

WWD

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Kering Confirms

The luxury group confirmed Francesca Bellettini is becoming CEO of Gucci, succeeding Stefano Cantino.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE TOMPKINS

BUSINESS

Kering Confirms Francesca Bellettini As Gucci CEO



Francesca Bellettini



Julia Gornier and Stefano Cantino

- The announcement marks the first big appointment by Kering's new CEO Luca de Meo.

BY MILES SOCHA AND LUISA ZARGANI

Francesca Bellettini is officially Gucci's new president and chief executive officer, tasked with turning around the troubled Italian fashion house amid a morose climate for luxury players.

The announcement from Kering after the close of trading on the Paris bourse Wednesday confirms a WWD report Sunday that Bellettini, one of the French luxury group's most visible and accomplished executives, would be entrusted with fixing its biggest and most crucial brand.

It's the first major move by Kering's new

CEO, Luca de Meo, who officially started on Monday after a long career in the automotive industry, most recently turning around France's Renault Group.

"At this pivotal moment, I intend to build a leaner and clearer organization in which the best talent drive our houses forward," de Meo said in a release. "Gucci, as the flagship of our group, deserves the sharpest focus, and Francesca – one of the most seasoned and respected professionals in our industry – will bring the leadership and flawless execution needed to restore the brand to its rightful place."

For her part, Bellettini said she was "truly honored to take on direct responsibility for Gucci, one of the world's most iconic luxury houses. I look forward to working under the leadership

of Luca de Meo, whose innovative and fresh perspective inspires us to push boundaries. I'm excited to embark on this new challenge together with the whole Gucci team and alongside Demna, whose creativity I have always admired."

Bellettini succeeds Stefano Cantino, and a few minutes before Kering confirmed her new role, Gucci separately announced his departure, stating he had decided to leave the company. Cantino had joined Gucci in May 2024 as deputy CEO and was appointed to the top corner office in October, effective Jan. 1, 2025. He reported to Bellettini.

"I would like to thank Stefano for his dedication to Gucci. During his tenure, he made a significant contribution to strengthening the brand's fundamentals and clarifying its positioning," said Bellettini. "We thank him for his commitment and wish him every success in his future endeavors."

Cantino also thanked Gucci and Kering "for the professional opportunity" he was given. "I am honored to have contributed to the company's development at such an important stage in its evolution."

Bellettini becomes Gucci's fourth CEO in the space of two years. Following the September 2023 exit of Marco Bizzarri – who had partnered with designer Alessandro Michele and grew Gucci to nearly 10 billion euros in revenues – Kering's group managing director Jean-François Palus stepped in, only to be succeeded last January by Cantino, previously a Louis Vuitton communications executive.

Bellettini is to partner with Georgian designer Demna, who previously revved up Balenciaga with dystopian chic and streetwear buzz, to restore desirability and growth to Gucci. He is to unveil his first effort for the brand on Sept. 24 during Milan Fashion Week.

According to sources, Bellettini hit it off immediately with de Meo and is excited to work with the Italian automotive

executive, who is expected to bring new thinking and a sense of urgency to the French luxury group.

For his part, de Meo is said to be eager to assure that he places the group's best talents in the right positions as he retools and streamlines the organization.

Since July 2023, Bellettini has been Kering's deputy CEO in charge of brand development, with all brand CEOs reporting to her, as part of a management reshuffle that also saw Jean-Marc Duplaix, chief financial officer since 2012, also become a Kering deputy CEO, in charge of operations and finance.

Kering clarified on Wednesday that Duplaix would now serve as group chief operating officer of Kering, supporting de Meo "in both the development of the group and the management of its organization. As part of this change, the functions of Kering deputy CEO will be eliminated."

Bellettini is best known for her long tenure leading Saint Laurent, which in 2024 accounted for 16 percent of group sales, and 23 percent of group earnings before interest and taxes according to HSBC estimates. (By contrast, Gucci accounts for 61 percent of EBIT, and 44 percent of sales.)

An investment banker who segued into business development, and later communications and merchandising for fashion houses including Prada, Gucci and Bottega Veneta, Bellettini helmed the Saint Laurent brand from 2013, initially working with designer Hedi Slimane, who dropped the late founder's first name, Yves, and in 2016 appointed Anthony Vaccarello as creative director.

During her tenure leading the house, she grew the size of the business roughly sixfold, according to market sources.

She handed over the Saint Laurent CEO reins last January to Cédric Charbit, who moved over from Balenciaga after an eight-year stint.

Since being named deputy CEO, Bellettini, in concert with Pinault, spearheaded decisions that left three Kering houses with new creative directors – Gucci, Balenciaga and Bottega Veneta – and four with new CEOs, at Gucci, Balenciaga, Brioni and Saint Laurent, where she relinquished the CEO title to manage the workload overseeing a stable of brands that also includes McQueen, Pomellato and Queelin.

Equity analysts have become increasingly bullish on Kering in the wake of de Meo's appointment last June.

In a research note Monday, HSBC analyst Erwin Rambourg maintained his buy rating and argued "the bear case will start to weaken with a drip-drip-drip of good news."

"What is crystal clear is that change is coming fast and unobstructed," Rambourg wrote.

HSBC is also of the opinion that debt levels at Kering are manageable.

In a separate report issued Monday, Bernstein analyst Luca Solca agreed that concern over Kering's balance sheet is already reflected in its share price, "which has already moved 50 percent above recent troughs."

Still, he said he expects significant share price swings as de Meo starts executing his strategy and "improving the executive team."

"We assume that de Meo has latitude to curb over ambitious capex and M&A decisions and possibly reverse them – or just continuing to offload real estate but possibly embracing a high-profile beauty license (rather than direct development), as well as focused brand and business divestitures," according to Solca, who leans toward the positive on the former Renault executive, and on Gucci's new creative leader Demna.

Executive search specialists lauded Bellettini's skill set and track record – while offering a quick to-do list for the executive. ▶



Francesca Bellettini

“Francesca Bellettini has consistently demonstrated a rare blend of strategic vision and operational rigor. At Saint Laurent, she didn’t simply manage growth; she orchestrated a transformation that repositioned the maison among the most dynamic and profitable brands in luxury,” said Roberto D’Incau, fashion headhunter, Lang & Partners Milan and Paris. “Her talent lies in balancing creative freedom with commercial discipline, fostering a culture where creativity and business performance reinforce each other rather than clash. She also stands out for her ability to listen and empower teams, building strong internal alignment while maintaining an acute sensitivity to market shifts.”

“This unique combination of sharp financial acumen, brand elevation, and human leadership makes her, in my opinion, one of the most respected executives in the industry today,” he added.

According to D’Incau, Bellettini’s first task “will be to stabilize and re-energize one of the world’s most iconic yet currently challenged luxury houses. Gucci strongly needs to reconnect with its identity in a way that feels both authentic and contemporary: protecting the brand’s heritage while sharpening its creative language to resonate with new generations.”

At the same time, the executive “will need to reignite desirability through disciplined distribution, renewed focus on product icons, and careful balance between exclusivity and scale. If anyone can achieve this, it is Bellettini – her proven ability to align vision, creativity, and execution positions her uniquely to guide Gucci through its next chapter of growth and relevance.

“Bellettini+Demna will be the new Bizzarri+Michele in terms of results? We shall see, the market context is very different; however, this is what Kering shareholders do expect,” concluded D’Incau.

Fondazione Altgamma general director Stefania Lazzaroni believes Bellettini has “a managerial style that allows her to hold the helm with exactness, enhancing, cherishing and fueling the creative soul of a brand.”

Bellettini in November 2022 accepted Lazzaroni’s invitation to speak at the association’s conference in Milan with Bain & Company presenting its then-latest luxury goods study. Bellettini “blends clarity with

a rational vision, with an innate empathy and relationship skills. In this she is really a unique professional,” Lazzaroni said. “In her new role I think she is recognized for a precise knowledge of the brand and the strategic ability to execute business strategies that are solid and coherent.”

Giovanna Brambilla, partner at Milan-based executive search firm Value Search, compared the arrival of de Meo, “a fashion outsider” to that of Sergio Marchionne, “an automotive outsider,” who succeeded in a textbook turnaround of Fiat.

Marchionne “leveraged skilled managers and their expertise in the industry as he led the group with his strategic vision and creating brand synergies. Likewise, de Meo has already given a clear vision of where Kering should be headed, and acts quickly as Marchionne did. To reach those results, he needs those who know this sector well, so it’s not surprising that Bellettini was chosen for this role given her experience in the luxury industry.”

Brambilla added that both de Meo and Bellettini showed “great intelligence in deciding to work together. It’s a win-win situation.”

Based on the successful job done at Saint Laurent, Rodgy Guerrero, founder of boutique headhunter Rodgy Guerrero & Partners, defined Bellettini as “a great strategist, with an excellent knowledge of the fashion industry, from style to distribution.” Given her extensive experience in Kering, Bellettini is “very knowledgeable on the company culture of each brand,” knowing how to add assets also in terms of creativity, Guerrero said. “She is a very intelligent professional who has proven her value.”

Her first step should be a focus on the creative direction. Guerrero believes Bellettini, as deputy CEO of Kering, was key in choosing Demna. “We are all waiting for his debut,” she said, conceding that some observers have reservations, given the past controversies that hit Balenciaga.

“Gucci is a giant and it can’t afford mistakes in communication or product but I believe Bellettini will be very watchful. I imagine that accepting the role of CEO in Gucci means that she believes in the choice of Demna and wants to prove it,” Guerrero concluded, adding that “to achieve a newfound credibility, the brand needs someone at the top who will call the shots, authoritative across the board.” ■

BUSINESS

Kering’s Luca de Meo Taps HR Executive From Renault

● The announcement marks the first big appointment by Kering’s new CEO Luca de Meo.

BY MILES SOCHA

PARIS — Luca de Meo, who officially started Monday as chief executive officer at Kering, has already made his first high-profile external hire, bringing over a human resources specialist from his former employer, Renault Group.

Thomas Cuntz, who spent nine years as vice president, executive and global talent management, at the French carmaker, has joined Kering as global talent development and people engagement head, a newly created role.

Cuntz announced his arrival on his LinkedIn page, saying he will lead “key HR functions at the heart of the Kering people strategy.”

“With my new team, I will work to accelerate impact across the group and ensure that HR practices support our strategic goals,” he wrote. “The role includes

talent acquisition and management, internal mobility, performance, learning and development, inclusion and diversity, employee engagement through listening and employee relations.”

A graduate of EDHEC Business School in Paris, Cuntz started his career as head of recruitment, retail banking, for Société Générale. He went on to log 24 years at Renault in a variety of corporate and HR roles, noting that he “experienced incredible transformation, resilience, and growth, partnering with talented and diverse leaders.”

Luxury analysts recently been critical of Kering’s approach to talent management and have been applauding de Meo’s arrival.

In a research note issued Monday, HSBC’s Erwan Rambourg said he trusted that in future “management will not be rewarded on loyalty, connections, or tenure, but only on competence.

“Rejigging staff at Kering could also be similar to what Tiffany went through: keeping some legacy performers, bringing back some who left and were too good to



Luca de Meo at the Kering general meeting.

lose, and recruiting from the best in class from other sectors and also within the sector,” he wrote.

In his LinkedIn post, Cuntz said he reports to Béatrice Lazat, chief people

officer at Kering since 2016, and said he’s “honored to enter a new sector and contribute to a great adventure, inspired by the strength of the Kering house’s brands and its ongoing transformation.”



Deb Redmond



John Demsey



Michele Parsons



Reed Krakoff

BUSINESS

Gap Inc. Taps Reed Krakoff, Others To Accelerate Accessories, Beauty

● Michele Parsons, who was with Coach and Kate Spade, former Estée Lauder Cos. executive John Demsey and Nordstrom's Deb Redmond are also players in the retailer's growth strategies.

BY DAVID MOIN

Gap Inc. has tapped top industry talent to develop accessories and beauty into "promising growth engines" across the retailer's portfolio of brands.

Reed Krakoff, of Coach and Tiffany fame and currently with John Hardy and L Catterton, and John Demsey, the former Estée Lauder Cos. executive, have become Gap Inc. executive directors of accessories and beauty, respectfully, essentially hired as advisers for strategic guidance and for their decades of experience building businesses.

In addition, Deb Redmond, formerly with Nordstrom Inc., has been named Gap Inc. general manager of beauty, and Michele Parsons, formerly with Kate Spade and Coach (where she worked with Krakoff) has been named Gap Inc. general manager of accessories. Both positions are new, and geared "to advance the strategy, product development, customer experience and go-to-market execution of beauty and accessories across the company's portfolio of brands," Gap Inc. said in a statement Wednesday morning.

Gap Inc. operates the Gap, Old Navy, Banana Republic and Athleta brands. Redmond and Parsons will report to Eric Chan, Gap Inc.'s chief business and strategy officer.

To grow its share of the \$100 billion U.S. beauty and personal care market, Gap Inc. will launch beauty first with Old Navy this fall in 150 stores. Many of those stores will set up beauty shops-in-shop with trained beauty associates. The Gap brand will launch beauty in 2026.

Similarly, Gap Inc. will apply "a deliberate, phased approach" to expanding its accessories assortment.

In some ways, the Krakoff and Demsey appointments mirror the hiring of designer Zac Posen, who continues as Gap Inc.'s executive vice president and creative director and Old Navy's chief creative officer. Posen continues creating his designer collection, and last week for Starbucks, which sponsored the Council of Fashion Designers of America kickoff dinner for New York Fashion Week, he designed a Starbucks-inspired "Siren" dress, which was worn by Nicole Kidman's daughter, Sunday Rose.

While advising Gap Inc., Krakoff and Demsey will continue in their non-Gap roles and activities. Redmond and Parsons, however, are in full-time Gap management positions.

Accessories and beauty have been relatively underdeveloped in some areas at Gap Inc., but it's where the company sees significant opportunity for growth and a path to help sustain recent momentum. Further developing accessories and beauty should bring greater volume to the \$15.1 billion retail conglomerate, and a better balance to the assortment. The San Francisco-based specialty retailer has produced six consecutive quarters of positive comps, and the three largest brands all posted positive comps for the second quarter of 2025. Part of the improved performance is due to better product acceptance, and tying in with pop culture and celebrities to regain relevance.

Gap Inc. has recently orchestrated successful campaigns at Old Navy with Lindsay Lohan and Disney, and at the Gap brand with the Katseye girl group and Troye Sivan. Denim at Gap and Old Navy has been a standout category, as has active at Old Navy.

"Building on the renewed strength of our iconic brands, we are setting the stage for Gap Inc. to accelerate long-term value

creation and connect with our customers in meaningful and culturally relevant ways," Richard Dickson, president and chief executive officer of Gap Inc., said in a statement Wednesday. "I couldn't be more excited about the journey ahead and the exceptional talent who will help guide the way." Credit Dickson for seeking additional help in the brand building agenda and for being open-minded to listening to new voices.

Old Navy, known for its flip-flops, has already begun accelerating its accessories offering with an expanded and reimagined handbag collection launched two weeks ago. "This is definitely something early on when I got here...that I really wanted to put at the forefront, and something that our customers told us we needed," Posen told WWD. "For me, when looking to elevate Old Navy style for our customers, an accessory is an incredibly accessible way to attain a style. It doesn't require fit. It can be a keepsake. It can be a pass-me-down. It can elevate the everyday outfit, and just give it that elevated zhuzh."

With the four executives coming into the picture at Gap Inc., Posen's role changes. "While Zac won't be leading the design or development of the beauty or accessories categories, he will be working in collaboration with the teams. His role as creative director of Gap Inc. remains focused on providing overall creative direction and guidance across our portfolio of brands," a Gap spokesperson indicated, in response to a query about Posen's role.

While working with Gap Inc., Krakoff, a prominent figure in the luxury sector for more than three decades, continues as creative chairman and shareholder of John Hardy, and as a strategic adviser to L Catterton, a large LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton consumer-focused private equity firm that is also the majority stakeholder in John Hardy. Krakoff joined John Hardy in September 2022. He oversees the creative and artistic direction

of the business. Krakoff is a minority equity stakeholder in John Hardy.

One of the fashion world's leading accessories designers for decades, Krakoff served as chief artistic officer at Tiffany & Co. from 2017 to 2021, and from 1996 to 2013, as president and executive creative director of Coach, where he was instrumental in transforming the brand into a global \$5 billion fashion powerhouse. Krakoff was named Accessory Designer of the Year three times by the CFDA. Since joining John Hardy he has helped reinvigorate the brand, which is seeing strong momentum.

While Krakoff once did a successful collaboration with Kohl's, his work with the Gap Inc. portfolio of brands will be the first time he has created collections for a wider, more mass audience.

Redmond brings more than two decades of experience at Nordstrom, where she was most recently senior vice president and division merchandise manager for beauty. She is credited for consistently exceeding sales targets and spearheading initiatives such as developing prestige beauty at the Nordstrom Rack offprice division as well as playing a key role in the reimagining of Nordstrom's beauty floor at the Manhattan flagship on 57th Street. Earlier at Nordstrom, Redmond served as manager of the Seattle-based retailer's department stores in the Houston Galleria and International Plaza mall in Tampa.

Parsons most recently led her own advisory practice, helping retailers drive growth through product and customer-centric strategies. From 2020 to 2024, she served as chief merchandising and commercial officer at Kate Spade New York. Before that, she was senior vice president and chief merchandising officer at Club Monaco. She also spent two years at FullBeauty Brands, and seven years at Coach, including serving as senior vice president of global merchandising and vice president of retail merchandising in North America. Her other stints were at New York & Company, Liz Claiborne, Tommy Hilfger and J.Crew.

Demsey, a former executive group president of the Estée Lauder Cos., led some of the company's leading brands, including Clinique, Mac, Smashbox and Tom Ford Beauty. He also is an adviser to L Catterton.

FASHION

Rochas Fashion Being Discontinued



Here and right:
Rochas, fall 2025.

- The brand's fall 2025 collection will be its last.

BY JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS – Rochas fashion is being discontinued, as its owner Interparfums SA refocuses on its core business of prestige fragrances and cosmetics.

The company has owned the French fashion brand over the past decade.

"These years have been an intense and inspiring journey," said Alessandro Vigilante, creative director of Rochas, in a statement released Wednesday. "I'm proud that together we have created a vision able to reach a global audience without losing authenticity or heart.

"Each collection carried a part of me, telling stories and inspiring others," he continued. "My commitment to fashion remains unchanged: to connect with women, anticipate their desires

and accompany them with clothes that embrace, protect and express identity."

"We are proud of the legacy we leave behind," stated Philippe Bénacín, chief executive officer of Interparfums SA. "I would like to thank everyone who supported us throughout the years, and especially Alessandro Vigilante, who, over the past two years as creative director, has beautifully expressed the DNA of this century-old house – an emblem of bold femininity and elegance."

The collection for fall 2025, presented in March, is to be Rochas' last. For it, the designer, who had been tasked with the brand's revamp, continued to build on his vision of eccentric femininity. He nodded to grand balls of yesteryear, especially those hosted by Hélène Rochas, the third wife of the founder and Vigilante's multifaceted muse.

He started at the brand by contributing



to its spring 2024 collection that had been initiated by the studio. Vigilante's official first collection was unveiled for the fall 2024 season during Paris Fashion Week. He set out to forge a new identity while building on Rochas' codes of elegance, audacity, femininity and sophistication, Vigilante said at the time.

He succeeded Charles de Villemorin, who had a two-year tenure at Rochas.

Founded 100 years ago by Marcel Rochas, the house was also under the creative direction of Marco Zanni from 2008 to 2013 and Olivier Theyskens from 2002 to 2006, when the fashion line was momentarily shuttered.

Interparfums bought the Rochas fashion and fragrance activity from Procter & Gamble in 2015. It marked the first step into fashion for the Paris-based subsidiary of Interparfums Inc.

HIM Co SpA – High Italian Manufacturing, the company previously known as Onward Luxury Group – produced Rochas' women's ready-to-wear for two years before it was returned to Interparfums, where the fashion and beauty businesses were united, starting in 2023.

Rochas' fragrance activity generates the lion's share of the brand's business. In the first half of 2025, the label's perfumes generated 19.8 million euros in sales. Its strongest sellers include the classic Eau de Rochas and Mademoiselle Rochas. The brand recently launched a FI-themed scent, called Audace.

Rochas fashion has been shuttered numerous times in the past. Following the death in 1955 of its founder, a couturier known for his feminine silhouettes and for inventing a bustier, called the guêpière, the company dismantled its fashion operation, opting to concentrate on fragrance. It launched scents such as Madame Rochas, Monsieur Rochas, Eau de Rochas and the original Audace.

German cosmetics giant Wella purchased Rochas in the late 1980s and resurrected the fashion as an image

machine. But Irish designer Peter O'Brien, upon whom the house called in 1989, failed to generate buzz.

Theyskens succeeded O'Brien in 2003. Despite critical acclaim, P&G, which inherited Rochas that year as part of its purchase of Wella, recognized fashion wasn't a core competency and closed the then money-losing Rochas fashion business in 2006.

At the time, a P&G spokeswoman said: "Running a fashion business in terms of the distribution chain requires specific skills. We had to make tough choices."

Rochas subsequently reintroduced fashion and in 2015, at the time of Interparfums' acquisition of the house, Alessandro Dell'Acqua was the brand's creative director. He remained until 2019.

Historically, it has been complicated for companies with a beauty focus to successfully run fashion labels. L'Oréal, for instance, bought Lanvin in 1994 and sold it in 2001 after attempting to engineer a makeover miracle and with the stated aim to continue "refocusing on its core beauty business."

Groupe Clarins at one point stopped manufacturing the Thierry Mugler fashion brand (which has since been revived) to focus on its hit fragrances. And today, L'Oréal owns and runs Mugler fashion and fragrance activities, after purchasing them from Groupe Clarins.

Interparfums' stable of licensed fragrance brands also includes Lacoste, Montblanc, Moncler, Boucheron, Coach, Jimmy Choo, Karl Lagerfeld, Kate Spade and Van Cleef & Arpels. The company owns Lanvin's perfume and cosmetics business, too.

Beauty companies are facing headwinds from numerous directions, including a slight slowdown in fragrance sales overall.

This month, Interparfums SA slightly adjusted its full-year guidance downward, from the approximate 910 million euros announced in July, which itself was on the lower end of its initial estimate given earlier in 2025.

"Despite a lack of visibility linked to an unstable international situation, an unfavorable euro/dollar exchange rate and a prudent commitment on the part of our partners, our 2025 sales are projected to be approximately 900 million euros," said Benčin in a statement dated Sept. 9.

"This situation confirms our strategy, which has a proven track record, and the stability of our products for the fragrance market," he continued. "Fiscal years 2026 and 2027, therefore, appear to be promising, thanks to the addition of the Off-White, Annick Goutal and Longchamp brands to the portfolio, and a program of major launches across the catalog. For these many reasons, I am very confident about our three-year strategy."

The company's sales in the first half of 2025 reached 446.9 million euros, representing a 5.8 percent on-year rise.

The Reviews



LaQuan Smith

In the urban jungle, always dress for danger – that seemed to be the statement LaQuan Smith was making Tuesday night to close New York Fashion Week.

Holsters disguising machetes were affixed to sheer leggings in transparent hosiery fabric. Worn with pelvic-framing bodysuits, the look screamed Laura Croft in “Tomb Raider.” Combined with the genuine fox fur bags and stoles, massive alligator belts and snakeskin printed chiffon, Smith might have earned himself a spot on PETA’s watch list.

To reference Nigel in “The Devil Wears Prada,” Smith unleashed the animal within to take on the big city. “I think this collection is sort of spotlighting things that are provocative and dangerous at the same time,” he said. His girl lives on the edge, which is why he chose to show at the Classic Car Club on Pier 76 surrounded by turbocharged supercars from Lamborghini and Maserati.

It was an unexpected venue, but “very New York,” the Queens native added, and “this season, for me, was all about bringing back what grit and glamour really looks like as a New Yorker.”

Grit came through in slouchy tailoring and trenchcoats with linebacker shoulders, while crystal and turquoise embroidered dresses were all glamour. Unraveling on the runway, they made one watch with trepidation should a model slip on a stray bead and fall (none did).

Backstage, Smith fawned over Izabel Goultart, who flew in from China just to walk his show. Wearing a slashed leather moto set with cross-lacing up the legs and torso, he stated: “She’s clearly on a mission.”

“She’s looking for something to make her man jealous, something that’s going



to turn heads,” he continued. “When I do basic and boring, it does not sell.”

But Smith was on his own mission, too. Like most designers who showed this week, he’s independent and this was his send-off to editors and buyers before they flock to Europe, where the new creative directors are set to make their debuts at goliath luxury houses. He reminded them that there’s horsepower in being small and not to count New York out. — *Ari Stark*

Kallmeyer

Last week, Daniella Kallmeyer was named one of the American Womenswear Designer of the Year nominees for the upcoming 2025 CFDA Fashion Awards.

“I honestly did not see it coming,” Kallmeyer said ahead of her spring runway show at the downtown Crane Club. “It feels like it’s been our year, but we’re not doing this for awards. It feels like we’ve been so rooted and grounded, and it feels really big. What I love about it is, it’s nominated by the people and that feels so Kallmeyer. It feels especially amazing because it feels like the clothes did it and the community did it.”

Kallmeyer founded her business in 2012 and since then has been steadily growing, refining her strong aesthetic, and has become a go-to brand that women truly love to wear. It’s because her clothes, spanning from precise tailoring to spring’s show-closing sensually elegant dresses, have a captivating quality and thoughtful

details imbued within.

Backstage, Kallmeyer spoke about how spring expresses “the beauty and heartache of being alive right now.” Her moodily lit show, set to an original score by Richard Sears featuring Dinah Washington’s poetic “This Bitter Earth” over a Max Richter’s melody brought the sentiment to the next level.

Kallmeyer referred to her collection in three acts, starting light, airy and natural with a tonal white suit that emphasized leisure through chic drawstring trousers, a beautiful drop-waist, crinkled rosette gown and easy pinstripe linen layers, to name a few. A palette cleanser, “to calm your nervous system,” she said of the mood she and her peers have coincidentally been messaging this week.

“Somebody asked me, ‘If this collection was on a dating app, what would she say?’” Kallmeyer said. “It’s, ‘Get you a girl who can do both.’ She’s so elegant, but she also can pitch her own tent.”

