

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.

Grand Prize

Meryll Rogge walks away with a major ANDAM win.

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Textile makers are bringing reassuring fabrics to an uncertain market for 2026.

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In the Fold

Simon Porte Jacquemus dedicated his spring show to his family and its humble roots in vegetable farming, wishing to convey “the feel of ironed cotton on a Sunday.” Here, one of his tiered gowns reminiscent of country curtains, vintage tablecloths and, vaguely, a snow-covered spruce tree. *For more on the Paris shows, see pages 10 to 19.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GIOVANNI GIANNONI



A rendering of the green space envisioned for Yorktown Center.



Rendering of District Galleria's open space and surrounding towers.

BUSINESS

Remaking Malls Into Green And Open Destinations

● Pacific Retail Capital Partners' CEO Steve Plenge and Annmarie Plenge, chief creative officer, discuss the value of incorporating gathering places, event spaces and parks into their projects.

BY DAVID MOIN

Downtown White Plains, N.Y., is undergoing a dramatic transformation.

The 900,000-square-foot, four-story Galleria mall – an outmoded, brutalist 1980s-style structure that housed Macy's and Sears and an array of lackluster specialty stores – will soon be demolished and remade into "District Galleria," an 11-acre, mixed-use destination. The new look will include seven Gensler-designed glass and steel towers with 3,200 apartments and rooftop gardens; 225,000 square feet of primarily dog, health and wellness retailers including a fitness center, a neighborhood grocery store, gourmet dining; a quarter-mile-long garden promenade, parks for people and dogs, and an outdoor event space.

Significantly, 46 percent of District Galleria's footprint – over 4 acres – will be open space.

"It's important for the city to see a lot of open space because it becomes a great way for the community to gather, and to actually have some breathing room in between these massive, very tall towers so it doesn't feel so dense," said Steve Plenge, chief executive officer of Pacific Retail Capital Partners, the Los Angeles-based developer of District Galleria, which is working with Cappelli Organization and SL Green Realty Corp.

"District Galleria is a \$2.5 billion project covering two city blocks. There are very few projects around the country of this

magnitude happening," said Annmarie Plenge, chief creative officer of PRCP, head of its design group and Steve's wife.

A high percentage of District Galleria's open space will be devoted to grass, trees and water features adjacent to a "hardscape" of restaurants, coffee stops, outdoor seating and an area for concerts, farmers' markets, outdoor movies and art exhibits.

"Because the site is so urban, you have to design sections for different things, but they're open and all integrate in a comprehensive way," said Steve Plenge. "It becomes a whole ecosystem, if you will, that flows, and the green space is the catalyst for that. It becomes a place where people can attend events, or just bring their dog, or have a coffee and hang out."

"District Galleria is a fantastic location in the center of the city, in the heart of Westchester, so we wanted it to be the number-one gathering place for the community," added Annmarie Plenge. "That's why the overall vision for the project incorporates that [high] percentage of open and green space into the master plan."

Rather than limiting a property's productivity, Steve Plenge said: "It's something that can actually generate better NOI [net operating income]. We've seen it. If you have good green space, you can get very good tenants, restaurants in particular, on the perimeter of these spaces, leading to an amenity base for the residential side. And whether you have town houses, high-risers or multifamily [dwellings], you get higher rents."

At other PRCP properties "with curated and well-designed green spaces," he said, "we've seen 10, 15 percent higher rents," from retail and residential tenants. With synergies happening, "You can create some real, tangible value if you do it right."

Remaking malls into mixed-use destinations with open and green space is a strategy permeating PRCP's portfolio

of 19 shopping center properties covering 25 million square feet. "We're trying to evolve malls for the next generation," said Annmarie Plenge, referencing PRCP's tag line. "It's really about designing places where people can gather and interact, create memories and have a sense of community. It's about emphasizing the design of spaces in between the buildings and making sure that's actually almost more important than what the buildings look like. It gets down to how you define what that space is. And it's unique for each market we work in. It's not a one-size-fits-all approach."

In Lombard, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, PRCP and Synergy Construction are transforming the 1.5 million-square-foot Yorktown Center – anchored by Von Maur and JCPenney and home to 150 specialty stores – by renovating and expanding it. That includes taking over a vacant adjacent strip center, adding thousands of square feet of retail space, more than 600 residential units and a central, green space to be called The Square. For the project, PRCP tore down a former Carson Pirie Scott department store that had been vacant since 2018. PRCP acquired Yorktown Center with KKR & Co. in 2012.

With the teardown, PRCP is attracting new retail along the perimeter, particularly health and wellness tenants, including a yoga studio with access to the open space for outdoor classes. Offices will also front green space. Because of its "thoughtful design," Yorktown is commanding higher rents, said Steve Plenge.

"As soon as we tore down Carson's and announced to the retail universe this big redevelopment, we were able to bring in Fresh Market [supermarket], which is unique to a mall, David & Buster's for entertainment, and six local and regional restaurants. We've never had so much leasing activity in the dozen years we've

owned Yorktown Center, all because we tore down a department store, and created this great green space, adding further density." Helping the city's efforts to structure a business improvement district enabled PRCP to fund the project.

Annmarie Plenge described Yorktown's open-space plan as about an acre in size, park-like with landscaping, benches, a play area, outdoor dining for restaurants, and space to host events for up to 1,000 people.

Two years ago, PRCP acquired Bridgewater Commons, a 1.2 million-square-foot enclosed mall anchored by Bloomingdale's and Macy's in Bridgewater Township, N.J. The adjacent 94,000-square-foot Village at Bridgewater Commons was also purchased.

"Bridgewater is probably our highest-end property, but it has this cavernous, kind of odd center court. Annmarie and her team are basically bringing a park setting into the space, with trees with artificial leaves because they can't grow inside," said Steve Plenge. "It's about bringing the outside inside."

At Bridgewater, 19 leases were signed in the past year, including Millburn Deli, a regional business offering classic chicken, beef, turkey and "vegetarian-ish" sandwiches and salads. He said staying relevant to the community entails leasing to local food operations, perhaps a bakery or fast casual restaurant, augmenting national restaurants and food establishments.

Also in 2023, PRCP acquired The Shops at Palm Desert, a 980,000-square-foot enclosed mall in Palm Desert, Calif. PRCP has a master plan for the 72-acre property, transforming it into a mixed-use destination and gathering place. "That's a unique market because it's hot, and an enclosed mall actually works pretty well, but you've got to have open space as well as the enclosed." Also, with some oversize parking lots there, "We're looking at doing a number of things on the residential front and discussing what green space we want," Steve Plenge said.

In White Plains, PRCP is close to getting its final approvals. The executives expect demolition to begin in 2026, with the project completed in five to seven years. Designing District Galleria's green space was a mutual decision by PRCP and the city, which wanted a place that would be considered the heart of their city. "The requirement from the city, for about 12 percent green space was nowhere near where we ended up," said Steve Plenge.

Reimagining malls with more open and green space started becoming an industry trend 15 years ago – a shift that only accelerated during the pandemic. "That's when my job got a lot easier because since COVID-19 everyone has been saying, 'Give me green space.' People want to get out and socialize."

PRCP's "secret sauce" is its ability to do master planning in-house, as opposed to outsourcing it, which can be costly. Annmarie Plenge and several other PRCP employees formerly worked at Gensler.

"What is constantly missing in a lot of downtown projects is green space," said Steve Plenge. "It helps to stitch all the pieces together, and draws people through."



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FASHION

Meryll Rogge Wins 2025 ANDAM Fashion Award



Alain Paul and Luis Philippe



Burç Akıyol

● The Special Prize went to Alainpaul, while Burç Akıyol took the Pierre Bergé Prize.

BY LILY TEMPLETON

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS – Second time was the charm for Meryll Rogge, who scooped up the Grand Prize of the 2025 ANDAM Fashion Award on Monday.

“Honestly, we just said it like it is, I didn’t really change much versus last year,” said the Belgian designer. “I think we just evolved and grew a lot in the last year.”

And what a 12-month run it’s been for the Ghent, Belgium-born designer who was a finalist of last year’s ANDAM.

In addition to becoming the first woman to be named designer of the year at the 2024 Belgian Fashion Awards and being a 2025 Woolmark Prize finalist, she saw her designs land on the likes of Dua Lipa, Chloé Sévigny and Rihanna.

Having shown her collections in Paris since 2021 in presentations, she held her first fashion show in March, presenting a collection she deemed her “most developed pieces.” These were among the designs she showed to the ANDAM jury earlier in the day.

Not that she is letting it get to her head. “It just shows that we are stepping it up every year,” she said. “And now we’re going to be able to make huge leaps, of course.”

A 2008 graduate of Antwerp’s Royal Academy of Fine Arts who dreamed of being an illustrator as a child, she swapped paint for textile swatches when moving to New York. After working her way up to lead designer at Marc Jacobs over seven years, she was back in Antwerp working for Dries Van Noten as head of women’s design in 2014 before going solo in 2020.

Several of her pieces have been acquired recently by MoMu Antwerp and Brussels’ Fashion & Lace Museum.

How she plans on spending the 300,000-euro purse that comes with this win is “very clear for us,” Rogge said.

One priority is direct-to-consumer channels, particularly e-commerce, a yet-un tapped opportunity for her business.

“It’s a big one for us because we do get a lot of views on our website, lots of DMs and we can never support it, which is a shame,” she said.

The 41-year-old is also looking at expanding in accessories. “We dabbled

Sarah Levy and Meryll Rogge



in shoes, working on a collaboration with [Japanese footwear brand] Grounds and we want to go further,” she said.

In addition to the cash award, she will be mentored by 36th jury president Sidney Toledano, an adviser to LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton chairman and chief executive officer Bernard Arnault, as well as president of the Institut Français de la Mode fashion school.

The seasoned executive will also have another mentee: Special Prize winner Alain Paul, who parlayed a 10-year career working for the likes of Vetements and Louis Vuitton into his eponymous Alainpaul brand, cofounded in 2023 with husband Luis Philippe.

Here too, being plugged in directly to consumers is a must. It’s a particularly important avenue for emerging brands for the revenue it generates, but also for the direct consumer insights.

“It really allows us to work on a collection plan that meets what clients are looking for and not waste so much time on pieces we don’t need,” Philippe said.

Summer will therefore be busy for

the brand, as plans for e-commerce that previously were on hold due to the costs involved can now move forward as early as September, the cofounders said.

And Paul is also among the finalists of the 2025 LVMH Prize for Young Designers.

The Pierre Bergé Prize and its 100,000-euro purse went to Burç Akıyol, whose eponymous genderless label marries sexiness with austerity – and flawless tailoring.

He will be mentored by Alexandre Mattiussi, the founder and artistic director of Ami who scooped up the grand prize in 2013. The brand came on board as a sponsor of the design competition with this edition.

“You never expect it,” said an elated Akıyol.

“I talked about the importance of craftsmanship and it resonated. We tend to forget the product in our industry today, and people think it’s borderline ugly to say the word ‘product,’ but I disagree. I think it’s at the heart of what we do and I’m happy, because that’s what I stand for. I won with that.”

The designer said he looked forward to getting advice from Mattiussi, who has parlayed his independent brand into a thriving business.

“I want to find out how he did it, because it’s an empire. I remember when Ami was founded. His initial inspiration was so organic. He wanted to dress a few friends that inspired him and make that available for others,” Akıyol said. “It’s a great financial success, which again comforts me in the idea that there is a place for product.”

He plans to use the prize money to fund his next collection for the label, which is a two-person operation.

“At our level, we have a knife at our throat every season,” Akıyol said. “I always have to juggle in terms of cash flow. Now, we will finally be able to develop these

categories that we’re always thinking about and don’t have the time to do, because you need real industrial know-how.”

Also in the running in this category dedicated to emerging creative labels were Jeanne Friot and Mouty by couple Bertille and Thomas Mouty.

Belgian designer Sarah Lévy of Sarahlevy beat out footwear designer Philéo Landowski and jeweler Marco Panconesi to win the 2025 accessories prize, which comes with 100,000 euros and purse and mentoring by Sophie Delafontaine, creative director of Longchamp.

Toledano said he’s had eyes on all the winners through the tentacular reach of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. He met Rogge when she worked at Marc

Jacobs, which belongs to the luxury group, while Lévy designs accessories for Patou, another one of its labels.

Meanwhile, he first discovered Paul and Akıyol’s work through the LVMH Prize for Young Designers. Akıyol was a finalist last year, while Paul is among the final eight this year.

“These four winners are exactly the type of candidate that need our help because they have reached a critical size. They’re doing fine on their own, but they really want to take their brands to the next level and I want to help them do that,” he said.

This year, the innovation prize was awarded separately in May and went to Losanje, a fashion tech company based in the central French city of Nevers that is helping brands implement the use of circular textiles.

The edition’s jury included 11 guest members, including Pascal Morand, executive president of the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode, Sarah Andelman and fashion documentary director Loïc Prigent.

Joining them were multihyphenate actress and author Lou Doillon; Lucky Love, the singer who performed at the opening ceremony for the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games; musical artist Eddy de Pretto; art gallery founder Emmanuel Perrotin, and model, actress and entrepreneur Liya Kebede.

Rounding out the 2025 group sitting alongside permanent members, who are mainly executives drawn from sponsors, were creative consultant Carlos Nazario; writer and fashion critic Sophie Fontanel, and Beka Gvishiani, who’s behind the Stylenotcom Instagram account.

Created in 1989 by Nathalie Dufour with the support of the French Ministry of Culture and the DEFI, a body that promotes the development of the French fashion industry, and with the late Pierre Bergé as president, ANDAM has been a springboard for designers who would go on to achieve international recognition.

In October, a retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs gave an overview of the ANDAM’s 35-year run, featuring works by winners across fashion and accessories including Viktor & Rolf, Jeremy Scott, Marine Serre, Y/Project, Christopher Esber and Ukrainian milliner Ruslan Baginskiy.

How Black-owned Brands Are Weathering the Challenges of 2025

Black founders and executives weigh in on how M&A slowdowns and diversity, equity and inclusion rollbacks are challenging their businesses. BY JAMES MANSO



Top row, from left: Alisa Carmichael, Denis Asamoah, Danessa Myricks and Piyush Jain. Bottom row, from left: Jackie Aina, Ron Robinson and Melissa Butler.

Black beauty brand founders are facing waning support.

Founders and executives told WWD that the galvanization they saw in the wake of George Floyd's murder has decelerated, largely in terms of retail support and investment, though not in terms of consumer sentiment.

"Every year since 2020, we've seen a rollback of the support and investment into Black and BIPOC-owned brands," said Ron Robinson, founder and chief executive officer of BeautyStat. "I think it's only gotten more significant under this new presidential administration."

"Eight out of 10 BIPOC-owned businesses fail within the first 18 months of launch," said Piyush Jain, chief executive officer of Maesa, which introduced the Maesa Magic Incubator to provide grants and mentorship to underrepresented founders. That program is now in its third year. "One cause is lack of mentorship, the other is lack of role models, and the third is funding."

The situation has become even more acute under the current presidential administration, which has actively rolled back DEI policies at a federal level, and taken legal action to do the same at universities across the country.

More localized to beauty, part of the issue is the number of retailers, in particular, and the wider business landscape that have rolled back diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives against the fast-changing political backdrop.

During its first-quarter earnings call in May, Target Corp. cited a broader shift away from diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives at the top of the year as a key

contributor to single-digit sales dips, in addition to on-again, off-again tariffs. More specifically, Target ended its Racial Equity Action and Change initiatives, and changed the moniker of its "Supplier Diversity" team to "Supplier Engagement."

Elsewhere in the mass market, Walmart stopped participating in the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Index, and agreed to drop the phrase diversity, equity and inclusion as well as products marketed to transgender children.

On the prestige beauty side, the news is more positive. Both Sephora and Ulta Beauty have signed the Fifteen Percent Pledge, an Aurora James-founded initiative to dedicate 15 percent of shelf space to Black-owned brands and seem committed to attaining that goal.

Founders also report investors pulling back in some cases.

As WWD reported in 2024, Black-owned brands were among the first to feel the drought of a waning M&A market. For some, the picture is still grim. Crunchbase data, additionally, indicates that funding for Black-founded startups in the U.S. fell from \$4.9 billion in 2021 to \$700 million in 2024.

"We haven't had the growth scale that typical VC firms want. It's difficult to expect that from founders that are Black-owned because we're already at a disadvantage, we don't have the same resources and we don't have the same capital," said Denis Asamoah, Forvr Mood, which he cofounded with Jackie Aina. He acknowledged that the brand was on track to meet its sales targets for 2025.

"It just seems like there's always a moving of the goalposts with Black

founders, and what we've been able to build and create has been nothing short of incredible," Aina said. "It raises questions of what's required of non-Black founders versus Black founders."

"It's hard right now in general – you can't ignore the macroeconomic pressures and general uncertainty. For small brands that's even more challenging," said Alisa Carmichael, partner at VMG Partners, who oversees VMG's Parity Collective in partnership with James, an investment initiative that specializes in BIPOC brands. "Also, the rollback from a DEI perspective have made people in the ecosystem a bit more nervous."

Melissa Butler, founder and chief executive officer of The Lip Bar, characterized the landscape overall as generally tough. "Investors are afraid to deploy capital," she said. "M&A hasn't been very active. That's true for every founder, and then you have to add on what I call the 'Black tax' on top of it."

Part of that, Butler said, was the persistent misconception that Black-owned brands are designed solely for Black consumers.

" Oftentimes, a Black founder will centralize a Black person in their advertising because your community deserves to be seen and it's an underserved community," Butler said. "The unfortunate truth is that can oftentimes lead to you only attracting Black customers. With the Lip Bar, for instance, there's no difference between my lips and a white woman's lips or an Asian woman's lips."

That phenomenon has also impacted the financial community.

"Everyone was so focused on investing in Black-owned brands with COVID and

the murder of George Floyd," said one investor who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Now, we're in this phase where saying you're Black-owned can be a disadvantage because shoppers wonder if the product is for them, if they should be buying it, or if it's cultural appropriation."

Conversely, brands that keep their appeal broad are reaping the benefits. "Yes, I'm a Black female founder and this is a Black-founded brand, but the ethos of the brand has always been that it's about everybody," said Danessa Myricks, who founded Danessa Myricks Beauty. "Our whole perspective is that everybody is able to participate and feel they're in a safe space."

Added Robinson, "I'm front-facing on TikTok, and a lot of people didn't even necessarily know that I was the founder until I started to do more on social. We have all these clinicals, all these patents, and that brings people into the brand. On the consumer side, I'm not seeing people pulling back from support."

Other brands agreed that it's not an issue of consumer perception. "The challenge is that the strategy should always be inclusive," said Butler. "I think consumers are already in tune with that, but it's the retailers, investors, strategics and private equity groups that are a little behind in terms of how consumers are looking at beauty today."

"I don't think it's consumers that are shifting," Butler continued. "Especially when you look at the population, Gen Z and Gen Alpha are the most diverse and the most open to diversity. I think it's an old guard saying they followed the rules in 2020, and now, they're onto the next."

Is Labubu Coming for Beauty?

The Pop Mart-made dolls have seen a surge in popularity across the globe, spurring collaborations with brands from Sacai to Coca-Cola.

BY NOOR LOBAD

Beauty may be the next industry in for the Labubu treatment.

While Chinese toymaker Pop Mart has been producing the furry, collectible dolls – which were first imagined in 2015 as storybook characters by artist Kasing Lung – for years, the figurines have more recently gained new popularity as consumers around the globe have gotten in on the hype.

According to Emily Brough, Pop Mart's head of licensing, Americas, the U.S. is one of Pop Mart's fastest-growing markets. Globally, the company saw a 500 percent year-over-year sales jump in 2024 versus 2023, with that momentum "being felt strongly in the U.S., where demand continues to climb," Brough said. According to Spate, Labubu receives more than 430,000 average weekly Google searches in the U.S., and roughly 180.8 million weekly TikTok views.

Like many of Pop Mart's characters, Labubu comes in a blind box, meaning consumers don't know which figurine they are getting until they open the box. Standard Labubu blind boxes retail for \$27.99, though brand collaborations – which have been proliferating as companies from Sacai to Coca-Cola join forces with Labubu – typically cost more. (Pop Mart's The Monsters Coca-Cola series retail for \$46.99 each, while a limited-edition Labubu capsule collection by Sacai and K-pop brand Seventeen netted as much as \$31,250 per doll last month on Pharrell Williams' auction platform Joopiter.)

The rise of Labubu has coincided with that of bag charms – the toy is most often seen affixed to a wearer's handbag; even Birkins are not off limits for the toothy, plushy doll – and, more broadly, growing interest in trinkets.

This effect has been particularly prominent in beauty. Last year, Hailey Bieber's Rhode launched a lip treatment-holding phone case, which immediately went viral, spurring a number of dupes in its wake. Lip balm keychains have also seen recent buzz, with Bubble, Cocokind, Fenty Beauty and more inaugurating launches in the category – including some featuring customizable charm packs. E.I.f. Cosmetics may not have launched a keychain, but

it did collaborate with Stanley to create limited-edition, mini tumblers meant to hold lip oils that can be affixed to actual, full-sized Stanley tumblers.

While Pop Mart has previously collaborated with beauty brands across other character franchises (in 2022, Skullpanda launched a limited-edition collection with Make Up For Ever and in 2021, Kiehl's launched two Dimoo sunflower dolls), Labubu has yet to ink a beauty partnership – though it's safe to say interest is brewing.

At the official Tony Awards after party held at MoMa last month, beauty sponsor TirTir hosted a Labubu claw machine for guests to win figurines. On TikTok, users are dressing Labubu dolls in bootleg Alo Yoga clothing and designing intricate, miniature press-on nail sets for the dolls. Meanwhile, one of beauty's most prominent celebrity founders, Rihanna, is among the slew of A-listers seen recently sporting a Labubu bag charm.

Though Brough did not specify any beauty/Labubu crossovers underway, she said, "[Pop Mart] is actively exploring beauty partnerships across several characters in

our portfolio – as our IP continues to build momentum across fashion, fandom and lifestyle, beauty is a natural extension."

As for who industry insiders and creatives would like to see link up with Labubu?

"It would be so cool to see a Fenty Beauty x Labubu collab; the doll could hold up my lip gloss the way it's holding a soda bottle in the Coca-Cola collab," said content creator Bretman Rock.

Maia Ervin, a marketing director at United Talent Agency's Next Gen Practice, echoed the sentiment. "Labubu feels like a natural fit for a brand that prioritizes spunk, creativity and celebrates individuality; I imagine a Fenty x Labubu collab could involve mini makeup tools, collectible makeup stickers...[opportunities] to take customization to the next level."

Brand strategist Jemma Wu pointed to Starface as ripe for a potential collaboration: "They've already made acne care playful and collectible, which feels totally on-brand for a Labubu moment. Imagine a limited-edition set of character pimple patches, or a blind-box-inspired Starface drop – there's a natural synergy in tone, audience and emotional value," she said.

Beauty influencer Eloise Dufka, meanwhile, looked to MAC Cosmetics. "Labubu deserves brands that push boundaries and embrace bold, playful expression, especially as we move beyond the 'clean girl' era – MAC is a no-brainer," she said.



The Top 10 Brands on TikTok Shop in May

A breakdown of the top 10 beauty brands by TikTok Shop sales during the month of May, per Charm.io, plus their respective top-selling products. BY NOOR LOBAD

The top 10 beauty brands by sales on TikTok Shop in May, according to Charm.io.

1		Tarte Cosmetics: \$4.9 Million Top product: Colored Clay CC Undereye Corrector Sales of top product: \$682,875	6		Maybelline New York: \$2.3 Million Top product: Colossal Bubble Mascara Sales of top product: \$2.1 million
2		Medicube: \$4.1 Million Top product: Affordable Glass Glow Skincare Set Sales of top product: \$1.4 million	7		Tymo Beauty: \$2.3 Million Top product: Tymo Rovy Compact Sales of top product: \$648,920
3		Wavytalk: \$3.5 million Top product: Blowout Boost Ionic Thermal Brush 1 1/2 inch Sales of top product: \$1.9 million	8		Color Wow: \$2.2 Million Top product: Dream Coat for Curly Hair Sales of top product: \$499,320
4		Dr.Melaxin: \$2.1 million Top product: Peel Shot Glow Rice Ampoule Duo Sales of top product: \$21 million	9		American Seair Imports: \$1.9 Million Top product: Arabiyat Prestige Nyla Eau de Parfum Sales of top product: \$204,629
5		Anua: \$2.4 million Top product: Ultimate Skincare Routine Set Sales of top product: \$590,142	10		Canvas Beauty: \$1.8 Million Top product: Body Glaze Mid Velvet Sales of top product: \$584,476



L'Oréal Acquires Color Wow

The hair care brand started by serial entrepreneur Gail Federici will live in the Professional Products Division. BY JENNY B. FINE

Here and below:
Color Wow's
hero products.



