

# WWD

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# WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

## Wedding Drama

The bridal collections showing this week at New York Luxury Bridal Fashion Week are expected to reflect the Milan and Paris collections' revival of '80s fashion with all its drama, as seen here in this Ines Di Santo satin-back crepe gown with 3D floral embellishments. *For more, see pages 9 to 35.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICARDO BEAS

### Bidding Battle?

Authentic Luxury Group is said to be eyeing struggling menswear brand John Elliott.

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### Tough Questioning

USTR Jamieson Greer was grilled by senators at a hearing about the 104 percent tariffs on China.

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### Fashion Celebration

The FSF Gala honored Tony Spring, Erin and Sara Foster and Jerry Lorenzo, plus FSF Scholars.

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MEN'S

## Authentic Luxury Group Reportedly Eyeing John Elliott Acquisition

- The California-based luxury streetwear designer has reportedly been experiencing financial issues and closed three of his six stores.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

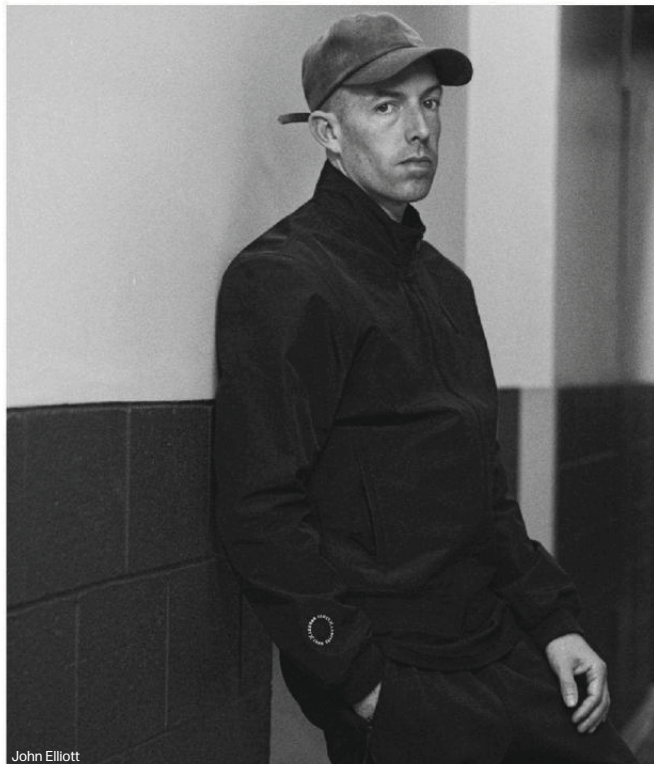
**Authentic Luxury Group** is on the verge of making its first acquisition.

Last October, Saks Global, owner of Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus, and Authentic Brands Group, created a joint venture, Authentic Luxury Group, to grow – and purchase – luxury brands. And sources said John Elliott may be its first addition.

Elliott, a California-based streetwear designer, is apparently searching for a white knight. Three of his six stores – Toronto, Aspen and Madison Avenue – have closed, and the fate of the remaining units is unclear. Elliott is still operating his stores on Lafayette Street in SoHo, West Hollywood and Miami.

Over the weekend, there was a lot of online chatter about Elliott either closing his business or selling it to Authentic Brands Group. However, the John Elliott brand is too small to move the needle at Authentic, which owns more than 50 brands and has \$32 billion in annual global retail sales, and doesn't tick the box of a brand with global expansion opportunities, which Authentic chief executive officer Jamie Salter has long said is a prerequisite to any purchase for his primary company. For Authentic to consider an acquisition, sales would have to be in the \$1 billion range.

While John Elliott doesn't have volume at that level, the brand is among those carried at Saks and Neiman's and wouldn't be held to the same criteria under ALG, sources said. Initially, the plan for



John Elliott

the group was to focus on luxury and accessible luxury names already in the joint venture's portfolio including Barneys New York, Judith Leiber Couture, Hervé Léger and Vince. But the long-term plan is to serve as an incubator for brand growth

through strategic licensing agreements and distribution across fashion, retail, digital, hospitality, real estate, art and travel.

Authentic had no comment and Elliott declined to comment. Sources said if the Authentic Luxury Group deal materializes,

it could happen as early as next week.

Los Angeles-based John Elliott founded his business in 2012 with his lifelong friend and business partner Aaron Lavee and it quickly became a cult favorite among athletes and influencers including Justin and Hailey Bieber, Kanye West, Victor Cruz and LeBron James. He held his first show in New York in the fall of 2015 with a celebrity-packed front row, and then showed several more times during New York Fashion Week before decamping to Paris where he showed his spring 2023 collection in an extravaganza on the rooftop of the Centre Pompidou.

But not long after, sources said, the brand began to lose its mojo and struggle with financial issues. "He changed direction," said one retailer whose sales with the label fell dramatically. "He had a moment," another merchant said, becoming a "modern James Perse, a California lifestyle brand for guys who like sneakers."

Although business during and immediately following the pandemic was strong, sources said, when people returned to work, they looked elsewhere for their wardrobe choices and Elliott was unable to maintain his momentum.

If the brand does indeed get sold to Authentic Luxury Group, it could breathe new life into the business and allow it to expand into other categories and regions.

Elliott grew up in the San Francisco area in the early 1990s when only basketball and skateboarding mattered, he has said. "Young guys would start skate companies with an apparel component, and sometimes those companies would take off. As a child, I saw that as an opportunity. I'm super dyslexic and school is not my forte, but I wanted to own an apparel company and create products that matter to my life," he said in a 2016 interview.

After college, he worked for Villains, a streetwear store in the city and collected vintage jeans, T-shirts and Champion hoodies in anticipation of one day launching his own brand. He started with men's only and two years later, won GQ's Best New Designer of the Year. In 2016, he was nominated for the Menswear Designer of the Year from the CFDA.

FASHION

## Alexandre Vauthier Out at Namesake Brand, Sources Say

- The French brand was purchased out of administration by Revolve in June and staged an off-schedule couture show in January.

BY LILY TEMPLETON AND EVAN CLARK

**PARIS** – It seems no designer is immune to the ongoing great shuffle – not even those with their names on the door.

According to industry sources, French designer Alexandre Vauthier has been pushed out of his 16-year-old namesake brand.

U.S.-based retailer Revolve, which purchased the brand out of administration in June, declined to comment.

Vauthier, an ESMOD graduate who cut his teeth at the side of Thierry Mugler and Jean Paul Gaultier, launched his couture house in 2009 and received the "haute

couture" appellation in 2014.

He became one of the red carpet's go-to couturiers thanks to unabashed glamour that telegraphed a strong, confident female character.

In addition to his couture line, the designer parlayed his volumes, fabric developments and embellishments into more readily reproducible ready-to-wear variations on his daywear tailoring and sultry evening looks.

Despite a roster of A-list wearers that included Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Rihanna and French First Lady Brigitte Macron, the company joined a long list of smaller independent brands faced with slow payments from retailers, political and economic uncertainty, and lingering effects from the COVID-19 pandemic.

After defaulting in November 2023, the brand subsequently filed for court protection with the Paris commercial court in February 2024. It went into receivership

later that month, seeking buyers.

According to French court documents, a joint offer was made by Chinese businessman Zhong Sun and the American e-tailer, a longtime stockist of the French label.

After Zhong pulled out of the bidding, Revolve purchased the company in June, pledging to invest a total of 6 million euros to relaunch the brand. Vauthier was permitted by the French court to retain a stake of up to 20 percent.

In its annual report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission in February, Revolve indicated that the acquisition was made through L.A. Rive Droite, a newly incorporated French joint stock company. It also mentioned that a July shareholder's agreement with Vauthier

saw the designer transfer all intellectual properties and rights relating to the business in return for a 20 percent stake and voting rights in the new company.

Revolve indicated that the total acquisition cost of the purchase was \$500,000 "and primarily related to legal fees."

The brand, which sat out the spring and fall couture seasons in 2024, returned off-schedule to the runway in January with an understated couture lineup that had only hints of Vauthier's erstwhile party-ready exuberance.

Ready-to-wear relaunched for spring 2025 on a revamped e-commerce site under the "Vauthier Paris" moniker, with a new logo and oblique references to a namesake designer.

Backstage at Alexandre Vauthier couture, spring 2023.



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Jamieson Greer

## BUSINESS

## Congress Grills U.S. Trade Czar as Trump Pushes Triple-digit China Tariffs

● U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer fielded agitated questions from lawmakers concerned about the impact of new duties.

BY KATE NISHIMURA

**Despair and confusion** overtook the U.S. stock market on Tuesday following the White House's confirmation that President Donald Trump would make good on his threat to impose triple-digit tariffs on China-made goods.

While Wall Street saw a cautious rally in the morning hours, any hopes that the administration might reach positive outcomes in negotiations with trade partners in advance of the midnight deadline dissipated as the day progressed.

China, which hit back at the U.S. with retaliatory duties following Trump's reciprocal tariffs announcement last week, will see an added duty burden of 50 percent beginning Wednesday, bringing its all-in tariff total to a staggering 104 percent.

As White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt delivered the verdict from the briefing room, U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer faced probing questions from Senate lawmakers about the impacts the duties could have – and the effects they are already having – on people and industry.

Constituents, U.S.-based retailers and manufacturers are withering under the weight of the administration's trade policies, they said. Several Republicans seemed incredulous. What is the administration's plan, and how long can this go on?

For nearly three hours, lawmakers grilled Greer, whose responses, while measured, offered few new insights. And what he did reveal contributed to the consternation that many are already feeling.

Much confusion stems from the muddled messaging on the purpose of the

tariffs – whether they are being used as points of leverage or bargaining chips, or whether the president's assertions about raking in billions in revenue for the federal government are the true objective.

"The president has indicated that he's willing to negotiate with parties that want to pursue reciprocal trade with the United States," Greer said from the hot seat, but he acknowledged, "We don't have any particular timeline set on that."

"The trade deficit has been decades in the making, and it's not going to be solved overnight," he added.

The response was unsatisfactory for Sen. James Lankford (R-Ok.), who spoke on behalf of companies that shifted sourcing strategies during Trump's first term in office. He pointed to an Oklahoma brand that spent "millions of dollars" retooling its supply chain to decrease dependence on China only to be hit now with staggering duties on the goods it imports from Vietnam.

"They spent all the money, spent all the time, shifted out of China, got to Vietnam and established there. Now they're saying, 'We've got giant costs in Vietnam at this point,' so they're going to have to renegotiate with every single retailer that they sell to," including Walmart Inc., Target Corp. and Costco, he said. Do they pause those talks or press on, not knowing what the coming days and weeks will hold?

Greer had no answer to the query, but reiterated oft-stated statistics about the size of Vietnam's trade surplus with the U.S. While it's true that Vietnam imports far less from the U.S. than it takes in (the trade imbalance rings in at \$123.5 billion) Lankford said succinctly, "I don't anticipate that we're going to ever have equal trade with Vietnam. We're a much larger economy than they are." Most countries in the world will simply never buy as much as we purchase, he added, illuminating the crux of the issue.

The Oklahoma senator also pointed to issues plaguing domestic apparel

manufacturers. "Obviously, this is a challenge," as they rely on "different pieces that are bought from different countries," he said, referring to the inputs and materials that many U.S. cut-and-sew operators source from overseas. Will there be an exclusion process for the elements that make up a finished garment?

No, Greer said. "The president has been clear with me and with others that he does not intend to have exclusions and exemptions," he said. "I've heard from textile manufacturers for many years that they would love to have a situation where Western Hemisphere textile and garment manufacturing is more competitive, and maybe we're setting up the conditions for that."

Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) called the USTR's bluff, saying that the administration's spray-and-pray tariff policy undermines nearshore friends and collaborators as well as offshore foes. "I still cannot fathom why we are treating Canada and Mexico, our largest trading partners, basically the same way we're treating Beijing. It doesn't make any sense to me; it makes no sense that we would do it all at the same time like that," he said of the indiscriminate nature of the tariffs.

Speaking about small businesses in his home state, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) accused Greer of deflecting questions about immediate tariff impacts and reverting to the party line: "Short-term pain for long-term gain."

That mentality won't do for SMBs and mom-and-pops, which could be out of business before the dust settles on any forthcoming trade negotiations. "Rhode Island is a small business state," and some of its manufacturers have an integral role to play in domestic supply chains, he said. But they need access to the imported inputs necessary to produce.

"If we're not looking out for these small businesses that are actually going to have to lock their doors and close the shutters

and fire their employees and go out of business, I think you've missed a huge hole in the problem that these tariffs have created," he said. "If all you're listening to is the big, mega-corporations who can move things around the world and have the resources to dodge these effects, you're not getting the straight story."

Greer said the administration has a trade advisory council made up chiefly of small business stakeholders. "If a small business has gone broke, it's not very amenable to a meeting. They don't exist any longer," Whitehouse retorted.

Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) continued to push on the exclusion issue, pointing to a business in his home state – Bamblu, a maker of bamboo-based sleepwear and sheets, owned by local entrepreneur Angela Hawkins. "Angela's products are made overseas, because you can't really find bamboo fabric made in the United States. What should Angela do? Pay the new tax, raise her prices and risk losing customers? Or is there a process for her to apply for an exclusion from the Trump White House?" he asked.

"She'll have to work with her business partners and find out about sourcing," Greer said, reiterating that at this point, the White House has no intention of implementing an exclusion process as it did during Trump's first term for Section 301 tariffs on China-made goods.

"So she'll just have to figure it out," Warnock surmised. "She might even go out of business."

Greer may have hoped for an ally in Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), the longest-serving Republican in the upper chamber, but the Senate stalwart has recently made his feelings clear: the legislative branch has delegated too much power to the president on trade issues. Grassley last week introduced bipartisan legislation that would check the president's authority when it comes to tariffs, reinforcing Congress' ability to remove them at any point.

He did attempt to gain clarity on the foremost issue nagging at lawmakers, business owners and the general public.

"My question to you is: in the medium- to the long-term, do you plan to turn these tariffs into trade deals to reduce tariffs and nontariff barriers? I support that," Grassley said. "On the other hand, if the purpose is to stall on negotiations in order to keep tariffs high for the sole purpose of feeding the U.S. Treasury, I oppose that. So is this administration for trade reciprocity, or for Treasury replenishment?"

Greer said the president still plans to engage in negotiations "immediately" with countries that are interested in lowering trade barriers and trade surpluses. But while the administration's strategy has been far-reaching and wide-ranging, affecting more than 180 countries across the globe, resolutions will be reached on a "country by country" basis.

In short, it will take time that many U.S. businesses don't have to waste. The USTR Ambassador said the trade agency has fielded calls from officials from 50 nations since announcing the reciprocal duties last week – and yet, all of the president's proposed tariffs are slated to go into effect Wednesday.

"There are going to be some countries that are not able to address their nontariff barriers or tariffs or the deficit fully, and there will be others who I think will be able to do that, and...the president will have the option of making a deal with them," Greer said.

"We're certainly seeking reciprocity," he added, acknowledging that there will be a "revenue effect" for the federal government once tariff payments start rolling in. "But we need to reshore manufacturing, to get rid of our agricultural deficit and we need to make sure that if countries are going to trade with us, it has to be on a reciprocal basis."

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## BUSINESS

# Victoria's Secret Names 3 Brand Presidents To Carry Out CEO Hillary Super's Vision



Anne Stephenson



Amy Kocourek



Ali Dillon

- The former Savage x Fenty chief has both promoted internally and gone outside – to Alex Mill and Kendra Scott – to build her leadership team.

BY EVAN CLARK

**Call them** the Super Squad.

Hillary Super, who left Savage x Fenty to become chief executive officer of Victoria's Secret & Co. in September, has now assembled her team.

The lingerie giant, which has rewritten its org chart several times in the past, will now have three brand presidents reporting directly to Super.

"Creating dedicated brand leadership roles is a recognition of the progress we've made and the extraordinary potential

still ahead for us," Super told WWD in a statement. "We are working from a position of strength, and I believe evolving our organization to further differentiate our iconic brands and deepen our emotional connection to our customers will supercharge our growth."

Last month Super laid out her Path to Potential strategic vision for Victoria's Secret, which has the company recommitting to the Pink brand, reasserting its authority in bras, growing the beauty, sport and swim businesses and updating its go-to-market approach.

The go-to-market changes will have the retailer reducing production lead times and updating branding strategies.

Responsible for executing that vision in the company's various divisions will be:

Anne Stephenson, who will be president of Victoria's Secret as of May 12. A 25-year veteran of the industry, Stephenson is currently chief merchandising officer of the company, having rejoined Victoria's Secret in 2023 after serving in chief merchant roles

at Full Beauty Brands and Torrid.

Ali Dillon, who will join the company on May 12 and become president of Pink. Most recently, Dillon was president of Alex Mill, where she led the overall business, including strategy, product, operations and growth. Earlier in her career, she worked at both Gap Inc. and J.Crew.

Amy Kocourek, who was named president of beauty last month. Kocourek had previously been chief merchandising officer at accessories retailer Kendra Scott. She has also worked at Kohl's, where she helped secure the Sephora partnership, as well as American Eagle Outfitters, Hot Topic and Old Navy.

Super said the three brand leaders have expertise in "telling clear, compelling brand and product stories inspired directly by a profound understanding of customer aspirations."

"This change makes us stronger and signals the next era of our growth around the globe," the CEO said.

Storytelling has always been a big part of the Victoria's Secret business – from the massive, traffic-stopping billboards to the megawatt runway shows.

While the brand lost its own narrative for a time, coming under scrutiny for being overly invested in the male gaze and not inclusive enough, it's been working hard to win its way back to consumers' hearts.

Super has argued that the company has what it takes.

Last month, she told Wall Street analysts: "In North America, we have approximately 20 percent market share, 25 million active customers, and 38 million loyalty members. We have the second-largest brand following in the world on social media with 88 million followers on Instagram alone."

Now it's time to really take advantage of that oversized presence in the consumer's mind and wardrobe.

## BEAUTY

# Kering Beauté Names New CEO at Creed

- Veteran beauty executive Nathalie Berger-Duquene will take the reins of the fragrance brand on May 6.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

**PARIS** – Kering Beauté has named veteran beauty executive Nathalie Berger-Duquene chief executive officer of Creed, effective May 6.

This follows the departure of Sarah Rotheram at the end of October, as reported. In the interim, Kering Beauté's CEO Raffaella Cornaggia has been managing the high-end niche fragrance brand.

Charged with spearheading the next phase of development for the high-potential business, Berger-Duquene will be a member of Kering Beauté's executive committee and will be based in London, reporting to Cornaggia.

Like her new boss, she joins Kering from The Estée Lauder Cos., where Berger-Duquene was global general brand

manager of Balmain Beauty since 2022.

A graduate of French business school ESSEC, she started her career at Guerlain prior to joining L'Oréal in 2005, where she held various positions at brands including Biotherm, Helena Rubinstein and Lancôme, before being named general manager for fragrances at L'Oréal Luxe France.

In 2019, she joined Lauder as general manager EMEA for Tom Ford Beauty and Kilian Paris, subsequently being appointed senior vice president global marketing at Tom Ford Beauty.