She might be wearing a butter yellow caped and draped blouse, but pair it with a textural crochet column skirt, or pair her go-to minimalist work suiting with colorful scarf dressing, sexy patent heeled thong sandals and little athletic shorts. “It’s kind of like Euro Americana,” Kallmeyer said of act two’s subtle additions, before closing the show with lengthy slim toppers softened with sweeping skirts – translating the collection’s elegantly elevated élan into the night. — *Emily Mercer*



The Collections
New York



Elena Velez



Aubero



Lii



Bevza

Elena Velez

All aboard. On Tuesday night at The Box, Elena Velez transported guests west with a gritty yet playful collection inspired by vaudevilles, vagabonds and crust punks while the sounds of an old train car rumbled on against a genre-mixing soundtrack.

“Looking very much into the 1930s to the 1970s of youth-led subcultures that are very anti-conformist but also have a sense of adventure, heroism and mysticism wrapped into their proposal of reality. I thought it was a bittersweet conversation around escapism,” Velez said during a preview, using historical references she finds as through lines to feelings of today.

Her overarching themes of prewar discourse and the Dust Bowl landscapes of the Great Depression; American literature like Kurt Vonnegut and John Steinbeck, and crust punks – “a hippie subculture who are more like vagabonds who ride freight trains,” she said, seen through the photographed works of Mike Broday that visualize “a sense of nihilism, but also nostalgia; a desire to reconcile with a place and tribe,” and her show-opening sooty train hopper clad in balloon pants and paneled utilitarian corset.

The clothes had a contemporary approach to historical methods of construction, as seen through deconstructed, “tedious, scrappy” corsetry, which Velez is passionate about and was a strong point of spring in dresses with draped, bunched skirts that looked like they’d been dirtied up through time with new surface treatments.

“I love this idea of very heavy stitched wax canvases and denim, but also materials that feel fragile and delicate but not because they’re precious or flimsy, but because they’ve been lived – and worked in so hard. That’s how we think of our jerseys and undergarments,” Velez said, cutting denim closer to the body in bustier jackets worn open atop Zhilyova’s lingerie alongside unbuttoned jersey knits, puff-sleeved prairie dresses and a big-tent striped mini.

The characters spoke to Velez’s ongoing message of the female anti-hero, depicting portraits of womanhood that are so often today “sanitized, unilateral and dishonest,” she said rather than the full picture, the

good and the bad, adding sexy cuts to workwear and darts to men’s tailoring to bring the full picture of rawer, roughed-up femininity to life. – Emily Mercer

Aubero

This marked Julian Louie’s debut at New York Fashion Week, but the creative director of Aubero said he wasn’t the least bit nervous. “I actually feel quite calm,” he said. “I’m really on the men’s calendar so the collection was mostly finished in June. So while there’s been show prep, in terms of the actual wrangling of samples, that mostly happened in the early part of the summer.”

It also doesn’t hurt that Louie is a veteran who studied architecture at Cooper Union before starting his fashion career under Francisco Costa at Calvin Klein Collection. He founded Aubero in 2022 and the collection is now sold at Bergdorf Goodman, Maxfield, Barneys New York and other trend-setting boutiques globally. He’s a finalist for this year’s CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund award and is also nominated for the CFDA’s Emerging Designer of the Year award.

What these retailers and organizations have come to appreciate is Louie’s skill at creating walking works of art from repurposed antique textiles, all inspired by his roots growing up in Santa Cruz, Calif. “I hesitate to call it an inspiration, because it feels more foundational and emotional to me,” he said before the show. “Santa Cruz is a very specific place: it’s a surf town, a university town, it was very important culturally in the ‘60s and ‘70s in the hippie world. There’s this kind of cultural heritage of character in Santa Cruz, and that really informs the attitude.”

What that translated into were models wearing what looked like long skirts but were intended to reference sarong towels that a surfer would wrap around himself after riding some early-morning waves.

While interesting and provocative, the most striking pieces in the collection were those created from vintage textiles that Louie repurposed into elaborate coats, pants and jackets. “The brand started working exclusively with antique textiles that were falling apart – things that were too fragile to be handled – and developing ideas around the preservation of materials.”

Louie also keeps every scrap that results from the creation of his collection and reworks them into his one-of-a-kind pieces such as the leftover taffeta that he used in a patchwork jacket.

All in all, Louie’s unique expression of fashion – that he presented in a lighting studio accompanied by a drum circle – was a welcome addition to this year’s calendar. – Jean E. Palmieri

Lii

Founder and designer Zane Li made noise with his runway show debut in New York – the figurative and literal kind. The Chinese-born designer – still early in his career with only three womenswear collections under his belt – kept up the momentum through inventive but impeccably functional designs for this season.

Referencing sound as what set the collection into motion, Li explored the effects of hearing familiar sounds, like the rustle of a fabric or the swish of a skirt in motion, that elicit a memory, a certain emotion or remembrance of a garment – what Li refers to as archetypes. These archetypes, such as a rain coat, can be worn together and layered, creating a complex composition of more than just clothes but a narrative of one’s story.

“By one motion, one movement, you can change the way or the impression of that simple garment. That archetype is what we’re trying to achieve, that’s not too pretentious, not too decorative,” said the designer.

With Li’s designs, what appears in photographs is more than what it seems – or its seams. What looks like a cropped zip-up vest on the model is actually a longer jacket, worn midway, with the original crown in the back. And there’s the miniskirt with an exaggerated origami fold that undulates with each stride. It’s hard to tell by just looking at a picture, but in real life the dimensions and design of each garment are revealed, the front and back of each piece telling a different story.

In theory, this may sound too complicated or conceptual for someone to wear, even perhaps setting oneself up for an outfit mishap. But up close you see all things were considered with precise execution. From the fabrics selected to

create tension and shape, the skillful construction of a flat square panel turned into a structured shrug to the pragmatism of providing multiple options to wear one garment. Li built on his codes of tailoring, function and playfulness that delivered yet another distinct collection of standout pieces. – Kathy G. Lee

Bevza

The Bevza woman may be minimal, but she ain’t no square.

For spring, Svitlana Bevza set out to prove the many possibilities that the simplest shape can have, cutting them out from necklines, constructing them in three dimensions and draping them front ways, back ways and sideways.

Inspiration, she said, came from artist Kazimir Malevich. “They call him the father of Russian avant garde, but he was born in Kiev, the same city as I was.”

Malevich’s geometric assemblages were reinterpreted in primary colors on a pair of upcycled parachute pants, which came across as more ‘80s MC Hammer than early 20th-century Cubo-futurism. In this case, Bevza should have read the quote by Antoine de-Saint-Exupéry that she printed on silk scarves more closely: “Perfection is finally attained not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.”

Take away those pants, this was an otherwise playful and sophisticated lineup of silhouettes mostly in black and white. The best pieces were the most straightforward, like a tabard top and wrap skirt worn with a pelvic-exposing tank. Both were cut from crepe viscose squares with zipper tracks running along the edges that looped around the body to conceal-and-reveal more or less.

Fighting with the lines of the body, Bevza seamed panels together to create cube-like cap sleeves and waists, which looked unnatural. They felt more sensual dangling like tissues from asymmetrical gowns, but ultimately, these fell flat on the mannequins at her presentation.

Bevza said it best, picking up a limp piece of fabric: “A human shapes the square because this has no point without the woman wearing it. She makes it beautiful.” – Ari Stark

BUSINESS

NYFW Wrap-up: Retailers Embrace Minimalist Silhouettes, Easy Louche Dressing



Diotima



Altuzarra



Zankov

- Standout collections included Ralph Lauren, Khaite, Diotima, Altuzarra, TWP and Brandon Maxwell.

BY LISA LOCKWOOD, DAVID MOIN AND
JEAN E. PALMIERI

The mood was clearly upbeat at New York Fashion Week, where streamlined, minimalist silhouettes and light, loose layers were evident throughout many collections.

During these uncertain times, many designers served up collections that were salable and had an ease, polish and sophistication. There was a return to Americana and sportswear, along with relaxed louche dressing and balloon silhouettes. Many of the collections featured fringe, feathers, leather, tulle, pleating, draping, hand-crochet and artisanal touches.

Among the favorite collections cited by retailers were Khaite, Diotima, Joseph Altuzarra, Kallmeyer, TWP, Brandon Maxwell, Toteme, Ulla Johnson, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Prabal Gurung, Zankov, Tory Burch, and Michael Kors. Retailers were excited about many of the up-and-coming female designers who showed their collections in New York, such as Frances Howie at Pforme, Ashlynn Park of Ashlyn New York, Stephanie Suberville at Heirlome and Maria McManus, along with other newcomers such as Gabe Gordon and Colleen Allen.

Here's what retailers had to say:

Linda Fargo

senior vice president, fashion office & store presentation, Bergdorf Goodman

Mood: Blue skies and gentle transitional weather set us up for an upbeat, feel-good week as the global fashion tribe happily reconvened in New York. Creative confidence marked the collections, as both established and emerging designers gave us some of their best-ever work. A notable takeaway was a pervasive and calming beauty, an almost zen-like softness and ease perhaps designed for a disquieting world.

Favorite collections: Khaite was a standout show as Catherine Holstein increasingly stakes her place on the global stage and becomes ever more self-assured with her signature mix of sensuous edginess. We loved the relaxed and softened organic silhouettes at Michael Kors. Jason Wu stretched himself to a new place with a highly creative collection inspired by Robert Rauschenberg, utilizing collage and assemblage for innovative constructions. Rachel Scott pulled off a remarkable week, with both her craft-meets-couture first runway success at Diotima, as well as her spot-on debut collection for Proenza Schouler. Ashlyn and Toteme, still relatively "emerging designers," showed sophisticated, beautiful collections that inspired us to change up our closets immediately into their new luxurious minimalism. Henry Zankov's first runway foray was whimsical and artistic. Prabal Gurung also showed a confident hand with a confection of a collection made even more pleasurable

shown in the peaceful spiritual venue of Saint Bartholomew's church. Altuzarra's collection covered a desirable lifestyle from great tailoring, the "It" harem pant and creative floral applications. Brandon Maxwell hit a 10-year milestone in style and with confidence, with modern references to his Southwestern roots.

Key trends: The prevailing trend, and antidote to turbulent, ever-changing times, was rather zen, languorous and quieting. Soft organic draping played a key role this week. Clothes felt sensuous without overt sexuality and bareness. Long lengths for all day were important, as were discreet layers of veiled transparency. References to Armani came to mind with the softened silhouettes, ballooning shapes and often airy layers. Both Donna Karan and Calvin Klein also came to mind through new takes on the luxurious pared-back ideas and organic draping. As a counterpoint to the cleaner vibe, there were numerous decorative trends – painterly watercolor prints; florals, both printed and appliquéd; fly-away feathers, and a whimsical use of shimmer and shine. Colors ranged from crisp refreshing all-white looks to summer black, to the new and welcome use of brown, earth tones and the exciting pops of vivid red and pink. Soft bombers and balloon harem pants felt like good items to track.

Rickie De Sole

vice president, fashion director, Nordstrom

Mood: The mood throughout the week was light and airy, with most designers playing it

safe, and the calendar packed with back-to-back events. Pragmatic fashion and a return to refined American sportswear were unmistakable this season – seen in Kors' polished ease, Ralph's timeless tailoring, Partow's clean separates, and TWP's quietly intentional wardrobing for every day.

Favorite collections: Diotima presented a strong debut runway show. It was bolder than most, with knits that unraveled, rich embellishments, daring prints and textures, and a sense of undone elegance. The white finale dress was a standout. Ashlyn delivered sculptural tailoring and fluid jersey pieces, all showcasing impressive craftsmanship. Toteme leaned into a quietly compelling minimalism. Crinkled and layered textures elevated simple staples with sophistication. Khaite offered exaggerated leather pieces and some of the best accessories of NYFW. Tory Burch brought joyful energy to the runway, with vibrant color and playful embellishment throughout. Monse revisited some of the house's greatest hits with a modern sensibility, while Brandon Maxwell reinforced his staying power with confident refinement.

Key trends: Streamlined, minimalist silhouettes and light, loose layers defined the season's mood. There was a sense of freedom in the styling – a clarity that felt distinctly American in its ease and intention. Billowy balloon pants from Altuzarra to Michael Kors dominated the runways. Khaite's leather kitten-heeled moccasins echoed that sensibility, offering a casual yet refined finish to everyday dressing. Coach's Moto boot and accessories were another standout.

Discoveries: This NYFW underscored how vital emerging designers are to the future of American fashion. From Gabe Gordon's debut and Colleen Allen's refined collection to standout first runway shows by Diotima and Zankov, the season was rich with fresh perspectives. Designers like Emily Dawn Long, KUR, and Heirlome brought new energy to the conversation, while Area's joyful shift in direction added a sense of play and possibility. ►

Roopal Patel

senior vice president, fashion director, Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus
Mood: It's a season of change and you could feel all of the excitement and buzz in the air with the fashion landscape shifting. The shift could be felt at NYFW with a new roster of talent lining up to represent American fashion. Designer debuts set the tone this season, most notably with Rachel Scott presenting for Proenza Schouler and Nicholas Aburn for Area. Our American legends Ralph Lauren and Michael Kors opening the week and leading the way. Diotima and Zankov each unveiled their first runway collections. Brandon Maxwell capped the week with a celebration of his 10-year anniversary. The summer sunshine lingering in the air set the perfect backdrop for a fantastic start to the fashion marathon. **Favorite collections:** Cate Holstein for Khaite pushed the boundaries with exploration of silhouette, proportion and deconstructed details. There was a raw edge to the collection that came through making the imperfect, just perfect. The black peplum jacket over a hand-knit crocheted black skirt, the sleeveless sculpted ivory hand-knit with the sculpted black hand-knit skirt, the deconstructed denim skirt, the Western motifs, the oversize polka dot ball gown looks and the stellar lineup of accessories are going to delight our Khaite customer. Rachel Scott is a tour de force with two back-to-back knockout shows. First, she gave us a prelude at Proenza Schouler of what's to come. You could see her influence with the texture, prints and artisanal hand to the fabrications. And her first runway show for Diotima was fantastic. It was sultry, sensual and joyful. Frances Howie for Fforme delivered a sleek and chic collection with the focus on fabric and details. The oversize spring coats, the

white fringe T-shirt and skirt, luxe leather, hammered satin lace dress and the feather looks that ended the show made for a strong lineup. Michael Kors' wanderlust and dreamy collection made us want to pack up and travel the world. There was an ease, polish and sophistication to the collection that feels right for these times. Joseph Altuzarra's collection was polished, sophisticated and elegant. The feather suit was a dream.

Key trends: Travel and wanderlust were in the air, expressed through easy, louche dressing and balloon pants. We saw a return to Americana and sportswear, with sporty anoraks, varsity stripes, crisp shirt stripes and pops of red making bold statements. Texture played a key role, often with an artisanal, handcrafted touch. Hand crochet and fishnet weaves showed up across ready-to-wear and accessories. Fringe abounded, while swoon-worthy feathers floated down the runways at Ulla Johnson, Altuzarra and Fforme. The low-slung, belted trench at Calvin Klein and Prabal Gurung stood out as key interpretations. Abstract florals were seen in both laser-cut and hand-appliqué designs. Accessories embraced craft: open-knit, handwoven market bags, structured frame bags, bold pendant necklaces and criss-cross open sandals.

Discoveries: There is a strong lineup of emerging female designers showing at NYFW. It is so important, now more than ever, to have these voices lead the way in American fashion, including Frances Howie at Fforme, Ashlynn New York, Stephanie Suberville at Heirloom and Maria McManus, as well as the CFDA Vogue Fashion Fund designers who all came front and center with shows and presentations – Julian Louie for Aubero, Gabe Gordon, Meruert Planul-Tolegen, Bernard James, Bach Mai and Don't Let Disco.



Khaite

David Thielebeule

fashion director, Bloomingdale's

Mood: Fashion is meant to make you smile, and this week's collections delivered plenty of joy. Fresh ideas from rising talents like Patricio Campillo and Henry Zankov felt invigorating, while mainstays Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors, and Tory Burch all pushed their signatures forward. And if it was cheer you were after, Nicholas Aburn supplied it in spades – complete with pompoms – at his exuberant Area debut.

Favorite collections: Khaite, Brandon Maxwell, Eckhaus Latta, Proenza Schouler, Toteme, TWP.

Key trends: We're all craving a dose of joy and optimism right now, and it was certainly felt in New York. Nearly every show offered up a pristine all-white look, but color and texture emerged as the real takeaways. At Proenza, Rachel Scott's "prelude" collection underscored both – it was a pleasure to see the fluidity and tactility she brought to the house's signature silhouettes. Red, in its most exuberant spring iteration, was having a moment: at Brandon Maxwell's jubilant 10th-anniversary show, poppy shades lit up some of the standout looks. Tory Burch leaned into a quirky, off-beat palette that felt fresh and full of personality.

Discoveries: The evolution at Heirloom and Ashlyn is exciting to see, each brand sharpening its voice with confidence. And Campillo continues to stand apart – his meticulous construction and deft blend of fabrics feel light and refreshingly new. There was excitement around new spins on deeply practical pieces – TWP's sharp trenches and the airy knit dressing at Toteme and Jenni Kayne stood out. But it wasn't all about pragmatism: Fforme's liquid silk dresses shimmered with ease, and Ulla Johnson's abstract painterly prints struck a vibrant chord. As for trousers, the silhouette of the season looks to be the bubble pant, with Joseph Altuzarra offering perhaps the most covetable interpretation.

Angela Pieretti

womenswear buyer, Mitchells Stores

Mood: Overall, optimistic: lots of smiles, sunshine and celebrities. It's an exciting fashion month with some creative shifts and debuts still to come.

Favorite collections: Khaite: The drama of it all – the lights, the pond, the mist and the music. Every piece of leather was better than the next. It was refreshing to see some print and floral embroidery – cool girls like floral too. Altuzarra: Elevated appliqué, 3D illusion, hula hoops without

adding bulk – a magician. Michael Kors: The man creates effortless, sexy clothes for the entire size range. Thank you. Libertine: Sitting across from Cyndi Lauper and out comes a dude wearing black washed jeans and a T saying 'DISCO.' Look 1 or a crasher? **Key trends:** Minimal, sophisticated, feminine. Black and white, red, earthy amber to orange tones, teal to sage to whisper blues and shades of happy pink. Monochromatic looks, bombers, utilitarian pockets, jackets that ranged from oversized to peplum to cropped, double layers, skirts, balloon pants, leather laser cuts, fringe, perforated touches, sheer peeks, open backs, high slits and tan legs. In shoes we continue to see designers prioritizing comfort without sacrificing style. Flat T-strap sandals, slim sneakers, slippers, boat shoes, kitten heels. Our bags come next spring will be slouchy, adorned and textured or refined in geometric top-handle shapes. Don't put away your envelope clutches, you'll need them. **Discoveries:** Rachel Scott's presentation for Proenza Schouler – a tease of what's to come. I'm ready to see more. It was great to have NYFW Live at Rockefeller Center back. It was a lovely way to share the energy and creative spirit the city gives us daily. **Prices:** So far, no major difference from previous seasons.

Tiffany Hsu

chief buying officer, Mytheresa

Mood: This season in New York felt sophisticated, serious, and deeply considered. The overall mood leaned more wintry than summery, with darker palettes and heavier fabrics taking center stage – unexpected for this time of year. We appreciated the city's designers choosing depth and gravitas instead. It marked a thoughtful moment in fashion, one that spoke to resilience, strength, and a desire for clothes built to last. Calvin Klein SS26, in particular, underscored this message with clean lines, sharp tailoring, and a renewed focus on the brand's heritage minimalism.

Favorite collections: Khaite's SS26 collection struck a perfect balance between architectural precision and sensual fluidity, which felt both deeply sophisticated and unmistakably New York. What impressed me most was how the brand managed to translate a sense of urban strength into silhouettes that remain wearable and covetable. It was a collection that not only captured the current mood but also delivered pieces that will resonate strongly with our customers.

Key trends: This season, the most striking trend was the dominance of heavy-duty leather and voluminous shapes. We saw a prevalence of dropped hemlines, balloon and hourglass silhouettes, and an unexpected use of leather and shearing for a summer season. The play with proportions created a strong sense of protection and drama, while details like exaggerated fringes and tassels added movement and character. It was a bold, uncompromising statement that reflected a shift towards clothes with presence and permanence.

Discoveries: For all the talk of newness at NYFW, little truly felt fresh – instead, the runways leaned heavier into winter moods than spring optimism. No new discoveries but the way brands presented stood out. Khaite once again demonstrated a mastery of presentation. The setting underscored the collection's drama without overshadowing the clothes, creating an immersive moment where every detail – from lighting to soundtrack – amplified the power of the garments. Collina Strada also offered an intriguing show format with its shadow model concept, which played cleverly with perception and storytelling. **Prices:** The collections spoke in richer textures and fabrics; price tags, when they arrive, will likely echo that shift upward. ▶



Michael Kors

Joseph Tang

fashion director, Holt Renfrew

Mood: The atmosphere carried a distinct sense of anticipation, as New York marks the first of many designer debuts. Overall, the collections were imbued with personality, optimism, and joy, highlighting the strength of a new generation of designers confidently sharing the stage with America's most established names. Spring 2026 brought a sense of momentum. The season captured the fluid, evolving spirit of women's lifestyles with New York as its natural backdrop.

Favorite collections: Ralph Lauren, Khaite, Ulla Johnson, Calvin Klein Collection, Toteme, Diotima

Key trends: This season was defined by a sense of laid-back elegance, with escapism emerging as a central theme. Ralph Lauren, Toteme, and Proenza Schouler anchored their collections in summer whites, presenting a refined and modern approach to spring dressing. Bohemian femininity took on a Western twist, as Ulla Johnson and LoveShackFancy leaned into lace and sheer fabrics with the balloon trouser being a must-have item for spring. Structured tailoring and voluminous silhouettes were showcased by Calvin Klein Collection, Khaite, Tory Burch, and Alexander Wang. Bold color also made a statement, from Ulla Johnson's painterly prints to Zankov's vibrant colorblocking.

Discoveries: New York signaled the start of a season filled with exciting debuts. Nicholas Aburn brought a bold new vision to Area, while Rachel Scott's influence was felt in her first season with Proenza Schouler. Culture and community remain at the heart of what we come to New York Fashion Week to discover, with designers such as Kallmeyer, Colleen Allen, Fforme, Grace Ling, and Lii emerging as key voices to follow into spring 2026.

Prices: We continue to work closely with brand partners to minimize price increases and ensure collections balance aspiration with value, offering clients thoughtful investment pieces across categories.



Ralph Lauren

Beth Buccini

chief executive officer, Kirna Zabête

Mood: The expectations were low, but fashion week really delivered this season. There was far more optimism and creativity in these uncertain times than I expected, which was wonderful to see. New York City also showed exceptionally well this week, with numerous designers opting for innovative venues for their events. It was great to kick off the week with Brandon Maxwell celebrating his 10th anniversary as an independent New York star. Rachel Scott's debut at Proenza Schouler looked beautiful, as did her own line at Diotima, and it is wonderful to see her progress. Maria McManus and now Alejandra Alonso Rojas are leading the way with sustainability while also showing beautiful and innovative clothes that sell. **Favorite collections:** Khaite, Kallmeyer, and TWP. Catherine Holstein's shows are always the highlight of the week, and she continues to nail every category and shape how we all want to dress. Kallmeyer is such a supreme talent, and I adored every single look in her beautiful show. Daniella is such a star. TWP is just fabulous. Trish (Wescoat Pound) makes clothes that fit so well and sell like hotcakes. Her relaxed, casual aesthetic is a huge hit, and she keeps elevating her looks season after season.

Key trends: We saw so much craftsmanship this season: lots of crochets, leather and tulle. There is a lovely mix of hard and soft, with an ease and sophistication in an elevated and effortless way. Pleating and draping are everywhere, as are black and white.

Discoveries: We have our eyes on a few new people. It is more complicated than

ever to be a new designer right now, and I'm thrilled to see new talent pushing boundaries.

Prices: Pricing really depends on the brand, and so many designers are still not finalized in the showrooms. We are expecting a slight increase, and we are paying more attention than ever to the perceived value of an item, as we're hearing it on the floor every day from customers. Most brands are working hard and are deeply aware of the tariff issue, trying to make their numbers consistent.

Brigitte Chartrand

chief buying and merchandising officer, Net-a-porter

Mood: With this fresh chapter at Net-a-porter, we're feeling excited and optimistic about the month ahead and NYFW proved to be the perfect start.

Favorite collections: In terms of set, Khaite had the most impressive set of the week. Fforme, Colleen Allen and Toteme showcased strong collections that really stood out this season.

Key trends: Monochromatic looks, sheer fabrics and crochet dresses dominated the New York runways this season. Calvin Klein embraced the monochrome trend, an aesthetic that was seen throughout the week. Delicate sheer layers were another key theme, often paired with soft tailoring – a styling approach that we saw at Khaite. **Discoveries:** I had the pleasure of meeting Stephanie from Heirloom and the collection was unique and her collection felt genuinely authentic. Commissioning Mexican artisans added a layer of storytelling and sense of cultural richness

and craftsmanship to each piece.

Prices: Over the past few years, we've seen lots of prices increase. Many brands are being cautious, carefully evaluating how to maintain their pricing architecture. It's clear they are working diligently to preserve both value perception and long-term customer trust, while navigating a more complex market.

Courtney Grant

senior vice president, buyer, Elysewalker

Mood: This season felt lighter than what we've seen in recent years – a soft, pastel palette with a whisper of the '80s and a more feminine sensibility than in seasons past. There was an ease to the collections, an almost buoyant quality that made the clothes feel optimistic.

Favorite collections: Kallmeyer delivered her strongest collection to date – it felt like a defining moment for the brand, and it's no surprise she's nominated for CFDA Womenswear Designer of the Year. Khaite continues to strike the balance between sharp tailoring and romance, and Altuzarra's draping was masterful – timeless yet completely of the moment.

Key trends: We're seeing pastels, long shorts becoming a real wardrobe staple, and a return to draping and organza that's airy without being precious. Open-weave knitwear also had a strong showing, offering texture and lightness in equal measure. **Discoveries:** It's always exciting to see new voices at fashion week. I was struck by the freshness of Kulson, Mel Usine, Ossou, and Amiya – each bringing a unique point of view and reinforcing the sense that NYFW remains a platform for discovery.

April Hennig

president, Moda Operandi

Mood: The mood was upbeat, thanks to the creative spirit and sharp commercial sensibility presented across so many collections. There was also a strong sense of the fashion community coming together to support rising talents like Diotima and Zankov, who both had their runway debuts. The enthusiasm felt all the more meaningful against the backdrop of a challenging macro environment, a reminder of fashion's resilience and its ability to bring people together.