Gail Federici

The beauty dealscape is heating up, with the world's biggest beauty company getting in on the action again.

L'Oréal has signed an agreement to acquire Color Wow, the hair care brand started 12 years by serial entrepreneur Gail Federici that is best known for its hero product called Dream Coat Supernatural Spray. The brand said one bottle, \$28, is sold every 4.4 seconds.

Overall, Color Wow is thought to have sales slightly over \$300 million and sources indicate the brand was looking for a \$1 billion valuation. That would be in line with the most recent multiples of the biggest beauty deals this year, with E.l.f. Beauty snapping up Hailey Bieber's

Rhode in a deal value at \$1 billion and Church & Dwight spending \$700 million for Touchland, a brand with \$130 million in 2025 net sales.

L'Oréal in early June said it had signed an agreement to acquire a majority stake in British cosmetics brand Medik8. Reports circulated that was a 1 billion euro deal.

L'Oréal and Federici declined to comment on the purchase price for Color Wow.

The brand will live in L'Oréal's Professional Products Division, which generated 4.89 billion euros in sales in 2024, according to the WWD Beauty Inc

milestone that further strengthens our increased position in the hair care market and in the styling category. Color Wow brings unique expertise and exceptional growth potential, and we are eager to unleash its full global reach."

Currently Color Wow is sold in salons, Sephora and on Amazon and ultra.com in the U.S., as well as in Sephora in the U.K., E.U. and Dubai. "We have a major opportunity to expand internationally," said Federici, who was a key part of the team that started and sold John Frieda Professional Hair Care to Kao Brands for \$450 million in 2002.

About a decade later, Federici noticed that her sisters were increasingly going gray but didn't have an effective solution to cover up the re-growth in between dye sessions. Working with Dr. Joe Cincotta, the same chemist who developed Frieda's Frizz East, she created and launched Color Wow Root Cover Up Powder.

It remains a bestseller, as is Xtra Large Bombshell Volumizer, Dream Cocktail Carb Infused Leave-In Thickening Treatment and Raise the Root Thicken + Lift Spray.

Federici said that in the last three years Color Wow has doubled sales and then doubled again. "We knew we needed more expertise than we have to go from the size we are now to the next step," she said in an exclusive interview with WWD. "At the same time, we have our own ethos and culture that is a key part of our success. As we spent time with L'Oréal it was clear that if we could have a home, this is the one that it should be."

In addition to Federici and Cincotta, marketer Ann Bell and Federici's two sisters and brother have also been a part of the core team since the John Frieda days. As far as integration goes, Federici said she will still be very involved in the brand "definitely for a while," declining to specify a time period.

As far as building a brand in the last decade versus the '90s when she got her start: "It's been extremely stressful, because the whole landscape has changed so much since the days when we started John Frieda," Federici said. "Back then there were not all of these platforms you had to address – we created commercials once a year. Today, we're creating content every minute and the algorithms are constantly changing. So you learn something and you think you've nailed it and then it changes. It is way more complicated."

This acquisition is the third big deal in as many years and comes at a time when many are hoping that a very tight M&A market might be loosening up. "It's a crazy time, but I think we've been lucky. We have a very healthy company and that's key," Federici said. "People are very risk averse right now. Our numbers give a form of safety to people in this uncertain environment."

As for what's next? "More of the same. It's what I do," Federici said. "Sure, there are days when it's like, 'you've got to be kidding me. But overall, coming into an office with people who you've known for a while, who you really like, who are super smart – it's people looking out for each other and enjoying the ride."

Federici started Color Wow at age 64 – and she's not necessarily done yet. "I'm always thinking," she said, when asked if she has one more brand in her. "I don't want to break up our band. That's what motivates me – the fun of thinking of ideas that will help people. I always say when we're thinking about products, we try to do products that matter. It's not money first."

"If we can think of something that really makes a difference to consumers, then we'll be back at it," Federici said. "If you make something that matters to people, then people will come."

Houlihan Lokey advised Federici Brands on the deal.

Top 100 and grew about 5 percent on-year.

"We are absolutely thrilled and proud to welcome Color Wow into our portfolio," said Omar Hajeri, president of L'Oréal's Professional Products Division. "The brand offers a unique range of products that have gained a loyal and devoted following amongst stylists, media and consumers. The arrival of this innovative and high-performing brand marks a strategic

L'Oréal Paris Wants People to Ask Beauty Genius — Not ChatGPT — for Help

After soft-launching the generative AI-powered beauty advice and education tool in October, L'Oréal Paris is gearing up to go wider with Beauty Genius in a partnership with WhatsApp. **BY NOOR LOBAD**

L'Oréal Paris is betting big on Beauty Genius.

The brand, whose parent company L'Oréal has gained status as a leader in beauty-tech in recent years, is looking to widen the reach of its generative AI-powered Beauty Genius tool with a newly cemented WhatsApp partnership.

Kicking off in early 2026, the partnership will make the tool, which offers personalized regimen recommendations as well as research-backed responses to ingredient-related inquiries and more, accessible directly via WhatsApp, which Statista reports has roughly 3 billion monthly active users.

"You will be able to message with Beauty Genius the way you would with a friend," said Thomas Vince, chief digital and marketing officer at L'Oréal Paris. "You'll be able to be very conversational in asking questions, getting diagnostics and recommendations and, ultimately, driving to fulfillment, if that's where your experience goes."

This combination of diagnostic capability with a conversational nature and flow is a key differentiator for Beauty Genius, which was unveiled by L'Oréal chief executive officer Nicolas Hieronimus at the 2024 Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas. The tool launched in beta mode in October via the L'Oréal Paris website, and has since hosted more than 480,000 conversations.

According to the company, cosmetics-related inquiries account for a little more

than half of the conversations, followed by skin care at more than a third, with hair care and hair coloring conversations comprising the remainder.

"The queries range from very sophisticated to very basic — from someone who is new to the category or to beauty in general, you might see questions like, 'How do I apply eye shadow?' 'How do I apply hair dye?' — and then you move into more sophisticated, longer and very pointed queries, which show a much more conversational exchange between the brand and the individual," Vince said.

Said Laura Branik, president of L'Oréal Paris USA: "We see a need for more conversational commerce, and that is what we are hoping to answer with Beauty Genius."

With more than 750 products across makeup, skin and hair care and coloring, L'Oréal Paris ranks as the biggest beauty brand in the world. It is also a routine top performer when it comes to influencer marketing, with platforms like CreatorIQ and Traackr consistently ranking L'Oréal Paris as a top 10 brand by monthly social media momentum.

"That's one of the reasons we started [Beauty Genius] with L'Oréal Paris — if we can crack it for L'Oréal Paris, we can make it work with any brand," Branik said.

Because L'Oréal Paris is most prominently sold in the mass channel, which doesn't offer the in-store expertise offered by beauty advisers at specialty beauty stores, Beauty Genius also serves to fill that gap — with the

added benefits of being available remotely and around the clock.

Though he did not share numbers, Vince said the brand "has seen a positive impact on sales, including significantly higher conversions and average order value, among consumers who have engaged with Beauty Genius versus those who haven't."

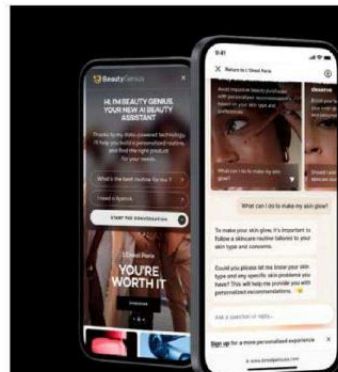
While Beauty Genius' product recommendations are limited to those within the L'Oréal Paris portfolio, the education it can provide ranges from breaking down ingredient functions to clarifying skin care myths and trends.

"We see that consumers don't want to need a Ph.D. to understand what kind of skin care to use; there is a lot of chatter, and Beauty Genius offers a way to demystify while ensuring the answers consumers get are correct and backed by science," Branik said.

This is significant especially now, given the evolving nature of how consumers search.

A 2024 survey by Adobe found that more than two in five Americans use TikTok as a search engine, while data from Statcounter shows that Google's search market share dropped below 90 percent for the first time since 2015 for the last three months of 2024, with ChatGPT being a key share gainer. Even Google is doubling down on AI overviews, which, according to BrightEdge, now appear in more than 11 percent of Google Search queries, a 22 percent year-over-year increase.

But Google AI Overviews and Open AI-owned ChatGPT are known to at



Beauty Genius, L'Oréal's generative AI-powered product insights and recommendations tool, is going wide.

times to deliver misinformation, a current inevitability due to the varying credibility levels of the data that feeds their respective large language models, or LLMs. With a more precise approach to the data it trains its model on — which includes proprietary information from L'Oréal's own research and innovation centers — Beauty Genius aims to establish itself as an authority in the space.

The bet is a next leg of L'Oréal's increasing ambitions in the beauty-tech space, fueled by efforts to bring forth tech innovations that are accessible and solve solutions for everyday consumers.

"We don't create technology for technology's sake," Vince said. "It always goes back to consumer-centricity. A consumer can use ChatGPT, they can use Google to address some of these questions — but we've distilled our unique point of difference, and we understand that it needs to be personal, it needs to come from a beauty authority and it needs to be 24/7."

EXCLUSIVE

Jimmy Fairly Cofounder Launches Firm

Sacha Bostoni is starting with skin care but will branch into other categories and open freestanding stores by year-end. **BY JENNIFER WEIL**

PARIS — What might the Jimmy Fairly of beauty be like?

It is Firm, the brainchild of Sacha Bostoni, who cofounded that pioneering eyewear brand 14 years ago.

"It's product first, a good brand and good price," he said. "If you do that — you can do anything. You see Jimmy Fairly bags all over the place. Apart from selling eyewear, we really innovate in this brand space."

He called Jimmy Fairly — a French equivalent to Warby Parker in the U.S. — a "love brand," which can easily stretch into other product categories. Bostoni left Jimmy Fairly two years ago, when it was

sold to investment fund HLD. He then moved to the south of France and bought a farm, which introduced him to cosmetic active ingredients.

Bostoni noted parallels between the beauty space today and the eyewear sector when he started Jimmy Fairly. The environment was noisy, with many brands doing similar things both product and retail-wise. Today, he finds the shopping experience undifferentiated, as many cosmetics brands — especially in Europe — launch just in pharmacies and parapharmacies or online.

As with eyewear, Bostoni said his goal

with other Firm cofounders is to return to the core of a product — its performance. He contacted Fred Züllli, a pioneering doctor who works with alpine stem cells, which are known for their resilience and longevity properties.

Züllli created a ingredient called Thirty Days Stem Cell Complex, or STM30, which works on wrinkles, dark circles and dehydration. "It is for the skin and also for the body in general," Bostoni said.

The complex has a mix of stem cell culture from Alpine rose and a microorganism living in a Swiss glacier that purports to rejuvenate skin and stimulate Adenosine triphosphate, or ATP, a key energy source for skin cells.

Firm is a Swiss-German word referring to a type of snow recrystallized on a glacier, where the microorganism was discovered.

"There is space for really high-performance products, but with an affordable price," said Bostoni, who serves as Firm's chief executive officer. "That's the whole model — Polène for bags, Sézane for fashion, Jimmy Fairly for eyewear and Firm for cosmetics."

The brand is launching with the Multi-Corrective Cream and five serums, all containing STM30. There's a serum with vitamin C for glow.

"Then you have four serums that act on different skin types," said Clémence de Stabenrath, another of Firm's cofounders and its product director, who has worked at L'Oréal and Typology.

The serum for greasy skin has salicylic acid; for pigmentation has niacinamide; for first signs of aging has bakuchiol, and for advanced signs of aging has retinol, at 0.3 percent.

Firm formulas, which contain between 85 percent and 99.9 percent natural ingredients, is dedicating 1 percent of its sales to a nonprofit helping farmers.

Raphaële Four, founder of the Girls in Paris lingerie brand, is Firm's other cofounder, who is focused on branding. She created the cream's packaging that's a Bakalite dome inspired by a 1970s lamp.

Firm's 50-ml. cream will retail for 55 euros, while the 15-ml. serums range from 25 euros to 29 euros. Having no intermediaries helps keep the prices down, according to Bostoni, who views cosmetics as a "product" rather than a "marketing" industry. "There is no marketing in Firm," he said.

The brand products are launching exclusively at Oh My Cream online, followed by Firm's digital platform in September and in its own stores, beginning with two in Paris, in November.

"I'm trying to replicate what I learned, how to build a unique retail experience, which right now is something lacking a lot in all kinds of markets, but especially in cosmetics," Bostoni said. "There are no performance brands that have a great retail experience."

Firm stores will stock products in different categories, such as hair care and body care, alongside skin care. "It's a really long-term project," Bostoni said.



EYE CANDY

Bold Beauty at The Milan Men's Spring Shows

Consider having your poodle painted on your head come next season.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – The men's spring 2026 shows here displayed collections filled with relaxed tailoring and a new approach to color – from pastel hues telegraphing a gentle masculinity to pops of vibrant shades for a more energizing injection of optimism.

Hair and makeup followed suit. The overall natural beauty looks were revved up by occasional bold options here and there. Cue the fire-red hair dye and pointy hairstyles curated by Lorenzo Barcella and the Wella Professionals team that popped up at the show Vivienne Westwood staged outside a Milanese café.

They came second only to the looks seen on the Fiorucci runway, where shaved heads became a canvas for artist Janina Zaïs, who covered them in baby blue to paint cute poodles and ribbons, or flashy yellow to stencil the brand's logo in a look that recalled a tennis ball. Another model also had his hair, face and torso turned into an artwork depicting Fiorucci's signature cupids.

For a less invasive statement look, one can look at the Setchu show, where makeup artist Anthony Preel opted for sky blue and emerald green as hues of preference to add a pop of color to models' lips or spotlight their gaze with graphic shapes around the eyes.

Even at Emporio Armani there was a touch of eccentricity, matching a daring collection that evoked seminal campaigns from the '90s shot in Morocco. In sync with the exotic vibe, hair was carefully parted in tufts, each gelled, twisted and punctuated by little metal clips doubling as ornaments.

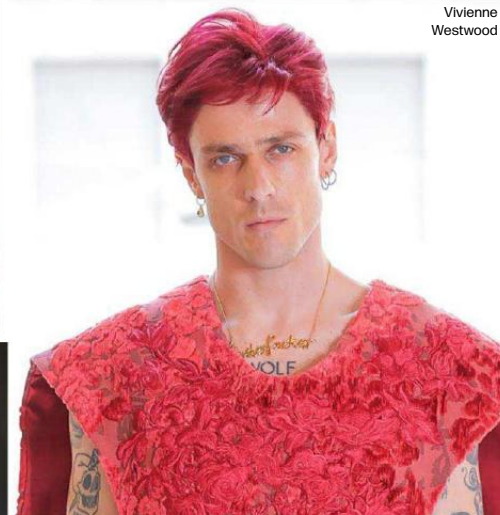
Hair stylist Louis Ghewy worked on a different concept with designer Luca Magliano, who forwent the runway format in favor of a short movie set on a ferry. Some of his characters had manes coiffed in extra volumes, others ruffled as the wind on the deck had its way with them.



Backstage at Fiorucci.



Backstage at the Setchu.



Vivienne Westwood



Magliano

Backstage at the Setchu.



Fiorucci

Fiorucci backstage photograph by Jonathan Pryce; Emporio Armani by Mirella Maggioni

The Reviews



Ambiance photographs by Giovanni Giannoni

Jacquemus

You can take the boy out of the country, but....

Simon Porte Jacquemus hasn't bleached his past as some designers do, proud of his pastoral roots in Provence — one side of the family farming carrots; the other, artichokes and spinach.

His mood board was dominated by hardworking folks in the fields, or selling their crops on roadsides, including one of his grandmother Claire, all in black, squinting into the sun and proudly posing with three baskets of her magnificent green produce.

The show was more autobiographical than usual, true to the designer's upscaling drive and increased interest in couture techniques, but with an emotional tug in the way he invited aprons, petticoats, fichu collars, plus fours and kerchiefs into his fashion universe.

He titled the collection "Le Paysan," or "The Peasant," in English.

Famed for his transporting destination shows — in lavender fields, salt flats or

stately homes — Jacquemus returned to the Palace of Versailles, this time repairing to its Orangerie, left in its raw, cavernous state and appointed with a single row of wooden chairs offering views of the potted trees outside through open windows.

During a preview, Jacquemus said his family, despite its modest means, never discouraged him from dreaming about a fashion career. Hence, his mother came to pick up her 8-year-old son from school proudly wearing a skirt he had assembled haphazardly from linen curtains and some Converse shoelaces.

A masterful storyteller on social media, the designer recreated such a scene in his teaser clips, one depicting a blonde boy gazing with wonder at the lady behind the wheel — and no doubt thinking about Paris ateliers and runways.

He opened his show on a blistering Sunday afternoon with a blonde tot bounding down the runway and opening a tall door for the models to enter from the gardens — a childhood dream become reality. ►





Matthew McConaughey and Camila Alves



Gillian Anderson




The Collections
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On the runway, his fields-to-catwalk narrative came to life in a surfeit of sack dresses and smock tops, some too oversized, and generous, full-circle skirts worn like aprons, the fabric piled up in dense folds at the front.

He also included simpler tank dresses with the same apron effect, only reduced, and these were lovely in cream and black.

He worked plain fabrics like cotton poplin and linen into impressive geometric volumes, a few dresses tiered to resemble Christmas trees, and a leather jacket took on the almond shape of a Gallison, a French delicacy made with that nut and candied fruit.

He didn't completely forsake the summery sensuality for which the brand has been prized. There were batwing gowns in chiffon, and halter-neck styles in embroidered tulle that drifted around the body.

Guests included Matthew McConaughey and his wife Camila Alves, in matching white jackets, singer Aya Nakamura, in a diaphanous maxi dress, and Emma Roberts, who bravely paired her white tutu with a gray sweater.

Asked what kind of a king he is, McConaughey replied: "A father." The actor's son, Levi, made his fashion week debut earlier in the week by attending the Dior show.

Gillian Anderson said while she's "definitely" up for playing a French queen, the closest she has gotten is her role as Catherine the Great's mother in TV series "The Great."

"It feels very similar to that. You can imagine those dresses with the panniers walking through the halls like this, but I've never been here before and it's beyond what one imagines it might be," she marveled. "It's a shame not to be able to just kind of

disappear and wander down the hallways."

The "Sex Education" star was preparing to head to an even hotter destination: Tangier. She will perform in "The Cherry Orchard" for one night only, as part of a charity gala. "It will be very hot, it sounds very exotic," she said before the show.

Perhaps because of the scale of the place — the main gallery stretches almost 500 feet, and took the models ages to traverse — the show never really took flight, though there were touching gestures, as when a model held a straw hat to his chest — or clutched a leather pouch resembling a single leek.

The men's looks felt a tad more elevated than usual, the tailored ensembles winking to the British aristocrats who frequented Provence back in his grandparents' time, but also humble, stripped of lapels and in drab shades. The designer mentioned that menswear now accounts for nearly half of his ready-to-wear business in direct channels of distributions.

During the preview, Jacquemus didn't sugarcoat the challenge of operating during a slowdown, even if he recently took on French beauty giant L'Oréal as a minority partner.

He said he's encouraged by robust sell-throughs of runway looks with four-figure price tags, but realistic about the need to cull some wholesale accounts and funnel resources into more freestanding stores, including one in the Miami Design District for 2026.

"It's a fight to be an independent (designer) in Paris from another social background," he said. "People think, 'Oh, Jacquemus is everywhere, it's famous. But you know, it's an everyday fight. I don't rest.'"

You might say fashion, like farming, is also a profession of hope. — *Miles Socha with contributions from Joelle Diderich*



Sacai

Chitose Abe was wearing her heart, not on her sleeve but on her T-shirt, during a walk-through of her poetic – and practical – menswear and women's resort presentation, which replaced her usual runway show this season.

Her black T-shirt had the phrase “Every Day, All Day” picked out in white thread on the front, and it summed up the spring collection, which she designed to meet her customers' needs 24/7.

“People want to dress up, but they still want the clothes to feel really easy – all day long,” said the designer, who introduced a new silhouette with wide, rounded trouser legs, and billowy sleeves that were draped and tucked in the style of the Three Musketeers.

Abe said her starting point was a cashmere-cotton “tuxedo” with a cropped, peacoat-like jacket and the wider trouser legs, for men and women. For customers on the hunt for a less formal look – or who like taking Zoom calls from bed – there was a tailored-suit-cum-pajama set made from cotton pinstripe shirt fabric.

The designer said she chose to do a presentation this season to give everyone the opportunity to see the stitching, draping and detail on the new silhouettes.

Even the chunky, spongy knits – which resembled rag rugs – were rounder, and cocooning. They came with puffy shoulders and skinny sleeves, another nod to the Musketeers' Renaissance style, while other colorful polo styles and cardigans had more modern flair.

Abe's womenswear was also comfortable – and glamorous – with nods here and there to Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel, who spiced the formal with the sporty.

There were too many beautiful pieces to count, with highlights including flapper style dresses with knife-pleats and uneven hemlines, ideal for “Downton Abbey” fans; a skirt suit with a split personality – part gray tailored wool, part silky bomber and a cream, ruffle-edged skirt paired with a matching sweatshirt, ideal for brides who prefer to jog, rather than walk, down the aisle. – *Samantha Conti*

KidSuper

Guests arriving at the KidSuper show found a children's book titled “The Boy Who Jumped the Moon” on their seats.

Designer Colm Dillane penned the tome that served as both the basis for his spring 2026 collection and the set for the show, staged in the soaring central nave of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Models – including Colombian rapper Ryan Castro and Italian soccer player Mario Balotelli – emerged from life-size pages as actor and TV host Craig Ferguson read the story on the soundtrack.

Blown-up illustrations and storyboard motifs were printed on outfits including a suit, a white shirt and shorts, and a dark coat that depicted a rocketship heading to the moon.

The cover illustration of a blond boy, reminiscent of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's “The Little Prince,” was rendered in intarsia on a leather bomber jacket. Calligraphy patterns were etched and stitched on shirts and pants for a more wearable take on the idea.

Dillane has always been a big dreamer, and the polished display certainly represented an impressive leap from his debut on the Paris calendar five years ago with a DIY stop-motion film. “It's hilarious when I'm texting my friends the address, and I'm like, ‘Just type in: the Louvre,’” the indefatigable designer said.

At the entrance of the museum stood his customized version of the new Mercedes-Benz CLA, which he imagined as a “superhero car” with turbine wings. It was suspended from balloons – much like the

Sacai



Sacai



 **The Collections**
Paris



one his kid hero uses to fly off into space. “I love ‘Chitty Chitty Bang Bang,’” Dillane explained.

The show included items from his upcoming Mercedes-Benz capsule collection, among them a racing jacket that was snapped up by style-conscious French soccer player Jules Koundé, part of a battalion of celebrity guests including rappers 2 Chainz and French Montana.

It also featured a pair of his new Ultra 5 Ultimate soccer cleats for Puma. Dillane, a former soccer player, has designed kits for seven of the teams competing in the FIFA Club World Cup in the U.S., including Brazilian club Palmeiras.

Its young star Estêvão, preparing to transfer to Chelsea, earlier in the week traded jerseys with Argentine legend Lionel Messi. “So there's a world where Messi has my jersey hanged up in his house,” Dillane marveled. Another wild dream come true. – *Joelle Diderich*

KidSuper

LGN Louis-Gabriel Nouchi

At the fork in the road of his education, Louis-Gabriel Nouchi was accepted at Gobelins Paris, a renowned French school for visual arts, and at Brussels' La Cambre Mode(s).