Kering Beauté revealed it was acquiring Creed in late June 2023 in a deal that reportedly cost about \$3.8 billion. That marked the French luxury group's first major acquisition after starting to build an in-house beauty division in early February 2023.

Creed is also the first niche fragrance brand to be owned by Kering, giving it entrée into a red-hot product segment. Since the acquisition, the brand has expanded its feminine fragrance portfolio,

with the launches of Carmina and Queen of Silk.

Creed logged sales of more than 300 million euros in 2024, with a strong performance in the United States, said Jean-Marc Duplaix, Kering's deputy CEO in charge of operations and finance.

"It's a brand with much greater potential than that," he told a press conference in February. "There's a lot of demand for unique fragrances, and that's really Creed's proposition."

The house dates back to 1760, when it was begun by James Henry Creed during the reign of King George III of England.

Over the years the Creed family produced more than 200 perfumes, including the cult bestselling men's fragrance Aventus Cologne, Viking, Himalaya and Green Irish Tweed.

Based in Paris, with a factory in nearby Fontainebleau, Creed manufactures many of its own essences using a traditional infusion technique that enables the brand to maintain the quality and authenticity of its fragrances.

Other fragrance brands in Kering Beauté's portfolio include Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga, Alexander McQueen, Pomellato and Qeelin.

Kering Beauté is using Creed as a gateway into the high-end perfume segment in terms of distribution, production and logistics, Duplaix said.

After the introduction of a range of niche fragrances for Bottega Veneta last year, it's working on a launch for Balenciaga this year.

"In the next few years, perfume is the absolute priority for Kering Beauté," said Kering chairman and CEO François-Henri Pinault.



Nathalie Berger-Duquene

## FASHION

# Fashion Scholarship Fund Hosts 88th Annual Awards



Erin Foster,  
Sara Foster and  
Jordan Foster.

- The event honored Fear of God's Jerry Lorenzo, Favorite Daughter's Sara and Erin Foster and Macy's Inc.'s Tony Spring.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND

The Fashion Scholarship Fund's 88th Annual Awards Celebration drew a big fashion crowd Monday night honoring Jerry Lorenzo, founder and creative director of Fear of God; Sara and Erin Foster, cofounders Favorite Daughter, and Tony Spring, chairman and chief executive officer of Macy's Inc.

Held at the Glasshouse in New York City, the gala celebrated the Class of 2025 FSF Scholars and Virgil Abloh "Post-Modern" Scholars, a group of 160 college students who have demonstrated their ability to disrupt and transform the fashion industry as creatives or as marketing and business professionals.

The event was hosted by Christian Siriano and his longtime friend and muse, the model, entrepreneur and advocate, Coco Rocha.

Among those who attended were Shannon Abloh, Anna Wintour, Jordyn Woods, Wes Gordon, KidSuper's Colm Dillane, Daniella Kallmeyer, Kenneth Cole, Jonathan Cohen, Jackson Wiederhoeft, Bibhu Mohapatra, Maxwell Osbourne, Dao-Yi Chow, Kim Shui, Beckett Fogg, Michelle Ochs, Lew Roach, Gabriella Karefa-Johnson, Michaela Erlanger, Jordan Foster, Bruce Pask, Emily Essner, Abbey Doneger, Paul Rosengard, Paolo Riva, Steven Kolb, Fern Mallis and Kristin Maa.

The FSF awarded more than \$1.9 million in scholarships to 160 FSF Scholars, including the newest class of 60 Virgil Abloh "Post-Modern" Scholarship Fund Scholars (up from 30 last year), who attend a network of 75 colleges and universities across the country, all of whom were in attendance and had their work showcased at the event.

Last month, the four highest-scoring Scholar Finalists competed for the FSF's \$25,000 Chairman's Award by presenting their in-depth case studies centered on the intersection between fashion and technology to a panel of judges representing all sectors of the industry. Each scholar finalist presented their case study topic, personal statement about their background, inspiration and intention for their future career in the industry. The four finalists were Chloe Allen (Virginia Commonwealth University), Fatmata Camara, (LIM College), Ryan Cheung (University of California, Berkeley), and Flora Medina (SCAD, Savannah Campus), who each gave a presentation at the event about their background, inspiration and intention for their future career in the industry.

The winner of the \$25,000 Chairman's Award is Camara, who was presented the award by John Tighe, FSF board president and five-time NBA all-Star and New York Knicks' Karl-Anthony Towns.

In Camara's case study, she proposed a "Smart React" initiative that "leverages AI-driven bio-sensitive technology and a Progressive Web Application to revolutionize skin care personalization. By integrating real-time feedback through color-changing indicators, users can monitor hydration, oil production and pH balance, receiving personalized skin care recommendations tailored to their unique skin conditions."

In accepting her award, Camara said, "Thank you to my college LIM for always pushing me. Thank you to Macy's for taking a chance on me and lastly, thank you to my mom for always pushing me and telling me I can do anything."

Camara, who is completing her online degree at LIM College, and works as an assistant buyer of outdoor active at Macy's, told WWD that she plans to use the money to pay off her college loans. "It's not very interesting," she joked. As for her career goals, she said she hopes to develop her skills as a merchant and continue to

So after the game, I get a chance to show myself in colorful graphic shirts and pajamas and stuff like that."

Towns said he's always loved fashion but didn't have the resources. "So I wanted to be able, when I had the chance now, to show my fashion sense, to be able to have those pieces that really can show who I am. I want to be able to give the next generation that, and give them the

opportunity to dress the next superstar," said the Knicks center.

In accepting his award, Fear of God's Lorenzo said, "To all the dreamers here tonight, know that you are respected and valued. Your stories are necessary. Know that it is simply your job to have a mission, and most importantly, your responsibility to have character. Hold onto your faith, and hold onto your vision, as that is truly all you have, all you need, and it is more than enough."

During the event, Lorenzo said he was heading to Paris and was looking potentially to make a move there. He has headquarters in Milan and Los Angeles. He said he's finishing

designing a collection that he's showing in Paris in June and finalizing some looks for the Met Gala. "We got a lot of work ahead," he said. Lorenzo said he has two physical stores in South Korea, but hasn't opened a flagship yet in the U.S. He's looking for that right now, and it will probably be in L.A.

Erin and Sara Foster both gave the students advice upon accepting their award, with the message that it's important to pursue your own story and not someone else's.

"Success is a combination of so many things you do have control over," said Erin Foster. "It is deciding that regardless of anyone who doesn't quote 'get your sense of humor,' or your 'sense of fashion,' it is yours and it is special and it's OK that they don't get it. It's not theirs, it's yours. Stay true to it." She said that she and her sister made a decision years ago to start saying "yes" to things.

"We started Favorite Daughter to create the clothes that we wanted. Not the clothes people told us we should make... authentically and unapologetically us... We immerse ourselves in every part of it because if we are going to do something we commit to it fully," said Erin Foster.

Sara Foster said, "It is so easy to think you want someone else's journey, or they have an instinct that you're lacking, but I'm telling you they don't. You have it. You, the one who is sitting there thinking we mean everyone here except you. You have everything you need, if you are willing to trust yourself, learn from other people, be enjoyable to work with, and take responsibility when you make a mistake."

Macy's Spring was presented his award by Iman El Khatib, vice president, divisional merchandise manager of kids' apparel at Macy Inc. and a 2008 FSF Scholar.

"For more than 20 years, our partnership with the Fashion Scholarship Fund has given us a front-row seat. We've seen firsthand how it cultivates rising talent, provides students with the opportunities to tackle real-world retail challenges and contributes new ideas. Today, as the company's CEO, I serve as the steward of our iconic brands pushing us into the future — and yet I'm humbled when I look back about how, for more than a century, many retail careers were launched at Macy's and Bloomingdale's. Many of our alumni today are thriving entrepreneurs of their own businesses — or in fact, work for many of the brands represented in the room tonight. And yes, even with our competitors," said Spring.



Fatmata  
Camara



Jordyn Woods and  
Karl-Anthony Towns

branch into strategy for a global company. "That is ultimately what would make me really happy and excited. But I'm open to the intersection of technology, so I think my dream job might not exist yet, and I'm fine with that," said Camara, whose background includes jobs at Target, H&M, Garage and an internship at Tiffany.

Towns, a partner to the FSF, established an annual named scholarship program this year that begins with two recipients from the 2025 FSF Class of Scholars who have demonstrated an interest in the intersection of fashion and sports.

The two winners were Aaron Williams, a student at Lehigh University, and Paris Cooke-Brown, a student at Brown University, who will each receive \$10,000.

Discussing the award, Towns told WWD that that he loves the art of fashion. "I don't just look at it as a piece of clothing. I'm here to serve others and to be able to give back to the next generation of art innovators and fashion innovators." He said creating these scholarships was an opportunity he couldn't pass up.

Asked whether his pre-and post-game style reflects his personality, Towns said, "For sure, I think it does. I'm just always expressing myself and being who I am. So I think with my pregame fits, I've been fortunate enough that people have taken notice and really respect my fashion sense." He said some days he wants to dress casually and comfortable, "and some days I may want to feel it's my runway.

## BUSINESS

# Tommy Hilfiger Launches Sailing Collection

- The 22-piece capsule, marking 40 years of nautical heritage, reimagines archival sailing-inspired silhouettes with a modern twist.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD

**“Sailing has always been part of my world. The freedom, adventure, and bold aesthetics of the lifestyle have inspired me for as long as I can remember,”** said Tommy Hilfiger, whose brand is launching the Hilfiger Sailing Collection Wednesday. It’s a contemporary reimagining of archival silhouettes inspired by the Hilfiger brand’s deep-rooted connection to the sea.

From the regatta to the runway, Hilfiger has drawn inspiration from sailing since the ‘90s, fusing seafaring tradition with cutting-edge innovation. As the PVH-owned brand celebrates 40 years of nautical heritage, the capsule looks to bring new life into classic designs.

“The open water and the yachting lifestyle have always carried a sense of freedom and adventure,” said Hilfiger. “Since the early ‘90s, our collections have captured the spirit of the sea, embracing maritime influences and blending relaxed sailing-inspired design with timeless prep. This collection is a tribute to that passion, a modern interpretation of our nautical heritage that remains true to the pioneering spirit of the brand.”

The 22-piece capsule is inspired by the energy of sailing down the Hudson River. Technical regatta jackets layer over fleece hoodies and striped Ts, while a woman’s nylon deck coat is redefined with fresh, feminine proportions and reversible functionality.

The men’s and women’s capsule features iconic motifs such as ropes, pulleys and

signal flags, which are woven into the collection. The color palette highlights reds and greens, adding a contemporary touch.

Retail prices range from \$65 to \$383, and the sizes go from XS to XXL.

To create the collection, Hilfiger said they dug into their archives and reinterpreted some of their most iconic sailing pieces through a modern lens. “We researched much-loved sailing silhouettes – regatta jackets, fleece hoodies and striped knitwear – and refined them with fresh proportions, premium fabrics and nautical details. It felt very timely to create sophisticated takes on iconic motifs like ropes, pulleys and flags that give it a fresh coastal feeling. It’s a collection that strikes a balance between heritage and innovation making timeless sailing style feel new again,” said Hilfiger.

Asked if he has a personal favorite from the collection, Hilfiger said the reversible regatta jacket, which he called “a true icon.”

“One side features our signature flag logo while the other comes in a rich contemporary green. It’s a perfect balance of heritage and modernity, paying tribute to 40 years of sailing inspiration while feeling fresh and relevant today. Whether you’re on the water or in the city, it’s bold, classic and effortlessly cool – everything I love about the collection,” said Hilfiger.

Forty years ago, Hilfiger’s original logo was introduced as a bold, rectangular “flag,” with Tommy and Hilfiger framed in navy bars. Designed to evoke a sense of nautical heritage, the logo integrated Hilfiger’s initials in maritime signals – THJ (Thomas Jacob Hilfiger).

The Hilfiger Sailing Collection is available on [tommy.com](http://tommy.com), in Tommy Hilfiger stores worldwide and through select wholesale partners. The brand is also sponsoring the U.S. Sail GP Team.

Tommy Hilfiger is launching the Hilfiger Sailing Collection.



## BUSINESS

# Blng AI Raises \$3 Million in Seed Funding

- Investors in the AI-powered jewelry design platform include Speedinvest, Cove Fund, eSeed and Focal.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

**PARIS** – Blng AI, a sketch-to-design GenAI and virtual studio for jewelry, announced Tuesday it had raised \$3 million in seed funding.

The investment round was led by venture capital firm Speedinvest, with participation from Cove Fund, eSeed and Focal.

The funds will support the company’s preparations for the public launch of its design platform, helping it scale its teams in Europe and the U.S. and expanding its production capacity to meet demand from luxury brands and independent jewelers.

Blng AI’s goal is to reshape the design process by offering advanced AI tools that help to turn sketches into production-ready designs by doing away with time-consuming manual revisions and renderings.

It offers three integrated AI-powered solutions that include instant design visualization; generation of high-fidelity marketing content that removes the need for photo shoots, and retail-oriented experiences geared toward real-time interactive customization.

“This year is all about rollout and

Valérie Leblond and Dumène Comptoi



refinement,” Blng AI cofounder and chief executive officer Valérie Leblond told WWD.

In the coming weeks, the company will launch its design software, which has a waitlist of more than 4,000. It is also expanding the customization and automated marketing content services, and there are plans for a subscription-based app targeting a larger segment of the jewelry industry.

“At the same time, we’re laying the groundwork for the next stage of our business by gradually integrating our self-service and enterprise offerings into one

unified platform,” she said. “The goal is an AI-powered creative suite that seamlessly connects designers, manufacturers and retailers with the goal to simplify collaboration, enable personalization at scale and accelerate time to market.”

Blng AI was cofounded in 2023 by Leblond, who was previously program director of UCLA Architecture and Urban Design’s IDEAS research platform and had a decade-long role at Cirque du Soleil as senior manager of special projects leading creative partnerships in the R&D department; and Dumène Comptoi, who

holds 10 engineering patents for his work spanning digital to physical design, vfx and immersive experiences. He has led the creation of AI-driven personalized avatars and characters at Walt Disney Imagineering and Disney Streaming for some 12 years.

“What sets them apart is their sophisticated and technical understanding of specialized materials like metals and gemstones, 3D visualization and reflections, combined with an exceptionally intuitive platform that achieves a level of precision and realism that generic AI tools simply cannot match – their decade of experience at Disney Animatronics really comes to life here,” said Speedinvest’s Max Wilhelm, lauding Leblond and Comptoi’s “infectious passion combined with a pipeline of top tier luxury brands.”

Last year, the start-up received a special mention at the 2024 LVMH Innovation Award at VivaTech fair in Paris. The tech summit was “a turning point,” Leblond said. “It gave us extraordinary visibility – not just in luxury, but across the broader tech and creative industries.”

The company saw a dramatic surge of interest following its demonstration at the French luxury group’s booth that featured a Tiffany & Co. ring design in realistic rendered images. It led to “new enterprise relationships and opened doors to collaborations that might have taken years to build otherwise,” the CEO continued.

Headquartered in Los Angeles, the company also has a residence at Paris’ Station F tech hub through LVMH’s accelerator program.

**THIS PAGE:** Sareh Nouri embroidered lace gown and Anne Barge chantilly lace topper; Binata Birdcage veil; Toni Federici veil; Anna Sui gloves; Gigi Burris clip; For Future Reference vintage 1980s earrings in 14-karat yellow gold with mabe pearls and accent diamond.

**ON THE COVER:** Ines Di Santo satin-back crepe gown with 3D floral embellishments; Monvieve hat; De Beers Infinity Heart round brilliant diamond ring set in platinum; Retrofête gold Hilma gemstone earrings; Crown Brilliance Carmona necklace in 18-karat white gold with lab-grown diamonds; stylist's own collar.

# Wedding Drama

The bridal collections showing this week at New York Luxury Bridal Fashion Week are expected to reflect the Milan and Paris collections' revival of '80s fashion with all its drama.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICARDO BEAS



# Market Moments

A snapshot of the industry's latest launches, collaborations and up-and-coming designers.

## Reem Acra Debuts Bridal Diffusion Line at NYBFW

Diffusion lines certainly aren't new. Over the years, there's been Marc by Marc Jacobs, Michael by Michael Kors, and now there's another that speaks exclusively to the budget-conscious bride: Roses by Reem Acra.

"For more than two decades we've been a destination for brides seeking luxury, elegance and romance," Acra said, adding that Roses offers all three qualities but at an accessible price, "allowing every bride to be a Reem Acra bride."

While the Lebanese designer caters mostly to private clients with custom order eveningwear, she's been making an effort lately to court off-the-rack shoppers. She introduced a less expensive range of

transitional ready-to-wear for fall 2025 and this diffusion line is an adjacent step toward broadening the reach of her wedding business.

Launching for spring 2026 on the first day of New York Bridal Fashion Week, Roses was presented Monday in tandem with Reem Acra couture, putting the two on equal footing while also highlighting their shared aesthetic.

"For this inaugural collection, I wanted it to have a distinct vintage allure," shared Acra, who mined her archives for silhouettes that have made her a fixture at red carpet events and high-profile nuptial ceremonies since the start of her career. They were reworked "in a simplified way," she added, without laborious

embellishments to keep the dresses light and the production costs low.

Prices for the 21 pieces range max out at \$5,000, but Acra's sophisticated élan is still prevalent in the use of Mikado – her fabric of choice – and lace with rose motifs that hint at the brand's name.

Acra will continue to offer a high-touch bridal experience from her New York atelier and is partnering with a selection of boutiques to roll out Roses globally.

"We look forward to evolving the collection, not only through innovative design, but thoughtfully expanding to reach new brides through retail partnerships and brand experiences that bring her into the world of Reem Acra," she said. — ARI STARK

A dress from the inaugural Roses by Reem Acra collection for spring 2026.



Sareh Nouri bridal.



A sketch of Sareh Nouri's upcoming second flagship store in Chevy Chase, Md.

## Sareh Nouri to Open Second Flagship

Luxury bridal and eveningwear designer Sareh Nouri is not only gearing up to launch her new bridalwear collection during this week's New York Bridal Fashion Week, but also working on opening her second flagship in Chevy Chase, Md., this summer.

"The success of our first location exceeded my expectations," the designer

told WWD of opening her first flagship at the Short Hills Mall in New Jersey shortly after the pandemic ended, before relocating to its current space at Livingston Town Center in 2023.

"Having our own space gave us the ability to offer more customizations, rush orders and an elevated level of service. In addition, we would have brides come to our [nearby] design studio to do alterations, which they loved, because they also got a tour of where everything was made," she said. "I also introduced my evening collection at Short Hills, which brought us incredible visibility,

because it's a very luxury Mall. So a mom spending \$4,000 and up on an evening dress was really not an issue."

Nouri explained that when deciding to open a second flagship, she homed in on Chevy Chase, Md., in order to grow her brand's presence with brides across the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area – a place that also holds a special place in her heart.

"I grew up [in the D.C. area], went to school there and got married there; my childhood friends, mom and in-laws live there. It was kind of a full-circle moment," she explained. The location – a "sophisticated, high-end

market," she said, will also allow her to further expand eveningwear, which the designer said her friends and family noted was lacking in the area.