Favorite collections: Brandon Maxwell's 10th anniversary collection started the week off on a high. The unexpected mix of madras plaids, feather trims, and graphic storybook-inspired prints all worked together – a perfect balance of personality and sophistication. Khaite showcased a new level of experimentation and range, which was refreshing to see. We also loved Fforme for its artful elegance, Kallmeyer for its fresh take on everyday dressing, Ashlyn for its confident femininity, and Ulla Johnson's collaboration with the Helen Frankenthaler foundation.

Key trends: Novelty is back. A lot of great things happening with color, texture and print – even as a penchant for minimalism (a la Toteme and Brandon Maxwell) continues. Balloon-hem pants (seen at Altuzarra, Adam Lippes, Michael Kors and Ashlyn) are very much here to stay. Feather accents were spotted on eveningwear at Ulla Johnson, Brandon, Fforme and Altuzarra. Styling was all about creative layering – from scarves tied around the waist at Kallmeyer to the drop-waist trench coats at Prabal Gurung, Lafayette 148, Calvin Klein and TWP. Long pendant necklaces (a big hit on Moda this year) are the accessories trend of the moment – Ralph Lauren was one of many to showcase these. Lingerie dressing (corsets at Wiederhoeft, barely-there slips at Colleen Allen) is also having a resurgence.

Discoveries: We are excited to launch Mel Usine exclusively in Trunkshow. Designed by Stephen Biga – an alum of Gabriela Hearst, Rodarte and Proenza Schouler – the debut collection features romantic evening looks and floaty separates. **Prices:** Brands are working hard to hold prices steady for customers as best they can, despite tariffs putting pressure on their bottom line. Overall we anticipate price increases in the midsingle digits, with the most significant increases coming from embroideries that rely on India's local expertise. ■



Fforme

PARTIES

Willy Chavarria, Anna Sui, More Attend WWD's NYFW Dinner



Thom Browne and Tory Burch



Alex Badia, Michael Atmore, Christian Juul Nielsen and Alexis Bittar.

● The semiannual event on the last night of NYFW brought together fashion designers, CEOs and more to mark the publication's 115th anniversary.

BY KANIKA TALWAR
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND

On Tuesday evening, WWD hosted its semiannual New York Fashion Week dinner – and this year, the publication used the occasion as part of its 115th anniversary celebrations.

Amanda Smith, chief executive officer of Fairchild Media Group; Jim Fallon, chief content officer of Fairchild Media Group, and Michael Atmore, editor in chief of WWD and chief brand officer of Fairchild Media Group, hosted the evening, at Sloane's at the Manor, bringing the fashion designers, CEOs and other industry leaders together.

Designers and creatives in attendance included Tory Burch and her husband Pierre Yves-Roussel, CEO of the company; Thom Browne; Narciso Rodriguez; Anna Sui; Alejandra Alonso Rojas; Prabal Gurung; Ronnie Fieg and his wife Shir; Christian Siriano; Alexis Bittar; Patricio Campillo; Aknvas' creative director Christian Juul Nielsen and Fforme's creative director Frances Howie and CEO Joey Laurenti. Also attending were Bloomingdale's CEO Olivier Bron; Saks' CEO Marc Metrick, and Bergdorf Goodman CEO Tracy Margolies.

At the cocktail party, guests sipped on "The Newsmaker" cocktails as a nod to WWD's anniversary list in its milestone issue, featuring the top newsmakers over the years of WWD, and snacked on canapés while they mingled and caught up after a chaotic fashion week.

Nielsen posed for photos with WWD's 115th Milestone issue and Gurung greeted Sui with a hello kiss. Later, Browne and Burch hugged and were engrossed in conversation at the bar.

"You all had a phenomenal New York Fashion Week," said Smith in her celebratory toast to the room. "There was so much energy and great buzz around your shows and the work that

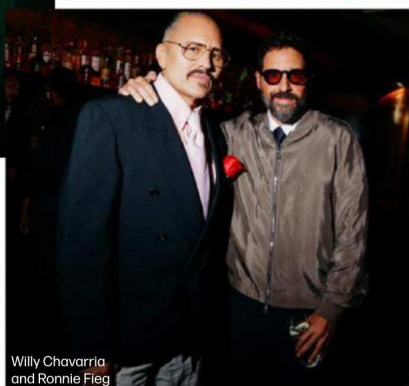
Christian Siriano and Prabal Gurung



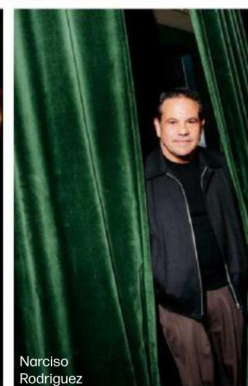
Marc Metrick



Amanda Smith



Willy Chavarria and Ronnie Fieg



Narciso Rodriguez



James Fallon

you're doing. We appreciate it and are cheering you on. This moment for us – at 115 years young – is really about looking to the future. We have done a great job supporting the brands and the industry. You can see more of that in the months to come. We appreciate you being part of the evolution of things that we do. Thank you for being here and congrats to all of you for everything you've done!"



Alejandra Alonso Rojas, Anna Sui and Frances Howie.

FOOTWEAR

Jaden Smith Christian Louboutin's First Men's Creative Director

Jaden Smith and Christian Louboutin



● The American rapper and actor is moving to Paris and is to unveil his first collection for the French house in January.

BY MILES SOCHA

"I found him very interesting, very kind, and very, very humble, and above all, very interesting: The way he is, the way he dresses, the way he thinks."

That's Christian Louboutin talking about Jaden Smith, whom he tapped to become his first men's creative director – roughly 15 years after he first extended his red-soled universe into men's.

The American rapper and actor is moving to Paris to take up the role and is to present his first designs in January during men's fashion week in the French capital. He is to oversee the creation of four collections a year across shoes, leather goods and accessories, along with developing campaigns, events and immersive experiences.

"This is the one of the biggest honors of my life, and I feel a lot of pressure to be able to live up to everything that Christian has done for the house, and also stepping into such a serious role," Smith told WWD over Teams from Los Angeles. "When he reached out to me, I was just blown away, because of how similar we are and how much we like to do things in a similar manner.

"I can't wait to show the world what we've been working on," he added. "I think that the universe of Christian Louboutin men's has so much potential."

In a separate interview at his new Paris offices a stone's throw from the Louvre, Louboutin said the appointment will allow him to focus more on his fast-growing women's business – and leverage the creative and communication prowess of Smith to rev up the men's category, which accounts for 24 percent of the business, but has recently been logging single-digit declines.

What might seem like a sudden handover has actually been percolating inside Louboutin's head for several years.

On one side, Louboutin realized he was becoming overstretched given his hands-on approach to design, prototype development and manufacturing, spending many days each month tinkering at his Italian factories. On the other loomed Smith, whom he met in 2019, realizing with each subsequent encounter how much the

American creative reminded him of his younger self – not to mention their shared love of color, fun and joyful self-expression.

"Dressing for him is an adventure," he said of Smith. "It's a form of communication. It's thoughtful, but it's playful. There are very few people that I find as surprising, the way he puts things together."

In fact, Louboutin said he did not launch any formal search for a men's creative director, settling on Smith as the organic result of his ruminations.

"He arrived before the idea of a creative director," the shoe guru related. "It's not because I needed the creative director, it's because of him, in fact. And so it happened like that.

"The day I said to myself, 'He'd be a great person to work with' was the day I realized I had been studying him without realizing it. I saw him interacting with people...He's very well-mannered, super respectful and curious. And those, for me, are values or qualities that are important."

Smith, 27, said he and Louboutin, 62, share a passion for ancient architecture, a deep affinity for music, and a love of dancing.

(In fact, among Louboutin's first steps into men's was creating shoes for Mika so the Lebanese pop star could comfortably dance while performing.)

As for fashion, "we both have our own unique style of dressing that is very particular to us," Smith said, also describing similar creative methods. "We have a very similar workflow where we go into the office, and then maybe, if there's a dinner party or something, we go there, and we continue the same conversation that we were having in the office with the same people, and we are just constantly in this bubble of creativity."

During the interview, Smith discussed his passion for footwear, reflected in his large archive of shoes that he doesn't actually wear, but keeps for reference.

"Just so that I can look at the materials, different lasts, different cuts, different internal shaping, different foot beds, different insoles, laces, shoe boxes," he said. "Shoes are definitely a passion of mine."

Cofounder of MSFTSrep – a streetwear label he launched with sister Willow Smith and friends in 2012 – Smith has also frequently collaborated with New Balance and acted as its ambassador.

He disclosed plans to launch a new

version of the brand called MSFTSrep Infinity – hinged on retrospective elements, "art and movement" – that will allow him to devote himself to the Louboutin project.

Asked if he picks the shoes first or last when he gets dressed, Smith replied: "First I go with the emotion of how I'm feeling on that day...Once I gauge whether it's an all-black day or a colorful day, I start trying on the shoes.

"If I have new shoes, then I'll put them on first. If I don't, then I'll just go based on how I'm feeling in a top-down kind of way."

Smith said Louboutins came onto his radar when he was extremely young thanks to famous and stylish parents: actors Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith.

"I would be in my mom's closet, hanging out with her as she got ready for an event and she had a row of shoes with red bottoms. I became bewildered by the shoes at a very young age," he related. "And then I realized that my dad also had shoes with red bottoms. And then my sister got older and started wearing them. And the first girlfriend that I ever had was like, 'I need you to buy me some red bottoms.' So it was something that was a part of my life forever since I was extremely, extremely young. And then I got my first pair around the time I started doing premieres for the first time."

Louboutin said he would continue to oversee the men's category, while letting Smith take the lead on design, image making and social media. "Because of his generation...there is a kind of mentality that is very different."

And a different reach: Smith counts 19.1 million followers on Instagram.

"When I design shoes, I don't think about a campaign at all," Louboutin related. "I think about the colors, the materials, but I don't think about the narrative...(Jaden) is going to show the brand's vision in a much more visible way."

The designer also lauded Smith's "richer universe that goes beyond the fashion perimeter" given that his creative tentacles stretch into music, photography, film and activism.

"He's someone who's very curious, who's very panoramic, who does a lot of things, who's interested and who connects all the things he does," Louboutin said. "One of the first questions he had was about our sustainability efforts, because it's important to him. And that is very, very, very good

because we have started to do a lot of important work around sustainability."

But mostly Louboutin marveled at their similarities. "He has the same enthusiasm that I have," he said, also describing a similar appreciation for objects and an incredible attention to detail, likely sharpened over years of collaboration with New Balance, and his other creative pursuits. "We have very different backgrounds, but we have a very similar mentality.

"He has a way of seeing things, of digesting things, of transforming that really connects with my way of functioning."

The star of "The Pursuit of Happyness" and "The Karate Kid" – and the singer of such songs as "Icon" and "Still in Love" – Smith said fashion has long been an attraction.

"I feel like fashion is just one of the most artistically expressive communities of people in the world, and that's what brought me to fashion, because of my wanting to feel accepted in an artistic way and to be able to express myself creatively without feeling judged by everybody else in the community," he said.

Smith arrives amid healthy business for the privately held company, with double-digit growth at present fueled largely by innovation in women's footwear, including its "everlasting sole," more low-heel options, substantial comfort enhancements, and price increases limited to cost of goods, according to Alexis Mourot, chief executive officer of Louboutin.

Emblematic of its momentum is its bestselling Miss Z pump, which features an expanded toe box and a padded insole.

"In women's shoes, we are gaining market share," Mourot said in an interview, noting that 70 percent of its business today is with heels below 10 centimeters, whereas two years ago it was above 10 centimeters.

The executive attributed softness in its men's shoes to market conditions, but said Smith's arrival should ignite the business.

"I think we can double the (men's) business in the next couple of years," said Mourot, citing opportunities in retail and wholesale channels. At present, men's products are sold in about 125 points of sale globally.

Today, Louboutin operates dedicated men's stores in Paris and New York "and we look to have more in the future," Mourot said.

Sneakers represent about half of Louboutin's men's offering, and the other half is made with leather soles. The Louis and Chambeliss lines are among bestsellers, the executive noted.

An "avant-premiere capsule" by Smith will be available in January at select boutiques worldwide and on Christianlouboutin.com, with his debut fall 2026 collection will hit stores next May.

Jaden Smith



BUSINESS

LVMH Shuffles Leadership in Wines and Spirits

● Jean-Marc Gallot is exiting Veuve Clicquot to join the Paris Football Club, clearing the way for two internal promotions at Moët Hennessy.

BY MILES SOCHA

Jean-Marc Gallot, a 22-year veteran at LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, is leaving behind Champagne to become managing director of the Paris Football Club, the soccer team in which the Arnault family's holding group Agache took a majority stake last year.

Gallot, who has been president and chief executive officer of Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin since 2014, will be succeeded by Thomas Mulliez, who has been Moët Hennessy's president of Europe, Middle East and Africa region since 2023 and a recent addition to its executive committee.

Mulliez reports to Jean-Jacques Guiony, president and CEO of Moët Hennessy and a member of the LVMH executive committee.

Mulliez will be succeeded in turn by Laure Baume, managing director of Moët Hennessy France, effective Oct. 1 and reporting to Alexandre Arnault, deputy CEO of LVMH's wines and spirits division.

In a release, LVMH noted that Baume is to continue in her current role until her successor is announced "to ensure an efficient transition."

"I am delighted to celebrate the development of our exceptional internal talent with these well-deserved leadership appointments that recognize the dedication, experience, and leadership capabilities of individuals who have grown within our organization," Alexandre



Laure Baume



Thomas Mulliez



Jean-Marc Gallot

Arnault commented. "Their transitions... are testament to our commitment to empowering leaders to reach their full potential, and I wish Thomas and Laure all the best as they take on their exciting new challenges."

Meanwhile, Guiony lauded the "leadership and vision" of Gallot, who made a "significant impact on the development of Veuve Clicquot and has been deeply involved in building Moët Hennessy. I would like to thank him for his contribution over the past 11 years and look forward to seeing him bring the same energy and expertise to his exciting new

chapter at Paris Football Club."

Gallot joined LVMH in 2003 as president and CEO of Louis Vuitton North America, becoming president of Louis Vuitton Europe three years later. He moved over to Champagne house Ruinart in 2009, until he returned to the fashion and leather goods division, first as president of commercial and international activities at Vuitton, and then as managing director of Fendi.

Paris FC is a first-division soccer club that has many fans within LVMH, including Gallot and Antoine Arnault, head of image and environment at LVMH.

Gallot is to succeed Alexis de Seze, effective Oct. 1, subject to approval by the club's board of directors, which is to take place in the coming days, according to a separate release from Paris FC.

In it, Antoine Arnault lauded Gallot's arrival at the sports team.

"We know him well, having worked with him in trust for many years, and we are counting on him to bring his dynamism and ambition to this fantastic project, which is only just beginning," he said, also thanking de Seze "for his commitment since our family acquired the club."

BEAUTY

Christian Dior Parfums Opens Toronto Flagship

● The store shares a facade with Christian Dior Couture at the Yorkdale Shopping Centre.

BY JAMES MANSO

Christian Dior Parfums' brick-and-mortar retail strategy is coming into focus, and it's going global.

After a slew of other retail openings in key markets in the U.S. — most notably the megafacility on 57th Street in New York

— the LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton-owned brand is opening its Canadian flagship in Toronto at Yorkdale Shopping Centre.

The store will encompass a broad expression of the brand, opening front-and-center with the ultra-luxe fragrance range La Collection Privée. Additionally, makeup and skin care will get their due, as well as Mitzah scarves and beauty accessories such as trunks, cases and caps for fragrances.

"Canada is an interesting and very

dynamic market," said Charlotte Holman Ros, president of North America, Christian Dior Parfums. "The total luxury market in Canada is growing incredibly fast."

Holman Ros noted that Dior is among the leading luxury brands in the country, "so as the market continues to grow, we want to make sure we are well positioned to capture our share of that growth to help introduce the brand to new clients," she said.

That ladders up to the broader vision of Dior's parent company. "In terms of luxury in general for LVMH, and specifically for Dior, Toronto is a key international city globally. It's a sizable market. For us, planting our flagship footprint in Toronto in Yorkdale makes a lot of sense in the context not just about a strategy for Canada, but an overall global strategy."

Fragrance is one of Dior's biggest categories, but Holman Ros sees opportunities beyond it in Canada. "The most noticeable difference is the penetration of luxury skin care in the market," she said of Canadian shoppers versus U.S. ones. "In Canada, it's about 40 percent, so it's much higher than the U.S. While the thrill of makeup and fragrances remains important, we have a much more established and deeply engaged luxury skin care client."

There's also an appetite for desirability in Canada and Holman Ros' focus is on perpetuating that momentum into newer, younger consumer cohorts. "We're very focused on growing selectively, and establishing a highly curated and highly selective network of flagship boutiques is a key building block of the long-term strategy," she said. "This is critical to enhancing our brand visibility, making a strong statement about our brand, offering

the best expression of the world of Dior to our clients, which will help us both expand our clientele while deepening the engagement with existing client bases."

Indeed, Yorkdale attracts north of 18 million shoppers annually, and Dior tested the waters with a holiday tree activation at the space in 2023. "We wrapped the whole mall with our out-of-home media placements and saw a very high level of engagement with the brand as well as an increase in overall sales," Holman Ros said. "Beauty will be positioned alongside the new couture flagship, so this creates a one-of-its-kind brand destination under a unified Dior facade."

The boutique is located in Yorkdale's newly christened luxury wing, and "the adjacency to Dior couture is key in terms of allowing greater synergies across the brand experience. In terms of merchandising, we very much tailored it to that discerning and ultra-high-net-worth Yorkdale client."

Inside, the layout is similar to existing boutiques, which "have really surpassed our expectations in terms of not just sales, but also the level of new client recruitment," she said. Rounding out the assortment beyond fragrance is a skin care alcove highlighting the brand's L'Or de Vie and Dior Prestige ranges, and the Dior Addict, Rouge Dior and Dior Forever ranges also get a large screen to showcase the latest campaigns.

"We're trying to take what we've been able to bring in California, New York and Miami to the shopper. A key success factor is investing in the right talent," Holman Ros said. "They understand how to sell the dream of haute parfumerie, as well as curating experiences in luxury skin care, that we don't offer anywhere else in our distribution network."



Christian Dior Parfums' Toronto flagship.

Jones Road lipsticks.



EXCLUSIVE

Bobbi Brown's Jones Road Takes on Lipstick

- The launch marks Brown's first entry into lipstick – the category she launched her first brand with – at Jones Road.

BY JAMES MANSO

When Bobbi Brown first started her eponymous beauty brand, she kicked it off by selling lipsticks out of her home. Now, a few decades and several businesses later, she's taking another whack at the category.

"The lipsticks were beautiful, and were everything I wanted in a lipstick. They were creamier, denser, and it was the '90s. It was modern," Brown said of her first foray. "But that's not for right now."

Enter Jones Road's 2025 take, which debuts Thursday in 12 shades, priced at \$30 each, on the brand's website and in its stores. Brown, in the throes of promoting her new book and launching a brand campaign, said it took her time to come back to the category. As she put it, "I'm a person that makes lipstick that hates lipstick. Now, I actually like this one."

"I was so not into traditional lipstick. It was old-fashioned, it didn't feel right, it felt aging and it doesn't feel like me," she continued. "But we started working on a formula to see what I would like, we got a bunch of things, started smushing them together. We didn't want one that was

too dense, or one that was too sheer. We wanted it to feel like it wasn't makeup."

It's part of Brown's evolved sensibility, which is more Brooklyn than Bergdorf Goodman, where she launched her first range. Called The Classic Lip, the formula has a satin finish that also hydrates with peptides and vitamin E.

"Our lip pencils have been this sleeper success for us, and all the pencils are lip color-inspired plus three bright colors. Those are the colors of the lipstick range," she said. "A lot of the younger girls wear them without much makeup on their face – just a little concealer, a little mascara. No one's wearing full faces of makeup at Jones Road."

The launch comes at a good time for Jones Road, which was said to reach revenues of \$160 million in 2024. "What's working is that I've got this vision, this team, and we're all figuring it out as we're going," Brown said. "We're able to do things without a lot of approvals and a lot of layers. We're just able to be scrappy and quick."

Makeup still comprises beauty's largest category across mass and prestige channels, despite showing signs of wear in the first half of 2024, as reported. Lip treatments, however, such as balms and oils, are offsetting those challenges, at least in part.

EXCLUSIVE

Leighton Meester Is Bubble's New Brand Ambassador

- The actress is Bubble's first global brand ambassador, and kicking off the initiative with a new campaign.

BY JAMES MANSO

Bubble Skincare has its first global brand ambassador.

Actress Leighton Meester has taken on the role and is fronting a new campaign for Bubble. That 360-degree campaign, called "Radical Joy," is also a brand first.

Though the brand, which has steadily built out global distribution, social media prowess and its product suite across skin care, is one of beauty's hottest today, Meester said the decision to work with them was much more personal than that.

"Their company mission is beyond the product itself. There are a lot of products out there that you can try to find that maybe work or don't, but they're bringing a joyful, loving and inclusive approach to different ages and skin types," Meester said. "The team and the people who are creating and formulating the products – their heart is in it."

Meester had encountered the brand before, having tried the lip serums and knowing makeup artists who trusted the formulas.

"The packaging is also very attractive to me. It's fun, cozy, colorful and they're very effective products," she said,

highlighting the brand's Plus One SPF, Soft Launch cleanser and Cosmic Silk toner as favorites.

"My skin is sensitive, so I need to be careful about what I do and how I switch it up," Meester continued. "It's evolved to where I'm very caring, gentle and kind to myself both inside and out."

For Bubble, Meester's cross-generational appeal made her an obvious choice, said Shai Eisenman, the founder and chief executive officer. "She has as many people who loved her 20 years ago as that love her today," Eisenman said. "We also still hear from our community their favorite show to rewatch is 'Gossip Girl.' We felt she's, on the one hand, so kind and lovely, but at the same time, is a fashion icon and has great taste."

It was time for the brand to find new pillars of growth, Eisenman said. "We've had such an amazing few years of organic growth, but it was built on social presence, our community and our ambassador program. We felt now was the time to tell the story from our angle and our side, and be able to give that to the community," Eisenman said. "This is a story about who we are and why we exist. People think of the brand as youthful because of the packaging, but we want to tell the story of joy."

Eisenman, who was one of the first founders to tap into Gen Z as a beauty consumer, also sees opportunity to



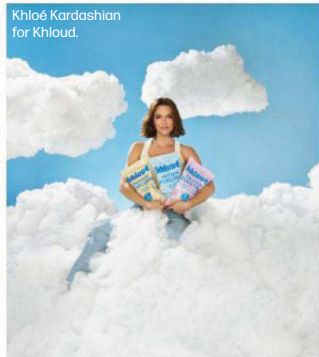
Leighton Meester for Bubble Skincare.

broaden the brand's appeal. "The oldest Gen Zers are turning 30 this year," she said. "We're growing with our community and also appealing to a broader range. People see us on social media, but the

appeal is to all ages in-store. We want people to understand that fun packaging doesn't mean our formulations aren't clinical, or going to deliver the best results."

WELLNESS

Khloé Kardashian's Khloud Names Jeff Rubenstein CEO



● Here, Rubenstein discusses key learnings from previous positions at CPG brands, the growth of the functional food and beverage space and what's next for Khloud.

BY EMILY BURNS

Khloé Kardashian's functional snack brand Khloud has named Jeff Rubenstein chief executive officer.

Rubenstein joins the team with a 24-year career in consumer package goods, most notably in functional beverage, across companies like The Coca-Cola Company, Vita Coco and Health-Ade. Rubenstein was most recently the chief growth officer of better-for-you soda company Poppi, which was sold to PepsiCo for \$1.95 billion in March. Khloud, which launched in April, currently offers three varieties of its protein popcorn: white cheddar, which is the brand's bestseller; sweet and salty kettle corn, and olive oil and sea salt. It is available at Target.

"What Khloé is doing here [and] why I was so attracted to this particular opportunity is that she has found a way to use modern marketing with her enormous

reach. She has 301 million followers on her Instagram alone, 5.7 million on TikTok," said Rubenstein. "She has figured out very precisely how to create a pandemic, essentially, around a particular new idea. Protein was already bubbling up, and so she amplified it in a meaningful way."

In addition to Rubenstein's appointment, Khloud has appointed Michael Maya chief supply chain officer.

Khloud is tapping into one of the hottest wellness trends: protein. The high protein diet has been trending across social media and in retail. It reaches 158.6 million average weekly views on TikTok, as more consumers tap in.

"Protein is the number-one nutrient for Gen Z and Millennials," Rubenstein said. "Protein snack is the number-one most searched snack type on Google, and the concept of protein snacking is growing three times faster than regular snacks. A big part of this is because people are on GLP-1s."

He continued: "We're fully satisfying the macro need for this nutrient. We're doing it in a Gen Z relevant way, and we're doing it in a more feminine way."

Khloud is targeting Gen Z and Millennial females, as the protein category has historically been marketed to men. The brand has an additional edge, as it is focused on a smaller protein portion. Instead of a bulky bar with 30 grams of protein, Khloud offers 7 grams of protein in a snackable portion of popcorn.

"We have tapped into functional snacking in a totally different way. Everybody else is playing in the high protein world, and we're playing in the portion-sized protein world, which is, to me, the future, because we're bringing in the home category [shoppers], moms. We're bringing in Millennials. We're bringing in Gen Z, who have avoided the category because it felt too masculine," said Rubenstein.

He pointed to the success the brand is already experiencing at Target as an example, noting that 71 percent of Khloud customers have never purchased popcorn from the retailer.

"That's bringing an entirely new generation of snackers into the franchise," he said.

In addition to the actual product, Rubenstein said Kardashian's involvement was a key tenet of the brand's success, particularly since it aligns well with her own health journey.

"Khloé was a famous snacker... If you've seen video coverage of her house, she has a snack closet," he said. "She's honest about how she's lost weight over the years, and she's open about the way that snacking in a cleaner way has been a part of her journey."

Rubenstein equated Kardashian's opportunity to own the functional snack space to her sisters' success, particularly Kylie Jenner's in cosmetics with Kylie Cosmetics and Kim Kardashian's in shapewear and basics with Skims.

While Rubenstein has worked across a variety of brands, including heritage companies and newer ones that have gone on to have successful exits, he sees the most potential in Khloud.