The path he chose has been amply covered in the seven years since he launched the LGN label, but for spring, the designer gave a glimpse of the road not taken.

Instead of a show, he unveiled the spring LGN collection at Silencio through a two-and-a-half-minute animated film inspired by the Blade Runner universe from Philip K. Dick's sci-fi novel "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep." It was developed from his drawings with French studio Wizz.

Nouchi homed in on replicants, the story's android antagonists that embodied how he feels about the sharp uptick in AI-generated imagery.

"It's a robot that looks like a human and starts to think like a human; there's an uncertainty," the designer said in a preview. "On social media now, my first reflex is to wonder [whether images] are fake or real."

To translate this into clothing, the designer played with *trompe-l'oeil*, revisiting his strong-shouldered, tailored silhouettes through layering. A floor length coat became, say, a boxy blouson, a trouser and a fluid trailing sheer skirt.

Gender ambiguity prevailed as he dropped female-adapted styles, but not female models, to reiterate his ideal of inclusivity for all bodies and genders.

His experience with the film also informed textures for the season, with latex used to telegraph glossy artificiality or a sheer top half on a double-breasted jacket nodding to a sketch's lighting.

Cunning darts on the ribcage or along the legs and inseam of jeans alluded to pencil strokes defining a chiseled musculature – without constraining the real body.

In photos, it packed a definite visual punch. But what made Nouchi's work remarkable was the fit and feel, an experience you can't have through any virtual means – yet. – *Lily Templeton*

Kartik Research

India is having a moment on the Paris men's runways this season.

The week kicked off with Louis Vuitton's bombastic display at the Pompidou Center celebrating Indian sartorialism, and ended with Indian designer Kartik Kumra making his runway debut on the official Paris calendar with an intimate show on Sunday for his Kartik Research label.

Fresh off the opening of his first overseas store in New York City, Kumra has gained a cult following among style aficionados seeking handcrafted clothes that telegraph an individual approach.

The coed collection offered a direct line to the streets of India: it was inspired by the designer's field trips around the country to meet the craftspeople who work on his collections. "You see just odd things in India that have some sort of elegance to them, or like a flamboyance to them," he told WWD.

He was struck by a man in Gujarat who had ripped the buttons off his shirt and threaded it with a silver necklace instead. The designer reprised the idea with a silver chain trim on a collarless chocolate suede jacket.

Linen jackets came lined with floral-patterned Banarasi silk, or embroidered with contrast stitching. One was layered with a block-printed shirt and pants in mismatched prints, channeling an instinctive approach to dressing that Kumra sees as an antidote to the prevailing

LGN Louis-Gabriel Nouchi



LGN Louis-Gabriel Nouchi




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Kartik Research



Kartik Research

minimalism trend in menswear. "This is a real alternative to what a lot of other brands are presenting, or what you find in stores. It's really a very human idea on what a wardrobe can be," he said. The collection was full of collectible pieces, from upcycled jeans embellished

with patchwork at the knees, to a lavishly embroidered natural linen chore coat. Alongside a broader women's assortment, Kumra introduced full leather pieces and collaborated with Converse on suede versions of its classic Chuck Taylors. Kartik Research designs have been spotted

on celebrities including Paul Mescal, Lewis Hamilton and Kendrick Lamar, and are part of Damson Idris' wardrobe in the summer blockbuster "F1." With this strong collection, the label's days as an insider's secret may be numbered.

– *Joelle Diderich*

Undercover

How does a teddy bear dress? Or a Jellycat or a Labubu?

This season, the stuffed toys are going with Jun Watanabe of Undercover, whose off-kilter collection was inspired by the stitching and styling of stuffed toys. It was a follow-on from his women's fall 2025 collection, and was a tribute to his fall 2004 – “but beautiful...part parasitic, part stuffed,” outing.

In 2004, Takahashi stepped into the toymaker's shoes, imagining what singer Patti Smith would look like wearing clothes resembling the stuffed animals made by French plush artist Anne-Valérie Dupond. The artist's raw, spontaneous vision dovetailed with the designer's obsession with beauty in imperfection.

The result was charming then – and now – with curvy seams and zippers; soft, droopy, unlined linen jackets; wonky buttons, and chunky, colorful stitching on denim.

Silhouettes were slouchy, and included padded coats with curved seams, exposed labels, and linings peeking out here and there. Wrinkly washed linen trucker jackets were decked with colorful fabric-covered pins and military-style badges.

A long plaid coat was a delightful mess of wrinkles, as if it had been rolled in a ball and stashed under the bed for a few days.

Knits were equally slouchy, and included a bright red cardigan with mismatched buttons – some with evil eyes on them – while wrinkly striped polo styles and

knitted hats were made from Japanese paper and cotton.

There were Patti Smith references, too, in the form of song lyrics stitched onto jeans with wide-rounded legs and curvy seams. Other jeans were stitched – and re-stitched – with colored thread, just like stuffed animals that had been lovingly repaired over the years.

It was thought-provoking, sweet and easy to wear for humans and non-humans alike. – *Samantha Conti*

Doublet

Waste not, want not.

And Doublet's Masayuki Ino wouldn't disagree, particularly when it comes to produce.

On Sunday morning, guests sat on haystacks in an urban garden in eastern Paris amidst heirloom tomatoes ripening on the vine to sample what he cooked up with materials made using eggshell membranes, cellulose from culled trees or banana peels in their composition.

There were also mud-based dyes in collaboration with Sky High Farm, a nonprofit farm in upstate New York.

Ino said he'd been inspired by his encounters with those developing such options, leading to a collection titled “Itadakimasu,” a Japanese word usually said before tucking into a meal.

“It means ‘I receive’ and this is to show gratitude toward the people who grow the food but also the lives [of plants and animals],” he said backstage.

“So we don't want to waste.”

This sage outlook was expanded into a droll lineup of producers and their produce that managed to tick some of the trends emerging this season, from loose-cut tailoring to workwear revisited into cropped street-cool versions.

Top of the crop were the cream suit with a muddy gradient along the edges that opened the show; a moleskin jacket with matching knee-length shorts, embroidered eggplants, onions and zucchini bursting out of every possible pocket; chunky knits modeled after fishing nets with some of the catch still caught in, or a bomber jacket embroidered with scattered rice.

There was even a sweatshirt modeled after an overripe banana zipped all the way over the head – it could be peeled down if you want to see where you're going.

Witty and wacky accessories thrown in the mix – egg carton clutches, a scallion as a tie or a straw hat figuring an egg sunny side up – reminded that with the right condiments, staples can be made into unique and palatable fare. – *Lily Templeton*

Officine Générale

Just like Cole Porter, Pierre Mahéo loves Paris in the springtime, in the fall, in the winter when it drizzles and in the summer when it sizzles – just like it's doing right now.

His shows are a reflection of his affection for the city, and a snapshot of life on the streets, viewed from some of his favorite haunts. Last season he staged the show at his favorite neighborhood hangout, Brasserie

Rouquet on Boulevard Saint Germain, where he invited guests to drink Champagne, nibble on nuts and watch models weave through the tables wearing his latest designs.

This season he was back on the streets, staging an open-air show on Rue Jules Chaplain (home of Officine's atelier) and wondering aloud what Paris would be like if it were close to the sea, like Barcelona or Marseilles.

“You'd need super-lightweight clothing and to make sure there's a lot of air around the body,” said the designer, who sent out a cooling lineup of resortwear ideal for the steamy Paris weather.

His models wandered up and down the street in leisurely manner, dressed in lightweight “parachute” poplin jackets and drawstring trousers, some of which were rolled at the bottom; ultra-lightweight seersucker tops, and tunics with skinny pajama stripes.

They wore flip-flops and bandana-like headbands, and accessorized with long necklaces adorned with shells and rope-like belts made from leftover bits of fabric.

Mahéo also designed for when the sun goes down and the breeze starts to roll in from the sea. For cooler weather there were suede or cotton workwear jackets and super-light leather short suits in a calming palette of cocoa, pebble, black and marine blue.

Mahéo fully embraced the ease of seaside dressing. During a post-show interview, he pointed to his own comfy, wide-leg chinos and said, “When you find something like this, you don't ever want to go back to tight.” – *S.C.*



Marine Serre



Wooyoungmi



P.Andrade

Marine Serre

Marine Serre's collection was an ode to the old, worn-out and discarded. The designer loves giving used fabrics and materials a new life and regularly buys old denim — by the ton — tears it apart and pieces it back together for her collections.

"There's enough material out there to survive for years," said the designer, who opted for a showroom presentation this season so everyone could see the details and how she worked old fabrics and materials into the collection.

There were bright, boxy shirts pieced together from discarded cotton tote bags, and the result was a joyous jumble of color, pattern and disjointed words and logos.

Tailored jackets and berets came with colorful scout patches — all of them different — while necklaces and bracelets were strung with old dice. Serre split conch shells in half lengthwise, revealing their skeletons, and turned them into dangly earrings.

The collection was heavy on denim. The designer buys old jeans, cuts off the legs and begins again, piecing the material into new styles.

This season they included top and trouser combos printed with the designer's signature crescent motif; patchwork jeans with leather panels in the shape of licking flames, and cool low-waist 1970s flares with worn and faded bits here and there, revealing the previous life of the fabric.

She worked flowery deadstock fabric into shirts with rows of tiny pleats, and old silk scarves into kimonos — and shoes. It was the first time the designer used upcycled fabric on shoes, and she said it was no easy task pleating the fabric and adding it to the kitten heel slingbacks.

The collection featured new materials, too. There were leather suits with the crescent moon motif which had been airbrushed to give them a "sunburnt" antique edge, and boxy leather cowboy jackets with a licking flame motif.

Serre is proud of her sustainable work and is preparing to amplify her message with the brand's first standalone store set to open in Asia in October.

— *Samantha Conti*

Wooyoungmi

Woo Young Mi proposed a breezy, elegant wardrobe with subtle fun touches and made for comfort on even the hottest days of summer. The South Korean designer imagined a picnic in the hills above the city, peopled by sartorially savvy creatures looking to keep cool.

Elongated hourglass suiting was done in lightweight mohair for a look that was structured yet wearable when temperatures rise. Poplin dress shirts had detachable collars and cuffs adorned with pearl buttons intended to glint in the sun's rays.

A burnished tailcoat nodded to classic

dressing, but was done in a gauzy silk viscose blend in white or pale gold, with the same gossamer fabric used for a diaphanous slipdress for women, and there were plenty of dressed-up shorts to be seen, cropped with covered buttons at the fly or Bermuda-style in a crinkled bronze fabric.

In a similar vein to last season's long Johns, Woo underpinned her wardrobe with a range of colorful vintage-inspired swimwear in the form of tops, shorts and bodies done in stripes and jewel tones, seen peeping out of the waistlines of pajama pants or layered under a coat. The open-weave knitwear and crochet pieces were designed to breathe, and jeans had semi-detached waistlines, highlighting the hip and undergarments beneath.

Woo styled the looks with striped elastic belts and ankle socks held up by garters, worn with colorful Mary Janes, and there was even a raffia bag with press stud fastenings that unfolded to become a handy picnic blanket. — *Alex Wynne*

P.Andrade

Husband-and-wife design duo Pedro Andrade and Paula Kim sought to make good on their promise of a "laboratory for innovation, technology and sustainability" for the Paris debut of their four-year-old label, playing on the juxtaposition of traditional crafts from their homeland of Brazil and innovations.

While oddly timed strobe effects and lighting changes made it difficult to take in details as models ambled past, the pair's knack for layering well-built smart takes on utilitarian classics shone through.

A short blouson came paired with straight trousers with a stone-embroidered overskirt. A cream suit was detailed with fuzzy orange seaming at the shoulder and curving down the front of the leg. A tracksuit came with a delicate embroidery draped along the shoulder line. There were also experiments such as a sumptuous A-line coat that had a backpack built into its back.

Patterns embossed on the surface of coats and tunics evoked macro photography shots of cells and other microscopic organic elements.

One feature that flashed by was the use of textiles featuring QR codes visible under UV light that offered traceability information through blockchain-stored data, a project developed with Brazilian traceability-focused start-up R-Inove.

Andrade and Kim also mentioned the use of microbial biopigments, which use native bacterial to replace conventional options and produce no waste during the dyeing process, through a collaboration with Ailton Pereira, a biotechnology expert who founded start-up Aiper.

Those helped create an intriguing picture that will be worth taking a second look at. — *Lily Templeton*



FASHION

Buyers Praise Bold Colors, New Energy From Paris



Dior, men's spring 2026

Dries Van Noten men's spring 2026 ready-to-wear collection at Paris Fashion Week

● Debuts at Dior and Dries Van Noten didn't disappoint, while Willy Chavarria's political statement and use of color were key talking points of the season.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD
WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SAMANTHA CONTI, LILY TEMPLETON, JENNIFER WEIL, ALEX WYNNE AND TIANWEI ZHANG

PARIS — Aside from the sweltering heat, all the Paris Fashion Week chatter centered on the major big-D debuts at Dior and Dries — and they didn't disappoint.

Jonathan Anderson's first collection in his triple-threat role at Christian Dior, overseeing men's, women's and couture, left buyers swooning. "Captivating," "assured" and "elegant" were just a few of the buyers'

superlatives used to describe the show.

Retailers plan a big buy into his vision with flared trousers, pajama dressing and light, breathable fabrics and plenty of color were noted as the styles most likely to resonate with customers.

With his layers of florals, Craig Green was another collection that pushed the color story. "I believe that moment has passed. What resonates now is the idea of individual curation: collections designed not to dictate but to invite. The must-have is no longer a singular item, but rather the pieces that reflect each man's personal sensibility and rhythm," said Simon Longland, fashion buying director at Harrods.

Budgets are ticking upward ever-so-slightly, many retailers reported, with an emphasis on supporting new talent that will excite the customer and give them a reason to spend.

Despite the soaring temperatures, buyers were energized by the strength of the collections and the buzz in the city. "Steamy conditions in Paris may have dampened our personal looks but not our moods, with a schedule filled with inspiring, uplifting fashion and expansive creativity that we know will excite our customers," said Bruce Pask, senior director of fashion at Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus.

Below, a selection of takes from top buyers:

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Alessio Aramini

head of menswear, LuisaViaRoma

Favorite collections: Willy Chavarria, Dries Van Noten, Dior, Acne Studios and Saint Laurent.

Best show format: Certainly one of the most beautiful, original and talked-about shows was Willy Chavarria's, where culture and street style took center stage. As usual, Jacquemus didn't hold back on his show, especially with his celebratory after party. In terms of presentation, we can't forget Rick Owens, who showcased his archive — an actual work of art.

Top trends and investment piece: Colorful shirts and suits took the spotlight, along with the ever-present loafer.

Budgets up or down: Budgets were kept very conservative this season, reflecting a strategic move toward rebuilding a healthy and sustainable business model.

New talent: Namacheke is definitely the brand that impressed me the most, along with Husband Paris.

Impressions of the week: Paris was truly electric during fashion week, radiating creativity, energy and a renewed sense of purpose. The city served as a vibrant backdrop to an intense calendar of shows, presentations and events while a new wave of emerging designers brought fresh ideas. Overall, it was a dynamic and memorable season.

Alice Feillard

director of menswear, Galeries Lafayette

Favorite collections: Dries Van Noten, Dior, Saint Laurent, Jacquemus and The Row

Best show format: Rick Owens' outstanding performance in the Palais de Tokyo fountain, Louis Vuitton's spectacular set in front of Beaubourg, Ami's cinematographic show and so Parisian [venue] on Place des Victoires, Y-3's poetic dancing performance and Louis Gabriel Nouchi's anime to present his collection.

Top trends: Fluid and soft tailoring for a refined yet casual elegance, luxurious natural lightweight fabrics, with quality being key. Layering, shirting, micro shorts, while leather and denim are still strong. The return of color after many seasons of monochrome shades. Earthy tones, especially chocolates, mixed with vivid and pastel colors.

Investment piece: A soft double-breasted jacket with pleated trousers from Saint Laurent, a pajama set from Dries Van Noten, a draped striped shirt from Hed Mayner, a light cotton or nylon carcoat and any oversize fluid shirt from Lemaire, a brown suede jacket from The Row or Officine Générale, a fluid, oversize shirt with matching pants from Fear of God. Leather sandals from Dior, leather minimal flip-flops or soft loafers from Lemaire or The Row.

Budgets up or down: Flat **New talent:** Willy Chavarria (already spotted last season) and Kartik Research. We keep on investing on talents that we support and already carry, like Hed Mayner, 3.Paradis, Auralee, Louis Gabriel Nouchi, Fear of God and KidSuper.

Impressions of the week: Paris was a beautiful shot of creativity and joy this week. Paris is definitely the strongest fashion week, with a very good balance between mega brands that delivered great shows and emerging talents or independent brands with high creative voices. In a global luxury slowdown, brands managed to push fashion boundaries forward as the fashion industry needs the return of desirability, value-for-money and restoring customers' confidence. ▶

Bosse Myhr

director menswear, womenswear and childrenswear, Selfridges

Favorite collections: Dior

Best show format: Rick Owens' show was incredible from start to finish and was followed by a tour of the excellent Rick Owens exhibition at the Galliera Museum. The second Paris AWGE show by A\$AP Rocky had an elaborate set design, laid out as a courtroom with security guards, judges and metal detectors. Needless to say, the soundtrack was brilliant.

Top trends: Detailed patchworks, as seen in Junya Watanabe, Kartik Research and Craig Green. Flower prints and embroidery were another key trend almost visible on all runways, including at Issey Miyake and Bode.

Investment piece: The green leather bomber jacket from the Dior show.

New talent: Brain Dead, a label from Los Angeles, showed a great collection of elaborate streetwear, hiking-inspired pieces as well as extremely cleverly designed denim. ROA's collection of outerwear and shoes is another collection we are excited about.

Cherry World, a streetwear brand created by Josh Levine, Fran Burns and Glen Luchford, is another discovery I am excited to bring to life at Selfridges.

Impressions of the week: It was hot in Paris this week, but collections that we saw in Paris got us very excited for what is to come in spring 2026.

Bruce Pask

senior director, men's fashion, Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus

Favorite collections: Dior, Willy Chavarria, Craig Green, Lemaire and Officine Générale

Best show format: The glorious city of Paris and its surroundings were on wonderful display this show season. Jacquemus transported us to l'Orangerie de Versailles for Simon Porte Jacquemus' touching tribute to his family and upbringing in the south of France. Rick Owens' daring, baptismal fantasia in the fountain of the Palais de Tokyo was astonishing and a perfect opening for his retrospective show across the boulevard at the Palais Galliera. Ami's takeover of Place des Victoires was a wonderfully cinematic setting for this Parisian hometown favorite, featuring a wardrobe that was made for a city stroll. The threatening skies thankfully held off until the final looks walked. Pierre Mahéo also took to the streets for his incredibly charming Officine Générale show en plein air, a perfect way to highlight his chic, breezy and easy wardrobe. Emily Bode's touching tribute to a noted relative, a famed composer, with songs and memories, and her entire collection presented in miniature on handmade figurines inside the grand Theatre National de l'Opera Comique, was simply magical.

Top trends: The nonchalant elegance that has characterized this season saw bold, inventive expression in Paris. The softly constructed, undone double-breasted jacket continues to be the sartorial statement of the season, appealing in its easy elegance for day and night. Tailored shorts have been prevalent, often shown with matching jackets. Both short, thigh-baring lengths and longer, much more voluminous shapes allow for personal preference. Hotel living and boudoir dressing has had a significant presence, with silky robes, fluid pajama shirts and pants, as both casual and eveningwear, appearing at Dries Van Noten,

Sacai and Amiri. The flared leg jeans seen at Dior, Amiri and Junya Watanabe are key for the denim market.

Sandals of all sorts, from flip-flops to fishermen's, were paired with both casual and dressed up looks and were especially appealing when paired with full, fluid trousers, as seen at Dior, Auralee and Lemaire. Mules and slippers paired perfectly with relaxed looks. Bright, vivid color was also prevalent and featured at Willy Chavarria and Saint Laurent.

Investment piece: From Dior – a velvet redingote, flares, fisherman sandals and a Truman Capote book tote.

New talent: The return of Sander Lak with his new namesake sportswear brand brought a welcome jolt of his signature color and pattern in a concise collection of cool, casual pieces that evoked the West Coast lifestyle.

Impressions of the week: The news was debuts, with fevered anticipation for Jonathan Anderson's first Dior menswear show and the first runway presentation of Julian Klausner's Dries Van Noten collection. Steamy conditions in Paris may have dampened our personal looks but not our moods, with a schedule filled with inspiring, uplifting fashion and expansive creativity that we know will excite our customers. The multibrand showrooms across Paris and centered in Le Marais are a vital adjunct and filled with discoveries from all over the globe.

Daniel Todd

buying director, Mr Porter

Favorite collections: Auralee, Lemaire, The Row, A.Presse and Dries Van Noten

Best show format: Willy Chavarria

Top trends: Soft power tailoring was a defining theme this season, seen across all collections from Rick Owens to Auralee. Designers embraced relaxed silhouettes, fluid cuts and deconstructed shapes – prioritizing comfort, identity and expression over rigidity. Auralee highlighted loose-cut wool-silk suits in soft spring tones that conveyed understated elegance, while Rick Owens offered strong-shouldered blazers, slashed and frayed, channeling his distinctive intensity.

Poppy red emerged as a standout shade this season, seen across both ready-to-wear and accessories. At Dries Van Noten, a balance between playful and refined – monochromatic poppy red sneakers and socks made an unexpected statement paired with a classic gray check opera coat. Willy Chavarria embraced the hue with bold red shirting under voluminous suiting, as well as a more understated take – a coordinated

tracksuit and sweatshirt subtly layered over a pink polo for a gentle contrast.

Investment piece: A lightweight leather jacket – Auralee presented a great structured, pale ochre style this season. Elevated yet understated, it's a timeless piece ideal for layering year-round.

New talent: Seeing Julian Klausner's very first menswear collection for Dries Van Noten was a special moment – marking not just a new chapter for the house, but a thoughtful and adventurous continuation of its legacy.

Impressions of the week: It's been a strong and exciting season, marked by bold exploration of fabric and form, and a thoughtful reimagining of traditional menswear codes. While designers embraced experimentation, the collections remained grounded in wearability and a distinct sense of brand identity.

David Thielebeule

fashion director, Bloomingdale's

Favorite collections: Saint Laurent, Dior, Lemaire and Issey Miyake

Best show format: Nothing brings the drama like Mother Nature. Ami's show took place outdoors on Place des Victoires. We arrived under gray skies as the balconies of the surrounding buildings filled with curious spectators. As the show progressed, the models didn't exit – instead, they spiraled continuously around the statue of Louis XIV on horseback. Eventually, 54 of them filled the square. Just after Alexandre [Mattiuissi] took his bow, the skies opened up, and a torrential rain poured down – a truly dramatic ending to a very special show.

Top trends: Shorts in all lengths and volumes are having a moment. From the shortest to the longest, we saw them in every showroom. And as the numbers climbed close to 100, they were in every front row, too. Colors continue in the dusty spice tones we saw in Milan, though bright pastels also emerged – especially the oversized tailoring at Willy Chavarria.

Investment piece: Light and floaty tailoring – trousers and jackets crafted from paper-light fabrics seemed to drift down the runway. Summer weddings next year are set to be extra chic.

Impressions of the week: Everyone was talking Dior. We need a new word for preppy – because it doesn't even come close to capturing the stunning evolution Jonathan Anderson unveiled at Dior. I rarely get texts about runway shows from friends outside the industry, but his first Dior show blew up my phone. Everyone had an opinion on those cargo shorts – even my mother. Truly a fashion moment that will be impacting menswear for years to come.

Emmanuel de Bayser

co-owner, The Square Berlin

Favorite collections: Dior, Dries Van Noten, Saint Laurent, Rick Owens and Lemaire

Best show format: My favorite show was Dior. I very much liked the unpretentiousness of the presentation, the easiness of the looks, and so many ideas and creativity. On the guests also [were] so many looks you wanted to wear immediately. It's a long while since I felt so much desirability, and we have been really [waiting] for that moment for many seasons.