"It's also going to help us further grow our presence there, and introduce my brand to a new clientele. I had a lot of brides from D.C. that would drive to come to the Livingston flagship, so we knew there was a market there. Also, Chevy Chase is a very regal, old money area, with a lot of young professionals and high end retailers, so I felt like that was a really nice, nice area to open in," she said.

Nouri plans to open the second flagship in early summer, looking to the end of May or beginning of June. The store design will be cohesive to her Livingston flagship, with a modern, clean aesthetic for her made in New Jersey dresses, "to take center stage," she said.

The brick-and-mortar will offer her luxury bridalwear collections, priced between \$5,000 to \$16,000, give or take with customizations and add-ons; the eveningwear line, priced between \$4,000 to \$7,000 and accessories.

"Both stores are by appointment because we want to give that personalized, exclusive shopping experience. Of course, we welcome walk-ins if there is availability, especially for evening collections, because we want to accommodate clients looking for last minute, special occasion dresses," she said. — EMILY MERCER

## David's Bridal Weds With Marchesa

David's Bridal is getting a little luxury lift by engaging with Marchesa.

Still working its way back after a bankruptcy filing in 2023, the big-box retailer has been seeking out new collaborations to generate buzz and recapture market share. Among them is a storefront with Amazon – The Edit by DB Studio – and a menswear collection with Perry Ellis, both of which were announced earlier in April. Marchesa is the latest to sign on, offering its Couture and Notte lines via David's Bridal's website.

"We're not just expanding our selections or naming a new partner, we're working with the leading names in bridal and couture fashion to reshape the way consumers find and shop for luxury," shared Kelly Cook, chief executive officer of David's Bridal. "Our partnership with Marchesa, along with our expanded in-house couture offerings and shopping tools, are redefining the category."

Georgina Chapman, founder and

creative director of Marchesa, said she "couldn't be more thrilled to partner with David's," adding that as an industry leader, David's Bridal provides clients with specialized wedding expertise, making them an ideal match.

The full Marchesa collection will be available to order through David's Bridal from Wednesday. Notte pieces start at \$695, while Couture wedding and evening gowns run upward of \$8,995 and have a lead time of 16 weeks from purchase. Completing the look, there is potential for David's Bridal to add fine and costume jewelry as well as shoes by Marchesa to its assortment in the future.

While no designs are exclusive to the retailer, customers will be able to get their hands on archival Marchesa runway styles as well two of Chapman's own award show dresses, which could easily make the transition from red carpet to aisle for any member of the wedding party. — A.S.



A Marchesa Couture wedding dress available at David's Bridal.



A Marchesa Couture dress available at the retailer.

## Runway Brides

A look at the top spring 2025 designer looks for fashion-forward brides searching for alternative, runway-to-aisle wedding wardrobes, spanning from Richard Quinn's fantasy gowns to Alexander McQueen's ethereal and moody ensemble. BY EMILY MERCER



Richard Quinn



Max Mara

Jason Wu



Jacquemus

Toteme



Wiederhoeft



Alexander McQueen

Alaïa



Proenza Schouler



JW Anderson



Giambattista Valli



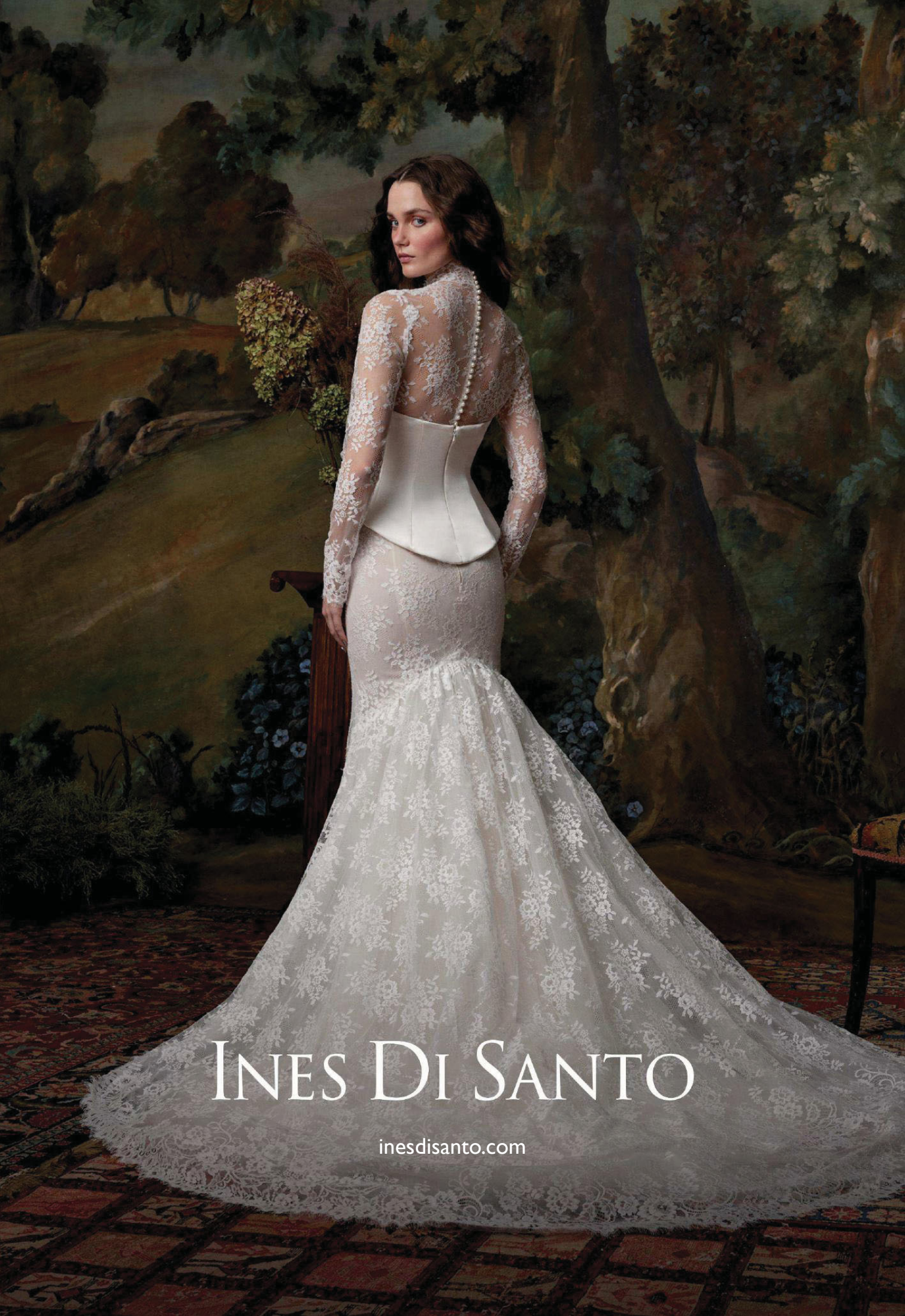
Monse



Genny

Alexander McQueen and Proenza Schouler photographs by Giovanni Giacomini; Richard Quinn by Francesco Gomez de Villaboa; Wiederhoeft by George Chinsee; Jason Wu by Stephanie Geddes; Giambattista Valli by Delphine Achard





# INES DI SANTO

[inesdisanto.com](http://inesdisanto.com)

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a white wedding dress with a capelet and long red gloves, stands in a marble hallway. The dress features a high collar and a large white floral applique on the shoulder. The background consists of large, polished marble columns with intricate veining.

MARK INGRAM

BRIDE

•



FAIRCHILD STUDIO X MARK INGRAM

# Mark Ingram Atelier Is Forever Changing the Bridal Shopping Experience

The atelier's newly launched "ROOM SERVICE" concierge is providing future brides a full bespoke experience.



**W**HEN IT COMES to shopping for a bride's big day, the experience can be deeply emotional and memorable for everyone involved.

No one knows this better than luxury bridal designer and bridal boutique owner Mark Ingram, who has held the hand of countless brides through their own journeys. Since establishing his eponymous brand more than two decades ago, Ingram has a reputation for creating a luxury experience built solely on word-of-mouth referrals – with many generational brides passing through his atelier.

Inspired by these moments, Ingram marked his Madison Avenue Atelier's first anniversary by launching "Room Service" – a luxurious, bespoke concierge service that builds upon his legacy of excellence, attention to detail and being client-focused.

"Dress shopping in New York City can be very chaotic between the traffic of the city and buzz of business in bridal salons – the 'Room Service' experience completely calms that," said Grace L., a recent client of Mark Ingram's VIP "Room Service" experience. "I was lucky enough to find my dream gown while feeling like I was just enjoying an aperitif with my closest people."

Ingram told Fairchild Studio that his childhood memories of shopping on Fifth Avenue with his grandparents combined with the magic of department stores influenced his desire to create "an experience deeply rooted in a lovely past with the spark of what is modern and relevant."

Abby G., another "Room Service" client, said "Mark Ingram is truly second to none and their attention to their brides is truly remarkable. From the pre-appointment consultation to the Champagne service and the entire appointment, my stylist did not miss a beat."

Here, Dawn Bromander, president and chief operating officer, and Annie Cavallo, director of marketing and client experience at Mark Ingram, sat down with Fairchild

Studio to share insights about the boutique's new "Room Service" experience, what continues to make Mark Ingram stand out and more.

**Fairchild Studio: Who is the Mark Ingram bride?**

**Dawn Bromander:** Since 2001, Mark Ingram Atelier brides have been sophisticated fashion-seekers who love and understand quality, craftsmanship and luxurious design. Brides are interested in Mark's unique point of view as both a designer and a longtime industry tastemaker. His relationships with the finest designers in the world allow us to work together to perfect his edit and bring exclusive designs available only in the heart of the city.

**Fairchild Studio: What differentiates the Mark Ingram "Room Service" experience from a typical bridal appointment?**

**D.B.:** Let's start with our vision. We are not interested in providing a typical bridal appointment. "Room Service" is an extension of the service we are proud to provide to every bride.

Prior to opening the new atelier, a great deal of time and creative thought went into what we wanted the atelier experience to feel like. We revisited the past and envisioned the future in every decision made about how we could best partner with the bride to create the experience that she was looking for.

Every bride that comes to us becomes a part of our DNA when she walks in. The space was designed to bring the bride and her family into our family and celebrate together. She will find our environment deeply rooted in Mr. Ingram's personal life with elements of his family history, the warmth of his personal entertaining style and a seasoned team that is both engaged and knowledgeable.

Our "Room Service" is an extension of our service for the bride who is looking for a little extra magic in her "bridal era." Aside from the services within each package, what we strive to achieve first and foremost is just a deeper touch of care and intention behind helping a bride select her wedding gown with the luxury of extended time to shop for her entire wedding wardrobe.

**Fairchild Studio: What does the "Room Service" consultation look like from start to finish?**

**Annie Cavallo:** When a client selects an appointment with our "Room Service," they are scheduled for an introductory chat to discuss the service details and food and beverage preferences of their appointment. All of our "Room Service" appointments include professional ring cleaning and reservation assistance before or after their visit to extend this unique NYC experience.

Once those nuances are selected, our concierge team moves into the reason for the visit: the fashion. They ask for links to Pinterest boards and gowns brides are loving along with details of their venue, season and aesthetic. The goal is to have the client or planner provide a clear picture of the event so our stylist can prepare, curate and call in gowns in advance to create a highly personalized experience.

The special nature of our "Room Service" is the luxury of time, with two full hours of shopping – our



▲ **Left:** Complementary ring cleaning returned on a velvet pillow. **Right:** Balloons and petit fours for a client's 25th birthday.

▶ **Mr. Ingram** standing in our private fitting areas.

PORTRAIT BY JAYMO JAYMES

▼ **Private Room** Service suite awaiting guests.



clients can walk the floor, gathering knowledge of each designer before trying on their selections. Upon completion of their service, clients leave with instant communication of their choices followed by dedicated touch points and priority rebookings."

**Fairchild Studio: With the "Room Service" experience offering a more intimate and custom experience, how are you able to tailor the experience personally to each bride?**

**A.C.:** Communication and having a vested connection with the client is our top priority and while most traditional retail models don't allow for such pre-shopping connections, our "Room Service" first and foremost relies on it. Having in-depth conversations about their vision and listening to their desires, learning their wants and needs before they even arrive at the atelier yields a deeper level of service.

Since opening our floor to "Room Service" options and upgrades, we have been able to create moments that celebrate with our brides. From an international group traveling in for after-hours shopping to balloons celebrating a bride's 25th birthday, a surprise reuniting of college friends and even an intimate mother-and-daughter morning with mimosas – each visit is done with personal touches that speak to their needs and wants around this momentous shopping occasion.

**Fairchild Studio: How is the "Room Service" experience changing the traditional bridal shopping experience?**

**D.B.:** Every woman we work with is unique and brings her own idea of what she wants her gown shopping experience to be. We strive to provide a variety of experiences that give the woman we work with the choices she is looking for.

Our brides choose "Room Service" as a way to bring in additional guests and in part, spend more time and create unique memories with their loved ones. It's truly her memorable experience, we are just providing the space and excellence in service for her to enjoy it.

"Room Service" is one of several of our initiatives that help us stand out. Last season, we featured "Salon Evenings" to launch our trunk shows. These events gave our new and existing brides the chance to meet our designers, hear their stories and share a cocktail and some laughter.

We introduced "Real Bride Stories" on Instagram. These feature our married brides coming back to share their gown stories, their wedding stories and the details that made it all come together for them. Mr. Ingram is regularly in the house and we often find him with one of our brides sharing her vision with him. His name is on the door and his heart is right inside. We think we have something special to share. 🍷

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Mark Ingram silk crepe gown;  
Adrienne Landau faux fox fur  
jacket; Gigi Burris hat; stylist's  
own gloves; Ronny Kobo Aster  
earrings; Nardi Matchpoint  
tennis Y cubic zirconia necklace;  
Grown Brilliance Carmona  
necklace in 18-karat white gold  
with lab-grown diamonds.

Maximalism is back – both on the runway and in the wedding aisle, as the collections being shown this week during New York Luxury Bridal Fashion Week are expected to tap into the '80s revival seen during the recent shows in Milan and Paris.

Photographs by **Ricardo Beas**  
Styled by **Alex Badia**

*MORE is MORE*



SAREH NOURI  
NEW YORK



Idan Cohen embroidered chantilly lace gown with strung pearl beading; Katherine Tash silk mikado cape; Unreal Fur faux fur hat; stylist's own gloves; Ronny Kobo door knocker earrings; Karl Lagerfeld pearl necklace.



HONORNYC.COM

**HONOR**

Sareh Nouri embroidered lace gown and Anne Barge chantilly lace topper; Binata Birdcage veil; Toni Federici veil; Anna Sui gloves; Gigi Burris clip; For Future Reference vintage 1980s earrings in 14-karat yellow gold with mabe pearls and accent diamond.





# IDAN

HOUSE OF IDAN

[houseofidan.com](http://houseofidan.com)



Honor gown with velvet bodice and celestial printed tulle and organza skirt; stylist's own pannier skirt; Blumarine boots; stylist's own collar; Retrofête black sari pearl earrings; Grown Brilliance oval engagement ring in 18-karat white gold; emerald graduated Bypass ring in 14-karat white gold; Kefalonia ring in 18-karat white gold; Istanbul ring in 18-karat white gold; Multi-Shape Blooming Flower cocktail ring in 14-karat white gold and 14-karat white gold Double Row Marquise eternity band. All lab-grown diamonds.





**JUSTIN ALEXANDER  
SIGNATURE**

Morilee New York satin gown; Adrienne Landau faux fox fur cape; stylist's own gloves; Ronny Kobo gold and amber earrings.



A man and a woman are posing in a classic, ornate interior. The man is wearing a maroon velvet tuxedo with a black bow tie and a pocket square. The woman is wearing a white, sleeveless, knee-length dress with black trim and black high-heeled shoes. They are standing in front of a white door with a decorative lattice pattern. The background features a large painting and a chandelier.

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Viktor&Rolf Mariage mikado gown with tulle skirt;  
Pologeorgis mink shawl; Lele  
Sadoughi flower choker.



V

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Ines Di Santo satin-back crepe gown with 3D floral embellishments; Monvieve hat; Retrofête gold Hilma gemstone earrings; Grown Brilliance Carmona necklace in 18-karat white gold with lab-grown diamonds; stylist's own collar.

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Monday: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Tuesday: 8:00 am - 1:00 pm



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**THE MART**  
A VORNADO PROPERTY

House of Gilles lace and hand-pleated silk gown with organza ruffles; Anna Sui hat; Monvieve veil; Anna Sui gloves; Retrofête cerise Cora gemstone earrings; For Future Reference vintage 1980s emerald and diamond ring in 18-karat two-tone gold with a Columbian emerald cabochon; Grown Brilliance Truly Custom lab-grown diamond and emerald engagement ring in 14-karat yellow gold.





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#NYLBFW



Alexandra Grecco nylon tulle and cotton cage dress with baby's breath embroidery and moire gloves; Adrienne Landau faux fox fur scarf; Ronny Kobo silver door knocker earrings.



Justin Alexander satin and tulle gown; Adrienne Landau faux fox fur cape; Binata hat; stylist's own gloves; Anne Klein gold-plated metal collar necklace with crystal and faux pearl details; Retrofête sangria kelsey gemstone earrings.

Model: **Nana Abramova** at Supreme Management

Casting by **Bronson Vajda**

Hair by **Izumi Sato** at Art Department

Makeup by **Akiko Owada** at The Wall Group

Senior market editor, accessories: **Thomas Waller**

Senior market editor: **Emily Mercer**

Fashion assistants: **Ari Stark** and **Kimberly Infante**

# Bridal Party

Whether you are aiming for a classic wedding like Princess Diana or more of a wild time like Kate Moss, there are accessories to make the most of that special day.

BY THOMAS WALLER



Jennifer Behr

Sophie Bille Brahe

Gianvito Rossi

Tiffany & Co.

Roger Vivier

Carolina Amato

Ariana Grande x Swarovski

Grown Brilliance

# NEW YORK LUXURY BRIDAL PREVIEW



Markarian



Eddie Parker



Dries Van Noten



Kate Moss



Judith Leiber Couture



Jimmy Choo



Retrofête



Lele Sadoughi



Jared



Christian Louboutin

## BUSINESS

# Buyers Look for Consistency and Novelty at Shanghai Fashion Week



Shushu/Tong, fall 2025

● Retailers praised local mainstays such as Samuel Gui Yang, Mark Gong and Oude Waag for remaining consistent, and scouted for new talent on Xiaohongshu.

BY DENNI HU

**SHANGHAI** – Even though Chinese designers remain mostly unperturbed by U.S. President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs – due to their hyper-focus on the domestic market – they still have to reckon with the slow burn of a multibrand retail market in flux and an increasingly cautious economic climate.

This season, what caught buyers' eyes were established designers, such as Samuel Gui Yang and Mark Gong, who demonstrated consistency that were also conveyed through easy products.