"When you apply the celebrity component with a credible brand that only has four ingredients and a story that's as compelling as this one is, the numbers start to go in your direction," he said, noting that competitors on the market have upward of 40 ingredients due to unnecessary additives.

Rubenstein, who was the first hire at Poppi, said that he is bringing four key learnings from the company to his role at Khloud. First, he is focused on building culture, both internally and externally.

"[Poppi] moved at the speed of culture," he said. "If Labubus [are] the hot trend at the moment, how does Khloud get into Labubus?"

In addition, Rubenstein emphasized the importance of authenticity, particularly when it comes to product development. Like Poppi, Khloud will stay true to its mission of using whole ingredients and avoiding artificial fillers. Kardashian's authenticity as a founder is another key element that Rubenstein pointed to. Finally, he said that the brand will

maintain its status as a premium product.

"You never see Poppi at the dollar store," he said. "You're not going to see Khloud there either."

Khloud is rolling out at several new retailers this fall, including Walmart, Kroger, Albertsons and Ahold, as the team is currently focused on natural, grocery and mass channels. Eventually, Rubenstein said the brand would look to club and convenience stores.

"We want to be adjacent to other snack brands. We don't necessarily want to be in a relegated, unique set that's for just protein," he said. "We'd like to go in the mainline snack aisle, because that's where this consumer is looking, and they are making a change."

In the way of newness, Rubenstein said Khloud will launch additional flavors of its popcorn in December and will expand into new snack varieties in 2026.

"Protein is the focus. It's not popcorn. Popcorn is the delivery mechanism," he said, noting that the brand could go into additional functionalities aside from protein in the future. "Within a year, I'm hoping that we're going to have two-to-three [snack] verticals that are live. Within three years, I'm hoping that we're going to have five-to-six verticals."

While the functional snack and beverage space continues to grow, Rubenstein said there is one factor that is crucial.

"Taste is queen," he said. "Any of the brands I've worked on in the past, they all match the original in flavor, but they beat them in function. That's a big part of the success script."

As Khloud offers a functional alternative to what's available on the market, Rubenstein said the brand will also lead with a fashion-forward approach.

"We're making functionality fashionable. That comes through in the packaging graphics. It comes through in the name. It's an elevated name," he said. "You're not going to see any of the brands within Frito show up at fashion shows. Khloud does, and it authentically fits and doesn't feel like it's forced."

FASHION

The Frankie Shop Is Ready For a New Growth Phase

● Founder Gaëlle Drevet has brought on seasoned fashion executive Sabine Brunner as CEO to lay the groundwork for retail and international expansion.

BY MILES SOCHA

The Frankie Shop founder and president Gaëlle Drevet is gunning to double the business in two years, and has brought on former MCM and Roger Vivier executive Sabine Brunner as chief executive officer to help mastermind a growth roadmap, WWD has learned.

Disclosing the management reinforcement in an exclusive interview, Drevet said Brunner started officially on Sept. 1 and is laying the groundwork to grow Frankie's direct-to-consumer channel, expand internationally, and perhaps eventually take on an investor to further speed development.

"I was wearing too many hats," Drevet said at the company's spare offices in the Bastille district of Paris, fabric swatches and line sheets tacked on boards behind her.

"I've never had a CEO or business partner."

In Brunner, she found a seasoned executive with experience across luxury, contemporary brands, childrenswear and accessories — and also a longtime customer of The Frankie Shop, introduced to the brand by her daughter, which tickles Drevet to no end.

"I love the product, I love the image, it's a very desirable brand," Brunner enthused, wearing a brown Rotare sweater that's among the emerging labels the retailer carries alongside its expansive The Frankie Shop collection. "I think it's quite unique in the market right now. Department stores and other wholesalers are queuing up to get the brand."

Most recently MCM Global AG's president and global commercial and brand officer, Brunner has also been CEO of Bonpoint and managing director at La Double J, Roger Vivier, and Tod's Hong Kong Limited, in addition to stints at DKNY, Stefanel and investment firm Stella Holdings.

Introduced to Brunner by a mutual friend, Drevet lauded her international profile, and experience across price and business segments.

Sole owner of The Frankie Shop, Drevet did not disclose figures, but said revenues advanced 15 percent in 2024, and have accelerated this year. Immediate expansion plans include a London boutique planned for 2026, with Milan among priorities for future locations.

At present, The Frankie Shop operates two boutiques in New York, and two in Paris, where Drevet would like more space to fully express the brand's lifestyle ambitions, and concept-store model that juxtaposes its private label with brands like Coperni, Better, By Malene Birger, Christopher Esber and Samsøe Samsøe.

It also boasts concessions at Galeries Lafayette and Selfridges, with select wholesale clients ranging from Net-a-porter, Mytheresa and Moda Operandi, to KaDeWe and Harvey Nichols Middle East.

The United States and the Middle East are among geographies with untapped runway for growth, "and in Asia, we haven't even scratched the surface," said Drevet.

In recent years, the brand has done pop-ups in as far-flung places as Los Angeles and Abu Dhabi, and it has so far only dabbled in the accessories and lifestyle category with caps, socks, candles, soaps and the like.

Brunner's arrival coincides with the 10th anniversary of Frankie Shop, synonymous with smart, oversized suiting and accessible prices despite its upscale image, fine fabrications and sophisticated silhouettes. "It's always about allure and

comfort," said Drevet.

Its average retail price online is \$300, according to Brunner.

A French native who began her career as a journalist in New York and London, Drevet burst onto the fashion scene in 2015 with a multibrand store in the Lower East Side, later adding her own clothing brand under the same name. In 2022, Drevet added men's and unisex designs to her fashion universe.





Wolford's anniversary campaign.

FASHION

Wolford Marks 75th Anniversary With Special Campaign, Turnaround Plans

● Creative director Nao Takekoshi and deputy CEO Marco Pozzo discussed the product and business evolution of the Austria-based company and its ongoing seismic shift.

BY SANDRA SALIBIAN

MILAN – The impact of the graphic silhouette of Wolford's signature turtleneck bodysuit comes second only to that of the diverse cast the company has tapped to celebrate its 75th anniversary in its new campaign.

For the occasion, a group of women of different ages and origins posed against majestic natural landscapes united by a large, flowing fabric evoking continuity and connection, all wearing the timeless pieces the Bregenz, Austria-based market leader in all-things skinwear selected to mark its milestone.

"We've been known as a pioneer and expert in second-skin dressing, which we started with stockings made with a seamless technology that we have invented... and that evolved into circular knitting technology that allows us to make dresses, bodysuits and other products," said Nao Takekoshi, Wolford's creative director since 2023. "But when I was thinking about this 75th year anniversary, I didn't want to talk about something so technical because in the end... [women] don't really care so much about the technicalities of a product but how it feels on the skin. So instead of talking about what kind of thread, material and special technique we used, I focused on the women who wear it."

Shot in Sicily, the images were photographed by Camila Falquez, whom Takekoshi tapped not only because he appreciated her work but for her different background. Colombian-born, raised in Mexico, rooted in Spain, and now based in New York, Falquez is a visual artist who explores contemporary feminine identities through photography, and was called to bring her unique perspective and female gaze to the project.

"I wanted someone to filter my vision with a more feminine touch and then communicate that to the models, because

a shooting is always all about the chemistry between photographer and the cast," said Takekoshi.

Titled "The Thread of Attitude," the campaign will be released on Thursday, to coincide with the launch of a special bodysuit at Wolford stores, its e-commerce and a selection of international multibrand retailers.

For the occasion, Takekoshi has developed an even more elevated iteration of Wolford's iconic product, here crafted for the first time from luxurious merino wool which comes with a lightweight and soft touch. Presented in a new color palette inspired by nature and ranging from black, deep night, dark wood to crimson and pink, it will retail at 325 euros.

The project comes at a time the company is pivoting creatively and experiencing a seismic shift business-wise.

Takekoshi described it as moving "from making just great products to becoming a brand with a purpose, which is to really empower women."

His long-term vision lies on expanding the product assortment to better serve her demands and cover different needs, from day to night. Takekoshi gradually built on this mission introducing capsule collections of easy-to-approach pieces that could be effortlessly mixed and matched and introducing also more fluid designs as an alternative to Wolford's renowned body-hugging ones.

Bringing his ready-to-wear experience honed by previously working at the likes of Issey Miyake, Donna Karan and Jil Sander, he also focused on sheer dresses and separates that could target nighttime and special occasions; seasonal lines and more daring propositions flanking the brand's timeless pieces as well as stepped into uncharted territories for Wolford via tailoring made of stretched recycled polyester.

"So we're covering a range of scenes and can be useful to everyone's lifestyle, from the sexy girl to the office woman. But we always have this body language in the equation, so there's always stretch and comfort," said Takekoshi.

Asked if an expansion into accessories and a men's proposition might be next, the designer sounded cautious and implied they are not a priority at the moment. "I don't

think there's any boundaries to what we can do but at the same time, we have to be very careful about how to expand because I don't want to dilute the culture of offer that we have inherited for 75 years," he said. "It's a very careful, selective process that we need to go through... Probably biggest responsibility here is to really judge how much we can expand our product and show how we can do that."

The overarching mission is to shift Wolford from a product-centric business to a brand-driven one, making what Takekoshi defined as a cultural change within the company.

This arrives in a time of overall transition for the company. Deputy chief executive officer Marco Pozzo – who joined Wolford in July, when the company also completed a capital increase of 25 million euros – shared the strategy behind his mandate, aimed at the business' turnaround.

To be sure, in the first half of the year Wolford revenues decreased 23 percent to 33 million euros versus the same period in 2024. The performance was impacted by the lingering effects of operational challenges, delivery delays and store closures initiated last year.

Pozzo underscored that despite the decrease, the company succeeded in reducing its cost base, leading to relatively stable operating profit versus the prior year, meaning that the transformation plans, streamlining and efficiency measures launched over the past months are working.

"The data we have so far are also comforting, because revenues are growing month by month," he said. Yet Pozzo sees 2025 as a year of consolidation after the strong disruption of 2024, when Wolford reported total sales of 88.4 million euros compared to 125.8 million euros totaled in 2023.

A series of operational and organizational headwinds across multiple areas such as supply chain, production and logistics impacted the performance, especially in the final quarter, and put the business under pressure.

Pozzo stressed the challenges in production and consequent delays in delivering products to the stores, but said that "the positive side is that demand never dropped."

"If we had more product, we would sell

it right away. So this proved its resilience, despite all the difficulties we encountered in giving access to our collections to both end consumers and our partners, distributors and multibrand stores... This is a point of strength we have," said Pozzo.

In addressing structural inefficiencies and enhancing organizational agility, the company also closed a selection of non-strategic retail locations. Its retail footprint counted 147 stores worldwide as of June 2025, down from the 163 units it had at the end of 2024.

In the first half of 2025, this distribution channel remained key and accounted for 48 percent of revenues. Sales generated online accounted for 21 percent, followed by the wholesale channel, "which proved to be the most resilient one," said Pozzo.

In terms of markets, in the first half of the year Europe accounted for more than 60 percent of sales, followed by the U.S. and China at 27 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively. Going forward, Pozzo sees potential in regions such as South America, Middle East and Southeast Asia, where Wolford aims to expand with local partnerships.

While this will be the year of stabilization, Pozzo defined the upcoming two as the ones of "revitalization and growth."

His mandate's mission will center on efficiently synchronizing the three macro-areas of product, production and distribution, in order to "place the right product in the right place at the right time."

To this end, he said that along with the creative evolution and assortment expansion, the company is working to reorganize and strengthen its supply chain, stretching its sourcing network to access new technologies and partnering with new companies supporting its peaks in production demand.

Still, the Wolford product will remain fully made in Europe. The company designs its collections in Milan, while manufacturing processes are split between the HQ in Bregenz and the Slovenian town of Murska Sobota.

Last year, Wolford's sales were driven primarily by ready-to-wear, which accounted for 46 percent of revenues, followed by its core legwear at 39 percent. Additional categories, including lingerie and swimwear, contributed 14 percent and 1 percent, respectively.

"Now it's time to consolidate our core business not to confuse the consumer, because in the past 18 months we didn't send out a strong message... and we want to recover credibility by doing what we do best and in the area where we're superior to our competitors," said Pozzo.

Yet he confirmed that the collections' structure is evolving. While for the moment the priority is consolidating the Essentials, that is the timeless pieces that account for 70 percent of the business and "give us more flexibility in the go-to market operations and enable us a less risky planning," going forward the firm will boost also its more trend-driven designs.

Pozzo also eyes a reprise of collaborations, which over the years have seen Wolford partnering with brands such as Thierry Mugler, Jean Paul Gaultier, Karl Lagerfeld, Vivienne Westwood, Missoni, Valentino, Giorgio Armani, Adidas, GCDS and Sergio Rossi, to cite a few.

While the fashion-forward products and collaborations accounted for only 3 percent of sales last year, they remain an essential part of the company in terms of brand awareness and might be instrumental in the longer term and in the "revitalization phase" to recruit new customers, said Pozzo.

Wolford is a company listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange since 1995 and since 2018 is part of the global luxury fashion group Lanvin Group, which was founded by Wolford's Chinese majority shareholder Fosun.

DARK ARTS

Dilara Findikoglu hopes to cast a spell on London Fashion Week with a spring 2026 collection called "Cage of Innocence." The show will be a blend of Findikoglu's signature Goth aesthetic with a fresh palette of nudes, pink – and even white – as the designer embarks on a new creative and commercial chapter. *For more on London Fashion Week, which runs Thursday through Monday, see through page 22.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCISCO GOMEZ DE VILLABOA



Dilara Findikoglu and a model in a preview look from spring 2026.

FASHION

Dilara Findikoglu Goes for Growth

● The Turkish-born designer is doing business on her own terms as she introduces handbags and plots the future.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCISCO GOMEZ DE VILLABO

LONDON – Dilara Findikoglu, one of the hottest tickets at London Fashion Week, has ambitions to grow, and go global, starting with her spring 2026 show.

She's introducing handbags, presenting more ready-to-wear looks and amping up wholesale and direct-to-consumer operations.

"I want to remain unique, but I have always had very big dreams for myself. I am commercializing in a Dilara way and keeping my couture and arty pieces, but I want to connect to more people and I want to see everybody look like a Dilara person," said Findikoglu during an interview in her studio.

"What I bring to the table is conceptual and intellectually sexy clothing, which I can't find around. I'm basically making clothes that I want to wear. I'm an expressive and outspoken designer, and we will one day have white T-shirts with the Dilara logo on it, but it's not yet."

Her signature dark, Gothic looks will be under the spotlight in a spring 2026 show titled "Cage of Innocence." The show will be staged inside a house that's meant to replicate an old village house, one not so dissimilar to Marie Antoinette's countryside retreat, Hameau de la Reine, on the grounds of Versailles.

Findikoglu is also welcoming a new color palette of nudes, pink and white that will offset the darker looks.

She said the idea of white came instinctively, adding that it's often associated with "virginity, brides or girls in white dresses in the countryside or in villages. But in this collection, the white dress becomes sexy."

She plans to show off sultry, deconstructed silhouettes, soft ruffled cuffs and sheer fabrics. She's adorned an antique-looking, cream dress with red cherries made from silicone. She said she liked the idea of a "cute cherry girl."

The Turkish-born designer is also growing the business, and launching new categories.

Her debut handbag, which will appear on the runway, comes in three styles: leather, python effect and the same fabric she's using for the couture dresses in the collection. The handbag has a rectangular shape similar to a vintage doctor's bag, with a compact mirror hanging from a chain on the side.

"If somebody is buying couture from me, I'd also like to make a bag matching their outfit. I don't design single pieces, I design everything as a full look," she said.

"Sometimes I feel like a doctor in the studio because my work is so intricate and [detailed]. We definitely do a lot of surgery on the garments. As much as we're a dark brand, I am very into glamour. I love dressing up. I love makeup and hair," she added.

With handbags on the way, she's now setting plans for a cosmetics collection. She also wants to open stores in London, France and Italy.

"My dream is to have a store in Palais Royal and another in Venice because it's my favorite city in the world. It's [also] important to have a physical store in London because we have so many bespoke clients at this stage and they just need the Dilara experience," Findikoglu said.

She said 50 percent of sales come from

the couture arm of the business, with ready-to-wear making up the rest. Rtw sales are divided between wholesale and e-commerce.

The brand's wholesale accounts include H.Lorenzo, Antonioli, Ssense and Antidote in Atlanta.

"People have this misconception that I don't do ready-to-wear that much, but actually most of my pieces are ready-to-wear, apart from the feathered pieces. For some people, ready-to-wear can be a white T-shirt and jeans, for me, it's not," said the designer.

Her punky designs have spanned from Hollywood to K-pop and have been worn by the likes of Cate Blanchett, Kim Kardashian, Margot Robbie, Dua Lipa and Blackpink's Rosé and Lisa.

The designer has become a recognized figure in her own right with her strong aesthetic of jet black hair, pale skin and red lipstick.

Findikoglu has weathered many storms

since launching her brand in 2016, including sitting out the spring 2024 season to keep her business afloat.

"My biggest learnings have been through being nearly bankrupt a few times, but I never stopped believing in myself, even in the worst of times," she said.

Her rebellious streak has always seen her to get ahead.

She graduated with a BA Fashion degree from Central Saint Martins in 2015, but was not shortlisted for the annual graduate collection show. In response, Findikoglu staged her own guerrilla fashion show outside the show's entrance, which certainly generated a lot of headlines.

Findikoglu's resilience remains intact and so do her goals.

"I want to be a game changer for how women with similar backgrounds to me are seen in the world. I want to create a Dilara empire," Findikoglu said.

Her Turkish and Muslim upbringing has only been a boon to challenge her belief

systems. When she left her home country to study at Central Saint Martins, her brother stopped speaking to her for 10 years. "He thought I was going to become a bad girl in their eyes because a woman shouldn't be free to go to a different country or even go out to dinner by herself," she said.

Findikoglu nods to the hardship in the title of her spring 2026 collection.

"I have been trying to heal my ancestral trauma. I have been remembering all of the women from my past who never had freedom and who were put in cages of innocence," she said.

"I'm still breaking free, and I grew up in an environment where men always had more power and freedom. When I was growing up, I didn't see one single woman who had a job or ran a business. I always learned power from men and thinking power comes in a masculine way. I'm now coming to peace with my vulnerability and I'm definitely the first person that has had this much freedom within my own family."

A look from Dilara Findikoglu's spring 2026 preview.



FASHION

Laura Weir Is Looking On the Bright Side



● The new CEO of the British Fashion Council wants to empower young talent, bring established names home and forge international ties to help British creatives thrive.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI

LONDON – Laura Weir isn't one for nostalgia, and won't dwell on the glory days of London Fashion Week, when the schedule was brimming with talent and the British capital was an essential stop – even for a day or two – on the seasonal circuit.

At the same time, the new chief executive officer of the British Fashion Council, a former fashion editor who was most recently executive creative director of Selfridges, isn't frustrated or angry about the myriad challenges London fashion is facing right now.

Instead she's trying to meet the immediate needs of the London fashion community, and position it for success in the longer-term. In an interview, Weir said she wants people to realize just how important London – and Britain – are to the European fashion ecosystem.

"We have a task on our hands to rebuild the clarity of purpose of the BFC, tell the story about why fashion matters and make clear that in the act of getting dressed, you are quite literally shaping culture. That is a real opportunity," she said.

"For so long we've been stuck in the doldrums of post-Brexit, post-COVID, and there's no diminishing that as the painful time it's been. But now it's about the next era, rebuilding British fashion and the ecosystem that exists here to a point where it garners the respect it deserves," Weir added.

Although her big strategy reveal won't be until early November, Weir has already made a few changes, including canceling the listing fee that designers had to pay in order to be part of the official LFW calendar.

She's also looking at fashion as a nationwide asset rather than a London one. Fashion, Weir believes, "is a nationwide endeavor, with 68 billion pounds in GDP contribution and the millions of jobs it creates nationwide. It is a confluence of creativity, art, retail, and the high street, and it's about bringing back a sense of pride to all of it," she said.

To wit, the BFC has started a creative education program called Fashion

Assembly that will see designers return to their old schools across the country and speak to young people about the industry's relevance, and how they can get involved at all different levels.

Having begun her career at the U.K. trade title Draper's Record, Weir said she's tuned into the critical role that retail plays in the bigger fashion picture. She's also aware of the decline of wholesale, the rise of direct-to-consumer sales, and declining consumption at the high end, where many of the London designers play.

"I understand the importance of those retail relationships, the shifting sales landscape, and I want to use my background to support the designers," she said.

The BFC will increase scholarship funding, and has secured a three-year commitment from the British government Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the Newgen program, which offers money and mentoring to emerging talent.

In January, the same department committed an additional 1 million pounds in funding for the BFC for the current year. As a result, the budget allocated to the "international guest" program has been doubled for the fall season, allowing the BFC to invite social media platforms, critics, editors and buyers who might not otherwise come to the shows in September and February.

This week, writers, stylists and content creators from publications in the U.S., Europe and Asia and buyers from stores including David Jones, Holt Renfrew, Joyce, Dover Street Market Paris, Galeries Lafayette, Le Bon Marché, Printemps, Antonia, Bergdorf Goodman, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue will touch down in London for the shows, which run from Thursday through Monday.

Weir has also been working on medium- and long-term projects, including The Fashion Awards, which will take place this year on Dec. 1 at Royal Albert Hall. She also wants them to have a broader reach.

Weir said the awards will be "a real exploration of fashion's role in wider culture, film, screen, sport, the stage and music. I have some exciting plans." The annual event will continue to raise money for the BFC Foundation, which focuses on education, grant-giving, and business mentoring.

As reported, homegrown talents Jonathan Anderson and Martine Rose will

be competing against Miuccia Prada, Glenn Martens, Rick Owens and Willy Chavarría for Designer of the Year, the top honor.

Weir is seeding the ground for the return of British designers and brands to London Fashion Week. The biggest names often decamp to Paris, where most of the buying and deal-making is done, but she's hoping to woo some of those Brits back.

Weir said she's already been engaging with the designers and brands who are showing in Paris, including Victoria Beckham, Stella McCartney and McQueen, "trying to open up conversations about 'What does a homecoming look like for you?'" Weir said.

She's only interested in brands returning to the U.K. "if it makes sense for their businesses."

She added: "I want to show how returning to the city where you started your career can be really positive because you'd be welcomed home with open arms. We do all have a collective responsibility to keep the European fashion ecosystem thriving, and that only works if London is thriving."

"I hope that, moving forward, we can start to have even more positive conversations about bringing some brands home. In the meantime, it's on us to celebrate the brands that are here, Burberry – and the fantastic work that Daniel Lee is doing – and, of course, Erdem, Roksanda and Simone Rocha," said Weir.

She added that Jonathan Anderson, who has transformed JW Anderson into a lifestyle brand and is no longer staging regular runway shows, remains committed to doing events at London Fashion Week every season. Later this week he'll be hosting a dinner to mark the relaunch and the transformation of the brand's Soho store, while the team will be doing appointments with members of the industry.

There is no doubt Weir has taken on a challenging role, but she's determined to re-energize London Fashion Week and fight for British fashion at home, and abroad.

Over the past months she's been forging relationships with other countries and regions "to drive the creative ambitions of our designers and retailers overseas. We're asking ourselves, 'What do trade missions look like in 2025 and beyond,' and 'Which countries are celebrating culture generally, and recognizing the creative asset that it is?'" Weir said.

She's interested in brokering deals with India, South Asia, North America, Australia and the Middle East and helping British designers grow their networks and find new commercial opportunities.

"Energy begets energy and when you have the right people in the room and the right conversations are happening, the buzz comes, the hype comes, and the orders flow. It's all about the ecosystem," she said.



FASHION

Designers at Debenhams Is Back With 'King of Sequins' Ashish



Ashish Gupta



● Supported by Boohoo Group's manufacturing capability, the initiative will expand to include more established and emerging names in the near future.

BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON — Backed by current owner Boohoo Group, Debenhams is bringing back its popular Designers at Debenhams initiative, with Ashish Gupta, a master of camp, glamorous sequin creations as the debut talent.

A small edit from the upcoming collaboration will be revealed as part of Ashish's spring 2026 show on Monday. The official campaign is set to be released on Oct. 1, while the range will be available to shop from Oct. 9 exclusively on Debenhams.com with prices ranging from 65 pounds to 195 pounds.

Debenhams is a British retail institution, which had more than 178 physical stores at its peak and a robust beauty offer. Like many other U.K. retailers with large store estates, it fell on hard times. In 2021, the fast fashion giant Boohoo acquired it out of administration, and turned it into an online department store.

According to the retailer's chief executive officer Dan Finley, Debenhams has grown into "a profitable and highly cash-generating" business with 650 million pounds-plus in gross merchandise volume and more than 15,000 brands in its ecosystem. Its customer base ranges from ages 17 to 70.

Finley called 2025 "an ideal time" to bring back Designers at Debenhams, a

trailblazing initiative from the early 1990s that saw talents such as Julien Macdonald, Matthew Williamson, John Rocha, and Jasper Conran create dedicated collections for the store.

The partnership enriched the department store's fashion credibility and provided a steady revenue stream for the designers, many of whom were able to keep their own brands afloat as a result.

"I think in these challenging economic times, it's all the more important that we can democratize style, break down barriers between catwalk and the closet, and make great designer-led products available at accessible price points," Finley added.

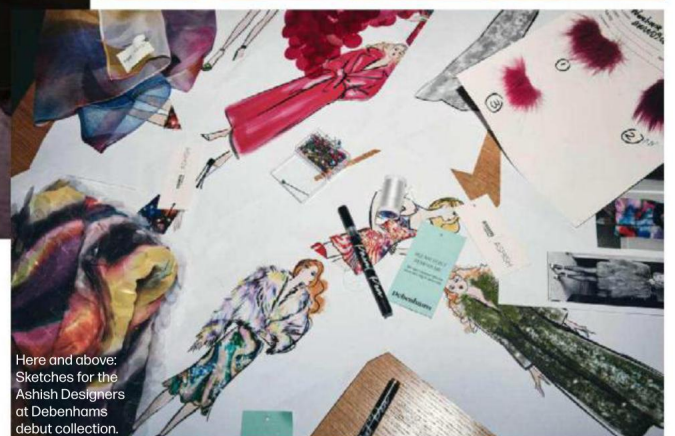
The executive described Ashish as "a dynamic, energetic and exciting" pick for the Designers at Debenhams' relaunch.