Top trends: Apart from shorts and colors that were maybe more [noted] than usual for the next spring 2026 collection, I see a quite strong eclecticism among collections offering a broad variety of options for customers. This is key for our business – to propose new offers, from relaxed preppy looks to chic oversize tailoring. It is the essence of fashion to regenerate itself. We are so happy and excited to have new strong creative directions at key fashion houses – and more to come. ▶



Jacquemus, spring 2026



Willy Chavarria, spring 2026

Investment piece: Everything that is easy cool – not too complicated. Pieces you want to wear in summer without thinking too much. Light, easy sneakers, a polo shirt, cargo Bermudas.

Budgets up or down: We will start to invest again more on the men's segment starting this season. So budgets are up. I am sure our customers will follow.

New talent: Willy Chavarria

Impressions of the week: There are very positive impressions this week. Apart from the strong, long-awaited shows there were two moments that really marked the week. First, was the Demna retrospective of his visionary fashion masterpieces during his reign at Balenciaga. Apart from the focus on products, which was so clever, the modernity of his visual approach for the exhibition makes all the pieces so accurate, desirable and fresh. I am not a fan of fashion in museums or retrospectives, it mostly looks old and dated, [but] Demna proved brilliantly it can be very much alive. And, of course, Rick Owens confirmed this with genius a few days later. What a show...and what an extraordinary exhibition at the Palais Galliera. It was a unique moment of authenticity. A real visionary. An absolute must-see.

Franck Nauerz

director of men's fashion, Le Bon Marché

Favorite collections: Dior, Louis Vuitton and Dries Van Noten

Best show format: Rick Owens once again exceeded expectations with an exceptionally powerful staging. The massive pool at the center of the show immersed the audience in a fully sensory experience. Between aquatic choreography and sculptural silhouettes, the presentation danced between artistic performance and fashion statement. A striking and unforgettable moment.

Top trends: Color made a powerful comeback this season, with bold shades like deep green, vivid red and vanilla yellow dominating the collections.

On the materials front, seersucker is making a notable return, especially through breezy short-sleeved shirts that balance freshness with structure. Cotton-linen blends are also everywhere, on trousers, shirts and jackets alike. The prevailing mindset: relaxed elegance, with an embrace of comfort and lightness.

Very wide pants or shorts remain a big trend.

New talent: Song for the Mute continues to grow in confidence with its most accomplished collection to date. Its focus

on material innovation reinforces the brand's poetic and artisanal identity.

Another highlight this season was the rediscovery of Mii, whose delicate embroidery and vibrant color combinations brought a sense of lightness and authenticity to the collections.

Impressions of the week: Fashion week once again proved to be a vibrant hub of energy and surprise. This season marked the definite return of color, bringing joy and lightness to the collections. Quiet luxury persists, but in a more casual, relaxed iteration. The overall mood strikes a new balance between ease, refinement and visual vitality, infusing men's fashion with a refreshing sense of modern elegance.

Görkem Şahin

general merchandising manager – designer men's, Beymen Group

Favorite collections: Dries Van Noten, Rick Owens, Lemaire, Maison Mihara Yasuhiro and Saint Laurent

Best show format: Rick Owens' "Temple of Love" presentation was the best for being the most theatrical and immersive format. They transformed the Palais de Tokyo into a sculptural stage, with all guests surrounding the fountain, breaking the traditional runway seating. Models walked on a raised catwalk suspended over the water. It was an intense sensory experience [with] sound, atmosphere, movement and water.

Top trends: Fluid tailoring, relaxed suiting, artisanal textures, sheer layering, hybridization and modular dressing, and workwear redefined.

Investment piece: Rick Owens draped outerwear; Lemaire tailored, flowy trousers; Sacai × Carhartt workwear hybrids, and Dries Van Noten oversize printed shirts.

Budgets up or down: Our budgets are steady or slightly up.

New talent: Julian Klausner at Dries Van Noten.

Impressions of the week: Designers were more focused on storytelling and emotion. We have seen more lighter fabrics, looser silhouettes [for] easy and elegant clothing. Even with artistic expression, most collections offered pieces that are beautifully made and easy-to-wear. Despite the current global mood, many collections felt hopeful and uplifting – full of color, movement and positivity.

Isla Lynch

director of womenswear buying, Ssense

Favorite collections: Dries Van Noten, Willy Chavarria, Stein, Our Legacy and Auralee

Best show format: Rick Owens at the Palais de Tokyo – though the location remains constant, he delivered something strikingly new with a towering scaffold at the terrace pool, where models descended into the water and emerged drenched, presenting the looks in a more sensory and dimensional way.

Top trends: Thong-style sandals and slides popped up everywhere from Kiko Kostadinov to Dries Van Noten, and Louis Vuitton to Lemaire.

Investment piece: Lemaire's belted hobo bag – offered this season in leather, suede and canvas cottons – looks poised to dethrone the croissant as the brand's next standout silhouette.

Budgets up or down: Ssense customers are gravitating toward brands like Rick Owens, Our Legacy, Lemaire and Auralee, whose seasonal consistency and cohesive wardrobe stand out – and continue to drive budgets upward.

New talent: Carter Young Altman of Carter Young, Marc Kalman of Still Kelly and Literary Sport.

Impressions of the week: The halo effect of Jonathan Anderson's first Dior



Auralee, spring 2026

collection ("perfect") added some energy into the menswear calendar. There's a certain tension leading up to the debut of collections by the newly appointed creative directors in the industry looking to shake things up for the coming season.

Jian DeLeon

men's fashion director, Nordstrom

Favorite collections: Dior, Jacquemus, Rick Owens, Bode and Dries Van Noten

Best show format: Bode's "The Expressionist" combining a lively jazz piano performance with dolls wearing a miniaturized version of the collection.

Top trends: Selvedge straight-leg denim, soccer-inspired sneakers, bright red statement pieces and relaxed sport coats.

Investment piece: Jonathan Anderson's unconstructed moccasin sneaker hybrids at Dior.

New talent: Kartik Research, Sander Lak and Greg Laboratory

Impressions of the week: There's a lightness and brightness to this season's offerings that seem to counterbalance a world that increasingly seems in the opposite mood. Simultaneously, there's an embrace of making sensible products with a certain classically masculine integrity (like Japanese selvedge denim in of-the-moment straight fits) that offer an enticing newness with a welcome dose of familiarity, a recipe for success in menswear.

Joseph Tang

fashion director, Holt Renfrew

Favorite collections: Dior, Jacquemus, Dries Van Noten, The Row and Rick Owens

Best show format: Willy Chavarria's show was an emotional tribute to his hometown, mixed with his Adidas collaboration, and felt deeply personal and visually striking. Rick Owens followed up his powerful show with "The Temple of Love" exhibition at Palais Galliera. It blurred the lines between runway, performance and retrospective,

and was one of the most memorable moments of the week.

Top trends: The Paris heat wave shaped the mood and even influenced what people wore. Designers leaned into lightweight, breathable fabrics like cotton poplin and linen, which felt both practical and fresh. Pajama dressing made a strong return, reimaged with polish by Sacai, Dries Van Noten and Ami. Bright, saturated color brought energy to the runways, with bright hits of magenta, cobalt blue and Kelly greens seen at Dries, Dior and Issey Miyake. Tailoring took a relaxed turn, with shorts styled with blazers or lightweight suiting seen at Amiri, Ami and Lemaire.

Investment piece: Jonathan Anderson's reworking of Dior's iconic Bar jacket is already a must-have from his debut collection. Dries Van Noten's satin sneakers are set to become a hero piece come spring. Also worth noting are Junya Watanabe's Levi's linen capsule and Sacai's take on Carhartt. Both collaborations balance function with fashion in standout ways.

New talent: Auralee continues to impress with its clean, elevated approach to everyday dressing. The styling this season was especially strong, reinforcing the brand's quiet power.

Impressions of the week: It's been an incredible season, driven by fresh ideas and innovative designs. All eyes were on Paris as the city came to a standstill for Jonathan Anderson's highly anticipated debut collection for Dior. A sense of joy defined the season, with many designers embracing a more carefree and relaxed approach to presenting their collections. This men's season marks the beginning of what we expect to be a significant shift in the fashion industry, with many more brands set to reveal new design directions during the women's collections in September. We're excited to see what the months ahead will bring. ▶



Kartik Research, spring 2026

Lauren Amos

owner, *Ant/Dote*

Favorite collections: Rick Owens, Walter van Beirendonck, Lu'u Dan, Dior and IFM Paris

Best show format: Traditional runway shows have seemingly become an extension of influencer marketing, the necessity of which brands without huge budgets seem to be questioning. Conversely, look books can at times feel overly utilitarian. With Lu'u Dan, the look book serves as a styling guide that is amplified by a physical environment in the showroom that has games, photos and a staff that is as integral to the design ideas as the reception. The "conventional" runway show of note for us comes from Willy Chavarria's show of solidarity with immigrants experiencing deportation and incarceration in rampant ICE raids in the U.S.; it was thoughtful and created a grounding moment. Being able to illustrate the lived reality of so many in the U.S. right now to a European audience feels like a huge feat. We can wear our beliefs and hearts on our sleeves even while creating fantasies and offering propositions of beauty.

Top trends: Silhouettes keep moving towards slimmer and slimmer pants, as we can see at Junya Watanabe, Rick Owens and Dior. Slim, low-profile sneakers are popping up everywhere. from Margiela to Rick Owens to Acne Studios. Deconstructed tailoring that's reimagined in new shapes at Comme des Garçons Homme Plus and Walter Van Beirendonck.

Investment piece: We can't narrow to just one, and would say to invest in a wardrobe full of Phoebe Philo's upcoming Collection D. The collection explored a variety of rich textures that translate easily from daily wear to formal and event dressing.

Impressions of the week: The week felt a little quiet and a little restrained. Smaller brands opted for look books instead of shows, which we don't necessarily mind as buyers, but it makes for a feeling of some hesitancy in the industry. It also felt like a season between big moments. There's one eye to the past with retrospectives opening for Rick Owens and Demna's work at Balenciaga while we all wait for collections from the rotation of creative directors.

Simon Longland

fashion buying director, *Harrods*

Favorite collections: Dior, Junya Watanabe, Saint Laurent and Lemaire

Best format: Rick Owens, unsurprisingly, pushed boundaries – this time quite literally. Models ascended monumental metal scaffolding, walked through cascading fountains in towering Kiss boots, and turned the runway into performance art. It was surreal, primal, and wildly engaging. Only in Paris could such a spectacle unfold without – seemingly – a single health and safety form in sight.

Emerging trends: Pajama dressing dominated the week – fluid, soft silhouettes that nodded to ease but never laziness; Stripes were omnipresent: bold, graphic, rooted in tradition but used with fresh energy. The language of suiting was rewritten – unstructured, flowing, deeply modern; denim, in all its iterations, was everywhere; shirting and collar grounded and elevated nearly every look; shorts varied wildly in length – from micro to maxi – but were undeniably key; color was central to the most successful collections: vibrant, purposeful and mood-enhancing.

Investment piece: I hesitate to single out a product because I believe that moment has passed. What resonates now is the idea of individual curation: collections designed not to dictate but to invite. The must-have is no longer a singular item, but rather the pieces that reflect each man's personal sensibility and rhythm.

Impressions of the week: There was a rare sense of cohesion this season in Paris – designers appeared unusually aligned

in their vision, with common threads emerging across collections without ever feeling derivative. What struck me most was the optimism. We saw collections rooted in beauty, certainly, but also grounded in real clothes designed for real lives – pieces to covet, wear and ultimately keep. There was a clarity of purpose that felt both contemporary and human.

Victoria Dartigues

merchandising director fashion and accessories, *Samaritaine Paris*

Favorite collections: Dior, Willy Chavarria and Dries Van Noten

Best show format: Ami set the scene at the top location of Place des Victoires, with the looming storm casting a dramatic light on the bronze equestrian statue of Louis XIV in all its glory.

Top trends: Impossible to miss the relaxed sophistication with relaxed tailoring, from flared trousers to soft shoulders mixed with wardrobe staples such as large stripes shirts, cargo trousers or polos.

Spring 2026 is wearable, the perfect balance of creativity and practicality, colorful with touches of craftsmanship.

Bold colors were a dominant theme across all shows, with striking shades of red, blue, pink, green and orange – turquoise and aqua at Willy Chavarria, soft pinks at Dries Van Noten – proving that color is more present than ever in menswear.

Investment piece: This season's menswear silhouette embraced volume and ease, with oversize shirts, big shorts and Bermudas taking center stage, often paired with fisherman sandals for a relaxed yet intentional look. Also, we note statement accessories, from ties to bold eyewear and headwear and Utility trousers paired with a double-breasted soft jacket.

Budgets up or down: Flat

New talent: Feng Chen Wang celebrated its first decade with its collection "A Future in Bloom" for elegant, romantic and layered silhouettes.

Impressions of the week: Paris meets the expectations with highly anticipated show debuts. We also have seen strong cultural storytelling and activism statements this season. It was a fusion of heritage, craftsmanship and versatility.

Spring 2026 opens a new chapter, one of dreams, lightness and colors. In contrast to fall 2025, spring 2026 is about optimism, holiday spirit and a renewed desire to escape.

Will Zhang

founder, *SND*

Favorite collection: Dior

Best format: Rick Owens. I remain captivated by Rick Owens' avant-garde showmanship. His spring 2026 collection, held at the Palais de Tokyo, featured a striking "temple" set that was both awe-inspiring and thought-provoking. What truly amazed me, however, was the civilization and faith he built through the "Temple of Love" series. The highly theatrical collection, combined with live installation art and interactive performances, created a unique immersive experience. The venue's layout also allowed attendees to visit the nearby Palais Galliera afterward for Rick Owens' retrospective, a seamlessly integrated experience. Among the exhibition's highlights was a controversial urinating statue, which sparked much discussion and reflected Owens' introspective look at his creative journey.

Top trends: Embroidery, prints and American streetwear-inspired vintage styles remain key trends this season. These elements, compared to the long-term trend of minimalism, have higher visibility, signaling a revival of retro vibes and reflecting a shift in consumer mood toward more expressive dressing.

Investment piece: Looks from Lemaire,

Dries Van Noten and Auralee are key investment pieces worth watching.

Budget up or down: Our OTB has remained stable over the past few seasons without increase, and market responses have yet to show positive feedback.

Nonetheless, our expectations for both emerging and leading brands remain high.

New talent: Mira Mikati stood out as a brand with a strong memorability factor during our buying trip. While not entirely new to the industry, the Lebanese designer brand is renowned for its bold colors, playful patterns and high-quality craftsmanship. It blends modern pop culture with artistry and emphasizes comfort and individuality. Mira Mikati is committed to breaking gender boundaries and creating a global, diverse fashion language, gaining significant traction in the international market in recent years.

Impressions of the week: Aside from the sweltering June heat in Paris, fashion week remained as exciting as ever. Each day brought new industry updates. For instance, Anna Wintour announced her departure from the role of editor in chief at U.S. Vogue; Jonathan Anderson made the move from Loewe to Dior, and Louis Vuitton's cruise ship campaign, once a niche topic for the fashion world, has become a global sensation.

Young-Su Kim

divisional merchandise manager,

Bergdorf Goodman

Favorite collections: Willy Chavarria, Lemaire, Dior, Saint Laurent and Dries Van Noten.

Best show format: The Céleste Boursier-Mougenot installation at Saint Laurent brought a sense of introspection, juxtaposed against the rich colors and strong proportions of Anthony Vaccarello's collection.

Top trends: We saw excellent examples of pajama dressing, especially at Dries Van Noten; beautiful pastels from Homme Plissé, and bright pops of color at Auralee and Willy Chavarria. The proportions of the season are still relaxed with loose trousers, single or double-pleated. There were many references to preppy culture, which, of course, were at their best at Polo Ralph Lauren. Shorts were a significant story, shown in a wide variety of styles, from the long and wide at Homme Plissé and Lemaire, to short and tailored at Dries Van Noten. There were also great examples of lightness using linens and silks, as we saw at Lemaire, Officine Générale and Yohji Yamamoto.

New talent: We were thrilled to have Sander Lak return to Paris. His collection for the brand, SanderLak, was influenced by Los Angeles and Venice Beach's skater culture with cool colors and relaxed proportions.

Impressions of the week: There was a lot of excitement in the air in Paris this season. Jonathan Anderson's debut at Dior was big news and his interpretation of the house codes and plays on volume did not disappoint. The ease in dressing that we saw in Milan continued, with a distinctly Parisian perspective. Color will be a major talking point for the season, from the bright and bold to the light and muted. ■

Craig Green, men's spring 2026



EXCLUSIVE

Boucheron Opens on Rodeo Drive

Here and below: Boucheron's new U.S. location in Beverly Hills at 499 North Rodeo Drive.



- The Kering-owned French jeweler unveils a 5,296-square-foot boutique that will serve as its West Coast flagship.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Boucheron has opened doors on Rodeo Drive.

The Kering-owned French jeweler unveils a 5,296-square-foot boutique that will serve as its West Coast flagship.

"The history of Boucheron in the U.S. dates back to the 19th century," explained Boucheron's chief executive officer, Héléne Poulit-Duquesne.

After launching the company in 1858, founder Frédéric Boucheron crafted pieces for America's high society during the Gilded Age. Boucheron opened a New York office in 1903 and showcased its creations

at major American exhibitions, including the Philadelphia World's Fair in 1876.

"But we didn't have boutiques," Poulit-Duquesne went on. "We were doing business with clients, but the majority of our clients were buying in France."

It's a renewed chapter for Boucheron in the U.S., with Poulit-Duquesne at the helm. The company once operated U.S. stores in Hawaii and San Francisco, though both closed prior to Poulit-Duquesne's arrival in 2015.

"We tried to enter the market, and then we stepped out," said Poulit-Duquesne, noting that New York and Los Angeles have always been top priorities for reentry.

New York came first, debuting last year on Madison Avenue. Then came an opportunity in Las Vegas at Fontainebleau, marking its second location. Now, the brand has arrived in Beverly Hills at 499 North Rodeo Drive.

The new store's facade draws inspiration from nature interpreted through an Art Deco lens, a signature throughout Boucheron's heritage, while the interior continues the nature-inspired theme, including bas-reliefs of ferns and ivy as decorative wall elements by Atelier D'offard.

Boucheron now has a clearer sense of its positioning in the U.S., leaning into creativity, innovation and craftsmanship as central themes in its storytelling, Poulit-Duquesne added. The spotlight is currently on the Quatre Tube and Serpent Bohème Vintage collections, with a new high jewelry collection set to launch in July.

Next, Boucheron is coming to Miami. "Mid-2026," Poulit-Duquesne confirmed.



BUSINESS

Walpole Names New Chairman

- Fortnum & Mason CEO Tom Athron to take on chairman role as former chairman Michael Ward becomes president emeritus.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – Walpole, the British luxury business lobby, has named Fortnum & Mason chief executive officer Tom Athron its new chairman.

He will succeed Michael Ward, longtime managing director of Harrods, who will step down Tuesday after serving the maximum tenure of nine years as chair.

Ward will continue to play a key role in Walpole in the newly created advisory role of president emeritus. He will also remain president of the European Creative and Cultural Industries Alliance, the group that brings together all European luxury associations under one umbrella, until January, when Walpole's two-year rolling presidency ends.

"Over what has been an exceptionally turbulent nine years for business, I am incredibly proud of the role Walpole has played in shaping public perceptions of British luxury and in championing the sector. Thanks to this work, our industry is now well positioned for continued recognition and growth," Ward said.

Athron said he looks forward to "working closely with chief executive [officer] Helen Brocklebank, the board, and our members to continue advancing Walpole's mission to promote, protect, and develop the British luxury sector, both in the U.K. and internationally."

"On behalf of the board and our members, I would like to thank Michael Ward for his outstanding contribution to the organization and for the passion and energy he has brought to everything Walpole does," added Athron, who prior to joining Fortnum & Mason in 2020 held various senior roles at Matchesfashion and John Lewis.

Established in 1707 by William Fortnum and Hugh Mason, Fortnum & Mason is the oldest department store in London. It's now owned by Wittington Investments Ltd., which is majority-owned by the Garfield Weston Foundation and has a majority stake in Associated British Foods, parent of Primark.

Walpole has more than 250 members spanning the fashion, automotive, hospitality and design industries. Walpole said its members, which include Burberry, Alexander McQueen, Fortnum & Mason and Rolls-Royce, collectively contribute 81 billion pounds annually to the U.K. economy.

The organization also offers a Brands of Tomorrow program that supports start-ups, and has issued the British Luxury Sustainability Manifesto, "ensuring the U.K. remains a leader in both excellence, and responsible practices."



BUSINESS

County of Milan Terminates Global License With Farfetch, Signs With Daddato Next

- The brand founded by Marcelo Burlon in 2012 is the latest in the New Guards Group stable to cut ties with Farfetch.

BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – More changes are afoot for another brand in the New Guards Group stable.

County of Milan, the brand founded in 2012 by Marcelo Burlon, is changing licensing hands, cutting ties with Farfetch.

Fully owned by the namesake designer, who exited the creative director's role in April 2024, the brand has signed a global design, manufacturing and distribution license with Italian fashion company Daddato Next.

The license was previously held by Farfetch, which in 2019 acquired New Guards Group, the brand platform that is home to Marcelo Burlon County of Milan, in addition to Off-White, Palm Angels, Ben Taverniti, Unravel Project, Heron Preston, Alanui and Kirin Peggy Gou.

Similarly to Off-White, the County of Milan brand was not owned by, but only licensed to, New Guards Group.

Helmed by Dario Daddato, Matteo Battaglia and Giacomo Ragazzi, Daddato Next, originally a kidswear specialist, has most recently scaled up its scope, adding adult apparel brands including Barrow,

Laneus and A Paper Kid to its roster.

"We have always been fascinated by the brand and what Marcelo has created. He's been a pioneer," said Dario Daddato in a phone interview. "Looking at the market, we believe we are in the right shape to reposition the brand in the contemporary market segment."

The first collection under the licensing agreement is to bow for fall 2025. There are no plans for Burlon to rejoin the brand in any creative or business leading capacity, for the time being.

The development comes after Bluestar Alliance acquired Off-White and Palm Angels and follows the announcements that Alanui's cofounders, siblings Carlotta and Nicolò Oddi, had bought back the stake held by New Guards Group in the high-end knitwear brand they launched in 2015.

Last April, Ambush's founders Yoon Ahn and Verbal reacquired full ownership of the company, which joined New Guards Group's roster in 2020.

Burlon – a nightlife PR, DJ, stylist and designer – jump-started the brand as a T-shirt project, which rapidly evolved into a full-fledged fashion label, with nods to crafts and Burlon's Argentinean roots (the designer was born in the Patagonia region, specifically in El Bolsón), which he reinterpreted through a techno-folk lens. In 2014 he was Pitti Uomo's guest designer, cementing his

reputation within the fashion system and the men's arena.

A division of Farfetch, NGG is still home to brands including Unravel Project, Heron Preston and Kirin Peggy Gou.

Farfetch acquired NGG for \$675 million in 2019. South Korean e-commerce giant Coupang took control of Farfetch at a knockdown price of \$500 million at the end of 2023.



BUSINESS

Stephen Webster Serves Up Cocktails and Rings

- Webster is focusing on some of life's greatest pleasures, cocktails and jewelry, at his flagship in Burlington Arcade.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON – After a challenging few years, Stephen Webster is back, serving up cocktails, and cocktail rings, at his new flagship in Burlington Arcade in Mayfair.

It's been more than 10 years since Webster has had a street-facing store – the former one was on Mount Street – and he's eager to get going, with plans to serve up martinis, English sparkling wine and Double Diamond beer.

The store spans three floors with Webster's colorful core collections on the ground level, a space for private client appointments and bespoke commissions upstairs, and a No Regrets Lounge in the basement, similar to the bars Webster has in Nashville and Beverly Hills.

Designed by Guy Hollaway Studio, the store features handcrafted display cases, scale models of designs that demonstrate his creative process, and art by friends and clients including Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst and Harland Miller.

"This is a huge deal for us, and a real statement about what we look like now," said Webster during an interview from the store, where he's surrounded by personal objects and ephemera, including a souvenir tin with a slice of Kate and William's wedding cake from 2011. (Webster is the former creative director of Garrard, the British crown jeweler for more than a century that made the engagement ring



Stephen Webster has redecorated Burlington Arcade in London with his signature jewel tones and gemstones.

given to Kate by William, which previously belonged to his late mother Princess Diana).