Retailers also praised designers that stayed on schedule. "A few designers confided in me that they didn't do shows because it's simply too expensive. But I think if you have something to say, there are ways to do this creatively," said Jillian Xin, buying director at Labelhood.

## Jillian Xin

buying director at Labelhood, Shanghai

**Favorite collection:** One of my favorite collections was off-schedule, Yehuafan. We've been buying him for a few years but his vision has evolved recently and the fall 2025 collection is incredibly sophisticated. The fit, craftsmanship and attention to detail is extraordinary. I also loved Samuel Gui Yang this season – the collection feels bolder and more self-assured. The more established designers were also very consistent and demonstrated they have sustained relevance and staying power, such as Shushu/Tong and Oude Waag. **Best show formats:** The best shows were the designers who made it happen despite everything – limited funds and a bad economy. They didn't let constraints hold them back from expressing themselves. For instance, I really liked the presentation format at Labelhood this year, which still allowed younger designers such as Tongwang and Papi Lav to showcase their collections in a more resourceful and economic way. A few designers confided in me that they didn't do shows because it's simply too expensive but I think if you have something to say, there are ways to do this creatively.

**Top trends:** I loved the styling at WMWM...unexpected layering such as silk camisole dresses over knits and clashing colors and textures...a more intellectual and intentional way of dressing. The "New Chinoiserie" trend is also becoming more nuanced and sophisticated – I loved



WMWM, fall 2025



Into the East, fall 2025.



Mark Gong, fall 2025



Jacques Wei, fall 2025

So Yes and of course Samuel Gui Yang's interpretations.

**Must-have item:** Everyone is talking about Mark Gong's logo Ts. I also want GG in Red's felted birds as bag charms.

**New talent:** GG in Red. What a remarkable first collection. There isn't anything like it right now. The designer himself is also so humble yet so talented.

**Impression of the week:** I think it's been about quality over quantity. Designers are more considered about what they put out...not designing for the sake of it or showing collections for the sake of it. Some brands are taking a pause, leaving room for others to shine. It's refreshing really.

**Budget up or down?:** Don't want to jinx things but our budgets are a tiny bit up for fall 2025.

## Eric Young

founder of LMDS, Shanghai

**Favorite collection:** Jacques Wei and Samuel Gui Yang

**Best show formats:** I was only able to make it to one show this season, to Samuel Gui Yang. He chose to hold it at a white cube lane house on West Jianguo Road, which was not as spectacular as the last show on the rooftop of the Suzhou Creek, but it still felt very special. Looking through the photos, I felt bad for missing the Jacques Wei show, it looked like the runway was

chic and gorgeous.

**Top trends:** Pragmatism.

**Must-have items:** Light-hearted dresses, sweaters in fun colors, Jacques Wei's sexy colored lace items and Samuel Gui Yang's denim pieces.

**New talent:** Cai Ru, a designer I discovered on Xiaohongshu (id: bitcrrcr). He was already designing impressive looks for American artists when he was still at school. He joined a local brand called White Abyss and then this season is their first. This collection is not perfect, of course, but I will continue to keep an eye out for his work.

Ode to Red is created by two young people who don't look very much like designers. They are very young still, so they haven't figured out what they want to do yet. But I'm really into the handmade knit work, it has rustic warmth yet fits within the global sartorial language. But they have to develop more from this point onward, there is still a lot of work to be done.

**Impression of the week:** If you go to a big showroom, you'll discover that big ready-to-wear labels still attract a huge crowd. Independent designers are having a much harder time, and could be in real danger if their collections were of the type that needed to take time to understand, as opposed to having an obvious selling point. The good and the bad of Shanghai Fashion Week can be observed even more

clearly during this economic downturn. The good thing is that the Chinese market is big enough and there are enough segments of consumption; the bad thing is that creativity is really shrinking and there is simply no incentive to try. **Budget up or down?:** Should be higher, but will buy more discreetly.

## Will Zhang

founder of SND, Chongqing

**Favorite collection:** Into the East. The brand maintained its bohemian bent, and for its latest collection, it paid homage to local culture, and explored new shapes and rejuvenated modern dress styles. Categories worth noting included dresses, printed shirts and pants.

**Best show format:** Oude Waag. The brand maintained its artistic aesthetic, which was very consistent. Colors and tailoring also stood out.

**Top trends:** In this season, we could see that more and more brands are actively catering to buyers' and market's particular needs. Products and styles skew casual, minimal and wearable. At the same time, brands with a bohemian twist are also popular.

**Must-have items:** Oude Waag's look four, seven, 14 and 21.

**New talents:** The Meaning Of.

This London-based brand blends simplicity and sophistication, and after only three seasons, it's already

showing a unique perspective with its product range and dimensions. With a focus on color and everyday details, the brand combines comfort, individuality and sustainability with an authentic wardrobe-focused story at an affordable price.

**Impression of the week:** Although the crowd has gotten smaller, this also means those who stay are true retail professionals and have found a loyal customer base. As the market evolves, brands can expect to welcome a more loyal customer base.

**Budget up or down?:** Slightly up based on full-year outlook. We are going deeper with good-performing brands, at the same time scouting for new brands on the market.

## Michael Mok

buying consultant of Society A, Singapore

**Favorite collection:** My favorite collection goes to Mark Gong. I am attracted by his bad girls romance looks.

**Best show formats:** Jacques Wei. The designer chose the top floor of a commercial building with big windows over view of the Shanghai sunset. Perfect timing to switch the whole venue into gold. **Top trends:** Feminine with a twist and bad girl romance.

**Must-have item:** Any furry items from jackets to accessories.

**New talent:** Sorry, but I did not find any this season.

**Impression of the week:** There were less buyers at showrooms and fairs, but the fashion shows were interesting. I felt that the brands are playing it safe and being cautious. They are focusing on their individualism and bestselling items.

**Budget up or down?:** Overall, our budget for Chinese brands has increased because of their price point and speedy replenishment system.

## Ash Ghazali

global creative director of Club 21, Singapore

**Favorite collection:** Chengguang Wang and Raxxy

**Best show formats:** Short Sentence

**Must-have item:** Raxxy Puffer Jacket

**New talent:** Chengguang Wang

**Impression of the week:** Great quality, great quantity; a lot of room to improve on unique brand DNA for the international market.

WWD

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# WWD MILAN DESIGN WEEK



Inside the Fendi Casa Milan flagship during Design Week.

## HOME DESIGN

### Silvia Venturini Fendi on Home, Interior Design

- The new Fendi Casa collection features collaborations with emerging and established designers.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – Silvia Venturini Fendi's passion for home and interior design is deeply rooted and the projects she has spearheaded so far are testaments to her interest and curiosity. "I imagine the collections and where they could live, in which house, it's natural for me, and it's almost a cinematographic viewpoint," the designer told WWD at the launch of the new Fendi Casa collection.

This year, it coincides with the celebration of Fendi's centenary and Venturini Fendi underscored how the brand founded by her grandparents Adele and Edoardo Fendi was a pioneer in this segment, first launching

a home collection in 1987. This was also reflected in the choice to support Design Miami for the past 17 years since the first edition, she said.

"At the same time, we committed to discovering and supporting young talents, many of them at the beginning of their career and then with full-fledged collaborations with them, investing in their future. It is key to maintain this vision and continue to sustain young designers. I like to see Fendi through their eyes."

She insisted the designers have free rein, although sometimes they work with Fendi's artisans.

This is reinforced through the involvement of British designer Lewis Kemmenoe, with whom Fendi collaborated in December 2024 at Design Miami. Kemmenoe curated the latest concept and window displays for the Fendi Casa boutique in Milan's Piazza della Scala, where

his pieces are showcased.

Site-specific panels set up in the store pay tribute to the artisanal techniques of tailoring and leather craftsmanship, dividing one part of the flagship dominated by metallic materials in a palette of grays and blacks, from the other characterized by natural textures, more organic shapes and lighter colored wood, bamboo, and soft lines.

Over the years Venturini Fendi has worked with designers on several collections, building a relationship with the likes of Cristina Celestino, Chiara Andreotti and Peter Mabeo, always with research in mind.

Asked who makes the cut, she said she enjoys working with "designers that like to experiment, who are open to dialogue, and with whom we can build a trusting and long-term relationship."

Among the new items in the collection

is the Later sofa, designed by Ceriani Szostak, a modular seating system inspired by the rationalist architecture of the Palazzo della Civiltà, which houses Fendi's Roman headquarters. A rigid, squared frame – in metal, leather, or fabric – encloses a seat that transforms the softness of an arch into a cocooning structure.

The Fendi Cover, a sofa with softer and less sharp shapes, was designed by the team, made with a single layer of cushioning and embellished with a leather strap bearing the FF logo. Leather plays a key feature on the thickness of the cushions – with or without buttons – and on the underskirt and the piping.

Another new item is the Twist chair, designed by Stefano Gallizioli, with a wood structure and available with or without swirling armrests, upholstered in leather, or in a combination of leather and fabric.

An exclusive collaboration with British designer Lee Broom introduced the Idol chandelier, a sculptural piece crafted from hammered glass elements with irregular surfaces. Its silhouette – through a play of light and shadow – subtly recreates the FF logo.

The Efo coffee table designed by Mabeo, who conceived a new FF logo with soft lines, inspired the conception of two products: the Efo side table and the Efo cabinet. The side table is available in Fendi's signature yellow ceramic, wood or a combination of both materials. The Efo cabinet with its rounded shapes in warm or dark wood features two Fs that each become the handle of a door.

Additions to existing product lines range from the Lunar coffee table by Jonas van Put now presented in a dining table version and a bedside table, and the Peekasleep bed from the Peekasit series by Controvento Collective inspired by Fendi's Peekaboo bag.

Fashion Furniture Design (FF Design) was founded in May 2021 as a joint venture between Flos B&B Italia Group (formerly Design Holding) and Fendi to develop the Fendi Casa world. Alberto Da Passano, a former president of Fendi for Europe and the Middle East, leads the joint venture as its chief executive officer. In addition to Fendi Casa, Flos B&B Italia Group includes Flos, B&B Italia, Louis Poulson, Maxalto, Arclinea, Azucena, Audo and Lumens.

## HOME DESIGN

### Ralph Lauren Debuts Canyon Road Collection

- The brand introduced the first home collaboration with seventh-generation weavers Naomi and Tyler Glasses as part of the Artist in Residence project.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

**MILAN** – During Milan Design Week, Ralph Lauren debuted the fall 2025 Canyon Road Collection, celebrating his love for the American West, and featuring the company's third Artist in Residence collaboration, but the first for the home.

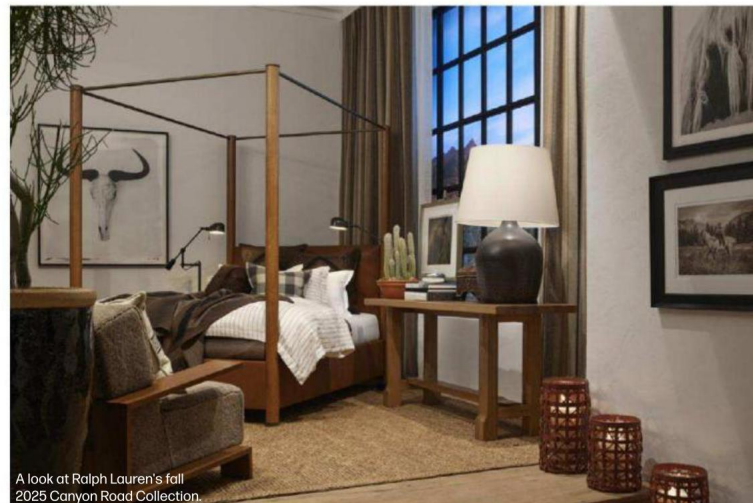
After debuting the Artist in Residence program with the three-part Polo Ralph Lauren x Naomi Glasses collection, the designer once again collaborated with siblings Naomi and Tyler Glasses. Seventh-generation weavers, they included fabrics, rugs, textiles and decorative accessories in the collection, incorporating cultural symbols found in many Navajo weavings, and designs inspired by their homelands

on Dinétah (Navajo Nation).

"Home is my way of sharing the art of living in its many forms, inspired by the way people live out their dreams all over the globe," Lauren stated.

Ralph Lauren decorated rooms of its stately Milan palazzo with the collection's Canyon Road oak dining table and chairs, embellished by the Glasses' throw pillows and wool blankets. The Glasses' collection features three color stories, neutral tones inspired by the siblings' homeland; the red and black hues recalling Navajo dyeing techniques, and indigo. Some of the key graphics include diamond motifs, horizontal stripes, four-directional crosses placed within each diamond and zig-zag patterns reminiscent of the desert mountain landscapes.

"The Canyon Road Collection speaks to my longtime love of the American West – the heroic beauty of its landscapes, its unique heritage and the Indigenous people who have been part of preserving its lands and traditions for centuries," the designer said. "Bringing the most authentic



A look at Ralph Lauren's fall 2025 Canyon Road Collection.

expression of the West to life means working with the artisans practicing these traditions and sharing their stories with the world."

The collection was presented together with Ralph Lauren's signature designs that have defined the brand's home collection for more than 40 years, staged as separate vignettes – the Estate, recalling the

grandness of an English country house; Island, with furniture reflecting a more relaxed spirit of a warm weather retreat, and the Penthouse, which included the signature carbon fiber RL-CF1 chairs inspired by the designer's McLaren F1 race car, placed around the Art Deco rosewood dining table.

## HOME DESIGN

## Karl Lagerfeld Maison Unveils 2025 Furniture Collection



Here and right: Furniture pieces from the 2025 Karl Lagerfeld Maison Collection dubbed K/Wellen.

- The collection was once again designed by the French, Milan-based designer Toan Nguyen.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** – Ks were all the rage at Karl Lagerfeld Maison.

For its third home collection, the house has built upon the design lexicon charted last year, again conscripting Milan-based furniture designer Toan Nguyen, who embedded the letter K into the new furniture and home pieces.

As guest designer of the Karl Lagerfeld Maison Collection, unveiled during Milan Design Week here, Nguyen designed

sculptural and somewhat minimalist pieces subtly integrating the letter in coffee tables, shelves, consoles, sideboards and mirrors.

Crafted from single sheets of brushed aluminum plied into seamless pieces, they boasted sinuous lines, in tune with Nguyen's first collection. Titled "K/Wellen," the latter word meaning "waves" in German, the collection also includes a round table with a polished aluminum base and travertine marble countertop, complemented by poufs and dining chairs in a contrasting bouclé fabric.

The new pieces would have perfectly fitted the futuristic studio and apartment Lagerfeld owned on the Quai Voltaire in Paris with a view of the Seine and the



Louvre, according to Caroline Lebar, the brand's senior vice president of image and communications and one of the late German designer's most trusted deputies. That apartment, where Lagerfeld reportedly spent about 13 years until his death in 2019, sold at auction in 2024 for 10 million euros.

"I think this would have matched very well with that kind of attitude," Lebar said.

She contributes creatively to the furniture range, which was introduced in 2023 and is produced under license by The One Design, a company headed by a group of investors who are longtime experts in the production and distribution of Italian luxury furniture.

"What I love with this furniture is the lightness of it. It looks extremely simple, extremely light, [although it was] technically challenging, but it doesn't show....The relationship between Karl and

this, it's that this is the way he was, you know, working hard, doing a lot of stuff, but made it look effortless. Everything was effortless...and I see this effortless vision through this furniture," Lebar said.

The Karl Lagerfeld Maison's strategy hinges on inviting new designers every one or two years to interpret the creative legacy of the late designer, who famously bought and sold entire catalogues of furniture as he cycled through eras with his interior designs for various residences.

He was capable of switching from the sort of gilded 18th-century splendor usually found at the Palace of Versailles to an apartment so stark, he compared it to a spaceship.

The home division aligns with the brand's hotel and residential projects, including The Karl Lagerfeld, a five-star hotel in Macau that marked the designer's biggest foray into the hospitality segment, and its first branded luxury residences in Marbella, Spain; Lisbon, Portugal, and Dubai, currently in development.

The previous home collection designed by Nguyen was titled "Wellen," alluding to the undulating shapes of the seating, such as the hero modular sofa. It included designs for the living room, dining room and bedroom, boasting materials such as chrome leather, opalescent marble and plush velvet.

In 2023 the Karl Lagerfeld brand teamed with guest designer Matteo Nunziati for its inaugural interiors range centered on the Art Deco and Bauhaus movements beloved by the late designer.

## BEAUTY

## Pharrell Williams' Humanrace Joins Design Week Frenzy

- A look at the brand's threefold activation aimed at enhancing its ties with design and its awareness in the market.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

**MILAN** – Pharrell Williams' Humanrace beauty brand has joined the Milan Design Week frenzy with a threefold activation that kicked off Tuesday.

Dubbed "Have a good day," the project aims to remind visitors how self care is woven into the fabric of everyday life and is driven by daily rituals. In addition to tying with Salone del Mobile's annual theme "Thoughts for Humans," the concept is in sync with Humanrace's mission of providing people with essential tools for living well, in this case stretching beyond skin care products to express the holistic approach to care embedded in the company Williams launched in 2020.

"Humanrace is a journey of well-being, and our Milan Design Week experiences are curated to immerse you in the routines that become part of your everyday life," said Williams in a statement.

That in Italy usually begins with coffee. The brand took over artisanal grocery store and café Terroir Milano, opting for a niche address known to locals and perceived as a neighborhood spot rather

than the established go-to pastry shops and bars in town.

The location is known for its focus on independent, natural and artisanal producers and carries a selection of fresh bio ingredients, lesser-known wine and oil labels, array of teas and overall under-the-radar food brands. This week it switched its banner from its brick color to Humanrace's vibrant green hue and added the brand to its offering of beauty labels – led by L.a Bruket – therefore temporarily joining the likes of 10 Corso Como and Modes in carrying Humanrace.

A 20-minute walk from Terroir, the Spazio Maiocchi venue displays a collaboration between Humanrace and Swiss-based company USM as part of Capsule Plaza 2025, which brings together designers and companies across interiors and architecture, beauty and technology, innovation and craft.

The tie-up resulted in modular furniture designs reimagining the bathroom as a modern temple for daily rituals. In particular, the USM Haller modular system tracing back to 1965 and here featuring fixtures provided by Laufen is rendered in the brand's green color. The Humanrace skin care and body care collections developed by Williams in collaboration with his longtime dermatologist, Dr. Elena Jones, also feature in the installation



Humanrace products displayed at Capsule Plaza at Spazio Maiocchi in Milan.

alongside a selection of custom items. The products will be available for purchase at Spazio Maiocchi's gift shop, where guests will receive a complimentary Humanrace tote bag with their purchase.

Running beyond design week, Humanrace has also launched the Reborn Pop-Up Spa at The Four Seasons hotel, open to guests and visitors through mid-May.

For the occasion, Jones has developed the Humanrace Deluxe Glow Facial treatment, which she will personally administer on April 11 and 12. The illuminating ritual combines Humanrace skin care with a CO2Lift Carboxy Gel Therapy mask and a relaxing massage.