"I couldn't think of anybody better. He's renowned for his unapologetic glamour, wit and creativity, and it sets the perfect tone for a bold new era for our brand and this initiative. There is so much more to come as we go forward. Designers at Debenhams has always been great at championing British design for both established designers and new and upcoming talent," said Finley.

For Gupta, who launched his namesake label in 2001 after graduating from Central Saint Martins, working with Debenhams has been a rewarding experience for both parties.

He first came across Designers at Debenhams in 1995, when he was doing a course at the London College of Fashion, whose Oxford Street campus was only a few blocks away from the Debenhams flagship.

"My earliest memory with it was walking past those massive advertisements



Here and above: Sketches for the Ashish Designers at Debenhams debut collection.

outside the store when they were doing the collaborations. It was a time when I was forming my own impressions of what things were. So I guess I have always associated Debenhams with those collaborations. It's actually quite lovely that I'm in that position doing that very same project now," said Gupta.

With Boohoo Group's extensive global supply chain, Gupta said he didn't feel he had to compromise for the range.

"They've got such a great team of people who have managed to do quite a lot in quite a short amount of time, without actually feeling like we've had to cut corners or pull back. Just to be able to have the level of freedom within that has been really wonderful," said Gupta.

The Debenhams range is manufactured by a network of factories across Asia. The designer's personal favorite in the collection, a multicolored, oversized faux fur coat, is made in China.

"They have this wonderful dialogue with the factory, where it's very collaborative. I think that's such a nice thing. Sometimes with factories, it can be difficult," said Gupta, whose main line often involves labor-intensive embroideries done by local artisans in India.

"We have this fantasy of doing this coat with a graffiti effect, but we didn't quite know how to do it. The factory eventually came up with this new technique of digital spray paint on fake fur after many experiments. I think it's exciting to be able to make things like that and have them accessible to a whole new audience," he continued.

At the same time, one can argue that the teams at Debenhams, as well as Boohoo Group, benefited from working with a well-known designer like Gupta, since he was able to produce an accessible collection with a unique voice by fine-tuning what's already in place.

The new Designers at Debenhams is different from Boohoo Group's previous fashion collaborations, which were more celebrity-led with the likes of Paris Hilton, Kourtney Kardashian, and Megan Fox working with the company.

Gupta described the new range as "fun, colorful, and sparkly." In addition to the faux fur coat, it includes new iterations of Ashish's signature sequin designs, as well as "beautiful knitwear that I'm really pleased that we've been able to do," he said.

He also expects those designs to work harmoniously with the pieces in his main line, the designer said.

LONDON FASHION WEEK PREVIEW



FASHION

Louther Is Defining London's New Look



Louther is the latest brand to join Dover Street Market Paris' brand development program.

● The emerging brand has joined Dover Street Market's development program and is launching a Carhartt collaboration.

BY VIOLET GOLDSTONE

LONDON – Since graduating from Fashion East last season, designer Olympia Schiele of Louther is most definitely not having a post-grad crisis.

If joining Dover Street Market Paris' brand development program and the

British Fashion Council's Newgen roster wasn't enough, Louther is also holding a presentation during London Fashion Week, and launching a Carhartt WIP collaboration in DSM stores on Oct. 1.

Amid trade wars, geopolitical turmoil, and a slowdown in spending, emerging designers are facing particularly challenging circumstances right now. Yet Schiele's brand is succeeding. What's her secret?

"I'm not 20 anymore," said the German designer. "I'm more confident, and I put more experimental work out. I think the brand just needed to grow with me."

Drawing on Schiele's streetwear background, Louther is defining the new London look. Styles blend fine tailoring à la Giorgio Armani with quietly sexy silhouettes ranging from cozy knits and supple leather pieces to lived-in denim. Think leather jackets twisted just so, rough-and-tumble slouchy pants, sumptuous faux fur coats and lots of trim suits.

"We've been through all the stages. In the beginning, we were a very drop-heavy, Instagram-accessible brand, but without much world building," she said. "When we joined Fashion East, I wanted to find a way to narrate a story around the brand – because it's not just about the garments."

With its strong silhouettes and fine craftsmanship, Louther's world is one filled with confidence.

The spring 2026 collection, titled "Hard Candy," is brimming with that can-do attitude.

"We started the collection by thinking about the person who wears it. It's someone who has no problem being confident in their work, their clothes, and how they express themselves," Schiele said.

"We looked at a lot of architecture and interior design because I was thinking, 'Where does this person go in their clothes? Are they going to meetings? Work? The Tube?' I wanted to have an interplay between what these places would look like, and the clothes," she added.

Sturdy upholstery fabrics, burnished with florals and chintzy patterns, were boiled down until they were flimsy and distressed enough to become dresses.

Silvery garments and breezy overcoats have raw edges, giving them a lived-in feeling.

"These details, like the unfinished-ness, make it feel quite raw – but also like it has a history. I like when there's a romanticism to clothing," the designer said. "There's something really rich about clothing holding memories and becoming this focal point of someone's life, how you'll be remembered by others."

She added: "Like if you fall in love with someone, and then that person takes your clothes because it reminds you of them. It's a memory card."

Well-loved clothing is a familiar concept for Louther, which first launched at Dover Street Market with an entirely upcycled collection. For Louther's upcoming collaboration with Carhartt's streetwear-inspired subbrand Carhartt WIP, the brand is returning to those roots.

"The conversation with Carhartt started two years ago, probably," said Schiele, explaining that the collaboration was postponed as Louther developed at Fashion East. It was only recently, as the label hit its stride, that the capsule came to fruition.

"It's an overlap of something that's very wearable and still has a lot of character. There's so much heritage within Carhartt, I think it was really exciting that they wanted to do an upcycling project," she said.

The capsule features a main line of upcycled garments, like patchworked denims, reworked chinos, and rugged crewnecks, which will be available across DSM stores worldwide. One-off pieces made from the collection's off-cuts, including a dress fashioned from what appears to be an infinite number of knotted T-shirts, will be featured in Louther's London Fashion Week presentation.

FASHION

Prada Mode Heads to London With Cinematic Installation

● The artistic duo Elmgreen & Dragset is partnering with the Prada brand for the first time.

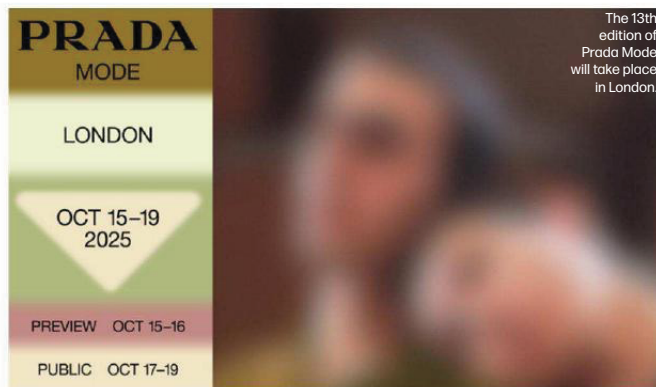
BY MARTINO CARRERA

MILAN – Exactly 20 years after erecting Prada Marfa – the permanent art installation in the desert along Route 90 in Jeff Davis County, Texas – artistic duo Elmgreen & Dragset have scooped their first collaboration with the Prada brand.

To be sure, the Prada Marfa installation – a freestanding faux Prada storefront filled with bags and accessories from the Italian luxury house that has gained cult status – was an independent project from the Berlin-based artists, never affiliated with the brand.

Until now, the duo has been conscripted for the next installment of Prada Mode, which is heading back to the Old Continent, after a few editions in far-flung destinations. The 13th iteration of the architectural and cultural activation will take place between Oct. 15 and 19 in London to coincide with fine art fair Frieze London.

For the five-day event, Prada and Elmgreen & Dragset are taking over the Town Hall, the 1937 landmark in King's



The 13th edition of Prada Mode will take place in London.

Cross that was recently restored into a cultural and events venue.

In Prada's usual cross-pollination of media, the activation's centerpiece, titled "The Audience," is a movie theater-like space scattered with five life-size human sculptures mimicking cinemagoers in different poses.

An additional hyper-realistic sculpture of a female sitting at a café table, named "The Conversation," interacts with the movie screen, which is to project a film written by the artistic duo.

Intended as a short snippet seemingly taken from a feature-length drama movie, the clip shows a painter and writer discussing their creative practices and is meant to explore "spectatorship in the age of image overload, hyperconnectivity, and attention deficit," Prada said.

"The Audience" is a work about spectatorship and redirecting the gaze of the visitors. As artists, we have often been interested in making exhibitions where the audience's attention is pulled in conflicting directions, spaces that

would encourage a degree of uncertainty and where the spectator has to actively navigate seemingly familiar environments in new ways," Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset, an artistic duo since 1995, said in a statement. "Being part of an audience in a cinema or theater implies being one of many, of sharing an experience, a moment within a spatial choreography. In 'The Audience,' that shared experience becomes visible and the audience becomes part of the narrative itself," they said.

While the collaboration is Elmgreen & Dragset's first with the Prada brand, Fondazione Prada, the Milan- and Venice-based art institution led by Miuccia Prada and her husband Patrizio Bertelli, hosted the duo's "Useless Bodies?" exhibit in 2022 in Milan.

As for previous editions, Prada Mode London will feature a full agenda of events and activations, including talks, conversations, film screenings and performances, in addition to DJ sets.

Earlier this year, Prada Mode traveled to Osaka and Inujima island, Japan, and Abu

Dhabi. The former event held last June was the result of a partnership with Kazuyo Sejima, the cofounder of architecture and design firm SANAA, as reported, while last February's iteration in the United Arab Emirates' city was held held at the MiZa district and developed in collaboration with multidisciplinary artist Theaster Gates.

Last year Prada Mode touched down in Los Angeles, presenting the third edition of The Double Club, a project by Carsten Höller, in collaboration with Luna Luna at the Luna Luna Studio.

In 2023 Prada Mode took place in association with the Tokyo metropolitan government and the Teien Art Museum, one of Japan's main institutions. It was hosted and curated by Sejima.

The inaugural Prada Mode was staged during Art Basel Miami Beach in 2018. The following year the format touched down at Art Basel Hong Kong and Frieze London, while in 2020 Prada brought the members' club to Paris and to Shanghai, where the brand invited producer, director and writer Jia Zhangke to transform the Prada Rong Zhai villa with a site-specific installation called "Miän" based on his cinematic work.

In 2021, the COVID-19-disrupted edition in Moscow was held in December, while in February 2022 the format touched down in Los Angeles during Frieze featuring a collaboration with artist Martine Syms.

In November 2022, Prada Mode headed to Dubai with a reprise of Damien Hirst's "Pharmacy" installation at the ICD Brookfield Place, a skyscraper designed by Foster + Partners in the heart of the city's International Financial Centre.

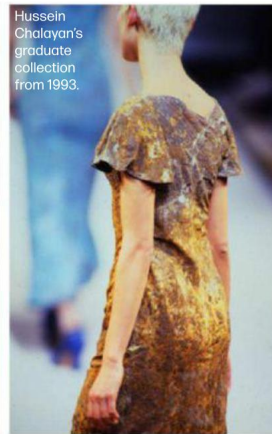
Past iterations featured works and installations by several artists, directors and photographers, such as Jamie Diamond, Kate Crawford, Trevor Paglen, Lee Sook-Kyung, Kim Jee-Woon, Yeon Sang-ho and Jeong Dahee, in addition to Gates, Zhangke, Hirst and Syms, among others.

EYE

Where to Go, Eat, Shop For London Fashion Week



"Marie Antoinette Style" at the V&A museum.



Hussein Chalayan's graduate collection from 1993.



Nordic Poetry



A look inside Alta.

- New exhibitions and restaurants are opening in time for the event, which runs from Thursday through Monday.

BY SAMANTHA CONTI, HIKMAT MOHAMMED, TIANWEI ZHANG AND VIOLET GOLDSTONE

What to See

'Reign of Fashion'

The artist Bradley Theodore is hosting a live painting show on Thursday at Clarendon Fine Art in Mayfair, where he will be painting an Hermès Birkin bag in his colorful style, followed by an exhibition running until Sept. 29 inspired by Marie Antoinette, who is also the subject of a major exhibition at the Victoria & Albert museum.

46 Dover Street, London W1S 4FF

'Dirty Looks'

Fashion likes it dirty. Or at least according to the Barbican's new exhibition "Dirty Looks," it does. Exploring high fashion's relationship with filth, designers under the spotlight include Hussein Chalayan, Alexander McQueen, Vivienne Westwood, Miguel Adrover, Helmut Lang, and Dilara Findikoglu. From Maison Margiela's spring 2005 button-down shirt covered in lipstick kisses to pieces from Paolo Carzana's fall 2025 collection, grime is explored as a political statement, rather than social faux pas.

Silk Street, Barbican, London, EC2Y 8DS

'Blitz: The Club That Shaped the 80s'

The Design Museum is celebrating all things Blitz and glamour with its exhibition "Blitz: The Club That Shaped the 80s." Exploring how London's Blitz nightclub influenced

'80s club culture, the show highlights fixtures at the club. Blitz Kids included Boy George, Spandau Ballet, Visage, fashion designer Stephen Linard, milliner Stephen Jones and "Game of Thrones" costume designer Michele Clapton.

224-238 Kensington High Street, London, W8 6AG

'Marie Antoinette Style'

The big Marie Antoinette exhibition at the V&A showcases more than just the queen's personal effects and impact on contemporary fashion. The V&A has commissioned original artwork, too, including a large-scale porcelain sculpture by the Brooklyn-based artist Beth Katleman. The work "Marie Antoinette's Folly," is meant to evoke the opulence of Versailles, and is inspired by pastoral toile de Jouy patterns and the frothy paintings of Fragonard.

Composed of more than 4,500 cast and handmade porcelain elements including toys, dolls and other knick-knacks, it's sweet, with a sinister edge, and tells the life story of the controversial royal. It's meant to be a parable of "decadence and decline," according to Katleman, who is no stranger to fashion. She has also created large-scale, permanent installations for Dior flagship boutiques in London and Hong Kong. "Marie Antoinette Style," which is sponsored by Manolo Blahnik, runs from Saturday until March 22, 2026.

Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, SW7 2RL

Where to Eat

Ce La Vi

Fashion week coping mechanisms come in many forms, including getting high. If that's a priority, head to Ce La Vi, a restaurant, bar, and lounge that specializes in rooftop dining. Offering a contemporary take on Asian cuisine, like miso sea bass with green Szechuan sauce, lobster noodles, and a range of dim sum, diners can eat, drink, and be merry while overlooking London.

17 & 18, 1 Paddington Square Floors, London, W2 1DL

Carbone at the The Chancery Rosewood

Want a taste of New York post-NYFW? Carbone, one of Manhattan's hottest Italian-American eateries, has just opened its doors at the Chancery Rosewood. Housed in the former American Embassy, the restaurant brings a bit of old-school New York flair with cozy red velvet booths and paneled walls. Diners will be able to tuck into Carbone's signature spicy rigatoni vodka, or try the risotto – a new menu item exclusive to London.

30 Grosvenor Square, London, W1K

Alta

Kingly Court in Soho has welcomed its biggest, and arguably most interesting, restaurant yet with Alta, where the chef is an El Bulli veteran, and the menu is filled with Basque specialties made with local ingredients. Headed by chef Rob Roy Cameron, the food is inspired by the open fire cooking of northern Spain, made with local ingredients. The recipes include British vinegars and oils, heritage breed pork from Dorset, beef from the Lake District, and fish from the southwest coast.

The menu features a world of escabeche dishes; gooseberry sea bass crudo, and sardine empanada with piparra emulsion. The restaurant is also tapping into the Basque country's cider culture, and is serving a selection of the alcoholic apple juice from U.K. producers; sherries, and a Spanish vermouth on tap. Alta is part of the new MAD Restaurants group, and follows the opening of Moi, a Japanese-inspired grill and omakase bar, on nearby Wardour Street in Soho, over the summer.

Kingly Court, Soho, W1B 5PW

Where to shop

Poetic License

Founded in 2007 by the Swedish, London-based stylist Ameli Lindgren, Nordic Poetry curates and sells archive luxury fashion, including statement pieces from Dior, Chanel, Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood and John Galiano. Lindgren said she started the Shoreditch-based Nordic Poetry "because I saw a gap between mainstream vintage and true luxury retail. Vintage has often been associated with either affordable thrift finds or hyper-curated archival pieces reserved for fashion insiders. I wanted to create a space that sits in between. For me, it's about making luxury vintage not just collectible, but also aspirational and accessible in a contemporary way." Lindgren said that, of late, she's seeing a "huge appetite for 'stealth luxury' – clean, minimal pieces from houses like Prada, Jil Sander, and Gucci/YSL by Tom Ford." Galiano's work for Dior is also hugely desirable among fashion insiders, especially his gowns and bias-cut dresses, she said.

Nordic Poetry, 141 Bethnal Green Road, Shoreditch, London, E2 7DG

Tartan: The Barbour Way

Barbour is embracing the tartan like never before with a pop-up on Carnaby Street. The space's exterior has been covered in the brand's signature tartan. The free ticketed event dives into Barbour's 130-year history with live loom artists at work. The space will include a bar in collaboration with Belmond, imitating the interiors of the Royal Scotsman train.

5-7 Carnaby Street, London, W1F 9PB

Where to Treat Yourself

The Six in Mayfair

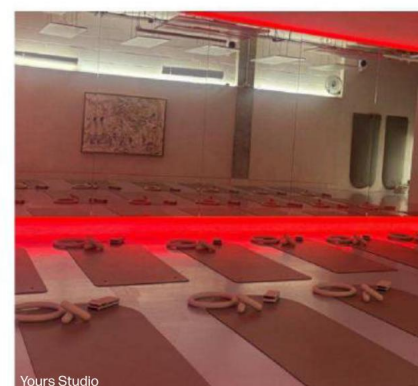
The Six in Mayfair is a one-stop shop for all beauty needs, offering services for hair, skin and nails. Set in a Grade II Georgian townhouse, the building's wood parquet floors and crown moldings are a beauty treatment in their own right. But if that's not enough, pop by whether looking for a hair color refresh or just to unwind with a massage.

6 Queen Street, London, W1J 5PA

Yours Studio

Feel hot and look even hotter after a class at Yours, a fitness studio in Hackney Wick that offers heated sculpt and Pilates classes. The low-impact workouts strengthen and tone the body, while the infrared heat aims to help muscle endurance and activation. If working out isn't on the agenda, it's worth going just to escape London's fall chill.

3 Prince Edward Road, London, E9 5LX



Yours Studio

Retail

Date

9/18

**NEW
THIS WEEK!**

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Rising Prices in a Crowded Marketplace: What's a Company to Do?

ROB GORIN, senior managing director, Getzler Henrich & Associates, shows what the food industry can teach apparel when it comes to pricing.

Listen Now!

Hanna Andersson Bets Big on Digital and Personal Shopping

IAN FREDERICKS, CEO of Hilco Global Capital Solutions and the executive director of Hilco Global's retail and consumer platform, chats with Hanna Andersson CEO **AIMÉE LAPIC** on the brand's digital sales model, future category expansions and that fiercely loyal customer base.

WWD SOURCING JOURNAL

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The Reviews

Palomo

Alejandro Gómez Palomo celebrated the start of a new chapter for his Palomo label with a show at Madrid Fashion Week.

"It's a return to the roots, to where it all started," said the Spanish designer, who previously staged runway displays in New York City and Paris.

With a new investor and chief executive officer, the brand is in transformation mode as it gears up for its 10th anniversary in 2026. So far this year, it has rebranded as Palomo from Palomo Spain, launched womenswear, and moved its headquarters to Madrid from his hometown of Posadas in southern Spain.

It's fair to say that Palomo also shed his skin, to a degree. Gone were the fringes, feathers and faux fur of his last New York outing a year ago. Instead, he channeled his signature genderfluid aesthetic into crisp, wearable pieces in a light palette inspired by Sofia Coppola's films.

Models paraded through a ballroom in the recently renovated Palace hotel for the lunchtime show.

Lampshade dresses with petticoat skirts came in sugared almond shades, while graphic contrasting bows appeared on everything from peplum leather jackets

to crisp poplin blouses and slinky ribbed knit tube dresses.

For the men, there were fresh takes on the twin set: think matching jackets and short shorts in pastel leather, cotton or taffeta, for a sweetly subversive effect. Billowing shirts covered in Swarovski crystals and ruffle appliqué trim should please his core clientele.

While it represented a major departure, Palomo said designing his first fully fledged women's collection was easier than expected.

"It's been something that has stressed me for years: I wanted to do womenswear, and I was kind of insecure," Palomo said. "Now that I'm doing it, I realize that it's exactly the same process, the same references, the same ideas — only different bodies."

He titled the line "Eighteen" because it was both his 18th collection and a coming of age moment. "It was perfect, because that's what we feel right now as well: that we're becoming an adult, being independent, leaving home," he said.

The confident show signaled the brand is gearing up for the next stage of growth, with footwear and handbags in the pipeline. "We're ready to take on the world," Palomo said with a grin.

— Joelle Diderich



BUSINESS

Tanger Purchases Kansas Outlet Center

- The purchase of Legends Outlets marks Tanger's entry into Kansas and the seventh open air center acquired by the company since 2022.

BY DAVID MOIN

Tanger has extended its streak of retail property acquisitions by purchasing Legends Outlets, a 690,000-square-foot open-air outlet center in Kansas City, Kan., for approximately \$130 million.

The acquisition of Legends Outlets represents Tanger's entry into the state. Since 2022, Tanger has acquired six open air centers around the country, including

four outlet centers. The company also built and opened an outlet center in Nashville in October 2023.

"I remember the Legends center when it was first built. I've always liked it. It's the scale, it's one of our largest outlet centers but it's quite manageable, and its in a rapidly growing part of Kansas," Stephen Yalof, president and chief executive officer of Tanger, told WWD.

He also pointed out that the center anchors Village West, a 1,500-acre master-planned community which is considered the state's top tourist destination. Village West is occupied by the NASCAR-owned Kansas Speedway, Hollywood Casino, Azura Amphitheatre, Great Wolf

Lodge, Margaritaville Hotel, the National Agriculture Center and Hall of Fame, and the HomeField KCK youth sports complex, as well as the Compass Minerals National Performance Center soccer training facility and Children's Mercy Park stadium for soccer. The area continues to grow rapidly, with Mattel Adventure Park, Topgolf, and the state's first Bucee's under development, as well as additional hospitality, entertainment, and residential projects.

"The destination draws from hundreds of miles," Yalof said.

With the addition of Legends Outlets, Tanger now has a portfolio of 38 outlet centers and three open-air lifestyle centers comprising more than 16 million square feet in 22 states and Canada. Legends Outlets will be renamed Tanger Kansas City at Legends.

The Greensboro, N.C.-based real estate investment trust used available liquidity and assumed a \$115 million commercial mortgage-backed security loan that matures in November 2027 to close the deal.

In conjunction with the transaction, Tanger settled approximately \$70 million of previously issued forward equity. The company estimates the center will deliver an 8 percent return during the first year, with potential for additional investment and growth over time.

Legends is the only outlet center in Kansas. Located at I-70 and I-435, Legends is 93 percent occupied and features more than 100 stores, restaurants, and entertainment venues, according to Tanger. Among the tenants are Nike, Aerie, Buckle, Bath & Body Works, Coach, HomeGoods, Sephora, Victoria's Secret, Under Armour, Puma, Tory Burch, Kate Spade, Michael Kors and Duluth Trading Company.

On the entertainment and food and

beverage side, the center also houses AMC Theatres, Dave & Buster's, Yard House, Panera Bread, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Five Guys and Cold Stone Creamery. There is also a Residence Inn by Marriott where Tanger is the ground lessor, along with the separately owned Legends 267 Apartments. Tanger indicated that the center is designed with an expansive central green space, courtyards, and fountains, and stages a public art series celebrating legendary Kansans.

Over the last few years purchased Tanger Asheville; Bridge Street Town Center in Huntsville, Ala.; Pinecrest Center in Cleveland; The Promenade at Chenal in Little Rock, Ark.; Tanger Outlets Palm Beach, and Legends Outlets.

Additional acquisitions by Tanger are likely. "We are very active in the acquisitions market now," said Yalof. "Our balance sheet is in extraordinary good shape and we access to capital. There are a lot of things being actively marketed, and our team has identified a number of locations that would be great fits in our portfolio and we are going after those off market."

In his prepared statement on the acquisition, Yalof said, "Legends in Kansas City aligns perfectly with our strategy to acquire well-located, open-air centers supported by strong residential and economic market fundamentals. Anchoring the state's premier entertainment district, Legends offers a holistic shopping experience, with the brands, dining, and entertainment options today's shoppers want, surrounded by numerous traffic-driving attractions. We look forward to enhancing the center's productivity through Tanger's proven leasing, operating, and marketing platforms."



VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW



Loewe maxi anagram, acetate frame with maxi anagram logo;
Nina Ricci wool gabardine jacket with velvet bow and mini skirt; Commando tights.



The Vision Expo trade show is back in Las Vegas with the latest trends in technology, eye care, eyewear and more.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE TOMPKINS

The show floor at Vision Expo West.



Vision Expo West Returns to Las Vegas

The trade show is back at the Venetian Expo from Wednesday to Saturday. BY THOMAS WALLER

Vision Expo West returns to the Venetian Expo in Las Vegas from Wednesday to Saturday, the last edition in the West before the exhibition shifts into a new singular cadence beginning in March.

The event will take place against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, partially fueled by the Trump administration's tariffs policy, and major changes in the sector, not the least of which is the news last week that VSP Vision, parent company of Marchon, plans to acquire Italian eyewear group Marcolin for an undisclosed amount. The combined group will own brands stretching from Zeiss, Linda Farrow and Calvin Klein to Tom Ford, Zegna, Christian Louboutin, ic! berlin, Guess and many others.

Co-owned by RX and The Vision Council, this year's Vision Expo West introduces a lineup of elevated activations that highlight the technologies, trends and creatives charting the future of vision care and eyewear globally.

The 2025 edition features a newly redesigned exhibit hall organized into four distinct areas: eyewear; eye care; independent design, and tech and innovation.

A redesign debuted at Vision Expo East earlier this year, and the response "was overwhelmingly positive," said Ashley Mills, chief executive officer of The Vision Council. "The goal was to create a more seamless and intuitive experience for attendees by clearly segmenting the show floor into four areas. This allows attendees to more easily navigate, discover products and engage with the areas most relevant to them, while also enjoying new activations, food and beverage options and networking spaces woven throughout the show floor."