Webster, many of whose clients were Russian, said he nearly lost the business after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, and the trade sanctions that followed. "We had to pull ourselves out of that, which is why this is such an emotional" moment, he said.

For the past few years, Webster has been taking private appointments at his showroom on Mount Street, and

A look inside Stephen Webster's new flagship in Burlington Arcade.



has had a long-standing space at Harrods, but it's not the same as having a stand-alone street-level store.

"The traffic in Burlington Arcade – the original shopping arcade – is truly global, and I have name recognition here. And I'm also able to tell the story behind the product," said the designer, who has redecorated the whole of the arcade in his jewel tones and patterns, and will be taking over London black cabs with his branding, too.

Although Webster is best known for his gutsy, statement jewelry for men and women – he's making a manta ray cuff for a former Olympic swimmer, and a monogram bracelet for a member of Guns N' Roses – he also designs glasses, knives and bar accessories.

Ahead of the opening, he even qualified for a London liquor license, which makes him particularly proud. He scored 83 percent, which he said was a first for him on any test.

Webster said he wants No Regrets, which will be open from noon until the arcade closes at 7 p.m., to feel like a speakeasy – and there's even a neon sign on the ground

floor pointing the way down.

"Anyone can come by for a drink – you don't have to buy any jewelry or homeware," said Webster, who tapped his friend, the award-winning London barman Nick Strangeway, to come up with the drinks and train the staff.

They'll be serving up local alcohol, including "a flight of martinis," three small cocktails made from Crystal Head vodka or English gin. The menu includes Double Diamond beer, Sugrue sparkling wine and a cider-based nonalcoholic cocktail that Webster is calling the Sourpuss.

Trupti Shah, commercial director at Burlington Arcade – which opened in 1819 and is home to brands including Manolo Blahnik, Azza Fahmy, Ladurée, Gagosian and Lalique – said the partnership with Webster dovetails with the arcade's focus on luxury and craft.

Webster's "fearless jewelry designs and the introduction of the No Regrets Lounge bring a fresh energy to our historic halls," said Shah. "We're proud to be home to a brand that shares our commitment to craftsmanship, individuality and creating unforgettable experiences."

FASHION

Vivienne Westwood, Rei Kawakubo Focus Of New Exhibition

- The show, titled "Westwood | Kawakubo," will run from Dec. 7 to April 19, and look at the designers' groundbreaking work, taste for rebellion and many similarities.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON – The National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia's largest and oldest public art gallery, plans to take a look at two groundbreaking female designers, Vivienne Westwood and Rei Kawakubo, whose careers evolved in parallel, and who both had a taste for provocation.

The show, "Westwood | Kawakubo," will run from Dec. 7 until April 19 and marks the first time the designers' fashion has been shown side by side, despite all they had in common.

"They were born within a year of each other, on different sides of the world, and were both self-taught. Both had groundbreaking moments in 1981, with Westwood showing in London, and Kawakubo in Paris," said Katie Somerville, senior curator, fashion and

textiles at the NGV, in an interview.

The similarities don't end there. Westwood's 1981 show, which she did with her then-husband and collaborator Malcolm McLaren, was called Pirate, while Kawakubo's outing for her fledgling label Comme des Garçons was titled Pirates.

Although the women's aesthetics were different, their mindset was often similar. Both pushed the limits of convention, examined the complex relationship between clothes and the body, and brought historical dress into their work.

"Their work has never been about going quietly – or presenting what's expected," Somerville said.

The show will feature more than 140 designs, most of them from the museum's own collection, with the rest from private collections and institutions including London's Victoria & Albert Museum, Palais Galliera in Paris and the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Somerville said that while they were organizing the show, the NGV received a "transformative" donation of more than 40 recent works from Comme des Garçons. They will also feature in the show.

The exhibition has been organized by theme, and looks at the designers' embrace of provocation; menswear and tailoring; historical costume, and the female body. It also looks at both women's ability to make statements about politics and the environment through their designs.

Exhibition highlights include Westwood's punk ensembles from the late 1970s, popularized by London bands such as The Sex Pistols and Siouxsie Sioux; a romantic tartan gown from Westwood's Anglomania collection worn by Kate Moss on the runway in the early 1990s, and the original version of the corseted wedding dress worn by Sarah Jessica Parker in "Sex and the City: The Movie."

Kawakubo's works include a sculptural petal ensemble worn by Rihanna on the red carpet and dramatic abstract works that challenge the relationship between the body and clothing. They include gingham sculptural designs from the Body Meets Dress – Dress Meets Body collection from spring 1997.

While the museum has a strong tradition of showcasing fashion, this is the first time it has put two designers side by side.

"At the NGV, we've carved out an innovative model of presenting shows where we pair artists," said Somerville, adding that recent – and successful – shows have looked at Andy Warhol alongside Ai Wei Wei, and Keith Haring in tandem with Jean-Michel Basquiat.

"We've never done one focusing on fashion – or women – and we thought it was a brilliant way" to do both, she said.

"We've learned from doing those projects that if you pick two really significant, impactful [artists] and put



Sarah Jessica Parker on the set of "Sex and the City: The Movie" wearing a Vivienne Westwood design.

them together, a whole other layer of things is revealed, other points of connection – and absolute divergence," she added.

The NGV plans to mark the opening of the exhibition – its annual summer blockbuster show – with a gala on Dec. 6 at NGV International.

FASHION

Nicole Miller, Carol Alt Help Judge Albanian Fashion Show

● This year's competition featured 10 finalists and some newbie models appeared on the runway.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG

Nicole Miller returned to Albania last week to help judge the Muza 2025 Finale, which spotlighted the work of 10 designers.

Having participated in last year's event as a judge, the New York-based designer was reunited with one of her former runway models, the Albanian-born Emina Cunnmulaj Nazarian at the Italia Square event in Tirana. Despite that she is now based in Miami and has three children, Nazarian remains committed to helping her home nation, championing its fashion and supporting various charities. She served as a judge with the American model and actress Carol Alt and the Albanian-born photographer Fadil Berisha.

Muza's organizer and producer Andriola Kambo said the event is not just a fashion show, but it's also a mission-driven project. "This year the most challenging and the most meaningful part was creating space for new, unestablished models. I wanted to give young people – many of whom had never even walked on a stage before – the chance to shape their identity as image-bearers of Albanian culture," she said.

Describing the country's fashion scene as being full of untapped potential, Kambo said, "We have a rich cultural heritage, vibrant craftsmanship and an incredibly creative younger generation. I wanted to shine a light on that through Muza – not just by showcasing designers, but by helping models step into the role of cultural ambassadors."

Most of the approximately 800 attendees were invited guests – industry professionals, designers, members of the media, influencers and supporters of the

finalists. There were also a limited number of invitations that were offered to the public for 30 euros each, and those quickly sold out. The aim was to keep the event exclusive but to also engage the creative community in Albania. The collections explored themes of tradition, identity, futurism and personal transformation.

This year's winner was Moralda Durra with Ezmerina Kasa and Xheksil Muça being the second place and third place winners, respectively. As part of the win, each will have mentoring opportunities. For Durra, that means in Milan, whereas Kasa is bound for Miami and Muça will travel to Dubai. The fourth-place finisher Alma Salih was awarded a scholarship from the Evolution Academy. The other finalists in this year's competition were Beslinda Hashani, E. Frontin Hasani, Jetmira Shyti Memia, Sajmira Lena, Sarita Gjini and the Rebel Issue Group's Gresa Krasniqi, Leandra Bërlajolli and Shaban Berisha. They started out by answering an open call and then took part in a monthlong process of mentorship and creative development.

Felting, which is "very big" in Albania, was evident in some of the designs, as well as embroidery and crochet, but the key was to use those techniques in a modern way. "They're just so hungry and eager, because it's really an emerging market. They have been suppressed for so long. Obviously, they're looking for international. It's great that the winning designers got these mentorships in other countries," Miller said.

With a population of 2.8 million, Albania's GDP was \$55 billion in 2023, according to the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom. As of November 2024, the country's inflation rate was at 4.8 percent and unemployment was 11.6 percent. Visiting Greek Coast, a luxury development project that is being developed by the country's first billionaire Samir Mane of the Balfin Group was a highlight from the trip, Miller said. "I've never seen anything like that in the



The runway show featured some models who are just starting to pursue the profession.

States. It's sort of built into the mountain. There are restaurants, stores, a hotel and condominiums. It was quite fascinating."

Alt, a first-time visitor, spoke enthusiastically about the country's potential and how many Albanian people, regardless of where they might now live, are loyal to the country and go back from time to time. "They stick together and they help each other. I must say it was quite an experience," she said.

Alt noted that some of her friends now own villas in Albania. The nation's tourism industry is expected to play a greater role in its economy, as Prime Minister Edu Rama pointed out in February. It was expected to contribute 26 percent to the country's GDP in 2024. The World Travel & Tourism Council reported a 54.7 percent increase in foreign tourist spending, which tallied \$4.8 billion last year. Albania recently set up a state-owned company to take a stake in the \$1.4 luxury resort development on the Adriatic Coast that is being led by Jared Kushner, who is U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law. Miller said there were "a lot of mixed feelings" about that endeavor among the people whom she had spoken with in Albania.

Miller said, "Obviously, their cultural heritage has a lot of Eastern European influence, because the Ottomans had invaded Albania for so long and then there's the Turkish and Italian influence. The [Muza] show had to be inspired by the heritage. It's really interesting how some designers can make that modern, and other collections look like they are stuck in the past. That [currentness] was also an

important factor in deciding what we liked, as well as how they moved that forward."

As for the country's design lore, Alt praised the Muza finalists' ability to incorporate "an ethnic twist" on their creations like one designer who drew inspiration from elements of a 200-year-old wedding gown for one of their creations. "What stood out for me was how clever they all were in incorporating the ethnicity of the country into other their designs. Nobody did it the same way. Each designer picked something that was completely different. Ten designers did it 10 different ways," she said. "There were some pieces that I would have bought. I love being at the forefront of things. So to see them opening up to the world, there are some things that aren't fully developed yet and other things that they are just moving so quickly with."

While in Albania, Berisha did an on-the-beach editorial photo shoot with Alt wearing an assortment of designs including some from Miller. The model-actress said she was doing shoots for an Albania magazine and Saudi Vogue. Needless to say, Alt said she is eager to go back next year, and that she really enjoyed having the chance to spend some time with Miller. "As a model, you never really get to spend time together with the designers. I worked for Nicole in the late '80s or early '90s for a shoot for Women's Wear in her offices. I was up at my farm, and we had a really bad snowstorm. I remember saying to my husband, 'I don't care. Put the snow tires on the car. I have a Women's Wear Daily photo shoot with Nicole Miller.' We made it on time."

FASHION

Tom Daley Talks Woolmark Knit Kit

● "What makes this knitting kit so special is the combination of beautiful design, quality natural fibers and the joy of creating something by hand," said the Olympic gold medalist.

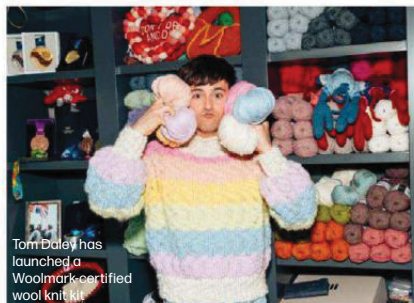
BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON – Olympic gold medalist Tom Daley's knitwear brand Made With Love has teamed with Woolmark for a pastel-toned knit kit for wool enthusiasts.

The merino wool yarns used in the kit, which include three knitting patterns for a jumper, a vest and a hat, are sourced from the U.K.-based manufacturer Laxtons.

In an interview, Daley said the knitting kit is a "combination of beautiful design, quality natural fibers and the joy of creating something by hand."

"I've always loved knitting with wool – it's natural, incredibly soft and long-lasting, so I know anything I make will be treasured



Tom Daley has launched a Woolmark-certified wool knit kit.

in my wardrobe for years. Partnering with Woolmark and our yarn developer, Laxtons, gave me the chance to really explore what's possible with wool," he said.

"We developed a unique, weight-shifting yarn that feels as soft as it looks – and it comes in seven sorbet-inspired shades that I absolutely adore. The Woolmark-certified kit also includes three of my favorite

patterns, each at a different skill level, so whether you're a beginner or a seasoned knitter, there's something in there for you to enjoy," he added.

The knit kits go on sale on Made With Love's official website on Monday, with select retailers across the U.S., the U.K., Europe and Asia to follow in the coming months.

The diver first got into knitting in March 2020 as a form of meditation and stress release. He later launched a dedicated Instagram account, Made With Love, to document his knitting journey, and turned his hobby into a prospering business with more than 1.4 million followers.

"When I first spoke about it, I thought it was a crazy idea. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I am so passionate about it. I love knitting and crocheting so much, and if I were going

to do anything after diving, I would be so lucky to be able to do something that I love just as much as I loved diving," he said.

During the collaboration development with Woolmark, Daley said his appreciation for natural fibers, especially merino wool, has deepened.

"It's 100 percent natural, renewable, biodegradable and the world's most recycled apparel fiber. As a maker, it's important to me that what I create is both long-lasting and low-impact, so wool is the perfect choice. I also discovered more about the Woolmark certification process – knowing our yarns meet that global quality standard gives me real confidence that my community is getting the very best," he added.

In addition to a knit kit launch, Daley this month released his documentary "1.6 Seconds" in collaboration with Warner Bros.

Later in the year, he is also set to host "Game of Wool," a knitting competition series on Channel 4.

"I am so excited about this show. It is going to showcase 10 amazing knitters and crocheters as they battle it out to become the very first 'Game of Wool' Britain's best knitter. It is knitting and crochet like you have never seen it before," he said.

WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT **Textile Turn**

Against an uncertain macroeconomic outlook, textile-makers are reuniting at the summer trade shows across Europe to unveil their fall 2026 collections, hinged on soft, cocooning and reassuring fabrics that ooze timeless chic, as those seen here. *For more, see to page 37.*

WWD TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT

Textile-makers Highlight Trends for Fall 2026

The yarns and fabrics for fall 2026 are expected to feature soft textures in a palette of earthy tones with touches of red, pink and blue.

BY ANDREA ONATE AND MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – Textile producers preparing to enter the trade show season are ready to present fall 2026 collections that are filled with soft, sustainable and technical yarns and fabrics.

Here, a roundup of the key fabrics and trends.



Reda's new Milleottocentosessantacinque fabric is wrinkle-free and the tinto tops dyeing process improves its color consistency. This latest version is available in three different shades: cobblestone, eggplant purple and copper tone. It's defined by a high technical performance due to the integration of the Roica stretch fiber, which enhances sustainability and functionality.



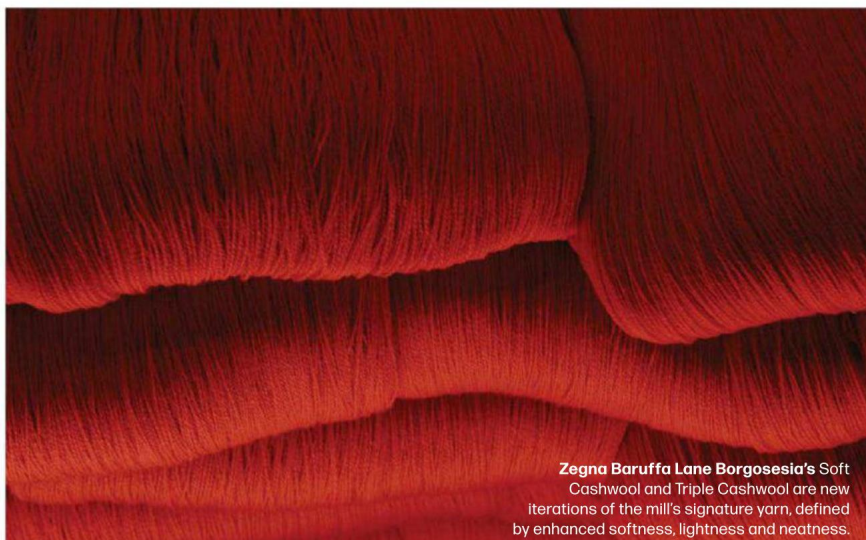
Botto Giuseppe's American Wool Tec is a new woolen fiber sourced from the Shaniko farms in Oregon, which have adopted the Carbon Initiative for regenerative agriculture.



Loro Piana's Silk Air fabrics are made of wool and silk blended with a small percentage of linen, which enhances the background. The fabric weighs 380 grams and it's ideal for suits.



Tollegno 1900's Country is a blend of the RWS-certified Pure New Wool yarn and hemp, the latter conferring a tactile, rough feel.



Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia's Soft Cashwool and Triple Cashwool are new iterations of the mill's signature yarn, defined by enhanced softness, lightness and neatness.



Chargeurs PCC's Alumo Supraluxe Premio is a 100 percent cotton fabric with a poplin base, embellished with semi-sheer effects. Ideal for elegant shirts and available in organic cotton upon request.

TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT **WWD**

Monticolor's Tweed Sense is an irregular bouclé yarn combining cashmere and cotton spun, according to the jaspé technique offered in fresh colorways such as indigo blue and in bold two-tone combinations.



Lanificio Cerruti's Flow is a 100 percent merino wool fabric, sometimes combined with stretch fibers to enhance elasticity. It's ideal for suits and jackets and features seersucker and jacquard effects, adding elegance to the looks.



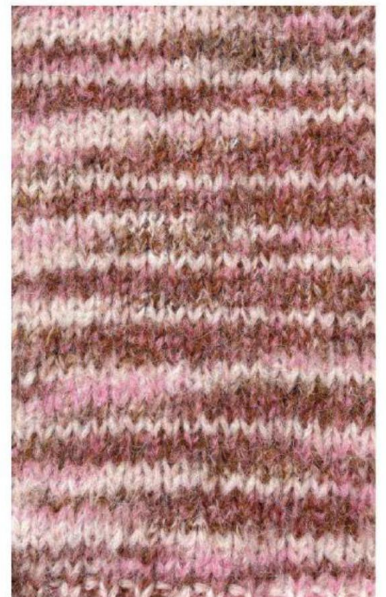
Eurojersey's Sensitive are stretch technical warp-knitted fabrics. Breathable, wrinkle-free and providing a strong resistance to pilling, extra comfort and easy care, they are ideal for clothing such as dresses, shirts, trousers and jackets. The fabrics are "Made Green in Italy" certified by the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security, which evaluates the environmental footprint of products through the PEF, or Product Environmental Footprint, method recommended by the European commission.



Servizi e Seta's Puhjio yarn is a blend of 75 percent Baby Lama and 25 percent polyamide, the latter providing a silky and luminous touch.



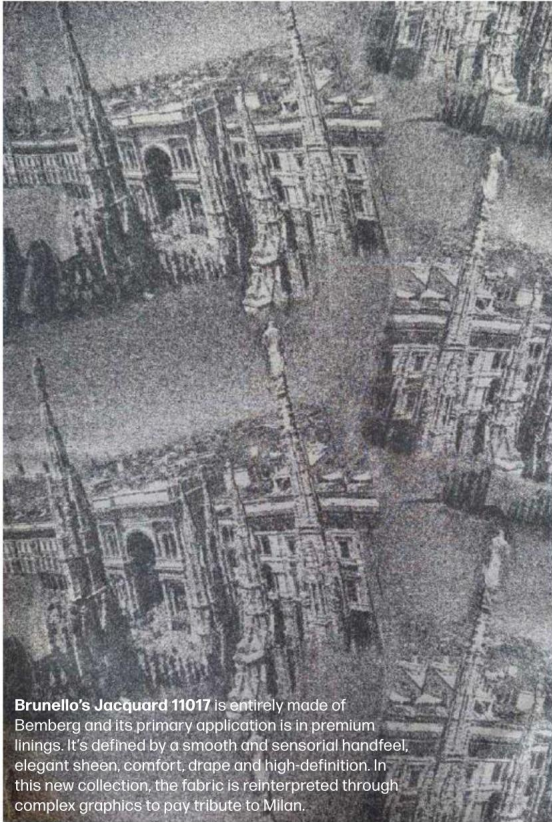
Lineapiù's Collins fabric is a four-color alpaca wool brushed fabric, made of a soft mélangé yarn with a new camouflage effect.



Vitale Barberis Canonico's Intrepid super 150's fabric is offered in a pure super fine wool version or in blends with flannel and cashmere. It's available in dark colors, patterns and yarn-dyed versions and presents a slightly looser structure, soft to the touch. It's ideal for business suits. Intrepid is also developed in eco water-resistant versions, in pure form or blended with cashmere and combined with a lightweight 5µ membrane for outerwear and overcoats. The fabric boasts windproof and breathable performance and a high resistance to water.



WWD TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT



Brunello's Jacquard 11017 is entirely made of Bemberg and its primary application is in premium linings. It's defined by a smooth and sensorial handfeel, elegant sheen, comfort, drape and high-definition. In this new collection, the fabric is reinterpreted through complex graphics to pay tribute to Milan.



Albini's wd apres ski camel is a fabric made of 70 percent cotton, 25 percent Tencel lyocell and 5 percent camel wool. Thanks to the blend with these natural fibers, the fabric feels soft and warm to the touch and it's suitable for shirts.

Tessitura Luigi Uboldi's Ottaviano Delavé is a fabric made of 100 percent Bemberg. It's a refined lightweight fabric with a delavé effect, a natural iridescent surface and a soft drape effect. Bemberg is Oeko-Tex Standard 100 and RCS certified and has obtained the the ISO 14001 certification.

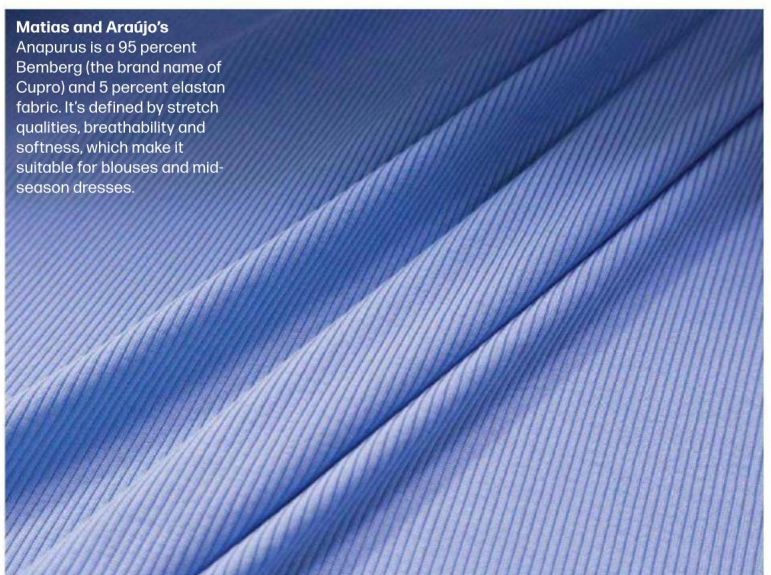


Iluna Group's TB444QZ 0230 is a fabric made of three components: 78 percent Q-Nova, an environmentally sustainable, comfortable and soft polyamide obtained from regenerated raw materials Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certified, 19 percent Roica EF, a recycled elastane produced by Roica, and 3 percent Lurex fabric. Its primary application is in underwear, lingerie and beachwear. The addition of the Roica stretch fiber enhances its qualities: comfort, breathability and durability.



Teseo Como's 2660 is a 100 percent Bemberg fabric. It's suitable for heavier shirts, light trousers or skirts, and soft jackets thanks to its versatile midweight and refined softness.

Matias and Araujo's Anapurus is a 95 percent Bemberg (the brand name of Cupro) and 5 percent elastan fabric. It's defined by stretch qualities, breathability and softness, which make it suitable for blouses and mid-season dresses.