On April 13, guests can book a consultation with Jones, who will offer tailored advice to support everyday skin care rituals. The Humanrace Signature Glow Facial, an express version of the treatment featuring Humanrace skin care, a revitalizing Déesse Pro Express LED mask, and a soothing massage will be available until next month.



Humanrace Three-Step Facial Routine.

The trifecta of implementations is among Andrea Grilli's first moves in enhancing brand awareness in the market since joining the company. Grilli, who succeeded the brand's founding chief executive officer Rachel Muscat in October, said the firm "chose to embrace the culturally significant moment of Salone del Mobile to deliver a holistic message that reflects the brand's strategic vision – a journey that begins with design and leads to well-being."

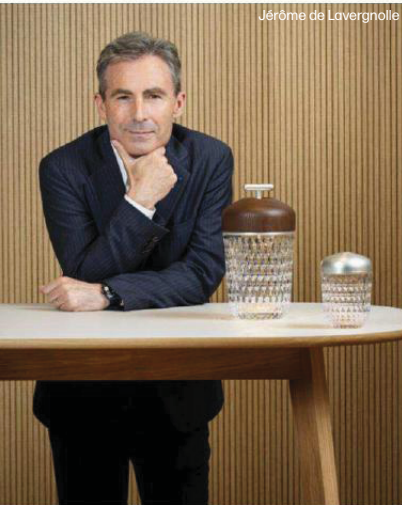
Grilli added that each leg of the project and partner brand "shares the same core values as Humanrace, where design, innovation and education form our guiding paradigm."

Previously Humanrace has tied up with the likes of Dover Street Market, Adidas and rapper Tyler, The Creator's fragrance label Le Fleur, among others.

# WWD MILAN DESIGN WEEK

## HOME DESIGN

### Saint-Louis Is Ready to Shine



Jérôme de Lavergnolle



The Torsade designed by Stefania Di Petrillo for Saint-Louis.

- CEO Jérôme de Lavergnolle talks to WWD about how lighting became a main driver of the Hermès Group-controlled luxury crystal-glass business founded in 1586.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Long-known as a wedding registry tableware staple, fabled crystal glass firm Saint-Louis has been flexing its muscles in the lighting business. When Euroluce kicks off here Tuesday, the Hermès Group-controlled-company founded in 1586 will be ready to show off its glow-up.

In Milan, the company will show the

design community how forward looking the 439-year-old glass brand has become. High tech introductions include the Folia Portable Lamp, an indoor/outdoor cordless lamp designed by French designer Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance; Torsade, a collection that draws inspiration from the armature of a chandelier designed by Stefania Di Petrillo, and a new outdoor Royal Sconce in clear crystal outfitted with IP44 technology, to protect the lamp from humidity and water.

The firm's chief executive officer and president Jérôme de Lavergnolle said the focus is developing Saint-Louis' retail network, now that it has solidified its lighting business and relationships with key architects and designers. This year will see the number of its stores rise from 15 to 20 with openings planned in Shenzhen, China; Seoul, and one in Elements in Hong Kong. "We will grow the retail business in order also to increase the brand awareness," he said.

De Lavergnolle joined Hermès Group-controlled Saint-Louis in 2010, after the

financial crisis of 2008 shattered business generated by wedding registries. Saint-Louis stores were shuttered, with only one remaining at that time.

"The firm had lost 50 percent of its clientele," he said.

The seasoned executive had previously held a variety of positions for Hermès International as deputy chief financial officer of Hermès International and general manager of Hermès Sellier, serving as the corporate representative of all departments of the Hermès Group – ready-to-wear, silk, art of living, horse riding and fashion accessories. At the time, just 15 percent of Saint-Louis' sales were generated from lighting, most of the models traditional chandeliers.

De Lavergnolle decided to change that. He traveled to Milan lighting biennale Euroluce in 2012 to present a statement chandelier and later forged collaborations with creatives like French-born design Ionna Vautrin and Italy's Paola Navone to amp up its potential. The latter envisaged the Hulotte model in the image of a Russian matryoshka dolls. Since then, the lighting segment has grown significantly for Saint-Louis since the manufacturer started revisiting its classic designs in 2015 with the Royal collection (a complete collection of classic chandeliers and lighting with 15,000 possibilities made with semi-bespoke expertise) becoming a best seller.

At Euroluce, Saint-Louis will also showcase its chandelier configurator, which allows customers to compose bespoke-like lighting with ease on an iPad. "You can design the chandelier you want to have. Customers want to imagine something which has been designed just for themselves," he said of the Royal collections Lego-like capabilities. Today, lighting represents 50 percent of sales.

De Lavergnolle shuns the idea of Saint-Louis crystal wine and Champagne glasses being locked up in the family hutch. "Those are meant to be used every day." The same goes for the lighting, he

said, which now comes outfitted with USB chargers, touch commands and humidity and water-proof protection. Referring to the Folia, fashioned in the shape of an acorn, he remarks, "It's spectacular you put that on the table. I mean, the refraction to the light. It's just absolutely superb," he mused.

Were Saint-Louis chandeliers found in Versailles and embraced by French royals? Maybe, maybe not. "That doesn't correspond anymore to our style is bronze and crystal," he said, remarking their lighting does hang in the private papal apartment in Vatican City.

While the rest of the design and decor sector posted flat sales in 2024, Saint-Louis grew 5 percent and doubled its sales from 2019's pre-COVID-19 result, although the CEO declined to reveal exact figures.

Its workforce has grown as well. Saint-Louis, which is based in Saint-Louis-lès-Bitche, France, currently has 400 employees, up from 250 in 2010. Out of this 400, 250 of Saint-Louis' workforce are glassmakers.

De Lavergnolle, who is also the president of the French Federation of Crystal, said that it takes 10 years to train glassmakers to be able to meet Saint-Louis' deadlines and work on a variety of collections. Like its owner Hermès Group – which acquired a stake in the Saint-Louis crystal factory with the Pochet group (in 1994, Pochet sold its stake to Hermes International) – Saint-Louis benefits from an artisan-driven business based around limited production capacity and buoyant demand, even in a rough economy.

De Lavergnolle developed a newfound respect for its glassmakers when he tried glass cutting and blowing himself. "It's so hot. I mean, it's 1,400 degrees Celsius. You want to pick the crystal up and you have about eight seconds before you burn your hands. I, of course, burned my hand and I put a lot of crystal around like caramel," he recalled, laughing. "I was efficient at that [cutting the glass]. But in terms of quality, it wasn't good enough."

## HOME DESIGN

### Interior Designer Giuseppe Porcelli Debuts Furniture Collection

- Named Garçonnière, a collection of lighting and furniture, is a reflection of the Milan-based designer's own romantic style.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – The air is thick with nostalgia as Billie Holiday's tunes fill Giuseppe Porcelli's Milan studio on Via Ampolla. The lighting is low and there's a mix of old and new. An antique table, silver trays and swathes of eclectic printed fabrics adorn his office presided by a turn-of-the-century Riccardo Virgilio painting. Inspired by the bygone archetype of a bachelor pad or garçonnière, Porcelli crafts his own idea of a male hideaway reinterpreted through a queer lens.

At Design Week which kicked off here Monday, Porcelli unfurled Garçonnière, his first furniture and lighting collection.

"The pieces play around with the elements that conventionally belong to different worlds. Elements usually thought of as feminine and masculine interchange. So a pink fringe or a gathered silk lampshade, both elements you would identify as 'prissy,' 'unmanly,' are mixed up with sharp and dry volumes, with black, gray and tortoiseshell plexiglass," he told

WWD. Porcelli's version of the garçonnière is a place of contrasts; references from the '30s and '40s are blended with '70s inspirations, past and new.

Before branching out on his own, Porcelli made a name for himself via high-profile projects through his work with Dimorestudio duo Britt Moran and Emiliano Salci. Among his many projects, he was the lead architect on their first interiors project in Florence in 2019 that involved transforming a neglected '60s-era house into an Italian Modernist shrine of design.

The collection includes an armchair, made with gold-plated metal, natural bamboo and cotton bourette; a console table made with glossy lacquered wood

and uncoated brushed solid brass; a table lamp with faux tortoiseshell plexiglass and polished brass; a silk lampshade and a mirror made with polished steel, uncoated brushed solid brass and bamboo roots, with a diamond bevel, silk rope and tassels.

For the event, Porcelli created an

installation turning a military tent into a single-room apartment, bringing bygone icons into the mix from Piero Portaluppi, Gio Ponti, Carlo Scarpa, Gabriella Crespi and artists like Nanda Vigo, Edgar Degas and Josef Albers among them.

"I am fascinated by the contrasts, I love making work together things that you wouldn't combine, and my style is quite layered and definitely not minimal. So there's always room to experiment juxtapositions especially when it comes to the materials. I couldn't do anything different for my first collection of furniture," he said.



Garçonnière by Giuseppe Porcelli.



Giuseppe Porcelli

## HOME DESIGN

## Brigette Romanek Makes Milan Design Week Debut



Inside the third edition of L'Appartamento by Artemest.

- The L.A.-based interiors expert walks WWD through her curation of one of Milan's most exclusive addresses for Artemest, an online destination for Italian craftsmanship.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Brigette Romanek – the Los Angeles interior designer whose client list includes Gwyneth Paltrow, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Demi Moore and Joe Jonas – has landed in Milan.

On Monday, her firm Romanek Design Studio made its debut at Milan's Palazzo Donizetti within the third edition of L'Appartamento by Artemest. The 19th-century architectural landmark is located in Via Gaetano Donizetti 48, which is also the headquarters of fashion label Alberta Ferretti.

"I wanted to make a really joyous room where you can sit and relax and just hang out in. I think we need that right now," she told WWD, as she walked into the opening dinner, which included members of the international design community and Alberta Ferretti herself.

In the dining room, the uplifting, ornate Venetian glass Michelle chandeliers by Bottega Veneziana stand out. Their grandeur is juxtaposed by the folk wall creations by Italy-based Fibra Research and are handwoven without looms. Elsewhere, a modern polychrome painting by Enrica Ciurli adorns the wall, accompanied by other surprises like an exquisitely carved wood bar by Bottos Design Italia by Sebastiano Bottos, which combines technical research and artisanal woodworking techniques. A travertine table made by Giopagani is flanked by upbeat retro TF Pink Chairs by Spanish designer Pablo Regano.

This unexpected mix of cultural elements is very much part of Romanek's design philosophy, which embraces both eclecticism and functionality, particularly in dining spaces. Whether she is working on a house or a boutique hotel, Romanek aims to create inviting environments that blend various design elements to evoke joy and comfort, using light colors and unique motifs, she explained.

Michelle Chandelier by Bottega Veneziana

"I want people to feel like this space is somewhere you want to be in for a long period of time and really enjoy and feel honored to be brought into that space, because it is so beautiful and to get to know the hands that made these things," she said.

Romanek showcased alongside internationally acclaimed interior design studios, such as I508 London, Champalimaud Design, New York-based design firm Meyer Davis, Riyadh-based Nebras Aljoab and Australia's Simone Haag, who each transformed a room of Palazzo as a way to showcase Artemest's rare collection.

In 2018, the aesthete founded Romanek Design Studio and made the AD 100 list, the year she opened her business.

In 2023, she released "Livable Luxe," which was published by Chronicle Books, which took readers on a journey through Romanek's own Laurel Canyon, California home. It also took readers through upscale projects for A-list friends like Paltrow, who wrote the foreword. "The spaces Brigette designs are extraordinary....It's like she can feel what the room is calling out to be and then will manifest it," Paltrow wrote.

Marco Credendino, Artemest's chief executive officer, and jewelry designer Ippolita Rostagno, the firm's creative director, founded Artemest in 2015. Today it has grown to an online destination with more than 60,000 products by 1,500 artisans that represent the past, present and future of Italian craftsmanship and creativity.

Artemest has been expanding its scope with a new gallery and interior design projects. In October, the firm took a leap into the luxury real estate world and unveiled its first model residence concept on the 85th floor of The Greenwich in New York City. The Greenwich is an 88-story tower in the Financial District and was designed by late architect Rafael Viñoly.

## FASHION

## Miu Miu Literary Club to Explore Girlhood, Sexuality, Love

- The two-day event, which is under the direction of Miuccia Prada, brings a feminist perspective on culture to Milan Design Week.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

**MILAN** – Miuccia Prada's ties with culture hark back to her youth and have defined her fashion output throughout her career.

In a 2020 digitally streamed conversation with her co-creative director Raf Simons on the heels of the first Prada co-created collection, she famously invited youngsters in the digital audience to "read literature," as well as enjoy art and movies. "Study, study, study," she said back then.

Hence it comes as no surprise that the Miu Miu brand has been focusing on promoting literature with its Miu Miu Literary Club initiative, first unveiled last year.

The two-day event is back at Milan Design Week with its second iteration on Wednesday and Thursday under the direction of Prada herself.

After debuting the concept in 2024 with "Writing Life," Miu Miu titled the second edition "A Women's Education" exploring girlhood, love and sex education through the work of French existentialist philosopher and writer Simone de Beauvoir, and Fumiko Enchi, the pen name

for Fumi Ueda, one of the most prominent female authors of the Shōwa era in Japan.

"For the second edition of the Miu Miu Literary Club we have chosen the work of two literary masters, Simone de Beauvoir and Fumiko Enchi: with their novels 'The Inseparables' and 'The Waiting Years' they have been able to challenge stereotypes that are still very present in our culture nowadays," Prada said. "By bringing these themes at the heart of the conversations, we try to raise awareness on the issue of women's education today. How do we teach young girls concepts as self-determination? How do we teach them to become the independent women of the future?" she asked.

Opening Wednesday at the Circolo Filologico, Milan's oldest cultural association, the event is conceived as a literary club with panel discussions, reading sessions, live music performances and as a culturally rich retreat from the frenzied pace of design week. It evokes the spirit of literary salons and artist collectives of yore.

Championing each day a landmark book from each of the two writers, Miu Miu selected the 1954 novel "The Inseparables" by the French existentialist de Beauvoir to tackle "The Power of Girlhood," starting from the book's feminist thinking, which sparked outrage at the time of its writing. The book was eventually published almost seven decades later in 1970.

The Miu Miu Literary Club's second day agenda is titled "About Love, Sex and Desire" moving from the 1957 novel "The Waiting Years" by Enchi, an explicit account of women's sexuality.

Wrapped in special Miu Miu packaging, the titles selected for the event will be available at the Circolo Filologico.

The two-day event is to be animated by panel conversations on the topics triggered by books' readings, which were curated by Olga Campofreda, a writer and researcher

of Italian culture, language and literature.

Panelists include French American author Lauren Elkin, also the official translator of de Beauvoir's "The Inseparables"; Indian-born novelist and short story writer Geetanjali Shree, the winner of the 2022 International Booker Prize for "Tomb of Sand"; Italian novelist Veronica Raimo; Nicola Dinan, the author of "Disappoint Me," which won the Polari Prize; Irish writer Naoise Dolan, and novelist Sarah Manguso.

All panels are moderated by writer and curator Lou Stoppard and by poet, model and activist Kai-Isaiah Jamal.

Last year's inaugural Miu Miu Literary Club spotlighted the work of the late Italian writers and poets Sibilla Aleramo and Alba de Céspedes. Conversations explored women's position in society, from motherhood to work.



Inside the Miu Miu Literary Club at Milan's Circolo Filologico.

# WWD MILAN DESIGN WEEK



HOME DESIGN

## Assoluce President on Why Lighting Might Be Poised for a Rebound

● Unique to design, the lighting sector has its own set of challenges and catalysts into 2025 and beyond.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – Minimalism and sustainability don't bode well for the lighting sector, but an uptick in contract business in booming markets like India and retail partnerships are expected to ignite some growth over the next year.

According to Statista, revenues generated by the Lamps & Lighting market in 2025 are expected to amount to \$86.62 billion. It is projected that the market will experience an annual growth rate of 3.67 percent between 2025 and 2029. In comparison to other countries worldwide, the U.S. leads in terms of revenue generation, with \$33 billion in 2025, although it remains unclear how U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff hikes might dim that outlook as the year progresses.

Carlo Urbinati, who is also president and chief executive officer of Italian lighting house Foscarini and president of lighting association Assoluce, told WWD he expects an improvement in 2025.

"After a prolonged period of market contraction, there is potential for a rebound. We are noticing some signs of renewed interest, possibly due to retailers consolidating their partnerships with select brands – Foscarini being among them," Urbinati said.

Foscarini, along with furniture brands Minotti, Porro and Molteni&C, Visionnaire and design firm Kartell, was among the top names chosen to take part in 2024's unique celebration of Italian home design hosted on the sixth floor of Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship in Manhattan as part of the retailer's "From Italy, With Love" country promotion.

Compared to furniture, lighting is easily shipped and has seen its sales buoyed by e-commerce channels since the dawn of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"E-commerce has reaffirmed itself as a borderless channel, effectively

capturing consumer demand across different markets. It is a segment that has experienced significant growth and continues to be a key driver of our business," Urbinati noted, adding that for Foscarini, online sales currently represent about 25 percent of its total revenue, which he expects will only rise in 2025.

As he approaches the 32nd edition of the Euroluce, the international lighting biennial, Urbinati said organizers are doing things differently to spark more interest in the Italian sector, which generates only \$1.62 billion of the global total, despite having some of the world's most upscale names – Flos, Artemide and FontanaArte among them.

The fair, which runs alongside Salone del Mobile.Milano from Tuesday to Sunday, is expected to start with a serious "wow" factor: American director Robert Wilson is expected to unveil a showcase around one of Michelangelo's last, rarely seen, works, the Pietà Rondanini.

About 300 exhibitors will unveil their latest designs at Rho Fiera around a concept by Beppe Finessi and designed by the Formafantasma studio. In addition, Urbinati said this year, organizers wanted to highlight the multidisciplinary voices that are altering lighting as we know it. More than 20 international speakers, including lighting designers, architects, artists, scenographers, scientists, anthropologists, astronomers and psychologists will be featured at the Forest of Space Arena, designed by the Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto. These speakers include unexpected names like Stefano Mancuso, a pioneer in plant neurobiology, and Piero Benvenuti, professor emeritus of astrophysics at the University of Padua.

European, particularly Italian, design retail spaces are on the rise and opening up worldwide and in second-tier cities like Scottsdale, Ariz. A notable uptick in openings has been noticed in cities like Riyadh, Dubai and Mumbai as the design community rushes to take advantage of the wave of new construction projects in those cities that were halted during the pandemic.

In Riyadh, for example, Italian design houses like Giorgetti and Boffi/DePadova

are expected to open there in the near term, with the latter's slated for 2026.

The Middle East is currently one of the most dynamic regions for the lighting industry. As for Foscarini, we have seen particularly strong performance in Japan and Italy, Urbinati said.

Consolidation is also taking the market by storm. Foscarini purchased 90 percent of famed German lighting designer Ingo Maurer's business in 2022. The plan at the time was to revitalize the name in the North American market and further penetrate Asia and Europe with the designs of Ingo Maurer GmbH. The brand will showcase its pieces under Foscarini's at Euroluce for the first time.