In step with an evolving industry, technology sits at the forefront of the show, with the tech and innovation area showcasing the latest diagnostic devices, treatment tools, software platforms and retail technologies. These sit alongside breakthroughs in eye care such as AI-powered diagnostics, smart lenses, robotic and laser-assisted surgical tools, regenerative therapies, innovative pharmacology advancements and next-generation wearable technologies.

Activations will take place across the show floor. LaunchPad, a showcase of more than 25 start-up companies ranging from early to late stage, is set to be a highlight. This year it

features the six finalists of the VSP Vision Innovation Challenge, each of whom has gone through a four-week bootcamp with Matter, the health care incubator, to refine their pitches and solutions.

"These companies are presenting cutting-edge work in AI, VR, AR and diagnostic innovations, everything from AI-powered decision support for early disease detection to AR glasses restoring functional sight, to VR-based vision therapy," Mills explained.

Some of the early-stage finalists may secure a \$400,000 investment from Topcon Healthcare's Thinc Ventures. The competition winners will be revealed during the live pitch event with audience participation on Thursday at 4 p.m. on the main stage.

The Indie Lab Speakeasy highlights an important element of the show each year – the chance for attendees to network. It is a dedicated space where independent labs can gather, share insights and connect with customers and partners in a relaxed environment.

"It provides visibility and a collective voice for this important segment of the industry," the CEO said. "With GSRX's sponsorship, the speakeasy has been elevated as a central hub for indie labs, reinforcing their role as innovators and essential partners within the optical supply chain."

Additionally, the Meeting Zone offers yet another dedicated space for one-on-one networking.

The Platinum Club brings together a space with exclusive access for million-dollar practices, media and influencers who receive early and extended access to the show floor. Open during show hours, it offers a private retreat on the busy show floor, with complimentary food and beverage, workspaces, charging stations and areas designed for meetings or media interviews.

Other new activations include a VSP Beer Garden, an eclectic spot to relax with themed drinks and mini golf; the Conferee Café, a French-inspired lounge sponsored by Hoya Independent Design Lounge, a space with daily barista service and TVC Bar where attendees can enjoy coffee, happy hours and meet experts from The Vision Council's government relations and research teams.

The UOA OptiCon Hub is a dedicated space with specialized programming for

opticians, presented by the United Opticians Association. It is designed exclusively for opticians, and features interactive workshops on practice growth, technical skills and industry trends, alongside accredited continuing education. A highlight of this year's program is the OptiCon General Session on the main stage, "Dream Big: The Future of Opticianry in the 21st Century," led by David Friedfeld, president and co-owner of ClearVision Optical, which will explore the trends shaping the profession's future.

Over on the main stage, there will be discussions and presentations on practice management, the future of the industry, advancements, trends and staffing and leadership development, alongside a pitch competition and award presentations.

The VSP Vision Innovation Challenge Awards on Thursday are expected to be a standout moment. The six finalists – three early stage and three later stage – will live pitch on-stage before the crowning of the winner.

On Friday at 4 p.m. there will be Invision's 2025 America's Finest Optical Retailer Award Presentation & Champagne Toast. The award celebrates the most innovative optical retailer in the U.S., chosen by a panel of industry judges. The winner will receive their trophy and \$1,000 from Vision Expo, followed by a Champagne toast.

The Flaunt the Frame Eyewear Fashion Show will take place on Friday at 4:40 p.m., hosted by Eyecare Business. It will showcase the latest trends in eyewear design, style and craftsmanship.

This year's education programming offers more than 270 hours of accredited and nonaccredited content, including 13 hours of free COPE-approved content and OptiCon @ Vision Expo programming, presented by the United Opticians Association.

New for 2025 will be the Summits series, one-hour, CE-accredited sessions to provide fast-paced insights on trending issues across eye care based on proprietary research only at Vision Expo. Attendees can engage with peers in an interactive learning environment featuring real-world cases and practical applications.

The Refractive Program is a collaboration between optometry and ophthalmology offering CE-accredited

sessions focused on refractive and cataract care, while the Technology Showcase is a dive into hands-on product learning in a space that connects classroom learning with exhibit hall solutions.

Now by Vision Expo, the trend showcase and award program celebrating innovation in eyewear, launched its first Now Design Competition, a challenge to rethink what eyewear could be.

Under the theme "Visionaries of Tomorrow," the competition called on designers, students, eye care professionals and creators from around the world to submit conceptual or functional designs for all eyewear or optical accessories. From avant-garde frames to accessories and technology-infused designs, participants were invited to explore how eyewear can redefine personal expression, enhance health and shape fashion for the future.

The inaugural five finalists are Arcatura by David Minich; Luman Vantage by Rosebell Gicheru; Orbit Progressives by Jennifer Wicks; See Beyond by Haoxuan Huang, and The Cinematic Frame by Dohn Ash.

Finalist designs and project descriptions will be showcased at Vision Expo West 2025 in the Now Pavilion from Thursday to Saturday, with attendees able to preview the entries and vote for their favorites. The Now creative team will make the final selection.

The Grand Prize winner will be revealed on Jan. 15, and their design will be featured in the Now Trends Showcase at Vision Expo in Orlando from March 12 to 14.

Planning for March has already begun and the Las Vegas show will include an Orlando 2026 Pop-up, a space to preview and plan for Vision Expo 2026 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando. It comes with perks, daily chances to win all-expense-paid trips and Michelin-star restaurant vouchers. "The goal is for our community to get more information and share feedback," the CEO said.

"Vision Expo is where the vision community gathers to move the industry forward," Mills said. "By bringing together groundbreaking innovations, education that empowers, and a vibrant community of professionals, Vision Expo West reflects our industry's shared commitment to growth, collaboration and shaping the future of eye care," she said.



Ahlem Opens Its Largest Boutique on Melrose Place

Founder Ahlem Manai-Platt is based in Paris, but considers L.A. a formative place for her eyewear as objects.

BY THOMAS WALLER



Here and below: Renderings of Ahlem's new Melrose Place store.

Luxury eyewear brand Ahlem has landed on Melrose Place, bringing its unique take on materials and craftsmanship – founder Ahlem Manai-Platt views eyewear as objects – into a new selling space, the brand's second in Los Angeles.

"I dreamed all my life for a store on Melrose," founder and creative director Manai-Platt told WWD.

Born in Paris to Tunisian parents, the creative calls the French capital home but launched Ahlem in L.A. in 2014 and she still considers it a formative place. "Los Angeles has been very important to me. I lived there for many years, and the city gave me a sense of freedom, light and openness – all of that shaped the way I create," she said.

The new flagship "atelier," as all her boutiques are known, sits at 8478-A Melrose Place and is the handcrafted eyewear brand's largest to date. It continues a creative dialogue of creating a space alongside architect Maja Bernvill, who created the Ahlem Paris atelier. Melrose sees Bernvill and Manai-Platt muse on the legacy of Austrian American modernist Rudolph Schindler and the conceptual approach of Japanese artist Hiroshi Sugimoto.

The space engages customers with ideas

on light, flow and materials. Manai-Platt sees the materials used as an expression of thought and mood. "I wanted the Melrose space to offer that same emotional resonance: a quiet intensity, where architecture invites you to feel rather than simply see," she said.

Each material was carefully chosen: oiled dark American walnut – a California native – anchors it with warmth; Marmorino, a lime-based plaster, is hand-finished with Savon de Marseille soap to achieve a radiant, natural sheen, and raw corten steel, weathered to reveal its powerful inherent properties, forms a protective, textural shield around the space.

"I really do imagine the stores as the temple for the object," she said of her new flagship. "You feel the vibe, the calmness."

Upon entering, clients are greeted with an austere yet calming space where craft is king, displaying frames handcrafted by artisans in Oyonnax, France. "When you are inside, you have the connection of the metal, the plaster and the glass," which all bring the space together, she said.

Melrose has a first for the brand – a private room where clients can engage with the creations on a more personal level. It's here that Manai-Platt meets with

clients for the ultimate expression of her creative spirit with her one-of-one program. She assesses their need through conversation and sketches, crafting a singular style that will only be made once. Clients can thank LeBron James for the idea; it was born out of her creating six one-of-a-kind pairs for the NBA legend.

"With knowing that I can design for LeBron, then I realized I can then do this with any face," she said, adding while it is

a luxury product, it's really solving a problem for people who have tried other eyewear brands "and couldn't find something that really fit, not only physically, but also inside their core, what they actually want to say about themselves wearing glasses."

As she continues to expand her retail footprint, each location will now have a private space included, furthering the concept.

In an eyewear category that continues to expand with new players with brands chasing celebrity and adding smart technology, Manai-Platt trusts her gut, moving with purpose. "Look at our product – nothing screams," she said. "This is exactly what we continue to do. It feels authentic."

It hasn't always been an easy decision to not follow the pack and not "make it big and loud. But when I looked at myself, I said, 'Would I like this? Would I want to wear a frame that is in that conversation. Why do I want to be part of a company that is in that conversation?'"

Manai-Platt said her goal is never to fulfill every category. "It's too much. We're just going to grow smart."

Over the last 11 years, outside investors with luxury marquee names have approached with offers, but she has declined until this past year, taking on an investment from 1686 Partners and naming former Thélios executive Enrico Sanavia as chief executive officer.

"I know the respect of the craft they have," she said of 1686 Partners, founded by David Wertheimer, son of Chanel co-owner Gérard Wertheimer. "I know that the Chanel group has helped artisans to actually survive and not to squeeze them for production."

The evolution is helping her to expand but thoughtfully. "The Ahlem identity and voice is so discreet, it's so 'if you know, you know,' but stores have to be open in the major cities so people can actually link to this conversation," she said.

And with Melrose opening by the end of September, she already has her eyes set on a second location in Manhattan, with plans to also expand her Paris flagship.

"We're creating something that will last forever and will authentically be us," Manai-Platt said.

Ahlem's handcrafted frames.





Brunson (left): Loewe signature double frame, acetate frame and metal rim with anagram logo; Emporio Armani wool jacket; Gucci cotton shirt; Ralph Lauren Purple Label pants; Giorgio Armani velvet tie; Scarosso shoes; Schiaparelli handbag.

Addison: Prada acetate sunglasses; Gucci wool jacket; Emporio Armani cotton shirt and wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie; Ralph Lauren Purple Label shoes.

Erika (right): Balenciaga bio nylon and bio injection double frames; Stella McCartney RWS wool dress and boots; Kiki De Montparnasse silk bra with lace insets; Versace calf leather gloves; Lele Sadoughi sapphire drop earring; Jennifer Behr gold-plated earring.

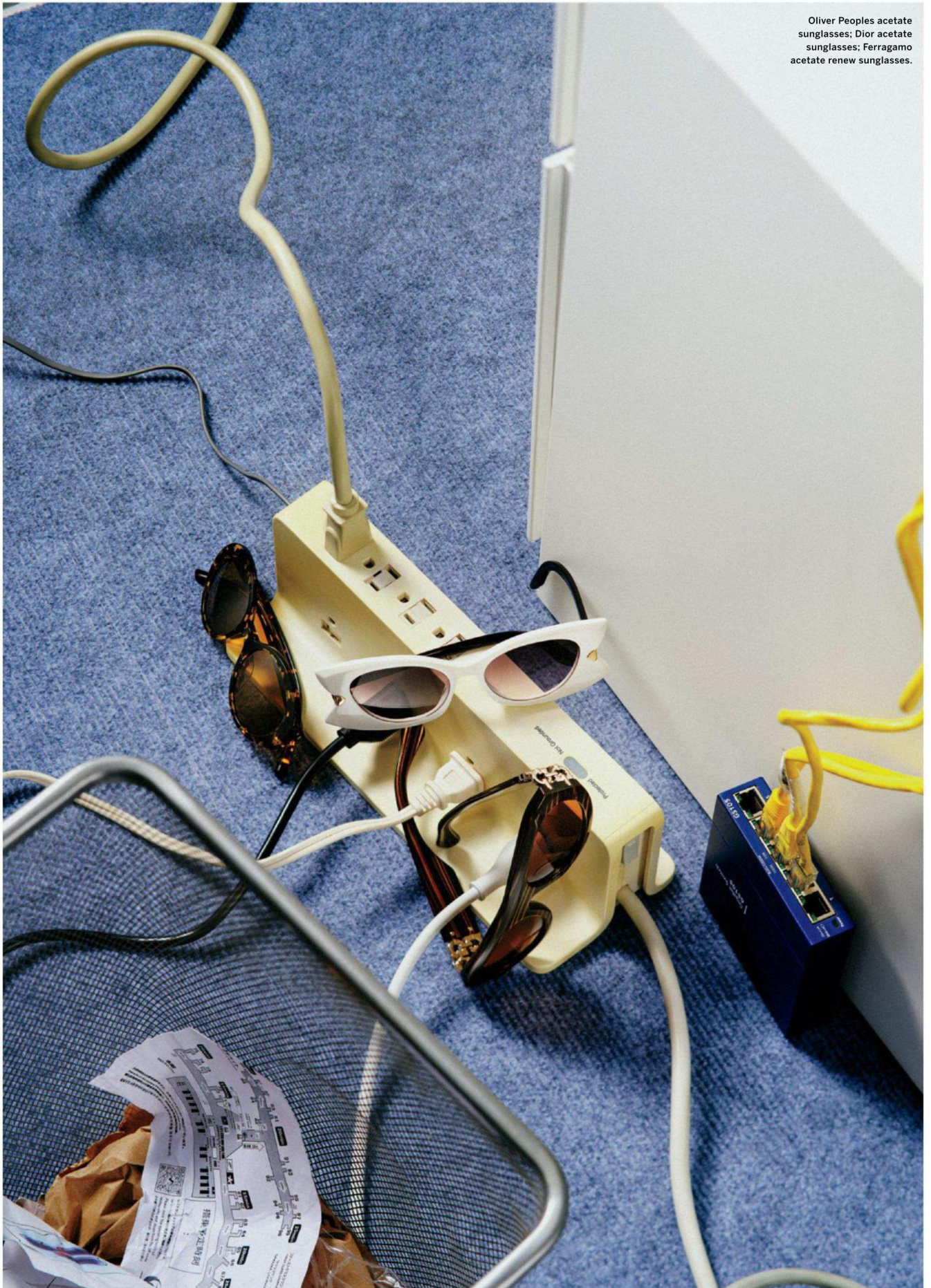
OFFICE VIEW

It's back to work for the season's biggest eyewear trends, including frames in geometric, sporty and shield styles.

Fashion photographs by **Caroline Tompkins**
Still life photographs by **Ryan Jeng**
Styled by **Alex Badia**



Oliver Peoples acetate sunglasses; Dior acetate sunglasses; Ferragamo acetate renew sunglasses.





MARCHON | ALTAIR

vsp vision companies

ANNE KLEIN	JOSEPH ABBOUD
BEBE	KENDRA SCOTT
CALVIN KLEIN	KARL LAGERFELD
CALVIN KLEIN JEANS	LACOSTE
CANADA GOOSE	LENTON & RUSBY
COLE HAAN	LINDA FARROW*
COLUMBIA	LIU JO
CONVERSE	LONGCHAMP
CUTLER AND GROSS*	MARCHON NYC
DKNY	MCALLISTER
DONNA KARAN	NAUTICA
DRAGON	NIKE
DRAPER JAMES	NINE WEST
FERRAGAMO	PAUL SMITH
FLEXON	PURE
GENESIS	SPYDER
JOE JOSEPH ABBOUD	ZEISS



FAIRCHILD STUDIO X MARCHON

Calvin Klein Eyewear's Fall 2025 Styles Feature New CK Emblem Logo

The new logo featured across its **SUNGLASSES** and **OPTICAL** reinterprets the iconic Calvin Klein monogram.



Calvin Klein style CK25540 in black.

Left to right: Calvin Klein style CK25538S in dark havana, CK25539S in black.

Calvin Klein style CK25539S in black.

Calvin Klein style CK25548 in black.

CALVIN KLEIN EYEWEAR has unveiled new sunglasses and optical styles for fall 2025, with standout styles from the assortment featuring the CK emblem – a new logo treatment that refreshes the brand’s iconic monogram.

This season, Marchon, Calvin Klein’s global licensee partner for more than 30 years, has integrated the new CK emblem logo across select eyewear styles, aligning with the brand’s release of underwear, apparel and accessories that also feature the new print.

A bold reinterpretation of the signature Calvin Klein monogram, the minimal,

graphic CK emblem print has been utilized in two ways: embellished on the metal wire and lasered across the entire temple.

The styles are constructed from Acetate Renew – made from bio-based and certified recycled material – and feature seven-barrel hinges along with bold new profile styles courtesy of the new temple designs.

For sunglasses, the CK25538S style, available in dark havana, black, gray and khaki colorways, has a modified rectangular front with a Calvin Klein logo accent at the temple with the allover monogram pattern laser-engraved onto the core wire.

The CK25539S angular style, available in black and transparent versions of brown,

green and blue, similarly showcases the laser-engraved allover pattern across the temple and a metal square logo featuring the CK emblem.

Within its new optical, the CK25548 takes on a similar shape to the CK25539S style. Available in black and transparent brown, khaki and blue colorways, this optical has a navigator-shaped front with a broad, statement-making silhouette. The temples are laser-engraved with the new allover monogram and feature a square metal CK emblem accent.

To round out the collection, the CK25549 shape takes cues from the CK25539S with a streamlined cat-eye optical style, with the new design

showcasing the allover monogram pattern on the core wire. The frames are available in black and Havana and transparent rose and burgundy colors.

“We value and continue to nurture our longstanding relationship with Calvin Klein. Our teams work collaboratively to ensure that Calvin Klein’s DNA is always at the forefront – taking notes from the brand’s iconic design, heritage and creative vision with each eyewear collection,” said Thomas Burkhardt, president of Marchon Eyewear Inc.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
MARCHON
BY HUGO BOSS COMPANY



Calvin Klein



Lacoste's New Lacoste Icons Campaign Draws From Its Heritage

The fall 2025 campaign takes cues from the **FRENCH BRAND'S HERITAGE** and ties to tennis.



▼▶
Lacoste style L6071S
in transparent yellow.

▼
Lacoste style L6071S
in dark Havana.

▲
Lacoste style L4003
in transparent dark green.

▼▶
Lacoste style L6071S in black.

▼
Lacoste style L4003 in Havana.

LACOSTE's latest campaign for its fall 2025 collection, Lacoste Icons, pays homage to the brand's roots since its founding in 1933. Drawing inspiration from its deep-seated heritage in tennis, it has been reinterpreted for the modern day with a sophisticated twist.

The three pillars of the brand represented in the visual language are the Lacoste crocodile, tennis ball and tennis racket. The crocodile was the nickname of French tennis player and founder René Lacoste; the name came from the courage and

determination he had on court. Wearing Lacoste means being daring – standing out and moving forward decisively.

The tennis ball symbolizes the founder's innovative spirit in designing the damper tennis ball machines, which is woven through the brand's never-ending evolution and pursuit of tech. The tennis racket symbolizes the intersection of fashion and sports with the brand's athletic heritage, merging aesthetics and functionality.

The optical and sunglasses concept was first derived from fashion-forward frames seen at Lacoste's spring 2025 fashion

show by Pelagia Kolotouros, creative director of Lacoste. The brand has launched a more commercialized version of the model that is elegant, bold and a fresh take on classic silhouettes.

Designed for both men and women, the L6071S sunglasses in acetate feature a modified rectangular front that's been sculpted to create a faceted effect. Its temple boasts a custom core wire and metal tips engraved with all of Lacoste's motifs of the crocodile, tennis ball and tennis racket and offered in dark Havana for the latest campaign alongside black,

transparent grey and transparent yellow.

For men's optical, the L4003 frame has a similarly bold modified rectangular front crafted from acetate with metal details throughout. Available in transparent dark green, transparent brown, black and Havana hues, the custom core wire on the temple features engraved details and the signature Lacoste crocodile brand emblem. 🐊

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





LACOSTE
EYEWEAR





The world fluttered. Her gaze held.



FERRAGAMO
FIRENZE



KENDRA SCOTT



DKNY

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bebe



NIKE FLYFREE INFINITY

INTERCHANGE LENS SYSTEM



Color Shown:
World Indigo / Green Mirror Lens

Secondary Lens:
Volt Low-Light Lens

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LOVE,
Chuck

CONVERSE 

CONVE



It is one thing to be looked at, and another to be seen.



FERRAGAMO
FIRENZE

ferragamo.com

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW



Paul Smith acetate sunglasses.



Max Mara metal sunglasses; Celine triomphe metal sunglasses; Persol metal sunglasses.

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW

WWD



Tom Ford metal sunglasses; Versace wool jacket, silk satin bodysuit, and metal bracelet; Gucci shoes; Commando tights; Yvonne Léon yellow gold feline stud ear jacket with tsavorites and gray and black diamonds; Jennifer Behr gold-plated earring with crystal pearl; 1970s FFR vintage yellow gold necklace.



Brunson: Marc Jacobs rimless shape with metal frame and temples in acetate and metal chain sunglasses; Khaite leather jacket over Emporio Armani wool jacket; Gucci cotton shirt; Ralph Lauren Purple Label pants; Ralph Lauren Purple Label tie.

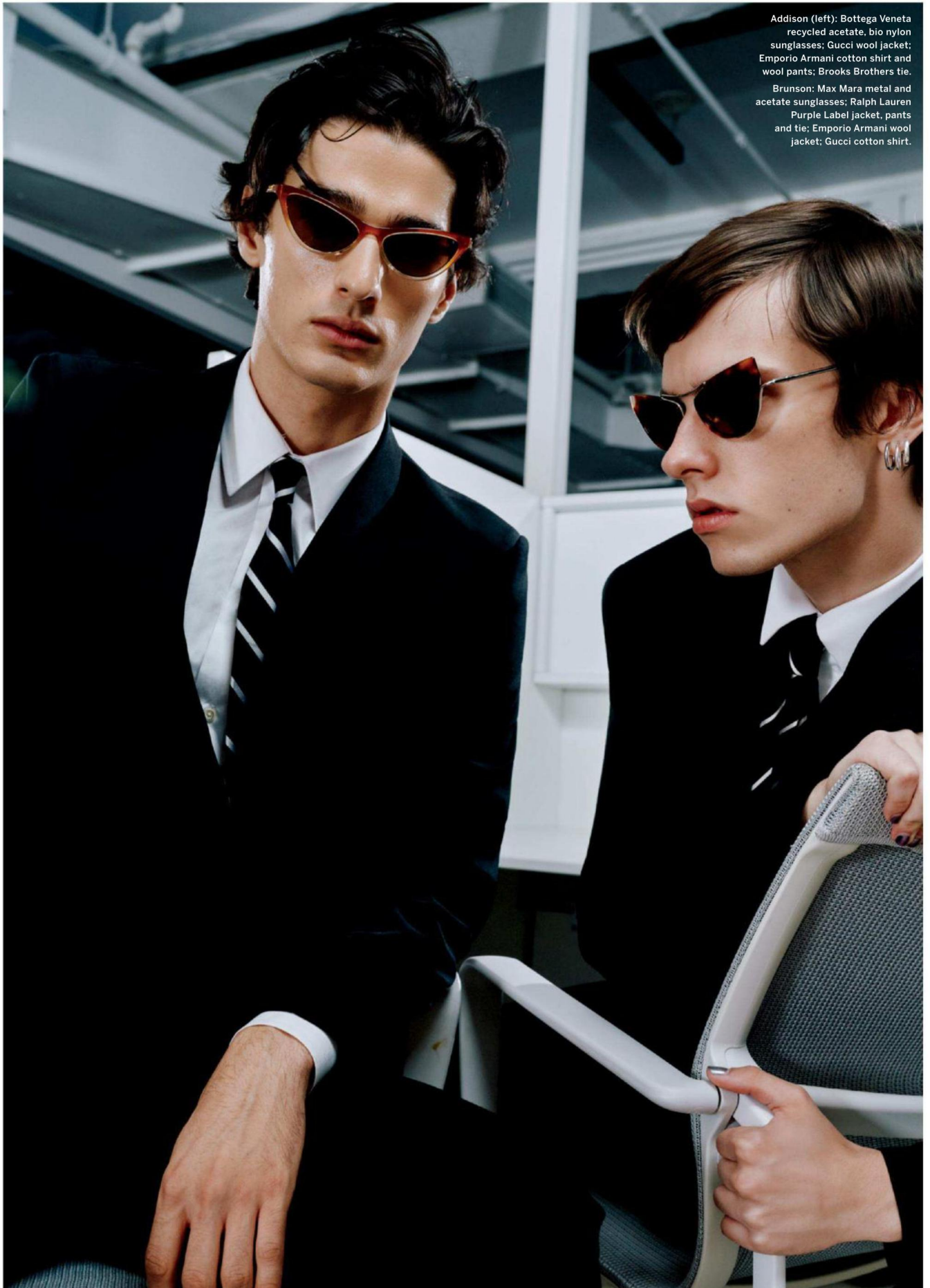
Erika: Kendra Scott acetate sunglasses; Ralph Lauren Collection wool dress, cotton top and belt; Commando tights.

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW

WWD

Longchamp acetate sunglasses; Akoni Eyewear acetate temples, custom titanium hinge plate sunglasses.





Addison (left): Bottega Veneta recycled acetate, bio nylon sunglasses; Gucci wool jacket; Emporio Armani cotton shirt and wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie.
Brunson: Max Mara metal and acetate sunglasses; Ralph Lauren Purple Label jacket, pants and tie; Emporio Armani wool jacket; Gucci cotton shirt.

EssilorLuxottica



Alain Mikli
Armani Exchange
Arnette
Brooks Brothers
Brunello Cucinelli
Burberry
CHANEL
Coach
Costa
Diesel
Dolce & Gabbana

Emporio Armani
Ferrari
Giorgio Armani
Jimmy Choo
Michael Kors
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Moncler
Oakley
Oliver Peoples
Persol
Polo Ralph Lauren

Prada
Prada Linea Rossa
Ralph Lauren
Ray-Ban
Scuderia Ferrari
Swarovski
Tiffany & Co.
Tory Burch
Versace
Vogue Eyewear

JIMMY CHOO
frames



FAIRCHILD STUDIO X ESSILOR LUXOTTICA

EssilorLuxottica Expands Its Wearables With New Oakley and Next Generation Ray-Ban Meta

As part of its long-term partnership, the companies have teamed to expand on their **OAKLEY AND RAY-BAN PRODUCT** offerings and new AI updates.



paramount. With Meta, our products will anchor a category that spans functions, technologies, brands and communities worldwide. We're looking at a long runway ahead of us."