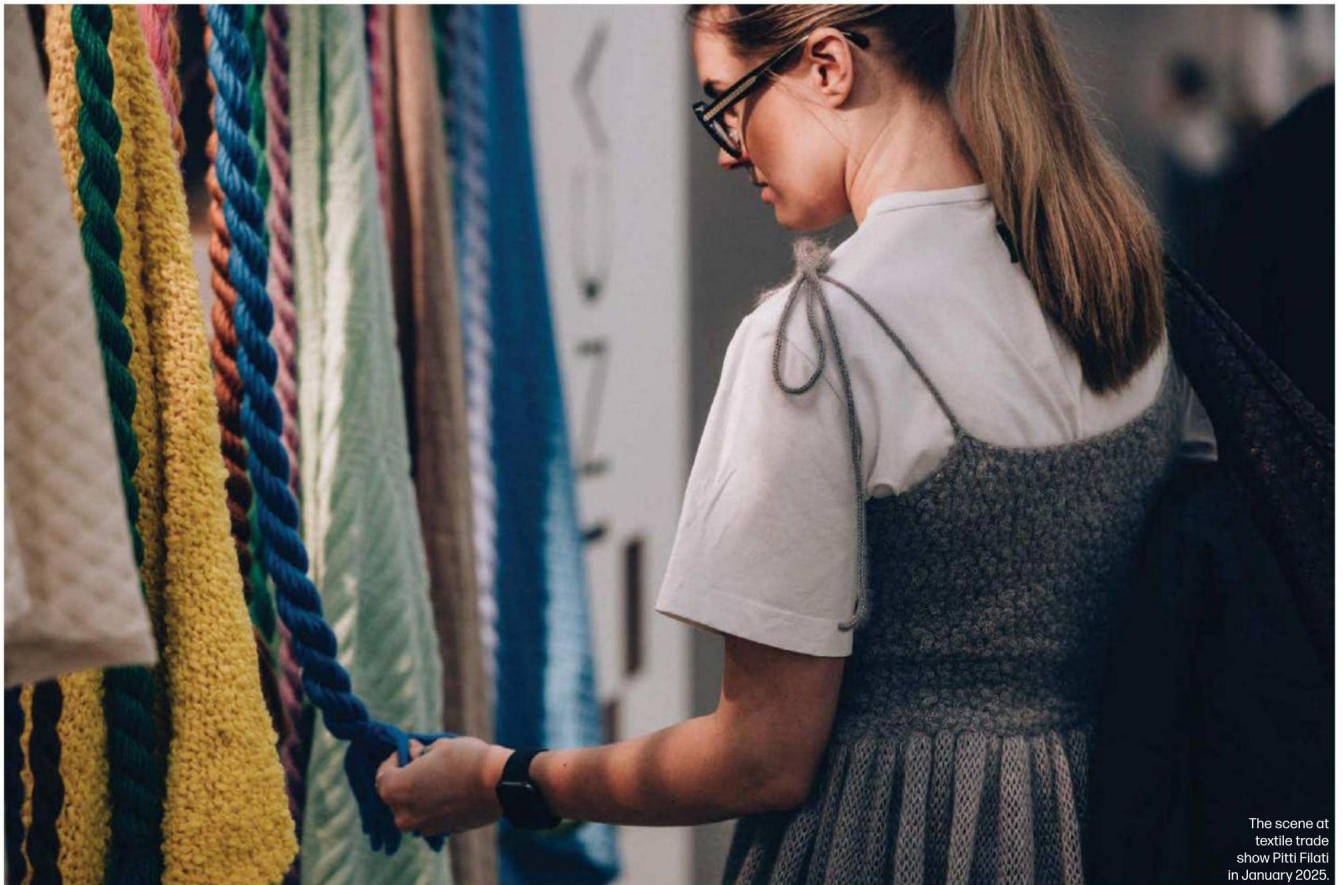




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The scene at textile trade show Pitti Filati in January 2025.

Timeless Yarns Dominate Fall 2026 Collections

Exhibitors presenting their fall 2026 collections at the three-day textile fair Pitti Filati voiced their concern about the unpredictability of the business outlook for 2025. BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – The fashion industry is grappling with the economic headwinds and geopolitical turmoil denting consumer confidence and the supply chain is feeling the pinch of slower demand, with little to no visibility even on short-term prospects.

Yarn-makers at the top of the fashion pipeline are playing it by ear, as 2024 registered a mixed performance for many and 2025 has not opened on more positive notes.

The global turmoil imposes caution and for companies to embrace a wait-and-see mode.

“Every sector is facing big challenges and especially the lack of planning and overall pessimism prevent us from making evaluations on the second half of the year,” said Alberto Enoch, chief executive officer of silk-maker Servizi e Seta.

Alberto Corti, owner of spinning company Monticolor, shared a similar view. “Business models and [brand] strategies are constantly changing as a result of extreme uncertainty and market volatility,” he said. In 2024 the company logged 30 million euros in sales, in line with the previous year, but Corti expects a moderate drop this year.

According to data provided by Confindustria Moda, revenues of the Italian spinning industry decreased 9.8 percent in 2024 to 2.6 billion euros, below an earlier consensus pointing to a 6.2 percent drop. Exports declined 9.4 percent to 786 million euros.

In the first quarter of 2025, sales have dropped 8 percent and exports were down 10.8 percent, according to preliminary estimates.

The 130 companies gathering at the three-day textile trade fair Pitti Filati, starting Tuesday, will get a sense of where business is headed for the remainder of the year. Unveiling their fall 2026 collections, hinged on timeless yarns done in a reassuring color palette, they are hoping for a rebound of the luxury and fashion sectors, at least in 2026.

“The landscape against which 2025 has opened, especially the war in the Middle

East, is not contributing to market stability,” Enoch said, mentioning increasing prices for energy and raw materials which suppliers have a hard time absorbing, especially as fashion players are pushing back on investments.

Earlier this year the silk specialist was acquired by Filidarte Group, a textile group promoted by Ethica Global Investments and already the owner of Lanificio dell’Olivo and Manifattura Sesia. Enoch – who has retained his CEO role – expects the integration to favor competitiveness. In 2024 Servizi e Seta generated a turnover of 25.3 million euros,

up 6 percent compared to the previous year and sales in the first half of 2025 are pointing to a midsingle-digit growth.

“The breakdown of global power balances and the return of strategic rivalry between major powers are driving a major rethink of long-established paradigms and worldviews – once solid, now increasingly unable to keep pace with global change,” said Lincoln Germanetti, president of Filatura di Tollegno 1900.

Declining to provide 2024 sales or figures for the first half of this year, Germanetti said business performance is substantially in line for the latter period.

“The generalized sense on instability is negatively impacting consumer confidence and willingness to spend,” said Lorenzo Piacentini, CEO of wool mill Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia.

In 2024 the brand’s revenues declined 16 percent to 74 million euros, a drop that Piacentini attributed to luxury’s retail slowdown, stagnation of some markets, including China, and overstock across the supply chain from the previous euphoric years. ▶



Botto Giuseppe's American Wool Tec yarn for fall 2026.



Servizi e Seta's Pùhlo yarn for fall 2026.

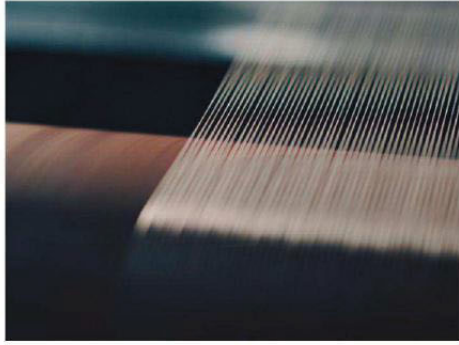


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WWD TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT

Monticolor's Inuit Merino yarn for fall 2026.



"Despite the persistent geopolitical uncertainty and slowdown of international spending, the first half registered higher sale volumes compared to the same period in 2024, confirming a promising restart, related essentially to the quality of our product offering and services, which favors loyalty and strengthens our market shares with key clients," Piacentini said.

At Biella, Italy-based wool mill Botto Giuseppe, CEO Silvio Botto was equally concerned about the many global issues factoring in.

On the heels of a moderate slowdown in sales last year, which fell 4 percent versus 2023, the executive said 2025 has not opened on a more positive note. "I'm convinced that the ongoing wars and rising inflation in certain markets have dented consumer confidence," he said.

"In such a context, one needs to assess and seize the opportunities that the market may present you, riding the positive trends with readiness to change," Enoch said.

The industry is under further threat posed by the uncertainty over the outcome of tariff negotiations between the Trump administration and international countries.

Textile executives sounded particularly cautious in expressing their views.

"I don't have a clear understanding of the economic policy in the U.S.," Corti said. "Our commercial relationships with brands that have a strong footprint in the U.S. is ongoing....Our operative strategies take into careful account the dynamics in this market," he said.

Enoch expressed perplexity over the rationale behind the tariff policy, which he views as unlikely to reboot the U.S. fashion supply chain. European and Chinese manufacturing will continue to rule the fashion pipeline, he said.

According to Piacentini, the most tangible impact of the tariff policy is the uncertainty it generates, for the measures place the international textile supply chain in standby mode, he said.

None of these companies has been skimping on advancing their production capabilities and sustainability credentials, though, readying for a bounce back of the sector.

"We are already seeing a certain attitude toward valuing the quality of products, which is bound to favor the high-end, sustainable and traceable offering," said Piacentini, adding that the company has

recently joined industry association SlowFiber. "To this end, Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia and more generally the value of Made in Italy manufacturing should emerge as winners from the unsettling challenges of our time," he said.

Overall, the fall 2026 collections to be presented at the fair hinge on classics, with a chic and timeless allure with a tactile and cocooning quality. This suggests spinners are playing it safe in times of uncertainty and leveraging their carryover textile



Tollegno 1900's Marley yarn for fall 2026.

products to ensure a better and speedier service to their clients.

Cashmere reigns supreme, oftentimes seen in blends with lighter threads, such as Monticolor's Nordic Sense and Arctic Sense, both including OCS-certified organic cotton fibers, giving an iridescent finish. The luxurious fiber is enriched by silver microsequins in Monticolor's Twinkle Sense or steel threads in Botto Giuseppe's Flair Steel yarn, boasting a metallic shimmer.

At Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia, cashmere was blended in with ultrafine, 17.5-micron merino wool for the Neo Millennium yarn or the Eclair carded option, which boasts the same softness as full cashmere threads. With Mirage, the mill is pushing the innovation envelope as the yarn combines RWS-certified merino wool and Spiber's Brewed Protein fiber.

Elsewhere, the Biella, Italy-based yarn maker zeroes in on its hero Cashwool merino wool yarns, offered for fall 2026 in new iterations with enhanced softness and lightness or neatness.

More merino wool iterations include Botto Giuseppe's American Wool Tec, sourced from the Shaniko farms in Oregon which have adopted the Carbon Initiative for regenerative agriculture, or Tollegno 1900's Marley bouclé and Monticolor's RWS-certified, speckled Polar Merino yarn.

The latter taps into the ongoing chunky, crafty knit trend, as do Botto Giuseppe's Flair and Flair Brush full cashmere threads, defined by a soft, cocooning touch and silky finish; Tollegno 1900's Country, a blend of the RWS-certified Pure New Wool yarn with hemp giving a tactile, rough feel, and Servizi e Seta's Puhjio, a blend of baby llama and polyamide.

Loro Piana's Wish Onde Soft also boasts exceptional softness and hairiness, while the new Wish Rice part of the same family is a fancy yarn defined by a rugged, tactile effect ensured by chain-like structure.

Sophisticated tweeds stand out in the Monticolor fall collection with Tweed Sense, combining cashmere and cotton spun according to the jaspé technique, in Botto Giuseppe's range, with the Cashtweed Mouliné yarn, and in Loro Piana's lineup with the RWS-certified Falkland Boucle, defined by a nubbler effect.

The Woolmark Company is to spotlight the trademarked QuantumColour technology by start-up Colourizd at the fair. The alternative dyeing process is based on the injection of colored pigments that tie to the thread and requires the use of only half a liter of water for each kilogram of yarn. ■



Loro Piana Wish Rice yarn for fall 2026.

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Meet Five Fashiontech Start-ups Driving Sustainable Change

Innovation and sustainability often come from out-of-the-box thinkers and entrepreneurs. Here are a few hoping to lead change. BY MARTINO CARRERA



Inside the Haelixa laboratories.

Peftrust aims to make LCAs across multiple products easier.



MILAN – Over the past 10-plus years, the textile and fashion industries have been pressured to take significant steps toward sustainability by consumers, policymakers and the general public alike.

They have indeed made quantum leaps in adopting an eco-mindset that spans chemicals, operations, processes and logistics, although this has often been confined to players in the high-end and luxury spaces, leaving the bulk of textile and apparel manufacturing behind.

Viewed as a key competitive business advantage, when not integral to the sector's survival toolkit at a time of continued supply chain disruptions caused by geopolitical turmoil and economic headwinds, sustainability and traceability require constant investments to fuel innovation.

The latter is often spurred by out-of-the-box thinkers and entrepreneurs driving change, some of which are behind the five fashiontech start-ups selected by WWD here.

Haelixa

Claiming that chain of custody standards, a record of all steps in the supply chain, are far from enough to ensure a reliable set of traceability information, Haelixa offers a DNA-based solution.

Established in 2016 by cofounders Gediminas Mikutis, also chief technology officer, and Michela Puddu, also advisory board member, the start-up aims to minimize fashion and textile companies' exposure to the vulnerability of standards and certifications by introducing a physical and tangible verification system.

Haelixa's solution applies DNA markers on fibers after the ginning procedure, providing them with a traceable identity and verifying the origin of intermediate or finished products, thus ensuring companies' claims on, say, the use of organic cotton or recycled fibers are validated.

A unique DNA code per location and fiber type is designed and the marker containing it – compliant with the GOTS, Oeko-Tex and Eco Passport standards – is sprayed onto the fibers. Forensic tests are conducted by independent labs and

information – also known as verification certificates – shared with companies or uploaded onto digital traceability interfaces and tools.

Adding a DNA marker in the early stages ensures all steps through the supply chain are automatically verified for traceability. This mitigates risks connected with material substitutions and the use of fake textiles by suppliers, in addition to easing custom clearance and avoiding import bans.

The company says that the use of its solution has the most impact on textiles for which false claims are more frequent, including recycled fibers, cotton, cashmere and alpaca wool.

It also unlocks the traceability of fibers currently not covered by other available standards, including hemp, nettle or banana fibers, for example.

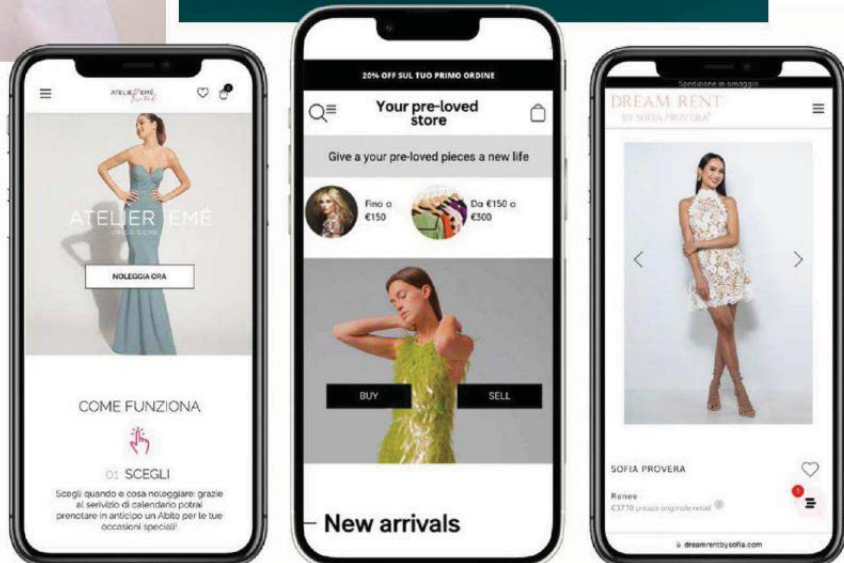
Peftrust

Implementing eco-design principles and conducting life cycle assessments across multiple products and product categories can become a headache.

Aiming to ease and speed the sustainability-oriented, decision-making process for fashion companies, as well as to scale up eco-minded efforts, the one-platform tech solution Peftrust automates sustainability and supply chain data across stock keeping units, categories and formats.

Established in Metz, France, in 2021 by cofounders Laurent Bocahut and Mélinda Dubreucq, chief executive officer and chief operating officer, respectively, the start-up allows bulk data uploads on the platform, with entire collections' skus and supplier datasets quickly available for an instant mapping of all steps in product creation.

This favors eco-design decision-making



The Cloov platform's mobile interface for Atelier Emè.

with scalable impact, helping companies to identify hot spots and areas of improvement, simulate eco-design pilots as well as to track and tackle Scope 3 GHG emissions. Its output data – supporting traceability and transparency – are designed for seamless integration in the Digital Product Passport.

Peftrust counts on a vast network of partners, including Product Lifecycle Management and traceability platforms, suppliers and policy makers.

Cloov

A three-in-one white label solution geared at circularity in fashion, Cloov was launched to meet demand for resale, rental and repair driven by Gen Z and Millennial customers alike.

The software aims to tap into the under-exploited opportunity for brands to reclaim ownership of their products' life cycle by resorting to circular business models, and turn them into strategic business levers, while aiming to ensure seamless integration and alignment with any given brand's identity.

Established in 2022 by cofounders Chiara Airoldi and Olimpia Santella, the business-to-business solution provides new means to manage unsold, returned or past-season inventory, beyond discounts, wasteful disposal or garment recycling processes.

The end-to-end solution aims to help brands build and scale a circular offering. For resale, it works as a tech infrastructure enabler building resale platforms from scratch, handling the resale shopping process down to the automated connections with logistics partners.

For repair, it connects brands and repair shops via a collaborative tech tool aimed at streamlining the process by allowing an anticipated configuration of repair details – as in which products and how they get repaired – as well as pricing.

For rental, the white-label tech solution allows the launch and management of the service, with real-time tracking of product availability and automated coordination of item returns, reconditioning and redistribution. ▶

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WWD TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT

CDC Studio

As European policymakers inch closer to issuing regulations on the mandatory implementation of eco-design principles to foster better textile and apparel recycling, CDC Studio hopes to come to the rescue with an alternative approach.

The start-up founded in 2020 by Cristina Di Carlo and Matteo Corbellini, CEO and chief technology officer, respectively, boasts the patented proprietary solution Miktòs geared at the management of textile waste, which is turned into raw material alternative to virgin or recycled plastics.

The patented technology allows brands to turn both single- and mixed-fiber textile waste into a granular plastic-like compound applicable across fashion, design, packaging, automotive and construction for potential use in the manufacturing of buttons, heels, outsoles, hangers and more. The Miktòs compound is also fully and infinitely recyclable.

The CDC Studio hub, based outside Pisa, Italy, sources end-of-life products by partnering with dedicated not-for-profit organizations and handles the transformation. The compound is then sold back to the companies which originally generated the waste or to third parties.

The solution is seen as helping textile and fashion companies' compliance with several to-be-implemented regulations, including the EU's Extended Producer Responsibility, which sets accountability terms on fabric-makers and fashion brands for textile waste, as well as with the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation legislation, which requires a critical reduction of virgin plastic use for packaging.

Earlier this year, the company closed an investment round of 380,000 euros spearheaded by Styleit – a fashiontech accelerator promoted by CDP Venture



CDC Studio's Miktòs plastic-like compound.

Capital SGR, Startupbootcamp and Gellify – and the Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore.

In addition to Miktòs, CDC Studio has developed a second solution called CoCo. The latter is a coating compound produced starting from post-consumer recycled plastic packaging which is to be used as a finishing treatment on unsold or flawed textiles and leather products. The coating provides water- and windproof qualities, in addition to enhancing the products' durability. Products coated with CoCo can be recycled by CDC Studio and turned into slabs suitable for flooring and design objects.

Movopack

The EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation framework requires that 40

percent of e-commerce packaging is reusable by 2030, spotlighting one of the often-neglected aspects across the fashion supply chain.

Founded in 2020 by Tommaso Torriani, Andrea Cipollone and Alberto Cisco, CEO, chief operating officer and chief commercial officer, respectively, Movopack, is offering a solution to comply with the regulation providing a wide range of reusable packaging products and handling reverse logistics to collect them and give them new life.

Customers receiving their e-commerce purchases in a Movopack package can mail them back via one of the 700,000 mailboxes spread across Europe. The start-up company sorts, cleans and refurbishes the package and puts it back



OTB Group's Brave Kid is among the clients of Movopack.

into the market for the next round of usage.

The company claims that each cycle of 20 reuses entails a 98 percent reduction in waste compared to the already greener use of disposable cardboard with 70 percent of recycled content. The Movopack system also claims to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 84 percent and 76 percent of water usage.

In 2024 Movopack secured a 2.3 million euro funding round from leading venture capital investors, which has allowed it to expand in the U.K. The company already counts such brands as Save the Duck, sports retailer Dechathlon, innerwear and swimwear brand Yamamay, as well as OTB Group's kidswear division Brave Kid, among its clients. ■

Pioneer Denim and Soko Debut Collab

The collection, designed by Adriano Goldschmied, was presented at the Pitti Uomo trade show in Florence. BY ANDREA ONATE

MILAN – The "Indigo Chaos" collaboration combines Adriano Goldschmied's creativity with Bangladesh denim manufacturer Pioneer Denim's material quality and Italian chemical firm Soko's technologies.

The result is a 10-piece collection featuring six women's items made from cotton-hemp and four men's items made

from wool and cotton, all inspired by sartorial craftsmanship and washed with a unique washing process created by Soko.

Soko's innovative Hydrogel technology, used for denim finishing, transforms water into a highly viscous state, enveloping fabrics and protecting them from aggressive agents while reducing water consumption by up to

10 times compared to traditional methods.

Each garment piece is dyed and washed with a tie-dye effect before being assembled, creating a one-of-a-kind look when combined with other pieces. The collection's sartorial inspiration is highlighted by details such as denim-covered buttons and internal seams, paying homage to classic garments.

Key pieces in the range include, for women, a single-button double-breasted blazer, a casual belted waist jacket, and a front-buttoned corset with unique cuts. All can be paired with a midi skirt or wide-leg pants. For men, the options include a blazer with chambray details, a jacket inspired by classic trenchcoats, and a classic men's pants.

According to Goldschmied "Soko

demonstrates its ability to experiment with new paths and validly accompany creativity, creating new opportunities."

The collection was presented at an event in the courtyard of Soko's Projects Division in Florence on June 17 during the Pitti Uomo trade show. The collection at the moment has no commercial objectives, as WWD was told it was designed for Pitti to experiment a new approach to denim.

The presentation also presented three exclusive collaborations, all crafted using the collection's fabric and processes. These included a silver jewel by Pianegonda; the Delight lamp created in partnership with Milan-based artisanal company Oceano Oltreuce, specializing in design-driven indoor lamps, and Casual sneakers by Tuscan shoemaker Sturlini Firenze.



Inside the Pitti Uomo tradeshow showcasing Indigo Chaos' collection by Adriano Goldschmied's, Pioneer Denim and Soko.



Indigo Chaos' collection by Adriano Goldschmied's, Pioneer Denim and Soko.



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WWD TEXTILE SPOTLIGHT

Biodegradable Is Beautiful, Say Exhibitors at Future Fabrics Expo

The annual event, a futuristic science fair in London, showcased 50 new innovations from more than 120 partners and exhibitors including LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Lenzing, Canopy and Hydefy. BY SAMANTHA CONTI



Stella McCartney's Ryder bag made from Hydefy fungi-based materials.



Patrick McDowell's printed couture gown, a collaboration with Sparxell.



LONDON — At Future Fabrics Expo, the glass is always half-full — of wood pulp, fungi and biodegradable pigments — just waiting to be worked into mass and luxury clothing, footwear, accessories and home furnishings.

The optimism at this year's fair was palpable, with more than 2,000 visitors, 50 new innovations and more than 120 exhibitors, the highest on record. They ranged from industry giants such as LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, Lenzing and Canopy, an NGO working to reduce deforestation, to start-ups.

During the event, which ran June 24 to 25, entrepreneurs and exhibitors highlighted innovation, collaboration and the efforts they are making across every inch of the green supply chain, from forest, field and farm to couture gown, luxury handbag and underwear elastic.

Change is happening at speed.

As the fair opened, Patrick McDowell announced a first-of-its-kind collaboration with Sparxell, a biotech firm founded by University of Cambridge scientists Dr.

Benjamin Droguet and Professor Silvia Vignolini and backed by LVMH.