In a surprise move, Nemo Group, owned by Milan-based lighting entrepreneur Federico Palazzari, added two crown jewels to its growing design hub of brands with the acquisitions of lighting-maker FontanaArte and Driade, its first furniture property. The fate of the Flos B&B Italia group also remains uncertain, after it was reported by WWD that the company

was entertaining informal offers for the furniture business. Flos B&B Italia group owns Flos, its flagship brand, as well as historic Danish firm Louis Poulsen.

Looking ahead, main challenges include creating avenues for growth in China, where the market has been crippled by the ongoing real estate slowdown and lackluster consumer confidence.

"The Chinese market is undergoing a particularly challenging phase, with economic fluctuations and structural transformations impacting demand," he said.

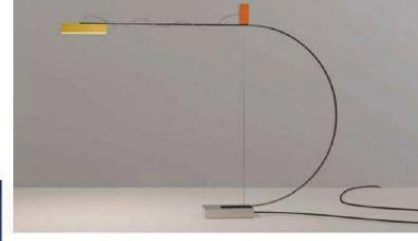
Other challenges include evolving habits and the need to bring decorative lighting back into focus, reaffirming its role in contemporary interiors. "Today, many interior projects aim to conceal the light source, prioritizing technical efficiency over expressive presence. Foscarini, however, remains committed to a decorative approach – our lamps are not just sources of light, but defining elements of space, adding character and depth both when illuminated and when off," Urbinati said.

Foscarini has been working on highlighting the ways in which lighting personalizes environments, making them feel like home with the goal to create atmosphere, enrich spatial perception and assert a strong, distinctive identity, leaving a lasting impression.

At Euroluce, the Veneto-based firm will unveil an exploration into the origins and future of the chandelier in a contemporary design language. To achieve this, they collaborated with designers of distinct creative identities: Italy's Dordoni Studio, father-and-son duo Alberto and Francesco Meda, as well as Francesca Lanzavecchia.

Foscarini was founded in 1981 on the island of the glass hub of Murano but today it is based in Marcon, Italy, just outside Venice. Despite having 63 families of lamps under its umbrella, it entrusts the production of its lamps to Italian companies and suppliers with the modern vision, materials, technology and know-how to adapt to each object. After joining the firm, Urbinati propelled the company into a modern age both in terms of creative vision and materials by steering it away from using Murano glass in 1992 with Italian designer Ferruccio Laviani's first lamp, Orbital, made using industrial glass.

Nemo Cupido table lamp



Ingo Maurer Nalum lamp



Federico Palazzari

HOME DESIGN

# A First Look Into Nemo Group's New Acquisitions

● In an unexpected twist, Nemo lighting's founder talks about stepping into the world of furniture for the first time with Driade.

BY SOFIA CELESTE

**MILAN** – As a rookie corporate lawyer stationed in China, a lightbulb went off for Federico Palazzari when he met one of the design industry's most memorable firecrackers: Ernesto Gismondi, founder of Artemide.

"Gismondi had this sparkle about him," Palazzari recalled of the ebullience and international vision of the late design pioneer who became his former employer. "This sparkle came from the company's approach. He showed me how successful we were outside of Italy. I carry his sparkle with me and combined it with my love for manufacturing beautiful objects."

Federico Palazzari founded Omikron in the early 2000s and later acquired Nemo, which was previously part of Cassina in 2012. Over the years, Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand, Lina Bo Bardi and Álvaro Siza have been among the global European design names to grace its lineup, as well as collaborations with like-minded friends like Israel-based Ron Gilad.

But first, why Nemo? "Not the fish," he joked of the cartoon Disney character endeared by children worldwide. Palazzari said it was called Nemo after Captain Nemo, the fictional explorateur made famous by French novelist Jules Verne in science-fiction books, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas" and "The Mysterious Island."

Nemo's bold spirit, his zest for the unknown is very much the ethos that binds

all the firms under Palazzari's newly founded Nemo Group. In October, in a surprise move, Palazzari treaded foreign waters with the purchase of two crown jewels for his growing design hub of brands with the acquisition of lighting-maker FontanaArte and Driade, its first furniture property.

"I was hesitant at first to acquire a furniture brand, but it's really an interesting company to work with. It's a little jewel." With this acquisition, Nemo Group's workforce rose from about 30 to 280 employees. "We need time but we're seeing the results in only five months after we completed the deal."

Nemo Group is fully owned by Palazzari. In 2020, his group acquired ILTI Luce, a historical brand with a strong focus on technical lighting and outdoor solutions. In mid-2023, Nemo Lighting bought Reggiani, a leader in large-scale professional technical and architectural lighting.

FontanaArte, which Palazzari most coveted, traces its origins back to 1881 with Luigi Fontana, who started making float glass or sheets of glass for the construction industry in Milan. In 1931, his firm Luigi Fontana & C. appointed Gio Ponti as its art director. Since the acquisition, its archives alone have served as a fantastic discovery.

The firm officially became FontanaArte in 1932 and today mostly produces lighting, but also some glass furniture. Ponti is credited with FontanaArte's iconic models: 0024, Bilia, Pirellina and Pirellone lamps, as well as a coffee table called the Tavolino 1932.

The irony, Palazzari reminisces, is that FontanaArte's Rome headquarters were once located across the street from Palazzari's childhood home on the historic Via Giulia, a 16th century marvel of urban planning designed by Donato Bramante.

For Design Week, which kicked off

Swedish design firm F&amp;G &amp; Blanche's new F-A-B chair for Driade in two versions.



French duo Marie Cornil &amp; Alexandre Willaume for the new Driade Coupelle coffee table.



Alon Rotman is the latest designer to join Nemo's roster of lighting designers.



Belgian designer Bertrand Lejoly's brand new Belle Haleine table lamp for FontanaArte.

Monday, Palazzari has scouted fresh new names to celebrate the formation of his new group. One of those being Belgian designer Bertrand Lejoly, who created the Belle Haleine table lamp for FontanaArte, an evocative model that recalls the brand's roots, under the art direction of Ponti.

Lejoly founded his studio in 2021 and has worked with brands such as Zanotta, Paola Lenti and Fantini, receiving prestigious awards, and also previously worked under Vincent Van Duysen and Matteo Thun.

Nemo will also showcase Dori, a brand new lamp with emerging designer, Tel Aviv-based Alon Rotman, who graduated in Industrial Design in 2021 from the Shenkar School of Design.

At Driade, Nemo Group will unfurl new collaborations with Swedish design firm F&G & Blanche for a new chair, called F-A-B, French duo Marie Cornil & Alexandre Willaume for the new Coupelle coffee table and new models with longtime collaborator Philippe Starck.

Driade was founded in Milan in 1968 by art director Enrico Astori, designer Antonia Astori and Adelaide Acerbi, who led the brand's image and communication. The avant garde set including Enzo Mari and Nanda Vigo was crucial at its inception: Mari with the Sof Sof chair and Vigo with her furry Blocco seat.

Achille Castiglioni, Alessandro Mendini and Starck are also among its historic roster of collaborators. Fabio Novembre, who was appointed art director of Driade in 2019, is no longer a fixed figure in the company, he said.

Unlike fashion, Palazzari believes that design brands benefit from relying on the core team and friends of the brand to purvey a sense of good taste. "We do not believe in creative directors. We believe in creative friends, which is something different. Whether they are designers or architects, they can be long or short love stories. So much depends on the strategic approach," he said, referencing Nemo's relationship with Rotman and its relationship with Gilad, who famously learned to swim for the first time during a

business meeting/boat trip on Palazzari's boat after a bout of seasickness. "They told me the only way to cure it was to take a dip in the water and regulate my body temperature. So, I did. Sounds silly to say I learned to swim in Portofino, doesn't it?" Gilad told WWD. Taking risks and scouting designers far afield is what makes Nemo special.

"We are constantly exploring things, the evolution of design and new people, getting to know new people in particular. You bump into people. You look for someone, discover someone. Like Captain Nemo, we're always exploring," Palazzari reminisced.

Consolidation has been a major theme in the design world recently. Furnishings, lighting and contract group Dexcelance, the first to list its shares on the Milan Stock Exchange, said it continues to eye acquisitions despite market challenges globally. In February, sources close to the situation said Flos B&B Italia Group, which owns vanguard brands B&B Italia, Flos, Louis Poulsen, Maxalto and Arclinea, is entertaining informal offers for parts of the company, on the part of its majority shareholders funds Investindustrial and the Carlyle Group.

In terms of expansion, Palazzari said the company is working on developing things in a financially "healthy" way. "We aren't a private equity company. This year, he said, is a "complex" year and that one of the firms biggest challenges will be restoring consumer confidence amid difficult economic times. The Middle East, where they have an office, represents a key geographic market both in terms of business to consumer business but also contract and hospitality.

"If you look back five years ago, our group was totally different. So, I mean, the sky's the limit in one way or another. We don't need to do a five year plan, we need a one hundred year plan to build the sort of good taste we are looking for. Our worst enemy is bad taste."



The Paloma Wool store on Broome Street in SoHo.



Paloma Lanna

## BUSINESS

## Paloma Wool Opens First Permanent Store in SoHo

● The Barcelona-based women's brand is also planning to open a unit in its hometown in June.

BY JEAN E. PALMIERI

**Paloma Lanna** was too pregnant to personally christen her brand's first store. But the influence of the founder and designer of the Barcelona-based women's label Paloma Wool was nonetheless evident throughout her SoHo boutique.

The 4,000-square-foot unit at 425 Broome Street is the culmination of a series of pop-ups that the brand has opened around the world over the past six years.

After selling direct-to-consumer since its founding in 2014, Paloma Wool started what was described as a "world tour" in 2019, bringing pop-ups to cities such as Barcelona, Madrid, London, Paris and Los Angeles, with New York being the most successful, according to Pol Conill, who heads communications for the brand.

The first pop-up was on Spring Street, he said, and when the doors opened, there was a line down the street. Ditto for the first day the Broome Street store opened as young women seeking its feminine, minimalistic designs turned out to shop.

"Our last pop-up was three months," he said, "so we realized it made sense to make it permanent."

The shop was designed in collaboration with Barcelona-based light designer Max Mila and is intended to reflect the brand's artistic exploration.

Lanna grew up in the fashion industry; her parents had a brand called Nice Things and after her father passed away, she joined her mother in the family business. But after a couple of years, she decided to launch her own brand and named it after herself — kind of: lana means wool in Spanish.

She started small, with just a handful of pieces in bold prints and colors that she promoted on social media. She didn't follow the traditional calendar

and dropped collections when it suited her instead of during market weeks. The collection was centered around artistic expression through clothing and inspired by her personal love of photography, illustration and art.

Early success led Lanna to begin wholesaling and to follow the fashion calendar, and today, Paloma Wool holds runway shows in Paris for wholesale customers such as Nordstrom, Ssense, Revolve, Mytheresa, Garmentory and Farfetch. "But we also keep the capsule idea coming throughout the season," Conill said.

Although the brand is nearly all women's apparel, shoes and bags, Paloma Wool has also begun dabbling in men's. "We started as a women's brand," Conill said. "But menswear is growing." He said some of the pieces such as the sweatpants with leather piping and T-shirts are unisex and the men's-specific items include a sweater with reflective stripes and a washed button-down shirt.

While there's a lot of wool in the fall collection, the spring line is much lighter and features a lot of knitwear. Among its most popular pieces, he said, are the sheer shirts or skirt pants for women, the latter of which are offered in a variety of options. There are also a cropped leather jacket and a leather miniskirt to juxtapose with the see-through tops. "They're effortless and offer a balance between femininity and masculinity," Conill described.

The store also features jewelry from New York-based Anna Santangelo that was created for the Paloma Wool show in Paris in February, as well as bags and shoes produced in-house.

Conill said a second store is expected to open in June in Barcelona and will house the company's offices as well. As a result, there are no plans to open additional permanent stores at this point, but the pop-up tour will continue with London and Paris next on the list.

## BUSINESS

## Printemps Group Taps Laëtitia Henry, Mélanie Turpin

● Henry will take over as general manager of Printemps Haussmann, while Turpin will lead human resources.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

**PARIS** — Printemps Group has tapped Laëtitia Henry as the new general manager of the flagship on Boulevard Haussmann in Paris, succeeding Laurence Nicolas at the helm of the historical department store.

Mélanie Turpin has been named general manager of human resources. Both will join the ranks of the executive committee.

"The appointments of Laëtitia Henry and Mélanie Turpin perfectly illustrate our commitment to re-enriching the experience of our French and international customers. Their retail expertise in both operational and human resources roles makes them key assets that complement the strengths of our executive committee," said Printemps chief executive officer Jean-Marc Bellaiche.

Henry joins the board with experience across a variety of brands, including Reebok, Cartier and Chloé. Her career has crossed the ocean, with positions in the U.S. and France. She succeeds Nicolas,

who had held the role since 2021.

Over two decades, Turpin climbed the ladder at Auchan, a French superstore similar to Target, starting in the textiles department before joining Printemps in 2021. Turpin takes over the role from Jean-Baptiste Dacquin, who had been in the position since 2023. Dacquin departed the group at the end of March.

This follows key hires in February, when the group tapped former Le Bon Marché executive Maud Barrionuevo as general manager, and moved executive Jean Gasnier from the group's Citadium sports brand to the role of general manager of marketing, communication and new business.

Printemps has been taking on ambitious projects in France and the U.S. as it seeks to grow into a global retail and lifestyle brand.

The French department store recently opened on Wall Street in New York City with a 55,000-square-foot flagship that it is positioning as a shopping and hospitality destination. The group took over the One Wall Street building and restored the Red Room, a Art Deco architectural landmark with an original Hildreth Meire mosaic covering the walls and ceiling.

The New York store has positioned itself

as an experiential location to differentiate itself in the crowded U.S. marketplace.

The U.S. outpost is part of the group's global ambitions, following the opening of its Doha, Qatar, store in 2022. That 430,600-square-foot store is the Middle East's largest department store, bringing

French luxury brands to the region.

In Paris, the flagship recently opened a 2,690-square-foot concept store space on its ground floor dedicated to men's accessories, beauty, watches, jewelry and home, as it seeks to capitalize on the growing segment.



# WWD Weekend

COMING THIS SUMMER, the WWD Weekend Time & Travel Issue is your ultimate guide to luxury, travel, and time well spent. From high-end watches and statement accessories to the latest in beauty on the move, this issue explores the season's most coveted trends. We'll dive into London's ever-evolving luxury scene, from must-visit destinations to the newest openings shaping the city's style landscape. Plus, we'll spotlight the best in summer entertaining, beyond-the-beach getaways, and the latest innovations from Watches & Wonders. As summer kicks off, the issue will be distributed in the Hamptons and London, offering a prime platform to showcase your brand to a global, style-driven audience.

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# TIME & TRAVEL ISSUE



## ACCESSORIES

# Longines Brings Heritage To New SoHo Boutique

- The new location at 128 Spring Street is the brand's third U.S. location.

BY THOMAS WALLER

**Longines has landed in SoHo**, opening its second New York City boutique.

"In a sense it's a pioneering space," Longines chief executive officer Matthias Breschan told WWD. "If you want to discover things that you have not seen elsewhere – new brands, new products, new ideas, new concepts, new everything – you would go to SoHo in New York."

The new location at 128 Spring Street is the brand's third U.S. location, but, the CEO explained, is not a signal of a larger boutique roll out. "We do not have a strategy to move all our point of sales into corporate stores, but there are some key locations in the U.S. where we need either in a multibrand environment or a monobrand environment, to really show the full scope and richness of the heritage and history of the brand." The brand's other NYC boutique is in Westfield World Trade Center.

At 193 years old, Longines has a vast amount of heritage to pull from and the new boutique speaks to it in a bigger way. Customers will discover iconic references from the brand's long-standing passion for equestrian sports to its involvement as a pioneer in aviation as well as its contribution to timekeeping in Alpine ski racing.

"The brand history and heritage is very much linked to pioneers in the history," Breschan said, naming Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart and Howard Hughes. "When you think of all the pilots that contacted brands because they were using already launching navigation instruments in airplanes. They came in the 1920s to Longines. I think that's what made the brand very unique and always avant garde,

because innovation was always a leading part of the DNA of the brand."

Breschan comes with more than 20 years of industry experience, but even he admits he didn't fully understand the scope of the brand heritage when he joined in 2020, first taking in the Longines museum in Switzerland. "I didn't know that Longines invented the fly back movement. I didn't know that Longines invented the GMT movement." Adding, "the precision of time, keeping of sport events. We were the first brand in 1914 being able to measure these events. If I don't know this, then there's a good chance that many other people also don't know about it."

Heritage is key to Longines and also embraced in the new boutique design, incorporating local-inspired materials such as brick walls, reclaimed wood flooring, cast iron preexisting elements and design pieces, all part of SoHo's architectural spirit. "It has to fit into the environment," the CEO said of the uniqueness of the space. "We do not want to destroy the beauty of SoHo. We need to enhance it. So, it's logic that Longines has to adapt to SoHo."

The downtown store features the full assortment of the heritage brand including the Master, Conquest, Spirit, Heritage, Elean collections. The CEO reported that a younger customer has been discovering the brand, brought on by the influence of a newfound interest in mechanical watches. "It's not only a question of watch collectors or watch passionate people, anymore. I think, young people, they discover mechanical watches as truly sustainable consumer products. Because nobody buys a mechanical watch and throws it away six months later. You buy it for your lifetime or next generation," he said.

Many of Longines styles, the CEO

Longines' new SoHo store at 128 Spring Street.

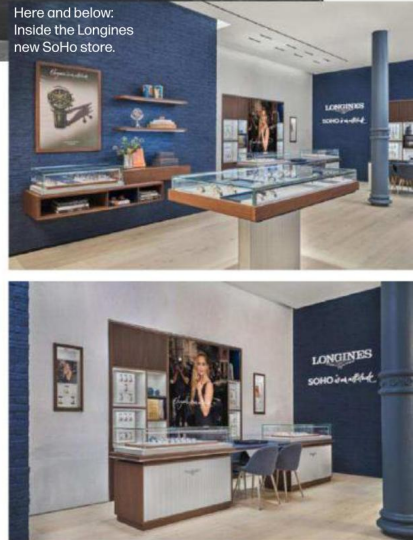


Here and below: Inside the Longines new SoHo store.

reported, sell equally to both men and women, a point of difference he sees from other timepieces in the category. "There is not a clear line anymore. Women buy a lot of big watches, very rugged watches. Men buy small, thin watches." In fact, the term men and women is only used at Longines for Google ranking. "If you don't use keywords on your website, you lose a lot of ground," he said.

Looking ahead, the CEO sees their "authentic" history helping to drive the brand forward. Later this year it will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first dual-time zone wristwatch. "We don't make up anything. Everything is written in our history, and there still are so many things that people don't know."

"Just recently a brand signed a big contract in Formula One," he said. "Not many people know that Longines was for more than 30 years the timekeeper of Formula One."



## EXCLUSIVE

# Arch Manning Signs Fashion Deal With Vuori

Here and right: Arch Manning for Vuori.



- The starting quarterback for the Texas Longhorns chats about his personal style, leading the team and celebrating his 21st birthday.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

**Arch Manning has landed** his first fashion deal.

It's with Vuori, the California-based performance lifestyle brand valued at \$5.5 billion; the brand was launched in 2015 by Joe Kudla, who serves as chief executive officer.