Alongside the June announcement of the Oakley HSTN product line, EssilorLuxottica has also expanded on its wearables offering with the unveiling of the Oakley Meta Vanguard. The wearables feature sport frames and dual lens wrap Prizm lenses from Oakley – powered by the next generation AI.

Designed for high-intensity sports and active usage, the glasses feature a centered 12-megapixel camera with a 122-degree wide-angle lens and hyperlapse and slow motion recordings. Moreover, the glasses are designed to be comfortably worn for longer workouts and with cycling helmets or hats and replaceable nose pads. The wraparound design features Oakley® Prizm™ Lens technology, designed to block out sun, wind and dust.

Lasting an entire marathon or century ride, the Oakley Meta Vanguard lasts up to nine hours of mixed usage and comes with a charging case that can provide an additional 36 hours of charge on the go. Wearers can also enjoy listening to their favorite music and podcasts with open-ear speakers integrated into the frames.

On the tech side, its AI or "athletic intelligence" wearables include fitness app integrations with Garmin and Strava for training and real-time personalized insights that are easily sharable. With Garmin, Meta is also introducing an Autocapture feature for the glasses to automatically capture footage based on workout stats and milestones.



SINCE OAKLEY's launch in 1975, the brand has been a pioneer in both sports and culture with a focus on technology and futuristic designs. Now, the brand has teamed with Meta to create its newest category: performance artificial intelligence glasses.

EssilorLuxottica, the parent of both Oakley and Ray-Ban, said that expanding the AI technology to the Oakley brand and creating the collection are part of its long-term partnership with Meta.

Ray-Ban Meta has had a strong year, becoming top-selling AI glasses around the world. Now, the company is introducing its all-new Ray-Ban Meta Gen 2 with more improvements for a stronger experience. Updates for the Ray-Ban Meta Gen 2 glasses include an extended battery life from four hours to eight hours of usage and an additional 48 hours with the charging case, improved video capture with an ultrawide HDR camera and 2 times the pixels versus the first generation, faster capture and transfer time.

New frame colors for the Ray-Ban Meta Gen 2 include Wayfarer style in Cosmic Blue and Transitions Gen S Sapphire lenses, Headliner style in Asteroid Grey and Transitions Gen S Emerald lenses and Skyler in Mystic Violet and Transitions Gen S Amethyst lenses. Also introduced is

the Ray-Ban Meta Gen 2 limited edition, a transparent frame and special Transitions Ruby lenses.

The new Oakley Meta glasses merge Oakley's distinct design DNA with Meta's technology and Prizm lenses to give consumers a new way to experience their biggest wins. This follows the pioneering Ray-Ban Meta AI glasses.

As part of the launch of the AI glasses for Oakley, the brands created a new global campaign with Oakley athletes – World



Cup winner Kylian Mbappé and three-time Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes.

"Glasses have emerged as the fastest-growing category in wearable technology and we're proud to be leading the charge," said Rocco Basilio, chief wearables officer at EssilorLuxottica. "Ray-Ban Meta proved that when iconic design meets breakthrough AI technology – the result is a product the world will embrace emphatically. By bringing that same approach to sport, as we've done with Oakley Meta HSTN and now Oakley Vanguard, we give our consumers the keys to another universe where performance is

"Our goal at Oakley is always to create for the future and deliver to the present. With Oakley Meta Vanguard, we're setting a new baseline for what is possible. We wanted to redefine what an eyewear could be, by delivering what we call an Oakley Meta A.I. – "athletic intelligence" – technological advancements that truly amplify human potential. And it's a leap toward a new era of human possibilities," said Caio Amato, global president of Oakley. 

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

EssilorLuxottica



OAKLEY



∞ Meta



Performance AI Glasses

GAME CHANGER

Patrick Mahomes in Oakley Meta Vanguard

Ray-Ban | ∞ Meta

MEET THE NEW AI GLASSES

ADVANCED AI. ENHANCED CAPTURE. MORE BATTERY.

Best paired with Transitions® lenses

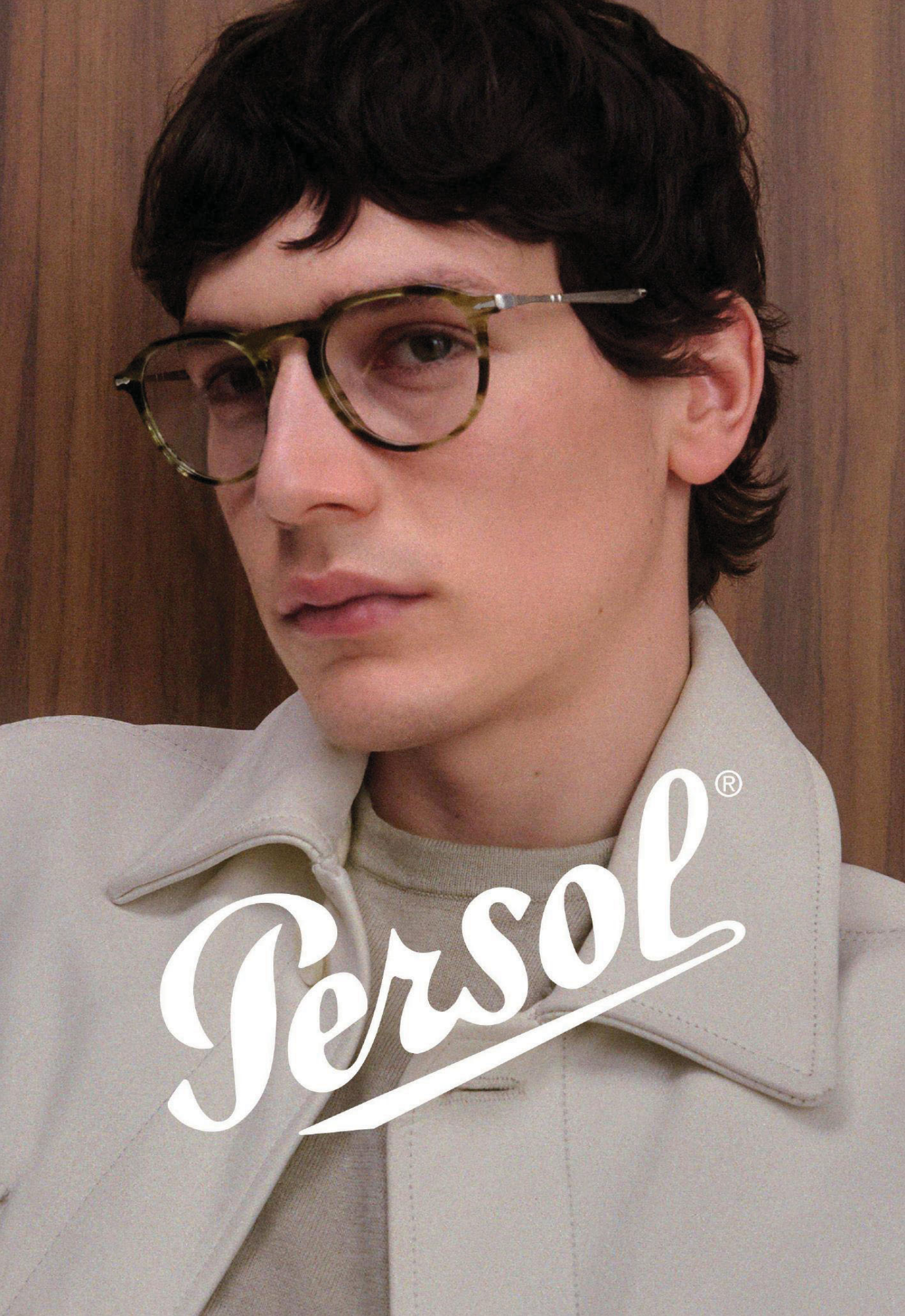


Photochromic performance may vary across colors and lens material
and is influenced by temperature and UV exposure.

OLIVER PEOPLES

LOS ANGELES



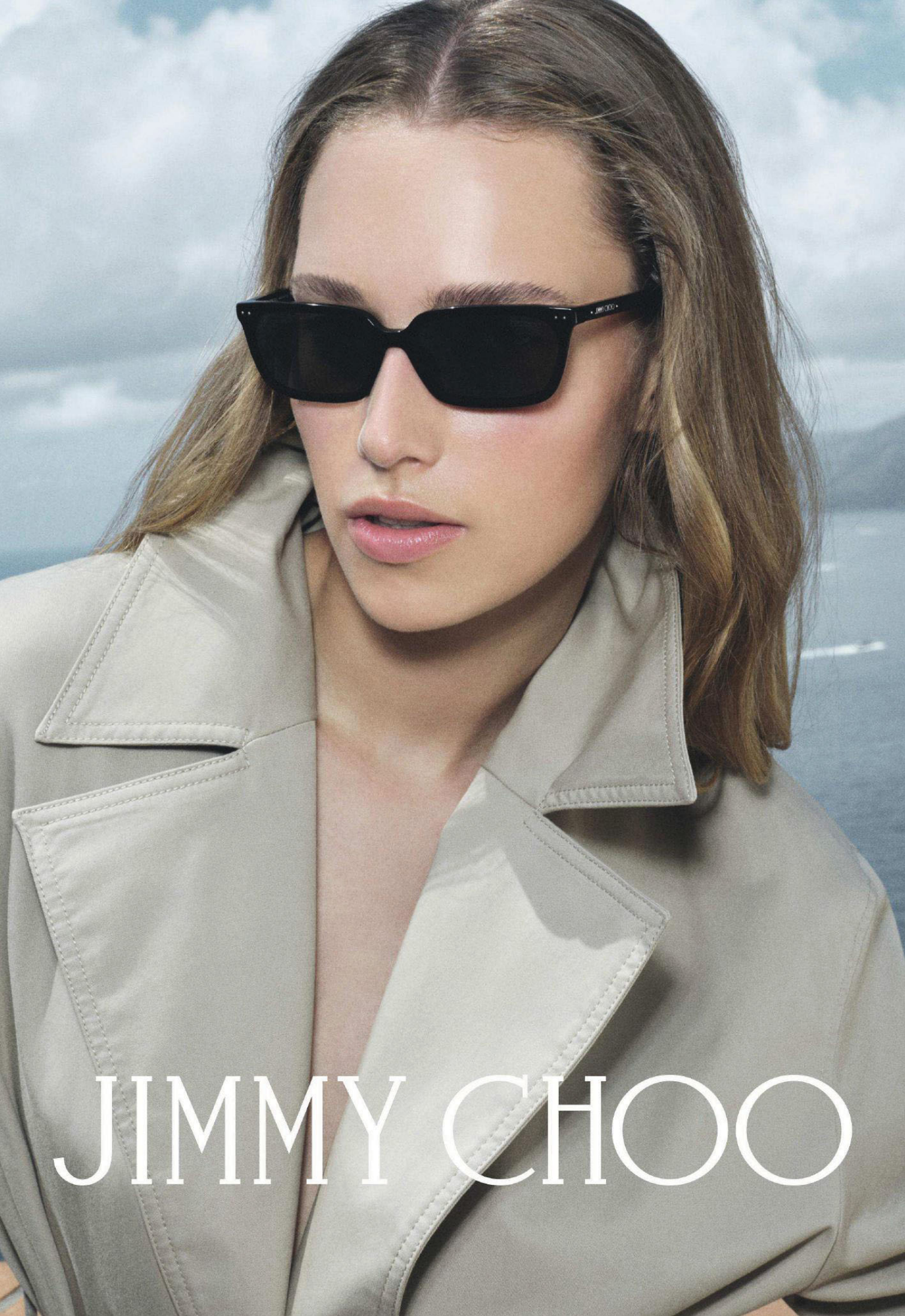


Persol[®]



alain mikli
paris

ROUGE NACRÉ SINCE 1978



JIMMY CHOO

A close-up, profile view of a woman with long dark hair, wearing tortoiseshell glasses and a light-colored knit sweater over a dark top. She is looking towards the left against a clear blue sky. The lighting is bright, casting soft shadows on her face. A small gold brooch is pinned to her sweater. The brand name 'TORY BURCH' is overlaid in white text across the center of the image.

TORY BURCH

SWAROVSKI



ARIANA GRANDE IN SWAROVSKI



Storm Reid

COACH



SCUDERIA FERRARI
EYEWEAR COLLECTION
FALL/WINTER 25



MICHAEL KORS



Erika: Prada metal sunglasses; Miu Miu wool jacket and skirt, satin bra, embroidery socks and shoes.

Addison: Alaïa recycled acetate sunglasses.

Brunson: Tory Burch acetate and metal sunglasses; Emporio Armani wool jacket; Gucci cotton shirt; Ralph Lauren Purple Label pants; Giorgio Armani velvet tie.

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW



Oliver Peoples Khaite acetate sunglasses.



Calvin Klein acetate renew sunglasses; Michael Kors metal sunglasses; Tom Ford metal sunglasses.

THÉLIOS

LVMH Eyewear Excellence

From the desire of LVMH, World leader in luxury, to raise eyewear as an essential element of its Maison's collections and a pristine expression of their creativity, Thélios was founded in 2017. Pioneering a new luxury experience in eyewear, Thélios masters each step of its value chain, from conception to distribution of luxury sunglasses and optical frames for LVMH Maisons. Through its state-of-the-art Manifattura, located in Longarone, Italy, Thélios stands for Alta Occhialeria: an advanced savoir-faire, combining outstanding creativity and manufacturing excellence. Moreover, Thélios operates a highly selective distribution network with a direct commercial presence in all major markets.

THELIOS.COM

DIOR

FENDI
ROMA

CELINE

LOEWE

GIVENCHY

STELLA McCARTNEY

KENZO
PARIS

BERLUTI

BVLGARI

 TAG Heuer

FRED


BARTON PERREIRA

VUARNET



Addison (left): Moncler bio nylon and bio rubber sunglasses; Gucci wool jacket; Emporio Armani cotton shirt and wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie; Ralph Lauren Purple Label shoes.

Erika: Versace metal sunglasses; Schiaparelli wool and neoprene jacket and pants, brass alligator necklace and shoes.

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW

WWD



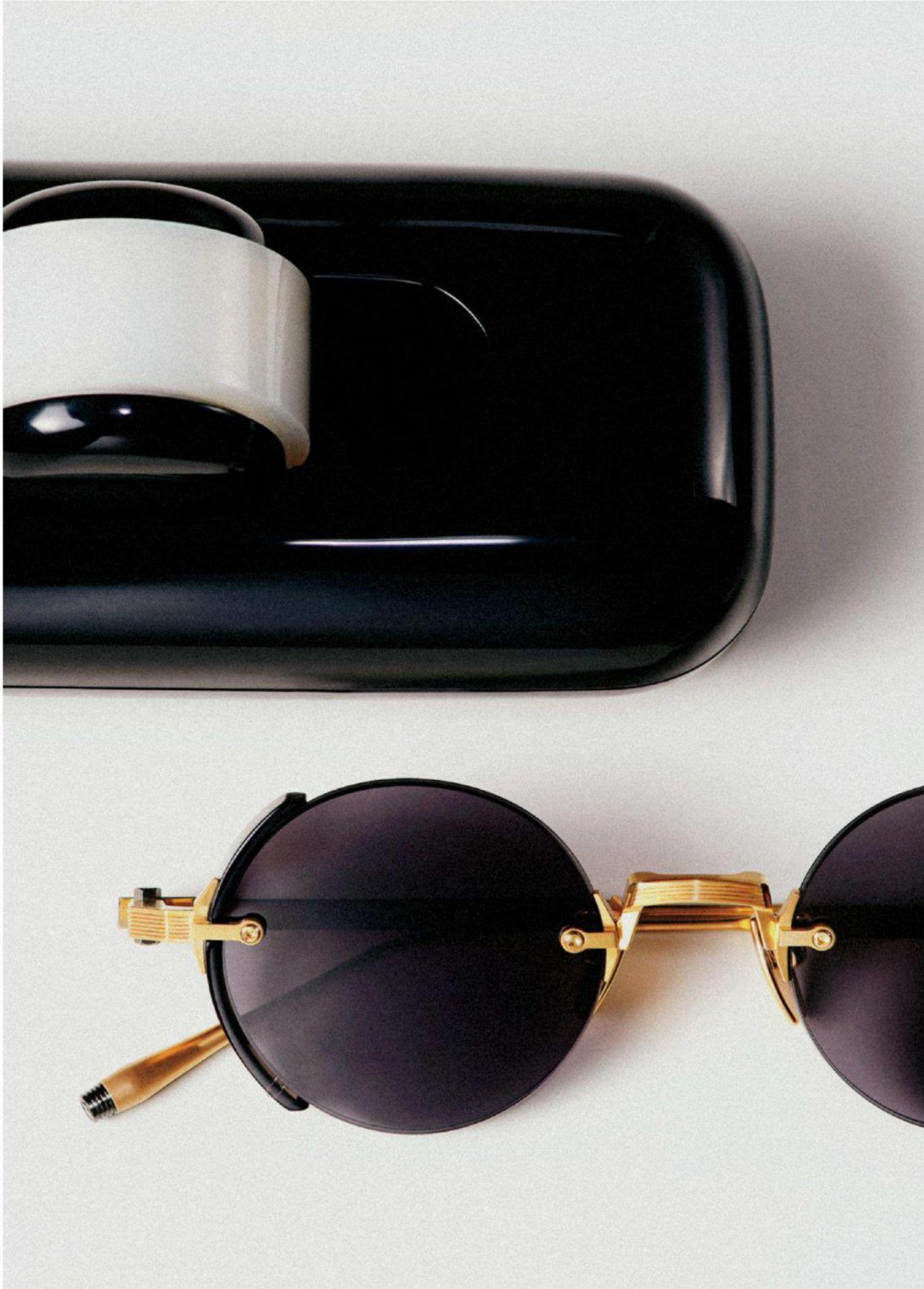


Addison (left): Thom Browne acetate sunglasses; System wool coat; Emporio Armani cotton shirt and wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie; Ralph Lauren Purple Label shoes.

Erika: Burberry metal sunglasses; Calvin Klein Collection wool jacket and skirt; Commando tights; Sportmax gloves; Nina Ricci platform heels.

Brunson (right): Canada Goose beta-titanium, acetate renew sunglasses; Simone Rocha wool coat; Gucci cotton shirt; Ralph Lauren Purple Label pants; Giorgio Armani velvet tie; Scarosso shoes.

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW



Akoni Eyewear japanese titanium, rimless structure enriched with acetate side shield sunglasses.



Vogue Eyewear acetate sunglasses.

VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW



Erika: Thom Browne acetate eyewear; Thom Browne painted overcoat, poplin shirt, wool crepe pencil skirt, tie and brogue shoes.
Addison: Guess Jeans Eyewear metal sunglasses; MM6 Maison Margiela leather double-breasted jacket over Gucci wool jacket; Emporio Armani cotton shirt and wool pants; Brooks Brothers tie.



VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW

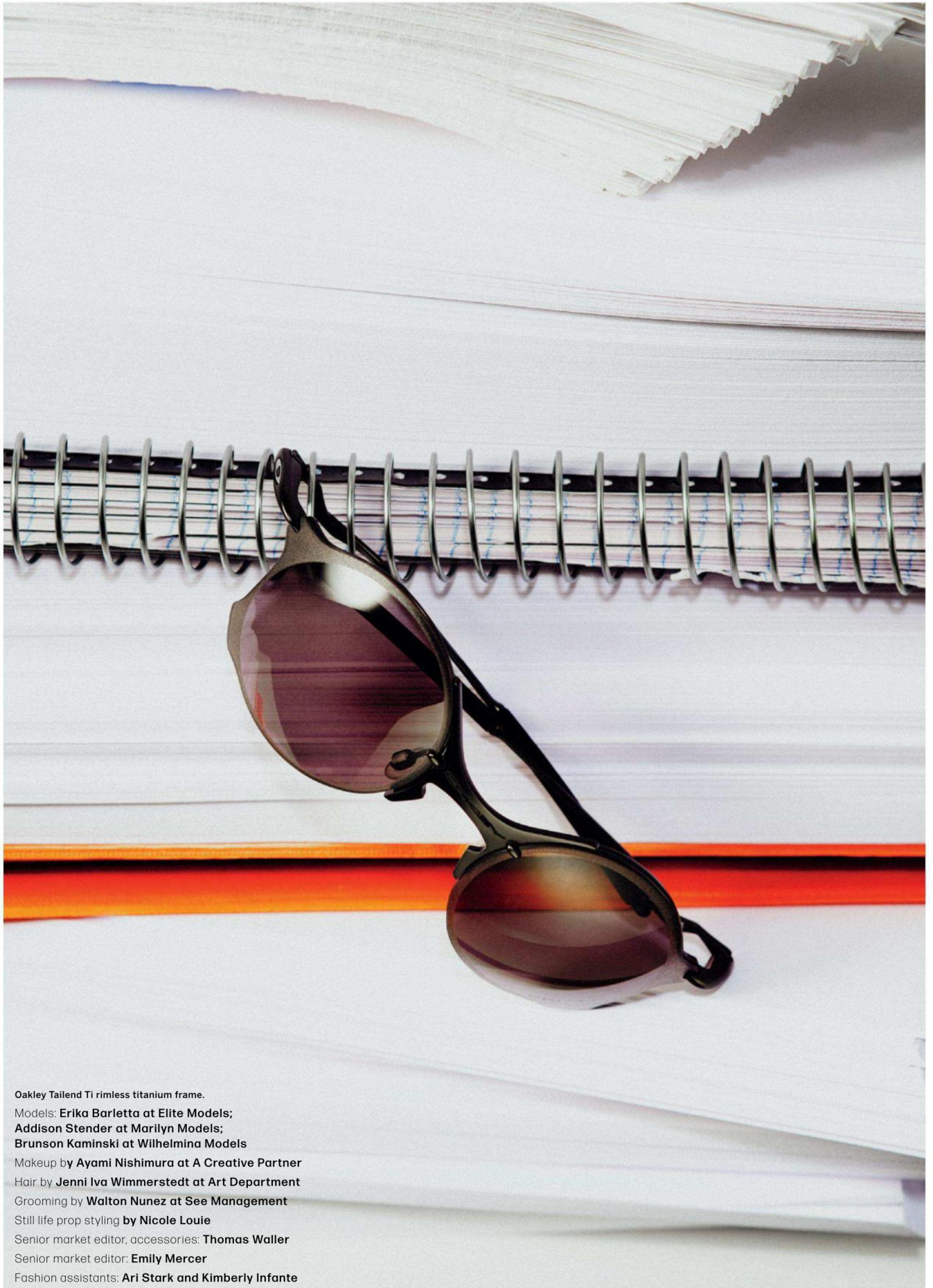
WWD



Addison (left): Swarovski acetate and Swarovski crystals sunglasses; Gucci wool jacket; Emporio Armani shirt; Brooks Brothers tie.

Erika: Swarovski metal and Swarovski crystals eyewear; Ferragamo wool coat, wool blazer, wool knit cardigan and wool pants; Stella McCartney boots; Lele Sadoughi sapphire drop earrings.

Brunson (right): Stuart Weitzman acetate sunglasses with pearl and crystal embellishments; Emporio Armani wool jacket; Gucci cotton shirt; Ralph Lauren Purple Label tie.



Oakley Tailend Ti rimless titanium frame.

Models: **Erika Barletta** at Elite Models;
Addison Stender at Marilyn Models;
Brunson Kaminski at Wilhelmina Models

Makeup by **Ayami Nishimura** at A Creative Partner

Hair by **Jenni Iva Wimmerstedt** at Art Department

Grooming by **Walton Nunez** at See Management

Still life prop styling by **Nicole Louie**

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

Senior market editor: **Emily Mercer**

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

Steven M.L. Aronson's Exacting Eye – and 125 Pairs of Glasses

The New York-based writer and editor discussed how his signature look has served as icebreakers at different points in his life.

BY ROSEMARY FEITELBERG PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND

Interviewing the writer, editor and book publisher Steven M.L. Aronson requires yards of advance work, as in an innumerable amount of questions, suggestions and discussion.

Bordering on human AI, his thoroughness leaves nothing to chance. (Most people as they speak don't tell you which words to italicize or bold. Let's not even broach the subject of punctuation.) Such markings are well-earned by Aronson. Quick-witted and unapologetically direct, he has long been ensconced in notable New York City circles. What really makes him unmissable, though, is his style signature – statement eyewear. Having amassed a serious collection of colorful, eclectic eyeglasses, he doesn't bury them in drawers or stash them in satchels.

His 125 pairs of eyeglasses – of which 70 have his current prescription and are part of a constant rotation – are housed in his apartment in a limestone building on what he laughingly calls "Cell Block East 71," since two of the nearest town houses belong to Bill Cosby and to the late Jeffrey Epstein. Aronson happened to snap an iPhone photo of FBI agents and New York Police Department officers battering down Epstein's solid oak front door that wound up on the front page of *The New York Times* in 2019. Aronson had just returned from the Apple store for a primer about how to take a photo.

After much convincing, he agreed to share some of the back stories about his statement eyewear with WWD.

WWD: Why did you start collecting eyewear?

Steven Aronson: Once upon a time, a friend gave me a pair of frames with a big-bow-wow provenance: Alain Mikli for Claude Montana. I had been wearing the same nonassertive ones for years, and these were anything but. I took them with me to Maine, where I'd rented a little place in the ultra-exclusionary summer colony of Prouts Neck, which was long the home – and subject – of the great Realist artist Winslow Homer. For me, Prouts was more about its beautiful, sandy, heart-shaped beach, access to which was privileged through the Prouts Neck Bathing Association clubhouse. I was duly put up for membership, but then the queen bee – the tutelary spirit of the place – a Lake Forest heiress married to a Boston Brahmin – tried to keep me out, reportedly on the grounds of my new eyewear. I was admitted, and her sentiments only inspired me to acquire more eyewear that I felt might further offend her. With every purchase, I'd think, "One in the eye for her!" But in retrospect and in all fairness, I want to take a moment now to salute the old scold as the instigation for my collection.

WWD: Did your eyewear ever offend any other "Mainers?"

S.A.: Years later I was invited to a dinner party in Tenants Harbor, up the coast. I drove there little knowing that I would find myself at a table presided over by the Chief Justice John Roberts, who, it turned out, had a house on a small island just offshore. The lady seated between him and me began feeling sick and excused herself, and the table closed up. As, I guess, an icebreaker, Mr. Chief Justice said to me, "Unusual glasses." I happened to be wearing the very ones that had caught the



Steven M.L. Aronson wearing eyeglasses from Belgian design company Theo.

