. I wouldn't wear a monocle unless it was really an incredible one. I did see a really beautiful one two weeks ago. It was antique and encrusted on the edge with diamonds."

KITTY HAWKS TANEN (right): "That's the silliest thing I have ever been asked in my entire life. I can't imagine that monocles will ever be here to stay, and I doubt it makes any difference. I would not wear one."

LOULOU DE LA FALAISE (left): "Never! I would never wear something that silly. I don't wear glasses and since I don't have to squint to see people at parties, I don't need one. I might wink, but I never squint."

MAXIME DE LA FALAISE: "I've tried often to wear a monocle. But it always falls out."

PAGE LEE HUPTY: "Frankly, I think I'd look good in it. It's my kind of body look. I think it's a marvelous look, very feminine and very risqué. But right now, I doubt I'd wear one. The brain thing about accessories is that they must be efficient, nothing extraneous. I'm not gadgety, and I'm sufficiently blind that I need contact lenses full time. For ordering in a restaurant though, it would be fabulous, and I do like the feel of the look."

ANNA PIAGGI: "Why not? It's normal. Everything is normal," says this lady of Italian fashion who more regularly wore a monocle to accessorize her vintage Vionnet and Callot Soeurs gowns. Where is it now? Probably tucked away in her trunk. "For a five-day trip to Paris, I usually travel with a trunk, and there's no telling what I will find in the bottom of that trunk."

WWD

Styles from the Denim Tears and Our Legacy Tupac Shakur collection.

Emory was also tapped in December by Kim Jones to guest design Dior's pre-fall 2023 men's collection, creating a collaboration called Dior Tears.

Denim Tears and Our Legacy's Tupac Tears Legacy collection will be available to purchase starting April 25 on both brands' websites and at Dover Street Market locations. – LAYLA ILCHI

Getting Personal

Friends, colleagues and family came out Tuesday afternoon to help launch Aliza Licht's new book, "On Brand: Shape Your Narrative. Share Your Vision. Shift Their Perception." A giant image of the book's cover was projected over the Nasdaq billboard at the corner of 43rd Street and Broadway.

Among those gathered on the street corner were Jill Kargman, Lydia Fenet, Patti Cohen, Anne Keating, Mickey Boardman, Sophia Chabbott, Darcy Miller, and Kimry Blackwelder.

The bestselling author of "Leave Your Mark," Licht shares her insider strategies for developing a personal brand to ensure that one's name gets dropped in the right rooms and that people know the value one might add. As Licht explained, a well-defined personal brand can secure professional longevity – what you do today may not be what you do tomorrow.

In "On Brand," she writes that how one shows up in person, over email and on social media communicates a personal brand. The book also tackles managing reputation and surviving cancel culture, understanding value and negotiating, and navigating a rebrand in the event of a professional pivot.

"I've always been passionate about mentoring, and with 'On Brand' I'm confident that I can help people understand who they already are, who they want to be, and ensure other people see them that way," said Licht on Tuesday.

Published by Union Square & Co., the 304-page hardcover book sells for $27.99.

A marketer, author, podcaster and personal branding expert, Licht is the founder of Leave Your Mark, a multimedia brand and consultancy. Earlier she created and was the popular voice of the anonymous social media persona, DKNY PR Girl, and was senior vice president of global communications at Donna Karan International. – LISA LOCKWOOD

Aliza Licht's book is projected over the Nasdaq sign at Broadway and 43rd Street.

Global Merch

WWE and Fanatics are expanding their relationship.

Beginning May 1, right before WWE's premium live event, Backlash, Fanatics will assume operations of global event merchandise business for the professional wrestling entertainment group.

Fanatics already operates WWE's e-commerce site and holds the rights for licensed merchandise and memorabilia for the organization, but it will now manage the on-site retail operations as well for WWE's 300-plus annual events including WrestleMania, Royal Rumble and SummerSlam.

Under the terms of the deal, Fanatics will work to enhance the in-venue experience by offering more local collections, creating innovative retail stores and utilizing Fanatics-operated team stores during events.

Fanatics already has partnerships with more than 50 professional and college teams across several sports.

"Fanatics has been an amazing partner and will immediately bolster WWE's event retail business," said Alex Varga, WWE's senior vice president and head of corporate development. "Expanding our partnership will allow WWE to further expand our offering to fans and grow merchandise revenue in 2023 and beyond."

"The WWE has built one of the most incredible global events portfolios across sports and entertainment, and we're honored that they've tapped Fanatics to build on our overarching partnership together," said Molly Adams, Fanatics Commerce's chief strategic retail officer. "Through our expansive global footprint and event retail operations expertise, Fanatics is uniquely positioned to provide an unrivaled event retail experience for WWE's passionate fans at hundreds of events worldwide."

WWE Backlash, hosted by Bad Bunny, will be held at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico José Miguel Agrelot in San Juan, Puerto Rico on May 6. – JEAN E. PALMIERI

Elizabeth Sulcer x Each Other

Styling Spring

Each x Other, the Parisian contemporary luxury brand, has enlisted fashion stylist Elizabeth Sulcer to front the spring ad campaign and curate a capsule collection, Elizabeth Sulcer x Each Other.

Photographed by Alex Artidiello at the Faena Hotel in Miami Beach, Sulcer is seen in motion portraying how the capsule fits the modern woman's everyday life. The images, which were styled by Sulcer, feature such looks as an oversized and belted vegan leather trench and a multipocketed jean jacket paired with a long denim skirt. The campaign, which breaks Tuesday, appears on Instagram.

The capsule dropped Monday and includes four pieces that were curated from the main collection by Sulcer: A logoed T-shirt, an oversized embroidered signature hoodie, a minimal leather shoulder tote and a vegan leather trench. It is available on the brand's website and retails from $75 to $690. It will also be available starting April 26 on Farfetch.

A similar collaboration is planned for the winter.

Sulcer, who studied design at Rhode Island School of Design, is known for her ultra-feminine and creative high fashion stylings.

"What really attracted me to Each x Other is their ability to merge the conversation between lifestyle and fashion," said Sulcer. "They are such a creative brand and are constantly evolving, working on new challenging projects. We are both really interested in merging experimental innovation and timeless luxury; working in this way allows us to reach a broader audience and spark dialogue. Working with the team was so inspiring and collaborative. They have such a positive and creative energy," she said.

Ilan Delouis, creative director of Each x Other, added, "Elizabeth has a great eye for putting the best looks together. The spring/summer 2023 collection is about further building the timeless wardrobe and cementing Each x Other's place in the modern woman's everyday necessities. As the brand honors the foundations it was established upon, it's great to have longtime friends share their perspective and make Each x Other a part of their daily conversation." – LISA LOCKWOOD