"It just made sense for me," Manning said of the partnership, calling from Austin, where he's the starting quarterback for the Texas Longhorns.

The 20-year-old – who turns 21 on April 27 – comes from an iconic football lineage, with his grandfather, Archie Manning, and uncles, Peyton and Eli Manning, all having made their legendary marks in the NFL.

"I already wore Vuori in my day-to-day life," he went on. "I'm pretty much a laidback dresser, so it made sense for me. Whether it's training or recovering or hanging out, it's pretty effortless and easy, comfortable, and it mirrors my personal style."

He keeps his looks casual. "I'm not a huge fashion guy," Manning said, laughing. "If you saw me dressed, you'd probably understand. But what I liked about Vuori is it's not trying to be loud. It's focused, reliable, and feels authentic, just like how, pretty much, I try to be. I think that's what stood out to me, and that's what I liked about it. It wasn't over-the-top by any means."

He fronts the brand's new campaign, shot at a local high school stadium in Austin, showcasing Vuori's Kore Short, made with a boxer-brief liner, and Strato Tech Tee, a stretchy blend that promises to be quick-drying.

"They care about performance, but also how athletes live and prepare for the game outside of football as well, which is important to me," he said.

The way Manning prepares for a game is by staying focused and present. "I don't wear headphones, and I don't wear sunglasses on the walk [out to the field]. I like to hear and see everything and be in the moment." His go-to meal before a big game is grilled chicken and pasta. "If I had to pick one thing."

This year, as starting quarterback, he's looking to be a strong leader: "Every day I'm just focused on getting better, being a better teammate and stepping into more of a leadership role. That's been big for

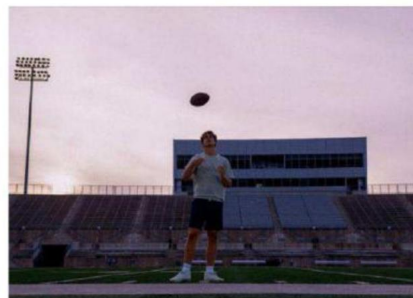
me....I'll do anything to help the team win."

His family has taught him to be "a good person and good teammate," he said of advice he's received. "That's what I'm reminded of all the time. That's what I try to do before anything else."

Outside football, he enjoys playing golf, pickleball and hanging out with friends.

"Compete, sweat, have fun, laugh," he said. What are his plans for his upcoming 21st birthday? He has spring ball practice the day before, he explained.

"So I might have the buddies over and kick it after the long spring ball," he said. "It should be fun."



## FASHION

# Ashish Launches Bridal Range

● The six-look collection, handcrafted in India, includes a recreation of a confetti veil that has gone viral on social media.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

**LONDON** — Ashish Gupta, a master in camp, glamorous sequin creations that have won over the likes of Cate Blanchett, Taylor Swift and Selina Gomez, will debut his first bridal collection on Wednesday with a direct-to-consumer approach.

The inaugural six-look bridal range draws inspiration from the designer's archival pieces with a renewed perspective.

It includes a hand-sewn glass-bead fringed dress, a cream silk organza gown adorned with cascading hand-appliqued florals and a recreation of the confetti veil, hand-embroidered with colorful sequins and beads, that has gone viral on social media. The veil was originally made for a friend years ago.

Gupta, who launched his namesake label in 2001, said bridal requests have been coming his way since the beginning of his career.

"When I started selling in Browns and Mrs. B [Joan Burstein] called me up one day and wanted me to design a dress for her to wear to her daughter Caroline's wedding. It was interesting because I was also doing a dress for Caroline to get married in," he recalled.

But interest in his capability as a bridal designer really piled up when the confetti veil, which was based on a look from the brand's spring 2014 collection, began to show up on every bride's Pinterest board.

"People keep messaging me with screen grabs of the veil from Pinterest, and said: 'I think you've done this veil. Can we do something like this?' Only in the last week, we've had three potential clients come in who want me to do things for their weddings. Also, a couple of years ago,



Here and right: Looks from Ashish's first bridal range.



we did a little bridal capsule for Matches, which did really well," Gupta said.

Then there was the high-profile Ambani wedding. The bride, Radhika Merchant, wore one of the Ashish fringe dresses for one of the events, and that generated considerable buzz and interest for the brand, too.

With production handled in India by local artisans, Gupta thinks the bridal range, which caters to all scenarios related to a wedding, is fairly and competitively priced, starting from around 2,000 pounds and going up to just under 4,000 pounds for the more labor-intensive pieces.

He advises brides-to-be to get in touch three to six months before the wedding for a timely turnaround.

"It's like a couture process with me. You're going to do rounds of fitting, then the embroideries. That process does take a

while. I have my studio in India, and I have people who work exclusively on my brand. Everything is hand done and finished and then refitted," added Gupta.

The launch of bridal, according to Gupta, was partially also because of the drastic changes in the British luxury retail landscape, with key retail partners like Farfetch and Matchesfashion going bankrupt. Having control over production, distribution and CRM is more important than ever amid a volatile trading environment.

"I never had my own platform. It wasn't something I ever considered. And then, obviously, last year, after I started doing my own online store, I suddenly realized actually how much freedom you have. Having the DTC makes it a little bit easier because you can offer something that a lot

of people don't realize," he said.

The designer admitted that business has been challenging post-Brexit.

"Brexit has been horrific. As a British brand selling in Europe, it's been disruptive. A lot of people don't like to talk about Brexit anymore, but we're still feeling the repercussions of that. Everything costs extra now. Also, with a lot of stores in Europe, there's a hesitation to buy smaller British brands because the duties are increased," Gupta said.

He is closely watching the trade war U.S. President Donald Trump is waging on the world, too. The brand's business in America so far has been stable. It consistently sells in stores like Ikram in Chicago and Mirages in Aspen.

Looking ahead, Gupta said he will update the bridal range every six months and intends to keep the team small.

"Everything is changing so quickly around us. As a small brand, I mean, on the positive side, you can change quite quickly and adapt to things. All the work that I do is so labor intensive. I can only manufacture a certain amount of things every season. In a way, it's nice to keep it small. Everything you make is special," he added.



Taraji P. Henson

## BEAUTY

## Taraji P. Henson Buys Brand From Maesa

● She founded her hair brand, TPH by Taraji, in 2020.

BY JAMES MANSO

TPH by Taraji is now under the full control of its founder.

Taraji P. Henson, who founded TPH by Taraji in 2020 with Maesa, has bought the brand outright from the incubator behind Fine'ry, Kristin Ess and Being Frenshe, among others.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

"Over the past few months I have been in discussions with my partners at Maesa regarding the future of the TPH by Taraji brand, and am pleased to say we have reached a mutually beneficial agreement that has afforded me the opportunity to buy back TPH," Henson said via email. "From Day One, our shared vision was to create a brand that celebrates hair and scalp with high-performance products rooted in self care, efficacy and inclusivity."

Upon the brand's 2020 launch, TPH by Taraji went into north of 1,800 Target Corp. doors with serums, scrubs,

shampoos and conditioners focused on scalp health. The brand has since augmented that assortment with body care and home fragrance.

Maesa also sold Andrew Fitzsimons his hair brand in 2024, which he founded with the incubator two years prior. Maesa revealed a new intimate wellness brand on April 4 called Niches & Nooks, which will enter all Target locations and its website with 14 products.

"TPH by Taraji has started with the idea of celebrating and redefining scalp and hair care and has grown into an incredible brand with a strong identity and loyal consumer following," said Scott Kestenbaum, Maesa's chief growth officer, in an email. "After launching and operating the brand for five successful years, we are thrilled to see Taraji take full ownership of the brand as it enters its next chapter of growth."

The news comes weeks after Kim Kardashian bought back her beauty business, Skkn by Kim, from Coty Inc. Elsewhere, sources confirmed to WWD that Hailey Bieber is exploring deal options for her beauty brand, Rhode.

## BUSINESS

# Warehouse Workers Spotlight Labor Dispute

● Two union representatives stopped in five fashion stores in SoHo to provide them with information about an alleged "union buster."

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

A group called "Warehouse Workers Uniting" walked through the streets of SoHo Saturday afternoon to draw attention to designers and brands that they claim are using a union-busting facility in New Jersey.

About 30 people, wearing pale blue hooded rain ponchos, took part in the event, which started at Tribeca Park with a brass band performance and a few speeches, according to an organizer. The event was designed to draw attention to a labor dispute with Elanders/Bergen Logistics, a North Bergen, N.J., operation that works with numerous designer brands and is said to be "a union buster." Supporters included a few factory workers from the facility, as well as ones from Starbucks Workers United, a worker-led unionizing effort.

Charles Ickes, chief executive officer of Bergen Logistics, issued a statement highlighting how the company calls the union-busting allegations to be false and noted that it abides by all labor laws and the National Labor Relations Board regulations. The company has been engaging with the union and the NLRB about the matter since December, according to Ickes. A vote was taken last year and the results were "very close," and are pending a decision by the NLRB. That process has been delayed by a lack of quorum. While the union requests being fully recognized without the

NLRB decision, Bergen Logistics cannot agree to in order to avoid potentially disenfranchising its associated, according to the company's statement.

Workers at the company's warehouse claim to be underpaid and overworked, and they are looking to unionize. The Warehouse Workers Uniting supporters "paraded" through SoHo, past the storefronts of some of the fashion companies that are said to utilize the Elanders/Bergen Logistics warehouse for storage, packing, distribution and e-commerce services. "Those brands included notable vocal supporters of 'ethical' and 'sustainable' fashion industry trends like Ganni, Acne Studios and Kenzo," the group's spokesperson said. Cynthia Rowley and Apiece Apart were also along the route.

Although the 90-minute procession kept going, two members of the Workers United Laundry, Distribution and Food Service Joint Board entered those five stores to deliver a hard copy of a letter, which had also been emailed and sent by the U.S. Postal Service to the companies last week. Making an appeal for a petition in support of Warehouse Workers Uniting, organizers suggested that if the brands "don't speak up, they are selling their products on the backs of exploited workers."

In addition to Cynthia Rowley, Acne Studios, Ganni, Kenzo and Apiece Apart, the fliers also flag Lela Rose, Phillip Lim, Ulla Johnson and Marimekko for using the facility. The fliers note that Warehouse Workers Uniting does not intend to and will not ask anyone to stop working or marking pick-ups and deliveries. Workers at the North Bergen facility store, sort,



Supporters of "Warehouse Workers Uniting" before the start of their April 5 "parade" through SoHo.

package and ship garments, shoes, bags and accessories for fashion brands.

A Lela Rose spokesperson said Tuesday, "We uphold the belief that workers should be appropriately compensated and, upon being made aware of the issue, have been pursuing further knowledge surrounding the circumstances that led to this petition."

Warehouse Workers Uniting alleges that Elanders/Bergen Logistics has engaged in delay tactics, to resist recognizing the union and bargaining in good faith. Representatives at Ganni, Acne Studios and Marimekko declined to comment Tuesday. Media requests to Cynthia Rowley, Kenzo, Apiece Apart and Ulla Johnson were unreturned. Wen Zhou, president and CEO of 3.1 Phillip Lim, was unavailable to comment.

Megan Chambers, co-manager of the LDFS Joint Board, Workers United, SEIU, said Tuesday that workers at the Elanders/Bergen Logistics distribution center in North Berge reached out to the union last year and "they urgently wanted to organize." In addition, they are seeking more paid time off, better pay, better and more affordable health insurance, and the right to be represented and to negotiate over working conditions. Chambers said, "They want to be able to have a binding

say when it comes to their workplace health and safety conditions, pay and benefits, schedule changes and other working conditions."

In November, the majority of the distribution center's 185 workers signed union cards, stating they wanted to be represented by the Workers United, SEIU, Chambers said. Elanders/Bergen Logistics was said to have been notified and was asked to live up to their signed agreement with UNI Global Union regarding organizing drives, but that has not happened, Chambers said.

The group's spokesperson said, "The parade served to reinforce the importance of these logistics workers to the success of the fashion industry, despite the fact that their essential labor is less visible than the products they handle and deliver."

Worker-led activism has gained some momentum in recent years with some people forming unions, speaking out for reforms and creating coalitions. Some have been motivated by underpayment, poor treatment or job insecurity. One New York nonprofit, For the Many, organizes workers and advocates for pro-labor legislation, and another The Model Alliance supports workers in the fashion industry.

## FASHION

# Frank Martinez Joins Fisher Phillips

Frank Martinez



● During his 30-year career, he previously worked for LVMH and other companies.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

**Frank Martinez**, a former senior executive at Prada USA, has joined Fisher Phillips as partner in its New York office.

Prior to joining the global international labor and employment law firm that represents employers, Martinez was senior vice president and general counsel for the Americas at Prada USA. He exited the luxury company after a two-year run last December. Before that, Martinez was vice president of legal affairs at LVMH, where he worked for nearly nine years. At LVMH, he served as the lead North American employment attorney for the group and dealt with clients that included the holding company and 35 companies. In that role, he worked with global and regional leaders to advance best employment practices while balancing group objectives. He also supervised hundreds of investigations.

Further back in his 30-year career, Martinez owned and ran his own law firm in New York for a decade, where he represented both management and employees.

In that time, he has given advice about compliance, preventative practices, employee relations, handbooks, contracts, executive compensation, discrimination, harassment, disability, non-competition

agreements and other employment-related matters.

Michael Marra, co-regional managing partner of the Fisher Phillips New York office praised Martinez's "ability to provide strategic counsel across a wide range of employment matters from complex disputes to executive compensation, as well as his understanding of client needs and client service." Having known Martinez for 25 years, Marra described him as "just generally a wonderful person. I know he will be an excellent fit with our team."

In his new post, Martinez is helping clients with workplace investigations, leaves and accommodations, employee relations, crisis management, international mobility, litigation, employee policies, compensation, and wage and hour practices. He is working with the firm's New York team to expand the firm's retail industry offerings and provide comprehensive labor and employment solutions geared for the sector's challenges. Fisher Phillips has more than 675 attorneys across the U.S., Mexico and Japan, as well as a network of attorneys in other jurisdictions.

Martinez earned his Juris Doctor from Boston University. He also earned a Master of Music from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University, Bloomington.

As for how his luxury fashion experience will benefit his new employer, the firm's director of media relations Meghan Warin said, "While Frank has joined Fisher Phillips to serve as a strategic business partner to all firm clients, we are confident that we will expand our partnership with the luxury and fashion industries through his deep knowledge and unique experience."

## BUSINESS

# Kering Marks a Decade Of Women in Motion

- The group invited Cannes Film Festival president Iris Knobloch and USC Annenberg's Stacy L. Smith to assess how the industry has changed for women over the last 10 years.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY STÉPHANE FEUGÈRE

**PARIS** - Kering will celebrate 10 years of Women in Motion at the upcoming Cannes Film Festival in May.

To mark the decade, the fashion conglomerate invited festival president Iris Knobloch and group chief brand officer Laurent Claquin to host a roundtable with USC Annenberg's Stacy L. Smith at its headquarters Tuesday.

Smith and Katherine Pieper presented a study taking stock of how women have made gains both in front of and behind the camera since the first edition in 2015.

Smith praised Women in Motion's focus on putting women in the spotlight with its annual awards in Cannes. Trailblazers such as actresses Jane Fonda, Viola Davis and Michelle Yeoh have been among the recipients, alongside executives including Universal Studios' Donna Langley.

"Awards are one way to really galvanize press recognition and to let women in the industry know that they're being heard, they're being seen and that their efforts are really important, and this has traction, and this has a cachet to it that really can advance an executive, an actor or a filmmaker's career," Smith said.

Smith also highlighted how the emerging talent award boosts young female filmmakers' profiles.

"[The award] provides not only financial assistance, but also press attention, which is really important to creating buzz and a cacophony of voices around these directors to get them meetings, to get them past any initial hurdles."

The winners of the emerging talent award have gone on to direct TV series and feature films and been nominated for and won numerous prestigious prizes.

"Amplifying that recognition is really important for agents, managers, financiers, sales agents in moving forward these talented directors and ensuring that they have the same careers as their male counterparts," she added.

Looking at the data from movies in Australia, France, Germany, Italy, the U.S. and the U.K. that had box office revenue of at least \$1 million, Smith showed that 32 percent of films had women leads or co-leads in 2015 when Women in Motion was launched, climbing to 54 percent of films in 2024.

However, the data showed that what hasn't moved too much is the proportion of secondary female characters having speaking roles or female characters that are older than 40. Those remain at 32 percent and 25 percent, respectively.

Behind the camera, the number of female directors in the U.S. has doubled from 8.5 percent to 16.2 percent; grown from 14.4 percent to 25.9 percent in France, and jumped in the U.K. from 8.3 percent to 32.3 percent mostly due to government funding initiatives and film board rules.

The number of female-directed films at



Donna Langley and François-Henri Pinault

film festivals has shown improvement from 18.2 percent a decade ago, to 26.8 percent in 2024.

Smith remarked that continued major areas of concern from Women in Motion talk participants include how women directors are pigeonholed as difficult to work with, difficulty for women to find financing for their films, or that female directors are kept in indie films and not given the same opportunities for big budget productions.

"Conversations like Women in Motion are really important to bringing pay disparities to light and providing a way for women on screen and behind the camera to discuss more openly the ways in which they're compensated for their time and talent," Smith said.

She added that these topics would be new areas of discussion to focus on in upcoming editions of the talks.

The annual awards and talks will continue with the support of Kering. The company has just signed on to support the initiative for another five years, and "it will be an ongoing partnership," Claquin told WWD.

Brazilian director Marianna Brennand was named the recipient of this year's Women in Motion Emerging Talent Award, which will be handed out at the gala dinner May 18.



Pinault and Viola Davis at the Kering Women in Motion awards.

chairman and chief executive officer François-Henri Pinault.

Pinault wanted the group to participate in the festival, but "bring an added dimension and something important" to the conversation and have an impact.

"We're very proud to...continue to make the place of women in cinema a priority not only on the red carpets, but also behind the camera, in the writing of scripts, in theaters, in discussions and at all levels," he said.

Knobloch, who is the first female president of the film festival, said this has been a decade that has "redefined the place of women in our industry."

"What I love is that Kering took this initiative before the movement, before the hashtag, that it was not done out of reaction, but out of conviction," she said, noting that it pre-dated the Time's Up and #MeToo movements.

"It makes me even more happy that in times like today, you stand firm, you are constant in this conviction," she added.

Discussing the current rollback of diversity, equity and inclusion programs in the U.S. as directed by the government, Smith said that there has been "a chilling effect" on educational institutions that are likely to have a long-tail effect.

"We could see a change in participation, and that is the direct pipeline to the industry for these companies," she said. Smith highlighted that companies such as Amazon, which had a woman at the helm of its film and TV division until last week, "completely erased" their inclusion policy.

Her data shows that female-centered films make an equitable amount of money as male-centered films when taking into account production and marketing budgets. Ultimately it will come down to the audience, which is shifting with Gen Z.