Sparxell creates plastic-free, toxin-free, plant-based biodegradable pigments, inks, glitters, sequins, and films using natural cellulose derived from wood pulp and agricultural waste.

McDowell's printed couture gown and commercial shirt dress marked the first time that Sparxell's patented tech has been applied to fashion. The designer described the firm's colors as "exceptionally vibrant," and said they open up "entirely new creative possibilities."

Hydefy, the Chicago-based company that uses fungi and sugarcane waste to create leather alternatives, is also pushing forward with innovation. The company behind Stella McCartney's silver Ryder bag has been intensifying its efforts to enrich the look and feel of its leather-like materials, creating deeper graining and a softer, drapier feel.

Mandy Geddert, a textile engineer and founder of the Berlin-based haberdashery Charle, is paying more attention to the inside

rather than the outside of clothing.

Working with Lenzing's Tencel Lyocell fibers and natural rubber, she has created plastic-free, biodegradable elastic trims and other stretchy components for waistbands and straps on skirts, underwear and lingerie.

"Sometimes change starts with something as small as a waistband," said Geddert, who said her stretchy bands might, in the future, also be used for toys, children's clothing and automotive interiors.

HerMin Textile is another company that's been working with Lenzing to create plastic-free textiles. The company, which specializes in sports and performance fabrics, showed off swatches of water-repellent fabric that had the feel of crisp poplin.

The front and lining of the fabric was made using Tencel fibers, and the company said it has been working closely with Lenzing to create the yarn that goes into the fabric.

Lenzing may be one of the biggest players in the sustainability arena, but there is still so much to be done, said Florian Heubrandner, executive vice president in charge of filaments.

He said the challenges are varied, and include working Lenzing's wood-derived cellulose fibers into more day-to-day products. Lenzing works closely with brands and mills around the world to develop new, and more sustainable, hybrid materials.

"Our existing fibers are so versatile, and there are so many sub-types," which can be used for knit and woven fabrics, and for trims, curtains, denim and underwear.

Of late, Heubrandner's team has been turning its attention to menswear and trying to develop a "bulkier" fabric for formal shirts.

"We're looking for a more stiff, cotton-like touch," said Heubrandner, pointing out that shirts made using Tencel Lyocell fibers have a softness and drape-ness that makes them ideal for dresses, but not necessarily for men's shirts.

Lenzing is not alone in working closely with partners. One of the big ideas coming out of the expo is that cooperation is often the mother of innovation.

Nowhere was that spirit of cooperation more apparent than at LVMH, which had a major presence at the expo.

LVMH's Life 360 environmental action program is structured around five pillars: biodiversity protection, climate change mitigation, circular economy, transparency and business partners.

Nona Source, LVMH's online resale platform for "re-sourcing" leftover materials from the group's fashion and leather goods maisons, said it is expanding rapidly. It has begun offering leather and deadstock material from houses outside the group, including Lanvin.

Nona Source, which has 4,500 fabrics in its arsenal, has also figured out what to do with deadstock yarn. The team turned to its neighbor in Paris, Benjamin Benmoyal, to transform the yarn into fabric, which is now sold on the platform.

The French giant is also working with WeTurn, which collects production scraps from various fashion houses, shreds it, adds

virgin fibers and creates new yarns for denim and other fabrics.

Other companies in the LVMH orbit are solution-providers, such as Fairly Made. It offers supply chain traceability for brands, including Loewe, so they can stick to their green commitments and keep consumers informed about where materials are coming from, and how they are made.

LVMH is also working with Genesis, which assesses soil health, and with Söktas on regenerative farming in the cotton industry. The LVMH partners are working directly with farmers on transitioning to regenerative agriculture, which can be time-consuming and expensive.

Funding remains a challenge for companies that are looking to scale their inventions or services, and was another major theme to emerge at the expo.

For instance, PDS Limited and PDS Ventures are hoping to solve some of the money issues, especially for start-ups and small businesses.

PDS is a manufacturing and sourcing platform that works with brands and retailers around the world, and provides a global "plug-and-play" platform for entrepreneurs. Its ventures arm focuses on seed and early-stage investments in sustainable products and technologies that serve customers and suppliers.

Yael Gairola, a non-executive director at PDS Limited and an investor at PDS Ventures, argued that "there is a gap between innovators and the industry. Innovators are still struggling to achieve scale, and you can only deliver impact through scale. We want to be part of that opportunity."

Canopy is also looking to help drive scale. It was there to support the launch of Circulose Forward, a platform meant to provide "practical, scalable solutions" that align with climate science and market needs.

Nicole Rycroft, founder and executive director of Canopy, described Circulose Forward as "the kind of innovation that helps the industry leave deforestation in the past and move decisively toward a resilient, low-carbon, next gen future."

Despite all the challenges — spiraling costs, governments' backpedalling on green policies and mounting tariffs — green innovators have been making steady progress, argued Malini Mehra of Globe Legislators, an organization that aims to support government lawmakers in advancing laws on climate change.

Speaking during a panel discussion, "On the Road to COP30: How Can the Fashion Industry Be a Climate Solution?" she argued that there is "too much amplification of gloom and doom in the media."

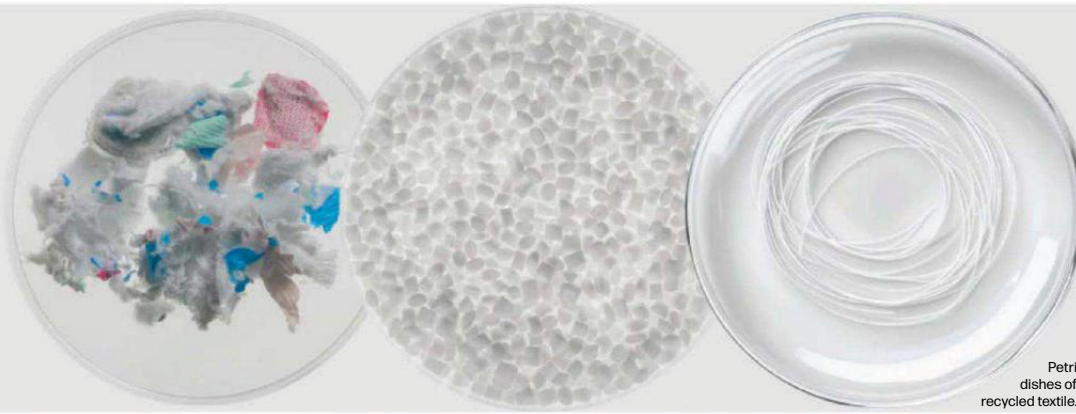
Mehra said that, instead, green innovations — and regulations — are helping to reshape economies worldwide. She said the regulations coming out of Brussels are "trendsetting," and the European Union is "leading the way" on sustainability directives, with the Chinese now taking cues from Europe.

She added that regulation works best when policymakers tune into the industry's needs, ambitions and budgets.

Mehra acknowledged that Europe's small and medium-sized companies are "screaming in pain" about new and proposed regulations, and that legislators have to "meet those companies where they are now, in this era of implementation and delivery."

Textile-to-textile Recyclers Breaking Ground Globally

Leaders in the space are planting worldwide roots. BY KATE NISHIMURA



Petri dishes of recycled textile.



Recycled textile.



Packaged recycled textiles.

The foremost innovators in the textile-to-textile recycling space are evolving from start-ups to scale-ups – and many are taking their operations global.

Over the course of the past year, pilot projects have begun the metamorphosis to commercial scale, generating new partnerships and backing from industry stalwarts, manufacturing experts and forward-thinking brands.

Here, a look at some of them.

Circ

The Danville, Va.-based polycotton recycling innovator revealed this spring that it's launching its first commercial-scale facility in Saint-Avoid, France, with construction to begin in 2026 and operations targeted to commence in 2028.

The new facility will employ 200 people and, once running at full speed, will be able to recycle 70,000 metric tons of blended polycotton textiles each year, separating the polyester and cellulose into usable regenerated materials.

The project has some high-profile backing. First revealed by French President Emmanuel Macron's administration at the 2025 Choose France Summit, it will be supported by national, regional and European Union incentives as well as by engineering partners including Worley, GEA and Andritz. A robust industrial base and progressive policymaking surrounding circular advancement attracted Circ to the region, its leadership said.

The French facility will serve as a commercial flagship – and just the first

outpost in what will become a global network, according to the American company. In the coming years, Circ said it's looking into North America and Asia as the next destinations for growth.

Reju

France-headquartered textile-to-textile regeneration firm Reju broke the news in May that it had decided on the Chemelot Industrial Park in the Netherlands for its first industrial-scale facility, following the opening of "Regeneration Hub Zero" in Frankfurt, Germany, this October.

Regeneration Hub One, as the facility will be called, will help Reju reach its goal of scaling by allowing the innovator to leverage the industrial park's existing infrastructure. It will be capable of recycling the equivalent of 300 million garments each year, resulting in a production capacity of 50,000 tons of rBHET that will be repolymerized into Reju PET. Derived from textile waste, the new material offers 50 percent lower carbon emissions than virgin polyester, and will be introduced into the supply chain for products like apparel.

The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency (NFIA), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and the Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth collaborated with Reju on planning for the facility and its location at Chemelot.

Ambercycle

The Los Angeles-based blended textile recycler in January said that it's expanding the reach of its upcycled Cycora material

in China through a partnership with polyester manufacturer Shenghong Holding Group.

The two companies have worked together since last year to develop regenerated filament yarns using Cycora material, which is made of upcycled polyester. The new partnership will allow the companies to scale production of those yarns in China, which remains an essential production hub for much of the fashion sector despite higher tariffs imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump.

Ambercycle leadership said the partnership would enable it to scale production, as Shengdong possesses advanced manufacturing capabilities and partnerships with global brands.

The company has employed the strategy before, with the apparent goal of integrating its material seamlessly into international supply chains. In 2023, the company joined forces with Taiwan-based textile manufacturer Shinkong Synthetics, providing pelletized polyester to be extruded into performance and specialty yarns. And in August 2024, Shinkong invested \$10 million in Ambercycle for its first state-of-the-art facility.

Ambercycle also partnered with Sri Lankan conglomerate MAS Holdings in 2024, providing enough regenerated polyester to make roughly 10 million garments. Days after entering that agreement, Ambercycle teamed with South Korea-based Hyosung TNC – which is known for its corn-based Creora Spandex – to incorporate Cycora in its supply chains.

Syre

Stockholm-based polyester textile recycling company Syre and specialty polyester supplier Selenis revealed last fall that they would be teaming on a textile-to-textile recycling facility in Cedar Creek, N.C.,

which is slated to open sometime this year.

When fully operational, the plant's output will reach up to 10,000 metric tons of circular polyester annually, the company said.

A relative newcomer to the space, Syre launched in early 2024 with the goal of establishing a number of textile-to-textile gigascale plants that will produce circular polyester around the world. Syre is building an adjoining facility to Selenis' Cedar Creek plant to allow for a continuous production flow, with the operations capable of performing a number of processes, from depolymerization to polymerization and PET-chip production.

Zara-owner Inditex, Patagonia and H&M Group have committed \$600 million to material produced by Syre.

Loop

Canadian circular plastics and fiber recycling firm Loop Industries teamed with one of India's leading manufacturers of specialty polymers to form a new joint venture last year – and construction is underway for a production launch in 2027.

Loop, which recycles plastic waste and polyester textiles into new materials, entered into a 50-50 strategic partnership with Ester Industries to form a new entity called India JV in 2024. The partners said they planned to build and operate a facility to produce low-carbon recycled dimethyl terephthalate (rDMT), recycled mono-ethylene glycol (rMEG) – materials that can be applied across different industries, including textiles.

Known as "Infinite Loop," the platform will bring together the two companies' complementary technologies and skill sets. Loop said it would bring the innovative processing capabilities while Ester would provide expertise in sourcing PET and polyester waste feedstocks from the Indian market.

The rDMT and rMEG products created at the Infinite Loop facility will add to Loop's existing PET and polyester fiber manufacturing business, allowing the company to access new markets and clientele within industries like textiles, automotive, electronics and packaging.

With production scaling up, India JV will be able to bring prices down for interested parties, making them more accessible to a broader market. Together, the partners invested about \$165 million into the new venture, and they anticipate that construction will be completed by the end of next year with operations slated to ramp up in early 2027.

Recover

Spain-based Recover, which regenerates cotton fibers and cotton fiber blends, said in December that it would open its latest manufacturing facility in Vietnam, to be operational in 2025.

The facility is the third to be opened in recent years, following a plant launched in Pakistan in 2021 with Artistic Denim Mills and a factory in Bangladesh opened a year later. The Vietnam outpost aims to service the Vietnamese textile production market, the company said.

The factory's location in the Dong Nai province was chosen strategically for its proximity to apparel and textile production – as well as waste streams – with Vietnam representing the world's third-largest textile exporter. In December, the firm said the factory would measure about 14,000 square meters and, once operational, produce about 10,000 metric tons of recovered textile fibers.

The facility's primary output will be RMix, a regenerated cotton-polyester blend. The recycling process eliminates the need to separate the fibers from each other – a consistent hurdle in the textile-to-textile recycling space.



Here and below: The new Muse shop inside Nordstrom's New York City flagship.



A selection of jewelry from the Muse shop inside the Nordstrom New York City flagship.

BUSINESS

Nordstrom Taps Muse as Anchor For NYC Flagship Jewelry Hall

● Muse, the jewelry showroom and West Village boutique founded by Jennifer Shanker, is coming uptown in a big way.

BY THOMAS WALLER

Muse, the jewelry showroom and West Village boutique founded by Jennifer Shanker, has been tapped by Nordstrom to anchor the reimagined jewelry hall at its 58th Street flagship in New York.

"From the beginning, it was such a surprise," Shanker said to WWD of Nordstrom approaching her to open a shop in the new hall. "Since our doors on Hudson Street opened, everything we've done has happened organically. This partnership is no different, and it's an honor that Nordstrom has decided to work together to replicate our customer experience within its walls."

Unveiled Tuesday, the reimagined space introduces Muse's blend of craftsmanship-focused jewelry and purposely curated home objects. It debuts with 20 independent jewelry brands, a category Shanker, an industry veteran, has led the charge with since opening Muse showroom in 1999.

Shanker remains humble, but within industry circles she's a sought-after power broker, last year she helped to bring Mellerio, the 412-year-old French jeweler Stateside. Today she continues to diligently fine tune Muse's stable of brands, each with singular voices, connecting them with wholesale accounts, stylists and media.

"Jennifer is such a trusted authority in the independent jewelry world, and a strong advocate for emerging jewelry brands — which is a vision we share at Nordstrom," said Rickie De Sole, vice president, fashion director, to WWD. "We're proud to partner with her on this shop. There is also an authenticity in partnering with New York institutions; we're excited to bring this West Village gem to our Nordstrom NYC Flagship uptown."

Shanker admits a retail expansion wasn't on her radar, but when Nordstrom pitched her, the stars aligned.

"They made us a deal we couldn't refuse," quipped Shanker, who jumped at the chance to give the designers she champions an opportunity for exposure to a new Nordstrom consumer.

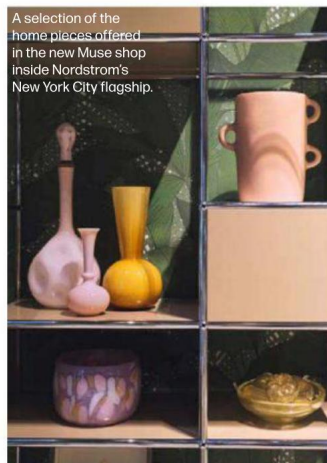
"I think our taste came through, our edit and our casual way of presenting something that is fine, and oftentimes taken too seriously in other environments," she said of Nordstrom's appreciation of her take on retail. "It was a chance for more people to have visibility into what we do and how we do it, because on our own, that hasn't really been our priority," the founder said.

De Sole echoed the potential: "The Muse shop in our jewelry hall is a highlight of the newly refreshed jewelry experience. We're making some exciting updates in New York by curating modern-fine and contemporary jewelry brands together in a warm and immersive new space on the first floor of the flagship. We're giving the customer a new one-stop shopping experience where they can explore the fullest expression of our jewelry offering as we continue to provide newness."

The new jewelry hall reaffirms the retailer's belief that the category, in spite of a luxury downturn, remains strong with room to grow. "It serves as a memorable and emotional purchase for customers and a personal means of self-expression, so it is important that the shopping experience reflects that," De Sole said of the new jewelry space. "We're bringing together a curation that offers something for everyone, focused on brands with a strong story to tell, in an environment that feels immersive and fun."

The assortment was developed in tandem with the Nordstrom team with Shanker carefully considering which of her brands made sense to showcase in a new larger setting. "We're not bringing anything from

A selection of the home pieces offered in the new Muse shop inside Nordstrom's New York City flagship.



downtown that we don't already sell really well. We're critical in how we think about the jewelry and how we present it and we're looking to cover the space with pieces that we know are great bang for your buck," she said. "It's all winners."

The range touches a variety of price points and aesthetics. Entry-level pieces start at \$350 moving up to a few showstoppers over \$10k. "We certainly can bring in that over \$10,000 merchandise, but it wasn't the focus from the beginning, we were mindful of that," the Muse founder said.

The assortment ranges from minimal delicate yellow gold by Shihara and carved gemstone earrings and everyday fine pieces from Ten Thousand Things — a brand Shanker pointed out hasn't been above 14th Street since Barneys New York shuttered — to colorful whimsical pieces by Bea Bongiasca, "who screams Nordstrom."



"We thought about brands not competing with each other," she said. "Brands we love."

The addition of home was strategic. "From across the room, a jewelry case is a jewelry case. You can't really see what's inside, but I think that the home will draw people in and will give them an easy thing to buy."

Over the years Muse has hosted a variety of events: book signings, floral arrangement workshops and impressive Broadway and film star appearances — Cynthia Erivo, anyone? She plans to bring the same energy to activations at Nordstrom, including a larger launch event in September with brand adviser and friend of Muse Carmen Busquets.

"I have been working for so long to build Muse and this opportunity could be the thing that helps take us to the next level. It's really just more jewelry from us now on people's radar," Shanker said.

EXCLUSIVE

Glen Luchford's First Solo Exhibition to Bow At 10 Corso Como

● Conceived and designed by the British photographer himself, the show will combine large-format prints, collages and an installation spotlighting his fashion films.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – The first solo exhibition dedicated to Glen Luchford is to bow at 10 Corso Como come next Milan Fashion Week.

Opening Sept. 25 and running through Nov. 23, the show titled “Glen Luchford. Atlas” has been conceived by the photographer himself not as a classic retrospective but as a site-specific project designed for the Galleria venue of the famed concept store. It will aim to offer a journey through his imagination and vision, displaying more than 30 years of work in a single continuous flow through famed shots, fashion campaigns, personal images and memories and even outtakes.

Curated by Alessio de’ Navasques, the exhibit will particularly focus on the ‘90s – the decade that marked Luchford’s rise to fame – and weave together fashion, design and photography. The exhibition journey will be made up of large-format prints, layered works and collages and will culminate in an installation of his best known fashion films.

Known for his cinematic approach, the British photographer’s unique style,

courted by fashion brands and magazines alike, has resulted in a body of work that is considered cult by more than one generation. The epiphany of watching the 1976 movie “Taxi Driver” for the first time, along with a passion for skateboarding and influences encompassing futurism, punk and ‘90s British subcultures all resonate in his raw yet poetic imagery.

From his early shots published in The Face in the ‘90s and his avant-garde fashion campaigns for Prada in those same years – which earned him the prestigious Best Campaign Award from the British Design and Art Direction Organization – he went on to collaborate with glossy publications including the British and French editions of Vogue and Vanity Fair, as well as photograph advertising campaigns for the likes of Gucci, Lanvin, Miu Miu, Chloé, Calvin Klein and Valentino, to cite a few.

His photographs have also been featured in major group exhibitions and are part of the collections of some of the world’s most prominent museums, including the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, MoMA in New York, the Getty Museum and MoCA in Los Angeles, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Dallas Contemporary and the Guggenheim Museum, among others.

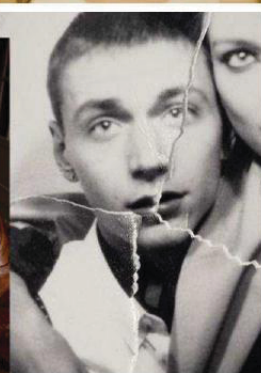
Luchford’s show at 10 Corso Como will follow the photographic exhibit on the work of Guido Guidi, currently being staged at the store until July 27. Titled “Da un'altra parte [elsewhere],” it celebrates Guidi’s career with a selection of images



“Glen Luchford. Atlas” collage: Tim Roth for Arena Magazine, 1993. Kate Moss, 1989.



“Glen Luchford. Atlas” collage: Gucci spring 2017 campaign. Another Magazine, 2011.



shot between the early ‘70s and 2023.

These initiatives build on 10 Corso Como’s increasing focus on boosting its cultural programming, as part of the new direction under the vision of Tiziana Fausti.

Founded in 1991 by Carla Sozzani, 10 Corso Como was acquired by Fausti in 2020. The latter is the founder of the namesake luxury multibrand store in

the Italian city of Bergamo. Since her acquisition of 10 Corso Como, Fausti has not only launched structural renovation works but enhanced the store’s brand selection, fueled the implementation of pop-ups and collaborations, and boosted its calendar of events, with a special focus on photography, the history of fashion and the applied arts.

BUSINESS

Moda Management Global, Rept Team on Fashion Partnerships

● The agencies will be working with the likes of soccer players Grace Clinton, Lauren James, Keira Walsh, Alex Greenwood and Celin Bizet.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

LONDON – The talent agency Moda Management Global is teaming up with Rept, a sports management agency to provide fashion partnerships for its athletes.

Rept’s roster includes English soccer players Grace Clinton, Lauren James, Keira Walsh and Alex Greenwood, as well as Norwegian soccer player Celin Bizet.

“We first met the team at Rept at a Lioness game at Wembley last year in a really relaxed, easy chat. It was apparent that the team at Rept truly cared about their girls, their passion and their drive to deliver which really resonated with our team at Moda. Everything has just clicked since then,” said Faye Browne, cofounder of Moda with Laura Clinton, in an interview.

Sports is a booming market right now in the U.K.

The London-based communications and marketing agency Good Culture has ventured into sports with Good Sport, while Amelia Penfold, founder of

the fashion and lifestyle PR agency AP Communications, has entered the game with AP Talent.

“The data tells us we’re partnering with Rept at just the right moment and the market is exploding with growth in viewership, commercial opportunities and

fan engagement. The current statistics and projections surrounding the women’s game represent a collaboration that isn’t just timely, it is essential for capitalizing on the fashion opportunities within women’s football,” Clinton said.

Besides fashion brand partnerships,

Faye Browne and Laura Clinton



Moda will also be providing the athletes with services across editorial, personal styling and brand development, event appearances and collaborations.

“At Rept, we pride ourselves on providing the best service to our athletes. As the women’s game continues to evolve at pace, the crossover between football and fashion has probably never been more important,” said Sam Stapleton, founder and chief executive officer of the sports management agency.

The talent agency has appointed Alice O’Connor, previously a publicist at Burberry and Alexander McQueen, head of communications and PR.

Earlier this year, the agency named Florence Huntington-Whiteley, the younger sister of British supermodel Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, as client connector.

Huntington-Whiteley previously worked at Nike across its talent management and strategic global brand partnerships.

“Florence brings established relationships with sports marketing teams at major brands who are now looking beyond traditional male sports partnerships. Her network includes brand managers and designers who specifically understand how to market athletic authenticity to fashion consumers and she knows how to position athletes as lifestyle influencers without compromising their sporting credentials,” Browne said.

Clinton added that “Alice understands how heritage luxury brands like Burberry think about brand partnerships and talent selection and has knowledge of global campaign strategies and how to position talent for international luxury markets.”

Ivanna Sakhno



Ivanna Sakhno On AI Villains and the Human Side of Amelia

The "M3GAN 2.0" actress discusses her role as an AI robot and how her journey from Ukraine to Hollywood shaped her career.

BY KRISTEN TAUER PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH BY LEXIE MORELAND

For Ivanna Sakhno, portraying an AI robot in "M3GAN 2.0" was a lesson in being human.

"Something that really moved me about AMELIA is that even though she is artificial intelligence, there's quite a few human traits about her psychologically," says Sakhno, describing the appeal of her character in the film.

It's the morning after the "M3GAN 2.0" movie premiere, and the Ukrainian actress is still fully powered up. Sakhno arrived in New York a day earlier from London, where she's currently filming the second season of Star Wars series "Ahsoka," and would head back to set the following day. Before that, she had a day of Zoom press for the film lined up inside a hotel room on Central Park South.

"M3GAN" became a meme-able viral success when the original film premiered in theaters in early 2023. But Sakhno, who describes herself as a "sensitive little creature when it comes to horror films," wasn't part of that initial conversation.

"The whole Megan moment, I do actually vividly remember her becoming a huge part of the culture," says Sakhno, who watched the popular first film after reading the sequel script and became a quick fan. "It made me really excited for

the second one."

The previous evening's premiere was Sakhno's first time watching "M3GAN 2.0" in a theater with the cast and crew, and she had her personal VIPs — three of her best friends and her mother — alongside her. The actress stars in the film as new AI robot AMELIA (aka, "Autonomous Military Engagement Logistics and Infiltration Android"), an enhanced version of the original M3GAN doll-bot. The uncanniness of AMELIA is more pronounced; the character is fully human, portrayed by one human playing a robot, versus the human-robot M3GAN, a chimera of a physical actress, voice actress and CGI.

"It was lots of stillness," Sakhno says of embodying the robot. "I learned that in that stillness, even though it's quite precise, there's a certain confidence and trust that you have to have in your body and in the movement to allow yourself to be so limited, and yet try to express the emotional aspect of it."

New technology is often villainized, and that's certainly the case for AMELIA.

"I think there is a reason behind every villain's action. And hers to me is actually quite heartbreaking," Sakhno says of her character. "Even though she's AI, certain aspects of her are deeply human, and

I think some people can resonate with what makes a villain and what drives them to become who they are. That darkness bleeds from a place of hurt."

Beyond the film's campy appeal — the original movie captured audiences for the titular character's killer dance moves and tag lines — the film poses of-the-moment questions around AI usage.

"There's a few aspects of it that invite you to take a look at ourselves as a humanity, and also the way that we communicate with one another and also with our children," says Sakhno, describing the film as fun and non-pretentious, but also a conversation-starter.

As a young kid growing up in Ukraine, Sakhno decided to pursue acting after seeing films like "Amelie" and "Run Lola Run." "I realized that felt like home to me," she says.

She moved to Canada via an exchange program when she was a teenager in order to learn English, and shortly before heading back to the Ukraine met the casting director who would help Sakhno connect with the team she's still working with today.

While she's starred in several big-budget

action films — often as the antagonist — she's excited to explore roles beyond that, with an eye toward the European film industry.

"I do feel really grateful to my 13-year-old self," says the actress, now 27. "We didn't have any Ukrainian actors when I was growing up who started in Ukraine and then moved to the States or to the world cinema to work. I remember being so fearful of 'what if my dreams are too crazy,' and I'm so grateful that I have gotten to actually follow my gut. And I hope that even at this point in my life, it's the beginning."

Currently living in Los Angeles, Sakhno spent several years in New York following the 2018 release of action film "The Spy Who Dumped Me." She landed in the East Village, inspired by Patti Smith's book "Just Kids." In a pinch me moment that would fit the magical world of "Amelie," Sakhno was preparing to move out of the city when Smith and her daughter ended up touring her East Village rental apartment, and took note of Sakhno's copy of the book.

"It was a full-circle moment, because she inspired me in many ways to move to New York," Sakhno says. "And when I was leaving it, she was the one saying goodbye for me."



M3GAN and AMELIA in "M3GAN 2.0," directed by Gerard Johnstone.



FN

THE TRADE SHOW ISSUE

AS THE THIRD major trade show month of 2025 kicks off, Footwear News is set to deliver its most impactful *Trade Show Issue* yet—dropping August 4 and reaching key players across the global footwear industry. This special edition dives into the people and trends shaping the business now—from licensing power players and brand management firms to emerging labels and retail strategies. It will also spotlight a major moment in brand heritage with Sperry at 90, celebrating the iconic brand's milestone anniversary.

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Oliver Zeffman Is Conducting The Queer Side of Classical

The founder of "Classical Pride" is taking the music of Leonard Bernstein, Camille Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky on tour.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED



Zeffman at work conducting.

LONDON — What is gay music?

"It's Charli XCX, Kylie Minogue and Elton John, but it's also Tchaikovsky," says Oliver Zeffman, the British conductor who is taking classical music on a world tour.

He's on a mission to shed light on the genre and its queer composers — think Leonard Bernstein, Camille Saint-Saëns and Harold Arlen, the composer behind "The Wizard of Oz" from 1939, who wasn't gay, but his music has resonated with the queer community.

Their music will be played at "Classical Pride: Voices of Joy & Sorrow" at the Barbican Centre in London on Friday with the London Symphony Orchestra before taking off to the Hollywood Bowl in the Hollywood Hills of Los Angeles on July 10.

"The most important composers past and present have been gay, but classical music has never done anything to celebrate that. It seems really long overdue," says Zeffman, pointing out that every corporation and industry has tapped into the commerciality of celebrating Pride apart from the classical music scene, which is "generally behind with the times by 10 to 15 years."

The conductor's program for "Classical Pride" is not just 19th-century string pieces, but modern-day features, too, from Jennifer Higdon's "blue cathedral" about losing her brother in 1998 to George Benjamin's "Dream of the Song," Arlen's "Over the Rainbow" and Bernstein's "Overture to Candide."

The show ends on a familiar classical note with Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake Suite."

If Taylor Swift's "The Eras" tour was a compilation of her musical evolution, then Zeffman's "Classical Pride" is a collection of classical music's best hits for newcomers and seasoned listeners.

The face of classical music is a changing one.

Zeffman, a confident, athletic man, is more Jon Snow from "Game of Thrones" with his charmingly dark features and light eyes than Bach or Handel in their powdered wigs. On stage he wears a formal suit as he waves his baton in the air — there's no pomp of a tuxedo, tailcoat or waistcoat as seen in the film "Tár" where Cate Blanchett plays a world-renowned conductor.

The 32-year-old conductor is also injecting some fun into the seriousness of classical music.

At the Hollywood Bowl, drag performer Thorgy Thor from season eight of "RuPaul's Drag Race" will take the stage to



Oliver Zeffman, the founder of "Classical Pride."

play the violin.

Since setting up "Classical Pride" in 2023, Zeffman has been treating it like a crossover between a film festival and concert. He's designed coquettish merchandise for the event, such as caps that say "DeBussy Boy," "Are you a Callas B-h?" or a cap with three musical notes that translate to the word "fag."

As a genre, classical music is in somewhat of a limbo — it's partly attached to highbrow culture and therefore benefits reputationally, but at the same time it needs all the help it can get from appealing to the mass market because of governments slashing funds for arts and culture.

"Classical music isn't good at audience development and there's a bit of an attitude of 'we do important art, if they don't know about it, it's their loss.' But that's not how you sell to an audience," says Zeffman, who believes that nobody

needs to have an encyclopedic knowledge of Frederick the Great or Igor Stravinsky to enjoy classical music.

His love for music began at a young age playing the violin and piano. He was also part of a youth orchestra, which is how he got his start as a conductor by conducting his friends. He put on his first concert at the age of 16 and between 2012 and 2018, he was conducting six concerts a year and commissioning young composers through the money he raised for putting together a symphony.

"Conducting is not like sign language, where a specific gesture means play this note. It's about bringing together a unified vision and it's all about timing. It's like being a director or soccer manager — all the work happens in rehearsals," Zeffman says.

The role of the conductor on stage is to guide the orchestra and control the tempo of the music. Their cues can dictate whether something should be played

aggressively or delicately.

Classical music's rich history led Zeffman to studying history and Russian at Durham University. He speaks fluent Russian and French with a little bit of Italian, which is always a boon for someone in the field of classical music.

He spent a year abroad in university at the prestigious music school Saint Petersburg Conservatory in Russia studying conducting. The school is recognized for its illustrious alumni including Tchaikovsky, Sergei Prokofiev, Artur Kapp and Rudolf Tobias.

But Zeffman is not a disciple of the da-da-da-duuum of classical music. Sometimes he will put his baton aside and indulge in Azealia Banks, whom he saw perform in Paris with his boyfriend; the hip-hop duo Coco & Clair Clair at the Camden Ballroom in London, and Aphex Twin at All Points East in 2023.

Life is not always an oratorio.



- SEP 8** FMG Women In Power Forum / **NYC**
- SEP 17** Beauty Inc Power Brands Celebration / **NYC**
- SEP 25** SJ Fall Summit / **NYC**
- OCT 6** WWD LA Beauty Forum / **LA**
- OCT 28-29** WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit & WWD Honors / **NYC**
- NOV 6** WWD Fashion Loves Food Gala / **MILAN**
- NOV 13** SJ Sustainability LA / **LA**
- NOV** Catalyst & Beauty Inc Awards / **NYC**
- DEC 3** Footwear News Achievement Awards / **NYC**

ALL DATES AND DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Fashion Scoops

The Dior fall 2025 ready-to-wear campaign.



DIOR



A Lady Dior bag adorned with charms from the Lucky collection.

Through The Looking Glass

Who better to shoot a campaign inspired by Virginia Woolf's "Orlando" than Tim Walker, known for elaborate narratives with a Surrealist twist?

Dior tapped the British photographer to lens its fall campaign at Hatfield House in England, which provided a majestic backdrop for Maria Grazia Chiuri's time-traveling collection.

She was inspired by Woolf's story about a Renaissance poet who lives for centuries and changes sex from man to woman. "It's really to reflect how much fashion helps you to perform," explained the designer, who stepped down as artistic director of women's collections in May after nine years at the helm.

Models Laura Savy, Huijia Chen, Peris Adolwi, Ebba Bostrom and Achol Kuir are captured in wide-angle images posing in front of the country

house's topiary hedges, or indoors in a turquoise blue box with a checkerboard-patterned floor. The sets were designed by Walker's regular collaborator, Shona Heath.

"The protagonist's free, shifting identity is embodied by the models passing through symbolic portals between past and future, reality and imagination," Dior said in a statement.

Corsets and crinolines were rendered in modular constructions and lightweight materials, but Chiuri's clearest influences were two of her predecessors at Dior: Gianfranco Ferré and John Galiano.

She echoed Ferré's signature white shirts and use of brocades and crinolines. From Galiano, she borrowed vintage-style J'Adore slogan T-shirts that were trimmed with lace or layered under a velvet doublet.

Margot Populaire art directed the campaign. It was styled by Elin Svahn, with Sam Bryant in charge of makeup and Malcolm Edwards doing hair.

— JOELLE DIDERICH

Getting Lucky

Dior is ready for its annual summer moment at Harrods, which this year will take the form of a pop-up for the Lucky accessories collection inspired by founder Christian Dior's belief in the power of charms, and especially the five-point star, a longtime symbol of the house.

The Harrods pop-up will run from July 21 until Aug. 27, and will stock the Lucky capsule, which was conceived by Maria Grazia Chiuri, the former creative director of women's collections who stepped down in May after nearly a decade at the brand.

The pop-up, located on the ground floor, will offer several customization services, where clients can choose to have accessories adorned with lucky symbols such as stars, bees and shamrocks.

The selection will also include the reinvented Lady Dior bag, with the signature cannage pattern picked ▶



Takashi Murakami and designer Yuta Hosokawa.

out in stars, clovers and hearts; the Dior Groove, and Dior Toujours Vertical, which can all be customized with special jewelry, brand motifs, charms and chains.

Flower-embroidered and printed Lady Dior, Lady D-Joy and Dior Book Tote bags, part of the Lucky collection, will also be on offer.

The space will have other fun elements, too, including an augmented reality mirror, where clients can try on the Lady Dior and Dior Toujours Vertical styles, and view them as crossbody bags. There are also plans for tarot card games, and special visits from a fortune teller.

Separately, on July 24, Dior will unveil a larger ready-to-wear universe on the first floor of Harrods. It will showcase high-end gowns, eveningwear and fine jewelry.

The space will also house two private suites, while a permanent Dior Lady

Art installation will open later this year, showcasing contemporary creatives' takes on the Lady Dior bags.

As reported, Harrods' first-floor designer womenswear spaces have been undergoing a multiyear refurbishment that began last year, and will continue into 2026.

Harrods has been working with David Collins Studio to create a warm, beautifully lit environment, while the in-house team has also been thinking creatively, grouping brands and designers by theme and editing the shop floor so that it's easier to read. —SAMANTHA CONTI

Artistic Threads

Takashi Murakami has teamed with Japanese designer Yuta Hosokawa, who is behind cult upcycling label Readymade, on

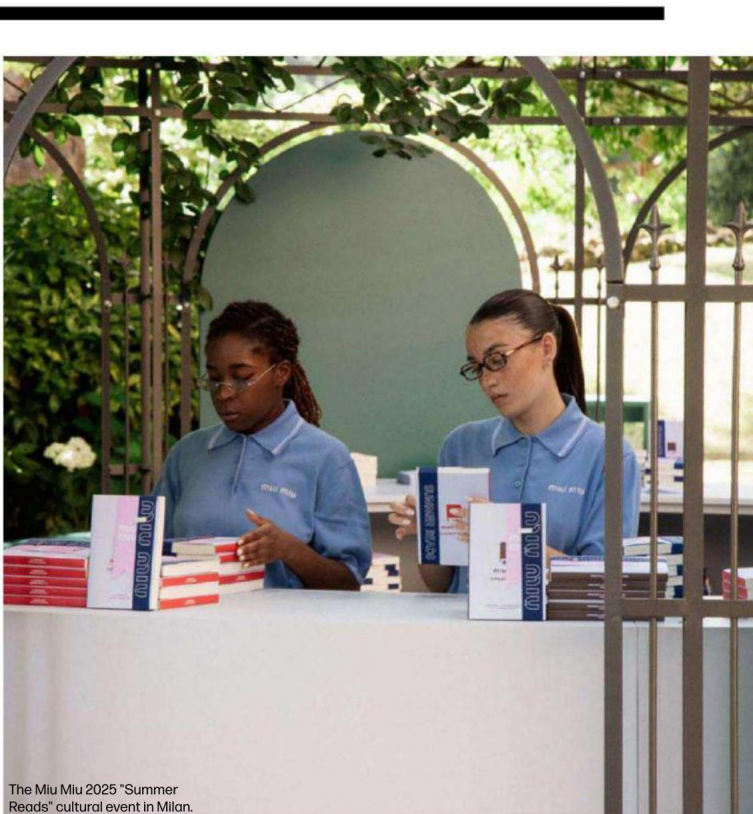
a spring 2026 capsule collection unveiled during Paris Men's Fashion Week.

Dubbed "Mononoke Made," in a nod to the contemporary artist's 2024 exhibition at the Kyoto City Kyocera Museum of Art, the line spans 30 pieces.

Topping the lot are a song by MNNK Bro., the group formed by Murakami and rapper JP the Wavy, and a runway-themed music video, both released Thursday.

In fact, it was the latter that was created first in this project that was two years in the making, Hosokawa told WWD through a translator.

The pair met in 2018, when the designer made a pair of shorts featuring Murakami's flower character as a gift for the artist, and had over the years worked on one-off jackets or T-shirts. Mutual respect blossomed and in 2021, Hosokawa held a solo exhibition titled "Yes-" at Tokyo's Kaikai Kiki gallery,



The Miu Miu 2025 "Summer Reads" cultural event in Milan.

Then came the idea of a music video, with Hosokawa designing the costumes. This led him to imagine a wardrobe that would fit "the Murakami lifestyle" and what the artist would want to wear.

You know: "An artist's life — living a studio, sleeping in [the] studio," deadpanned Murakami. "[Wearing] shorts and suspenders."

Both items are among the options shown in Paris, which also includes T-shirts, soccer shirts, varsity blousons, souvenir jackets and a protective vest.

While the capsule's price range wasn't yet finalized at press time, it is expected to sit in the same ballpark as Readymade, which starts retailing around \$300 for T-shirts and goes above \$1,000 for outerwear.

A handful of accessories such as wallet chains, belts and caps complete the ensemble, which taps into Murakami's famous characters such as the 12-petal flower, panda and cherry blossom.

The artist said he'd given Hosokawa carte blanche to select them, expressing admiration for this designer he deemed "a genius" with a natural connection with fine arts and who has a profusion of ideas, each with a detail and intensity that left Murakami impressed.

"Yuta-san gave us a big inspiration," he said. "Doing a collaboration with him [felt] like a breath of fresh air."

Despite being no stranger to projects in fashion and luxury, which have included collaborations with Louis Vuitton and watchmaker

Hublot, there's another reason why this one had particular resonance for Murakami.

"He also knows a lot of geek content like [sci-fi animated series Neon Genesis] Evangelion or [Mobile Suit] Gundam, the whole manga and anime philosophy," said the self-avowed geek artist.

"That's why I could link very deeply with him," Murakami continued. "Because the fashion world is the fashion world, right? But he knows [as much] about the geek world and the fashion world. That is a very unique point, that's why I am very close with him." —LILY TEMPLETON

Peruse It

Fostering its cultural approach to fashion and lifestyle, Miu Miu hosted the sophomore edition of its "Summer Reads" event this past weekend.

Held in in key cities around the world, such as Milan, Paris, Beijing, Hong Kong and Osaka, the literary initiatives took over green spaces in each location, including the Giardino delle Arti in Milan and the Chaoyang Park in Beijing.

Visitors were gifted copies of two literary classics selected by Miu Miu: the 1954 novel "The Inseparables" by the French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir and the 1957 novel "The Waiting Years" by Fumiko Enchi, the pen name for Fumi Ueda, one of the most prominent female authors of the Shōwa era in Japan.

The selected titles were wrapped in special Miu Miu packaging, customized with different colors and a dedicated bookplate, bookmark, reading clip and stamp for each location.

Both writers and titles are not new to Miu Miu. They were already selected last April for the second edition of the Miu Miu Literary Club initiative held during Milan Design Week. The goal was to promote literature and the arts with a schedule of talks, readings and live music performances to evoke the spirit of literary salons and artist collectives of yore.

Miu Miu's Summer Reads is in sync with Miuccia Prada's wish to create a space for ideas and conversation around emancipation and women's empowerment with the Miu Miu brand — in addition to directional and innovative collections.

In the same vein, for example, the Miu Miu Women's Tales, the series of short films introduced in 2011, have been allowing women directors to speak up and offer their points of view, remaining one of the only consistent commissioning platforms exclusively for female filmmakers.

Similarly, the "Tales & Tellers" event, launched in Paris during Art Basel in October 2024 and replicated with a second installment last May in New York during Frieze Week, is billed as an intersection between "fashion, cinema and art," which includes film commissions from Miu Miu's Women's Tales. —MARTINO CARRERA ▶



Louis Vuitton's 2025 travel campaign shot in Guilin, China.



Project had shown at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York for many years.

Great Escape

Chinese consumers may have paused luxury spending, but the country remains firmly in the sights of industry leader Louis Vuitton.

Days after opening a Shanghai flagship in the shape of a cruise ship, the brand has unveiled its new travel campaign, set in China. For the first installment, U.S. photographer Alec Soth shot the lush green scenery and karst limestone mountains near the Li river in Guilin.

The brand's Monogram Horizon rolling case and Soft Keepall bag are showcased against a traditional fisherman's

bamboo raft. Its Alzer briefcase and small travel trunks are among the items strapped to bicycles crossing the river.

"The campaign's images and video invite viewers to discover the country's lesser-known gems and move beyond the familiar narratives often presented in Western portrayals," Vuitton said.

The campaign launched in display on Tuesday, with print insertions due to begin on Saturday, a rollout on Vuitton's local social accounts on July 8, and its global social platforms on July 24.

The brand will unveil two more destinations in the coming months: Zhangjiajie, home to the quartzite sandstone pillars of the Wulingyuan District, and

Datong, one of the nine ancient capitals in China.

Vuitton's last travel campaign, in 2022, was shot by Viviane Sassen in Iceland.

Soth, who is based in Minneapolis, is best known for his large-format photography that blends documentary realism with lyrical storytelling. He has published more than 30 books — including "Sleeping by the Mississippi," "A Pound of Pictures" and "Advice for Young Artists" — and is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship.

A member of Magnum Photos, Soth is represented by Sean Kelly in New York, Weinstein Hammons Gallery in Minneapolis, Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco and Look Galerie in Berlin. — JOELLE DIDERICH

Canali's First

Canali has named Stefanos Tsitsipas its first brand ambassador.

Starting from the Wimbledon Championship, running from Monday to July 13, Tsitsipas will be featured in editorial content, official appearances and bespoke campaigns.

"Stefanos stands for more than performance — he represents values we believe in deeply: dedication, composure and the constant pursuit of excellence," said Stefano Canali, president and chief executive officer of the Italian menswear company. "He brings depth, integrity and a strong sense of identity — qualities that align naturally with our vision."

Tsitsipas, who is Greek by birth, has won 12 ATP Tour singles titles, and contested two finals, at the 2021 French Open and 2023 Australian Open. On the court, his favorite shot is the one-handed backhand.

This marks a further connection with the world of sports for Canali, following the three-year partnership inked in 2024 with storied soccer team FC Internazionale Milano, best known as Inter and one of the two main soccer teams of Milan.

Canali was founded in 1934 and, now in its third generation, it remains an independent family-run business that retains tailoring at the core, integrating technology into the artisanal process.

Earlier this month ahead of the label's presentation during Milan Men's Fashion Week, Stefano Canali said "the first half of the year showed once again encouraging signs. In uncertain times, customers seek reliable brands that offer consistency and real content."

The Italian menswear specialist said it continues

to fuel its investments, which include new store openings. In July, Canali will inaugurate a store in Los Angeles, "proving the centrality of the United States, which remains a driving market for the growth of the brand and where we continue to grow at a double-digit pace even with the uncertainties linked to the tariffs."

At the same time, China remains "a country we continue to believe in, even in a phase of slowdown which is connected to exogenous factors," he continued. In fact, coming up next is the opening of a Locanda Canali, which "blends hospitality, experience and a lifestyle vision." — LUISA ZARGANI

Big Apple Bye Bye

Going, going, gone. That could describe what happened with the once-popular Project trade show — at least in New York City.

When Advanstar Global purchased the men's show for \$9.9 million in August 2005 from founder Sam Ben-Avraham, it was the must-attend event for the menswear industry, both in New York and in Las Vegas where it competed with the company's MAGIC Marketplace. Advanstar was purchased by UBM plc in 2014 and that company was subsequently acquired by Informa plc in 2018, Project's current owner.

After a successful run of several years — the Tents at Project became a destination for a variety of popular men's designer brands and complemented the more affordable labels at the flagship show — Project began to diminish in importance and size. And now, it will not hold a show in New York during men's market week in July at all.

Project had long been held at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, but it was put on hiatus during

the pandemic. It returned in January of 2022 in a smaller space at Iron 23 in the Flatiron District. In January 2024, it moved into an even smaller space in Greenwich Village with just 12 brands on display where it remained for three seasons.

And now the decision has been made to not hold an event at all this summer.

"With the men's wholesale events and community shifting and changing, we are continuing to plan for and restructure how Project shows up in New York for 2026," Edwina Kulego, vice president of events for men's, international and sourcing at MAGIC told WWD when contacted for comment. "As we received feedback and worked with the menswear community as a whole to plan during the upcoming men's market in July 2025, we are shifting our focus to host a series of community and industry events and supporting initiatives to complement the existing men's market schedule in the interim before we roll out our plans for 2026."

She said the company will sponsor the MR awards in July, host "an intimate dinner with retailers and press, as well as other partnerships to be announced later during the year that will bring the community together."

She also said the Project Las Vegas show will continue to be held, running Aug. 18 to 20 at the Convention Center there and featuring "a series of events and programming as well as brands who will showcase their latest collections."

The other competing trade shows are planning to hold events in New York in July including MAN, which is relocating from Spring Studios to The Altman Building on 18th Street from July 22-24, and New York's Best Menswear Show at the Park Central from July 20 to 22. — JEAN E. PALMIERI ■



Canali's first brand ambassador Stefanos Tsitsipas.