"The audience dictates these companies' choices, and so to further court the audience, they will need to continue to lean into what the audience wants and from box office revenue, it is really clear women and people of color are on the top of the agenda and what sells."



Pinault, Amanda Nell Eu, Langley, Iris Knobloch and Thierry Fremaux.

## BUSINESS

# Tariffs, Inflation Challenges Pressuring U.S. Consumers and Businesses



U.S. President Donald Trump holds up a chart while speaking during a "Make America Wealthy Again" trade announcement event in the Rose Garden.

- As economic uncertainty deepens, analysts highlight dynamic consumption shifts, regional spending disruptions and growing struggles for small business owners in the face of evolving trade policies.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Recent analyst reports point to tariffs as the latest in a long list of headwinds having a negative impact on consumer spending that include inflation and rising debt. Tariffs are also affecting another key segment of the economy: small businesses.

In a research note from Circana, the firm said U.S. consumers "are currently faced

with a great deal of uncertainty that may or may not impact activity at retail. Aside from that uncertainty, consumers are already adjusting purchase decisions as a result of broader circumstances that are impacting them now."

Those "broader circumstances" included the ongoing pressure of elevated prices, rising debt, concern among the Hispanic community about the administration's clampdown on immigration, extreme weather and natural disasters that are disrupting traditional spending patterns.

Marshal Cohen, chief retail industry adviser for Circana, said, "Dynamic shifts in consumption are already occurring across consumer groups and retail segments. The consumer is in a state of confusion and trying to decipher how to prioritize their purchases in an environment of significant change."

Cohen said in his report that since 2020, "prices have risen across most consumer goods, and wages have lagged, resulting in weakened consumer demand." He noted that while there is less of a gap in retail food and beverage and at food service, "the impact on discretionary general merchandise and nonessential consumer packaged goods is noticeable."

The report noted that in 2023, general merchandise had reached a peak average price increase of 25 percent over pre-pandemic 2019 levels, with unit demand

that fell as low as 9 percent. "In the fourth quarter of 2024, the average price increase of goods sold was up 17 percent and unit demand slowed to a 7 percent decline," the report stated. "Part of the recent shifts is the result of consumers choosing more mainstream or value product options, including private label, moving their spending away from the more premium offerings."

The report also noted that discretionary purchasing among Hispanic consumers "continues to fall at a faster pace than non-Hispanic purchasing." The declines that have picked up speed in the second half of 2024, and continue, "have resulted in the first time in two years that Hispanic consumer demand underperformed that of non-Hispanic consumers," the report said.

Circana also noted in the report that regional consumption patterns have shifted due to major weather events. In early 2025, Southern California wildfires and winter storm Blair worsened discretionary spending declines from a 1 percent 2024 average to 4 percent for that week. Meanwhile, winter storm Enzo brought record snowfall to the Gulf Coast, causing double-digit declines in discretionary spending there. Unexpected storms and colder U.S. temperatures in January, however, boosted sales of cold-weather essentials.

"Unexpected events create unexpected needs, and put added pressure on consumers," Cohen said. "As more uncertainty and new dynamics enter the picture, the consumer has made it clear that they will not continue to spend in

their usual way."

Regarding the impact of tariffs on small businesses, Chuck Casto, head of content marketing at Alignable, said even at this stage of the deployment, the effect is negative for many.

"As the trade policy roller coaster accelerates under the Trump administration, U.S. small business owners are growing increasingly anxious about their financial future," Casto said, adding that data from a new report from the firm found 44 percent of [small business] owners say they expect reduced sales due to tariffs – up 3 percentage points from March and 14 points from February. Of those, 13 percent anticipate significant revenue drops.

And the concern isn't just forward-looking: more than 25 percent of small businesses report they're already experiencing tariff-related declines in sales.

The findings were pulled from Alignable's April Tariff Report, which is based on 4,441 responses from randomly selected U.S. small business owners that were surveyed between March 22 and April 1. Casto said the study was done in collaboration with Harvard Business School researchers Zoe Cullen and Ebehi Iyoha as well as Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher David Atkin.

"This survey was conducted just prior to President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariff announcements," Casto said. "As such, these findings likely represent only the beginning of a growing trend, which is expected to accelerate as new trade measures take effect."

## BUSINESS

# Uber's 2025 Lost and Found Index Highlights Beauty, Fashion Faves

- Among the list of most left behind items are Rhode lip glosses, Dyson Airwraps, Alexander Wang heels and Aritzia Superpuffs.

BY ALEXANDRA PASTORE

According to Uber's ninth annual Lost and Found Index (timed to the end of Mercury in retrograde), when a passenger leaves their favorite Rhode lip gloss behind, they're quick to report it.

In reflection of the report, Camiel Irving, vice president of operations and GM of mobility US&C at Uber, told WWD that the report always proves to be surprising adding that the 2025 results truly delivered. Notably, the report's data is pulled from Uber's lost and found inquiries submitted by riders – meaning these items are ones that riders want back and will likely replace or purchase again.

"What really stood out is how often people forget their everyday beauty go-tos," said Irving said. "On the beauty and fashion front, we saw everything from full Jo Malone fragrance bottles and Dyson Airwraps to luxury heels and designer accessories. Even

the basic essentials are things riders would rather try to track down than repurchase. We totally get it – when your favorite gloss goes missing, it's personal."

Across all categories the most commonly lost and reported items are phones, wallets, keys, luggage, headphones, glasses, clothing, passports, vapes and water bottles, with New York leading the most "forgetful" cities followed by Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. People are most likely to forget gloves on Mondays, jackets on Tuesdays and cowboy hats on Saturdays.

"We've all had that moment of panic when you realize your favorite pair of sunglasses or go-to beauty product didn't make it out of the car with you," Irving said. "Whether it's something sentimental or just something you'd really rather not replace, we're here to help reunite riders with their lost belongings."

The list of most left behind beauty items includes: Dyson Airwrap, hair extensions, face wash and ashwagandha pills, Jo Malone perfume, lip gloss, Baccarat cologne, Happy Clinique perfume, Rhode lip gloss in Toast, pink Caboodle, Summer Fridays lip balm in brown, Makeup by

Mario setting powder, press-on nails, vitamin C and sunscreen, melatonin and collagen, Silk hair scrunchie, Milk cooling blush stick, Hair building fibers, Solwave red light therapy wand, Versace perfume, eyelashes and Fenty lip liner in I Wouldn't.

When submitting reports of lost lip glosses, Uber noted that a common note added to the request by the rider was "I know it's ridiculous but it's my favorite lip gloss and they discontinued it."

The top 10 fashion items left behind are tuxedos, J.Crew women's blazers in black, U.S. Open pullovers, Doc Martens, Kate Spade purses, Timberlands, Vuori shorts in black, white Vans, Aritzia Superpuff in black and Birkenstock slides. Top luxury items include Supreme headbands, Balmain navy blue blazer with gold buttons, gold Rolex, Diesel cap with big metal logo, Air Jordan 1s, black Gucci belt, black Dior shawl, Prada scrunchie, Burberry throw blanket, Alexander Wang heels, green Ganni bonnet and Dior slides.

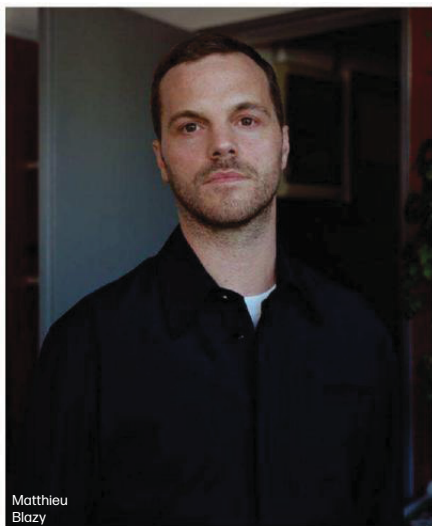
To bring the index to life, Uber hosted a one-day pop-up in the city with the most lost items – New York – on Tuesday. The event allowed attendees to explore some of the more unusual forgotten items and get freebies of some of the most left behind items including headphones from Bose, umbrellas from Shed Rain, Maybelline Lifter glosses and Everyday Crescent Bags from July. The event will also pay tribute to someone who lost 175 cheeseburgers in the back of an Uber ride last year by giving out burgers from Shake Shack.

"We're so excited to bring our annual Lost and Found Index to life with a one-day-only pop-up," Irving said. "It's a fun way to celebrate the everyday chaos of city life – and remind people that if you do forget something, Uber has got your back."



Uber's Lost and Found Index reveals the top fashion and beauty items left in rides.

# Fashion Scoops



Matthieu Blazy

## Building His Team

Matthieu Blazy, who officially started work April 1 as Chanel's new artistic director of fashion activities, is quietly assembling his team, WWD has learned.

According to market sources, he has tapped seasoned designer Andrew Heather from Maison Margiela for a top post.

It is understood Heather starts in June and will work in Chanel's haute couture studio.

A graduate of London's Royal College of Art, Heather started out as a design assistant to Bruce Oldfield before moving to Paris in 1998 to work at Givenchy as head designer, haute couture, under Lee Alexander McQueen. He stayed on to assist Riccardo Tisci on Givenchy's couture collections.

In 2011, he was named creative director of fur house Revillon, following in the famous footsteps of Rick Owens and Peter Dundas.

Between 2013 and 2021, Heather held senior design roles at Celine and Chloé before joining Maison Margiela as design director of the Artisanal couture line under creative director John Galliano, according to sources.

Contacted on Monday by WWD about the hire, a Chanel spokeswoman said: "As we enter a new chapter, it is natural that we should consider to have our creative organization evolve by bringing in new talents, while continuing to rely on our current teams."

Heather could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, sources said executives in Blazy's immediate orbit that he is likely to bring with him to Chanel include Michael Giugliano, who lists himself on LinkedIn as head of brand expansion at Bottega Veneta.

Last December, Chanel confirmed that Blazy, formerly Bottega Veneta's creative director, was joining the French house and would be responsible for all haute couture, ready-to-wear and accessories collections.

"I am thrilled and honored to join the wonderful house of Chanel. I look forward to meeting all the teams and writing this new chapter together," Blazy said in a statement at the time.

He is expected to make his debut with Chanel's spring 2026 ready-to-wear collection, which should be unveiled during Paris Fashion Week next October. — MILES SOCHA



Jack Draper and Rosie Huntington-Whiteley in Burberry's high summer campaign.

## Here Comes The Sun

Burberry is looking to brighter days with its high summer campaign – taking a break from trenchcoats and the four-seasons-in-a-day British weather.

The brand's new ambassador Jack Draper stars in the campaign called "Wish You Were Here" with models Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Alva Claire and Babacar N'Doye on a yacht called Check Mate.

"We wanted to capture the joy of the British at play. A kind of kick-start to the summer. Burberry is a brand for all the seasons, don't forget," said Daniel Lee, Burberry's chief creative officer.

He added that the campaign was inspired by the brand's "celluloid postcard – an arc of British idiosyncrasies and humor, with factor 50 on," which were inspired by various "incredible yachting and holiday images" he found in the Burberry archive.

The tennis player and models wear check swimwear and shirtdresses, as well as two-piece sets with a nautical knot pattern.

Burberry has been pushing a united, British front under new chief executive officer Joshua Schulman's strategy.

"Burberry represents to me an extremely cool English brand. I'm very patriotic so the chance to work with a British brand and be an ambassador for a huge brand is a real honor for me and something I don't take lightly," Draper told WWD, who was named ambassador earlier this month.

"I'm looking forward to hopefully being with Burberry for many years to come but I just love what the brand symbolizes, good values and the slogan to keep moving forward," he added.

The tennis player ranks as the world's number seven, and number one for the U.K. on the ATP tennis list.

Draper said he remembers the "first piece of Burberry kit I owned was a vintage coat that I got at a market in London. It's been a coat that I've worn many, many times. I'll keep on wearing it for a long time, that's for sure."

The brand's high summer campaign is taking on its own life with two pop-ups – one at The Newt in Somerset, England, and another at The Standard in Ibiza, Spain.

— HIKMAT MOHAMMED

## Time To Celebrate

Etro is paying homage to its heritage during Milan Design Week.

The brand has unveiled the "5 threads, 40 years" exhibition to celebrate its signature Arnica fabric, which turns 40 this year. The show is being held in the Etro boutique on Via Pontaccio until Sunday. The signature fabric is made of five bright threads in organic, earthy tones woven into a paisley jacquard, which undergoes a special coating process to become resistant.

The exhibition, intended as a journey, unfolds in three dark rooms. All connected by a continuous carpet, each room is dedicated to a different stage: the creation, the icon and the journey.

Founder Gimmo Etro's desk is located at the entrance of the exhibition.

A screen, placed on it, shows the first step of the Arnica creation: the ornamental drawing of the paisley motif. The weaving phase is represented by the five threads, which make the pattern in yellow, green, red, turquoise and white, followed by fabric samples that have already undergone through the coating process.

Going forward, guests can find a selection of bags, which celebrate the path of the brand. In the last room are placed trunks and suitcases as a storage of the memories of everything that Etro has studied, produced and collected over the years

Inside Etro's "5 threads, 40 years" exhibition during Milan Design Week.



around the world.

At the end of the visit, visitors will receive a stool made of Arnica, which is a symbol of the stops during a journey. — ANDREA ONATE

## Design Week Celebrations

Swarovski has come up with several ways to celebrate Design Week in a year that marks the 130th anniversary for the Austrian-based company.

On Wednesday, the brand will host a cocktail party in its Duomo flagship to present the new Swarovski x Rosenthal Idyllia. The collection, designed by global creative director Giovanna Engelbert, is the second collaboration with

the porcelain specialist and features tropical birds such as cockatoos, royal flycatchers and citrus fruits in porcelain.

The jewelry Idyllia collection will also be on display in the store.

Visual merchandising, including window displays and interior graphics, form part of the overall unveiling. The collaboration is available on the Swarovski website and will be launched globally in stores from June.

Until Sunday, the brand also is inviting visitors to take a ride on a branded Milanese tram adorned with printed motifs depicting Idyllia florals. On board, guests can take part in floral workshops during a 30-minute journey. ▶



Swarovski x Rosenthal Idyllia collection windows display.



The Under Armour x Unless hoodie.

This year, Swarovski has joined EuroLuce 2025, the light exhibition held in Milan and running until Sunday. The brand has presented a collection entirely made in Austria, which includes lights with five interchangeable shapes that can be used in combination or as individual elements.

Some of the shapes featured are the octagon lily inspired by nature with a star cut at its center; the bead, ideal for crafting chains and links, or the pendeloque, shaped as a teardrop. All the pieces can be complemented with the brand's interior panels such as the sheets of crystal rocks and fine rocks.

— A.O.

## Active And Green

About eight months after acquiring Unless, the all plant-based, plastic-free, regenerative fashion brand, Under Armour has taken to Milan Design Week to unveil the first cobranded sportswear collection.

Founded and led by industry veteran Eric Liedtke, who boasts 26 years at rival sportswear giant Adidas, Unless bills itself as an apparel and footwear brand committed to returning harmless goods to the environment and promoting a plastic-free future by using all plant-based materials.

As part of the acquisition deal, Liedtke joined Under Armour as its executive vice president of brand strategy, helping the company scale up its sustainability credentials.

"Plastics are wonderful.

They provide durability, they provide flexibility, they provide breathability... The problem with them is they're forever. They never go away. So we have to find a better way," said Liedtke, sharing facts on how plastics are impacting human health care and Earth's ecosystems.

"Regenerative [fashion] means you create value every step of the way. Regenerative means you make stuff that's not harmful. You make stuff from natural materials to go harmlessly away at the end

of its life...So we're actually starting with the end in mind," he offered.

The Under Armour x Unless regenerative collection marks the first collaboration between the two brands and includes menswear and womenswear designed for an active lifestyle, such as hoodies, T-shirts and shorts bearing eco-slogans such as "protect this earth" and pixelated flowers.

"What's in front of you right now is what really moved and compelled me to get engaged," said

Kevin Plank, Under Armour founder, president and chief executive officer, pointing to the installation showcasing the Under Armour x Unless collection and exhibitions on materials employed. "Under Armour has always been on the cutting edge...of innovation when it comes to material science...the vision here was to support Eric in this concept of imagining to actually leave a better planet behind and do it in a sustainable way," he said.

"We've embarked on this journey, and I want to applaud Eric for taking this lead, really grabbing the baton of this...I knew what was important about the Unless initiative, which is what compelled me, because when I think about being a public company, it's completely in line with what it means to be a sustainable company. It's about reducing waste, reducing footprint, being as efficient as possible, and so we want to be great stewards for the environment, for the world. We're just getting started in doing that, and we're thrilled to have this partnership," Plank said.

The cobranded collection is priced between \$30 and \$160 and will debut exclusively at the Under Armour Brand House in Baltimore at the end of April. — MARTINO CARRERA

## First CEO

Ciele Athletics Inc., a Montreal-based performance running brand, has named its first chief executive officer.



Jano Arabaghian

Chris Prescott



Jano Arabaghian, a veteran of Red Bull, The North Face, Oakley and Vans, has joined the company in the newly created position to spur growth and cultural impact, the company said. He served most recently as head of action sports sales for Vans North America and had previously worked as general manager of Vans Canada.

"With the appointment of Jano as our first CEO, we're excited to work alongside him to bring sharper focus and stronger leadership to our rapidly growing brand," said Mike Giles and Jeremy Bresnen, cofounders of Ciele Athletics. "He brings a wealth of experience, but more importantly, his values align with ours. He recognizes the strength of what we've built and sees the immense potential ahead, helping us continue to create exceptional products and experiences in this next chapter of considered growth."

"Since Jeremy and Mike founded Ciele Athletics in 2014, running has undergone a cultural shift. It's no longer solely about performance, but also expression, connection and identity," said Arabaghian. "What excites me about Ciele Athletics is its unwavering dedication to building the best products for people who run, while authentically existing in this evolving, community-driven space that running has come to represent over the last decade."

The brand started out offering lightweight headwear and has since expanded into apparel for men and women centered around performance and protection. It is now sold

in more than 1,300 stores in 43 countries and Ciele Athletics is a B Corp-certified company.

— JEAN E. PALMIERI

## New Consultancy

Chris Prescott, a London-based communication executive, has launched C.P.C., a boutique consultancy firm that aims to connect the luxury and entertainment sectors.

Prescott said the agency specializes in tailor-made strategies to connect brands and studios with culturally relevant ambassadors to elevate their reach, maximize awareness and create desirability.

"At C.P.C. we believe that storytelling is the key to brand longevity and sentiment. By curating meaningful partnerships and connecting brands with relevant voices, we create moments that resonate and inspire," said Prescott.

According to Prescott, C.P.C. has worked with clients such as Stella McCartney, Miu Miu, Harrods, Sky Cinema and Gordon Ramsay Restaurants on brand communities, global events, content creation, partnerships, campaigns and communication strategies.

Prior to launching C.P.C., Prescott worked at Charles Finch's brand development and advisory firm Finch + Partners as associate director. Before that, he worked on special projects as an account manager at the now-defunct transatlantic communication agency Starworks.

— TIANWEI ZHANG ■