Prouts dowager's jaundiced eye. I shared their back story with him, and I think he smiled when I quipped that it could have been the basis for an antidiscrimination lawsuit that went all the way up to the Supreme Court. I mean, nobody should be

discriminated against for their eyewear.

Now, on my other side that evening was one Helga Testorf, the woman that the artist Andrew Wyeth had secretly made all those hundreds of sensational paintings and drawings of. But she suddenly got up and

wandered off, as was evidently her wont, and the table closed up there, too, with Andy, whom I already knew, taking her seat. He'd overheard the tail end of my story and laughed, "Knowing that club, I'm not surprised." ▶



The eyewear aficionado in his uptown New York apartment, sporting oversized frames by Anne & Valentin.

WWD: So that sparked a lifelong spree?

S.A.: Right. There was an Alain Mikli boutique on Madison Avenue just around the corner from where I lived. A snappily dressed Jamaican man by the name of Garthunvaringly waited on me, and his response to any pair whatsoever that I tried on was, "They're crucial," which did the trick: I bought them. I ended up as one of their biggest customers: they even had me photographed and hung me on the wall between Steve Martin and, I think, Kanye West. Over time, I branched out to Mikli's artisanal onetime disciple, Jacques Dunand. The company that owns his brand asked me to do a photo ad campaign, which I – regrettably – turned down. And then I branched further out to Jacques Marie Mage, Kuborraum, Theo, Anne & Valentin and Masahiro Maruyama.

WWD: What was the best compliment you ever received for a pair of eyeglasses?

S.A.: Some say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but I say theft is. One dark night last winter I stopped in the middle of 58th Street between Fifth and Madison to look at a text. I was holding my phone in one hand, and my glasses in the other – I had had to take them off to read – and lo and behold, a ride-by criminal on a Citi bike swerved over and grabbed them both. He sped away, but paused at the corner of Fifth where, presumably seeing it was an iPhone which of course wouldn't unlock, he smashed it to the sidewalk and pedaled on his way with only the glasses. They had precious little curb appeal, by the way – being made of horn, they were just quietly costly. So he apparently had innate good taste.

WWD: Do you know anyone who has collected more eyeglasses than you?

S.A.: My late friend Baroness Marion Lambert, of the striking looks and gilded life. She was tirelessly described as a visionary art and photography collector, but to me she was also an eyewear visionary – she had literally hundreds of fabulous frames. She was to die in a spectacular fashion, absentmindedly walking straight into the path of an oncoming double-decker bus on Bond Street in London. But one simply has to appreciate the cruel irony of such a deluxe number being knocked down by a pedestrian bus rather than, say, a Rolls-Royce or a Daimler. My own tears were shed as much for her orphaned eyewear as for her.

WWD: How did you wind up in a J.Crew campaign last year?

S.A.: They were sponsors of the annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show and were launching limited-edition canine-themed merchandise. One of their brand people had seen a photo of me and my dog Quintus online. He's my fifth of his dying breed, and all the rarer for being a water-hating American Water Spaniel. Some of his

predecessors were photographed by [Robert] Mapplethorpe, [Andy] Warhol, Peter Beard, Harry Benson and Kenneth Noland. And this last one has also had his day, as a dog-of-the-day on the wildly popular website "The Dogist." When I asked if he could wear his custom Goyard collar of inestimable cost (a handsome present from our late great friend Anne Cox Chambers) for the shoot, I was shot down. But my request to wear my own eyewear was honored. A veritable team of stylists selected some purple oval Anne & Valentins from the 16 pairs I had brought with me. In the end, I was disappointed to see my glasses blurred out of all the photos, which I can only attribute to their not wanting their stuff to be upstaged. I felt I looked faceless without them, but then the ad went on to elicit the most "likes" on the J.Crew website. Beats me.

WWD: Stylistically, how far are you prepared to go with your frames?

S.A.: The enterprising manager of the Anne & Valentin shop on Madison [Avenue], Tyler Trinh, once reached out to me about some eyewear from the Belgian designer Theo that he insisted "has your name on it." I took one look at his wares and burst out laughing, at the same time

feeling chilled – he must have mistaken my name for "Hannibal Lecter's"! The sinister face-pieces he pressed on me struck me as things to be worn only if you had an important serial killing coming up.

WWD: Would you ever consider parting with any of your pairs?

S.A.: One of them perhaps but not really. My good friend and near neighbor Joan Didion and I used to do long thrice-weekly walks in Central Park with our respective pooches – her Wheaton Terrier mix, "Ellie," and my aquaphobic Water Spaniel. Joan would always wear those oversized faux-tortoiseshell sunglasses that she'd modeled for a famous Celine ad campaign at the age of 80 – Juergen Teller took the photos. One afternoon when we were taking a breather on a bench by Bethesda Fountain, she asked if she could try on my sunglasses for a change – I again happened to be wearing the ones that had so scandalized the powers-that-be at Prouts. In my opinion, they put her Celines to shame, but she felt otherwise. I was glad, since if she had fancied them, I would have felt obliged to offer to give them to her. Hers went on to make headlines after her death when they sold at auction for nearly \$30,000 [in 2022 at Stair Galleries]. So I guess I could always put mine up on eBay with the tagline "as fleetingly worn by Joan Didion."

And now I'm suddenly remembering an encounter with the legend among legends and her oversized dark glasses. George Plimpton used to host an annual July 4th fireworks party on the greensward behind his rented beachfront house in Wainscott, and one year, for a wonder, he walked me over to his old friend Jackie Onassis and plunked me down on her blanket. She was wearing, as usual, those huge dark glasses of hers, which she kept on long after the sun had set. At one point we were speaking of a mutual friend and, seemingly without any sense of self-awareness, she breathily asked me, "But why does he *always* wear those dark glasses?"

WWD: Which pair would you wear should you ever get to meet Elton John?

S.A.: I did in fact meet Elton John, thanks to his friend Ingrid Sischy. I wore my most subdued ones, naturally – out of deference to his exponentially greater eyewear profile. Didn't wanna try to steal *his* thunder.

WWD: Was there ever a pair of eyeglasses that you wished you bought?

S.A.: Not if I could help it. One day back in 2019 I stopped in at the Punto Ottico store on Madison Avenue where I had purchased all my Jacques Durands, one by one: the same style in 11 colors, in premium cellulose acetate. My eye was arrested by a couple of pairs in a stunning new shade, the purple of wisteria, sitting on an almost-out-of-the-way shelf. Giovanni Noro, the manager, told me that they had been custom-ordered by no less than Spike Lee, one of their biggest customers, to wear to the upcoming Academy Awards ceremony – he had evidently been nominated in three categories. The fabricator in Italy had been so nervous about making a pair destined to be worn on an occasion viewed by untold millions the world over that, unbeknownst to Spike, he had gone and made a spare. I said, deductively, "He can't wear both," and I persuaded Giovanni to let me buy one of them. On the night of the awards, Spike won the one for best adapted screenplay. Photos of him accepting the award and wearing what I was by then convinced were my glasses were everywhere. Later, when he launched his own line of those wisteria-hued beauties, they wilted on the vine.

WWD: What's next for you in the way of eyewear?

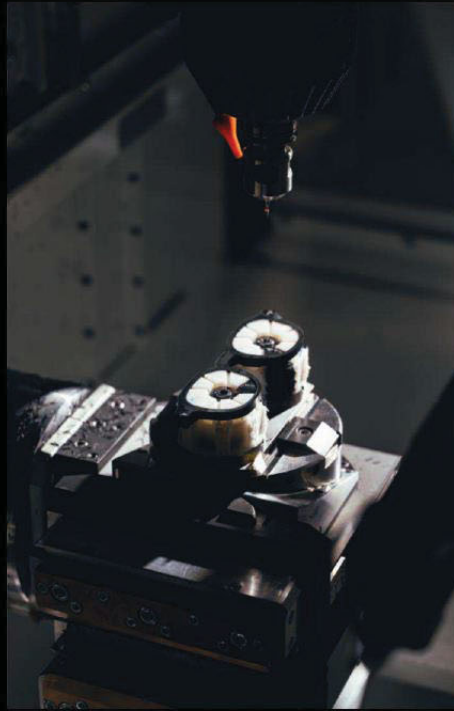
S.A.: Breaking news: I'm facing cataract surgery, the outcome of which could well mean I won't even be needing glasses – at least in the ophthalmological sense. What I intend to do is have all my lenses popped out and replaced with plain glass. My eyewear may cease to be utilitarian, but I will always regard it as far, far more than a fashion statement – rather, as almost a part of my anatomy. It is not dispensable, it is not expendable – it is, in the unforgettable word employed so effectively by Garth formerly of Alain Mikli, "*crucial*." ■



Aronson sizes up white frames from the 1950s that he purchased in a Paris antique store.

MARCOLIN

BOUNDLESS VISION



OUR BRANDS

Abercrombie
& Fitch



GANT
EYEWEAR

GCDS

GUESS

HARLEY-DAVIDSON
EYEWEAR

HOLLISTER

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KENNETH COLE



MARCIANO
GUESS

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PUCCI

SKECHERS
eyewear

Timberland

TOM FORD
EYEWEAR

WEBW
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ZEGNA

rag & bone
NEW YORK

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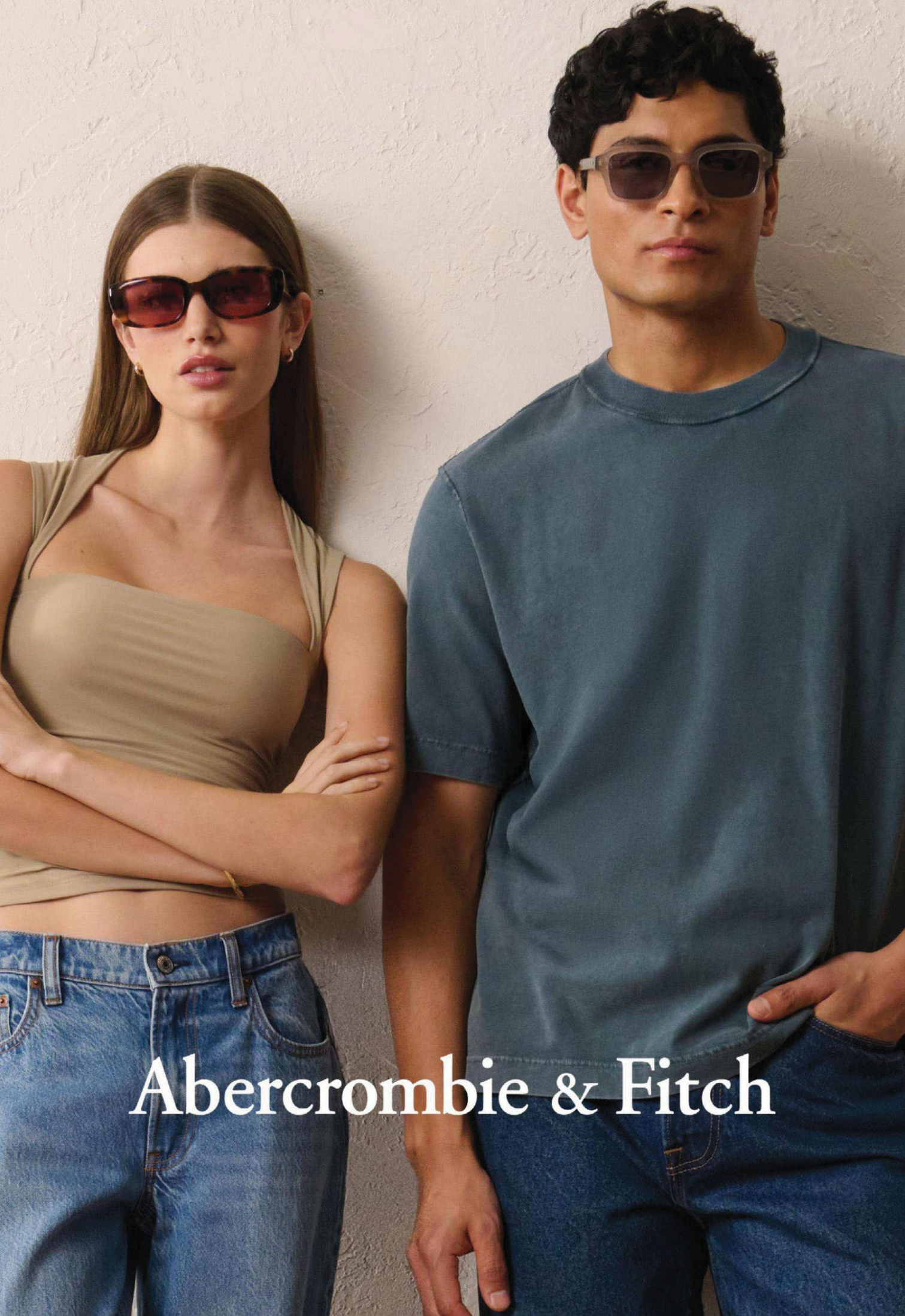
TOM FORD
EYEWEAR

Dr. the pleasure from the "No good"



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Abercrombie & Fitch

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How Swede It Is to Protect Your Eyes – and Face

Eyewear specialist Chimi and men's skin care brand Narcyss came together in Stockholm to offer "full facial protection." BY MILES SOCHA



Charlie Lindström

In what may be an industry first, a sunglasses brand and a men's skin care specialist have come together to offer "full facial protection."

Over the summer, customers who purchased full-price sunglasses at Chimi Eyewear stores received as a gift-with-purchase a 70-ml. tube of Narcyss facial sunscreen – and a twin-barreled blast of Swedish aesthetics and functionality.

The two Stockholm-based companies said they're planning to reprise the offer in December, when many folks in the Northern Hemisphere head for holidays in warmer climates.

For Charlie Lindström, cofounder and creative director of Chimi Eyewear, the tie-up represents a way to spur full-price sales in a lackluster retail climate, while also highlighting the high UV-protection features of his lenses.

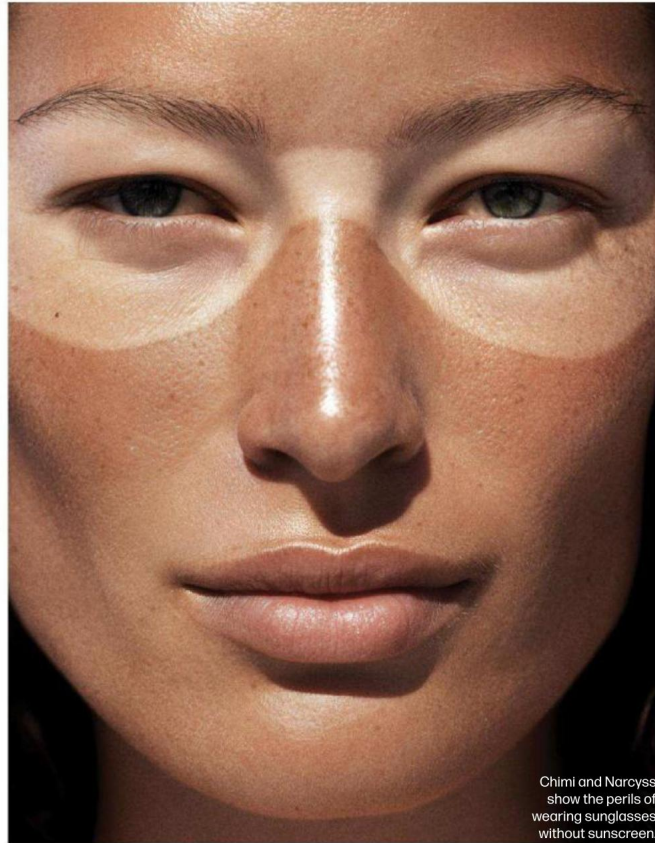
Meanwhile, for Gustaf Törling, cofounder and creative director of Narcyss, the collaboration sped the development of the high-performance sunscreen – its first explicitly unisex product, for the hydrating cream is unscented – and offered additional exposure for the upstart brand in Chimi's seven boutiques.

The SPF 50 moisturizer is also available for sale at Chimi stores and on the Narcyss website for 27.95 euros – or 25 percent less if purchased via Narcyss on a subscription basis.

In an interview, the two men described their collaboration as organic.

"You know, Stockholm is a tiny town, we're all friends," said Törling, who launched Narcyss in 2021 with his brother Oscar Knaust after a varied career that included top creative roles at beauty brand Origins, bookseller Indigo and agency Laird + Partners. "We've been talking spontaneously about doing something together."

Lo and behold, that a Narcyss sunscreen was in development piqued the interest of Lindström, a stickler for lenses that offer 100 percent shield from UVA and UVB rays – and a self-described skin care obsessive proud of his 10-step routines, and regular consultations with a therapist, most recently for an acid peel that left his face slightly red for the Google Meets



Chimi and Narcyss show the perils of wearing sunglasses without sunscreen.

call with WWD.

"Charlie, we probably should hire you, actually, because I feel like you would be a fantastic product developer. You're extremely knowledgeable in the world of skin care," Törling piped in.

"I have always had a 50 SPF in my routine," Lindström confessed. "I even wear it in Sweden on a day like this, cloudy and 12 degrees [Celsius]."

According to him, Chimi and Narcyss were natural partners to collaborate as both brands are urban-minded, forward-looking and functional.

"Design and skin care have more in

common than you'd think: They both reflect how you move through the world, how you present, how you feel," Lindström said. "At Chimi, we think of eyewear as architectural pieces for the face. Skin care is the same – it's structural, sensory, foundational."

Indeed, Törling said he created Narcyss "because I couldn't find a brand that was suitable for me," requiring "very high efficacy, and at the same time, extremely easy to use."

The nature-based, vegan products are produced in small batches, using a blend of adaptogens as its main active ingredients. Meanwhile, they bear catchy,



The Chimi x Narcyss sunscreen.

irreverent names – Acid House for protective serum; AM/PM for all-in-one moisturizer, and Upper Hand for hand balm – and no-nonsense packaging.

The two brands are also "very aligned when it comes to how we see styling of a man," Lindström related.

That said, the hero image for their summer collaboration is a woman with "raccoon eyes" who remembered to wear sunglasses, but forgot to apply sunscreen. It telegraphs that Chimi has frames suitable for men and women, and that Narcyss now has a skin care product suitable for everyone. (Most Narcyss products carry a distinctively masculine scent.)

"Most often, women – the girlfriends, the wives – are the gatekeepers to men's beauty purchases, unless you're educated like Charlie here," Törling commented.

So far, the collaboration "has definitely impacted our sales positively. It gets the name out there," he said.

Knaust noted the SPF collaboration with Chimi would continue as long as stocks last.

"As a smaller disruptor brand, it's been exciting to partner with such a global, established name," he said. "It gave us wider credibility and visibility far beyond our existing circles."

Narcyss counts roughly 100 points of sale globally, with a strong focus on top-tier retailers such as Nordiska Kompaniet.

To be sure, the Chimi tie-up already has it mulling expansion in the sunscreen space. According to Knaust, "We would love to offer our customers an SPF designed for exercise and on-the-go use, as well as a gel-based sunscreen that blends more easily for men with beards."

In addition to its own stores, Chimi boasts a global wholesale presence through such retailers as Bstn, Apropos, Antonia, Fwrd, Goodhood and Printemps. Chimi opened a New York City boutique last year at 110 Grand Street and its U.S. business is doubling year-over-year, according to Lindström.



Gustaf Törling



The Chimi boutique in New York City.

WWD lab

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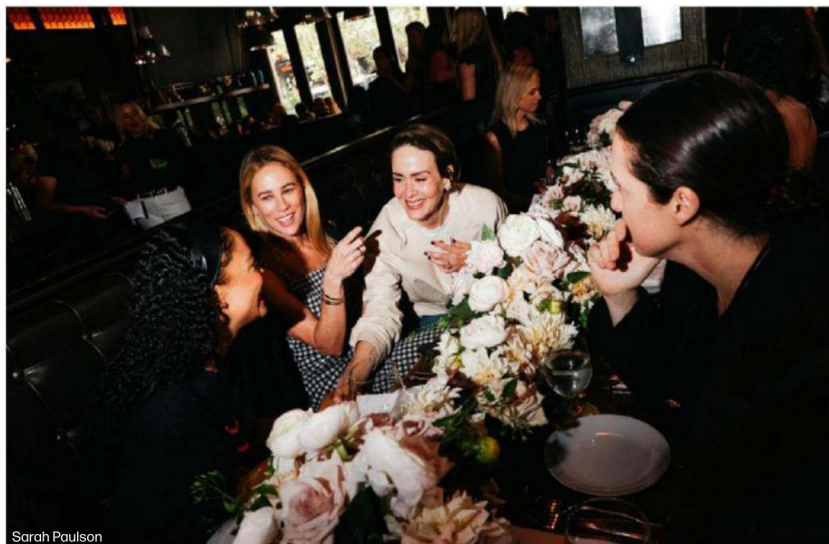
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WWD



Chanel, Tribeca Luncheon Marks 10 Years of Through Her Lens

Meghann Fahy, Lucy Liu, Tessa Thompson, Sarah Paulson and more attended the filmmaking program's annual luncheon kickoff at Locanda Verde. BY KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND



Sarah Paulson

"Chanel girls always look the coolest," declared Sarah Paulson.

The actress was on the carpet outside of Locanda Verde in New York on Tuesday afternoon, two days after presenting at the Emmy Awards, and by her calculation, she was surrounded by "the coolest." Chanel and Tribeca were kicking off the 10th year of the Through Her Lens program for emerging female filmmakers with their annual luncheon, and the crowd was, well, wearing Chanel.

Paulson is serving as a mentor for this year's program, a three-day workshop that provides support and development opportunities – and networking – for five female-led projects.

"One of the great things that success provides is an opportunity to give back," Paulson said. "I don't know that I have anything particularly valuable to say, but I certainly have ears to listen," she added. "The more everyone gathers together and talks to one another about their experiences, the more you can normalize some of the stranger things that happen in this industry – and just, you know, walking around the planet as a woman."

The actress is starring in the female-centric series "All's Fair" later this fall, a Ryan Murphy production about "a bunch of female attorneys who make it their life's work to represent women and only women," said Paulson, whose costars include Kim Kardashian, Glenn Close and Teyana Taylor. "And what happens between them when they are together as a group. The trials and tribulations, not just of the clients, but interpersonally, too."

Katie Couric, sensing the trials and tribulations of the reporters gathered to cover the carpet before lunch, offered to pull some strings with talent. "Do you want me to wrangle some more people?" said the legendary journalist, noticing the VIPs that were posing for photos and then continuing to make their way inside for cocktail hour.

It was a kind offer, but most guests were more than happy to share their enthusiasm for the program.

"I started last year. They asked me to come on for the jury, which was an impossible mission to try to choose between all these wonderful, talented directors and



Lucy Liu

producers," said Lucy Liu, returning as a member of this year's advisory committee. "I know that it really makes a difference. It specifically nurtures women and nonbinary artists," she added. "I wish that I had had that myself when I was starting out."

Tessa Thompson is also returning to Through Her Lens as part of the advisory committee.

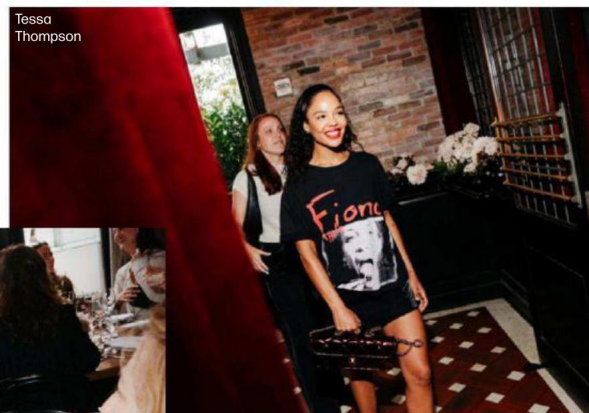
"I'm just always excited to get to be in

communal spaces with other storytellers, and also to be in a period of when people are in ideation and working through story. It's such a vulnerable and beautiful moment of creation, and it's really lovely to bear witness to that."

The actress recently wore a Chanel look for the premiere of her film "Hedda" at the Toronto Film Festival, which was directed by Nia DeCosta. "It's very auspicious



A.V. Rockwell



Tessa Thompson

now to be here for Tribeca, because the first film we ever made together was a film called 'Little Woods,' which was Nia DeCosta's debut and premiered at Tribeca. And we met at the Sundance Filmmaker Labs, also through a similar program of mentorship and community."

Meghann Fahy will be part of the jury selecting this year's winning team, who will receive a full financing award to produce their short film. "It's such an incredible organization and it's so important to get in with women at this stage in their careers and give them not only opportunity, but also mentorship," said Fahy, who will help reveal the winner on Thursday.

Now in its tenth year, the Through Her Lens program has supported young filmmakers including past winners A.V. Rockwell and Nikiyatu Jusu, who went on to direct breakout films like "A Thousand and One Years" and "Nanny." "It's almost become a movement, and it's become a community that's intentional. And when you build a community that's intentional, it can actually create some change," said Tribeca cofounder Jane Rosenthal of the program hitting its decade milestone.

As guests including Edie Falco, Ilana Glazer, Hava Rose Liu, Kaitlyn Dever, Fala Chen and more sat for lunch, Rosenthal offered a tribute to Sundance founder and filmmaker Robert Redford, whose death at 89 was announced earlier that day, and Through Her Lens cofounder and longtime champion Paula Weinstein.

"Before we start, take a moment and raise a glass to Robert Redford," Rosenthal said. "For making the world a better place through his activism, his charm, his films. And as the late, great, Paula Weinstein would say: no one stood in a doorway better than Robert."

Fashion Scoops



Mia Goth

and Greta Lee as the new faces of the brand this season.

Next year, Goth will appear in Christopher Nolan's action fantasy film "The Odyssey," joining a star-studded cast that features Matt Damon, Zendaya, Tom Holland, Anne Hathaway, Robert Pattinson and Charlize Theron.

And she will soon begin production on "Star Wars: Starfighter," the next installment in the Star Wars franchise costarring Ryan Gosling. That film is not set for release until May 2027.

Goth was previously featured as one of the faces of Prada's La Femme fragrance, and has appeared in several Miu Miu campaigns, in addition to walking in the brand's fall 2023 show.

— JOELLE DIDERICH

Goth Girl

As it gears up for Jonathan Anderson's womenswear debut on Oct. 1, Dior has named its third new female brand ambassador this month: Mia Goth.

In a statement shared exclusively with WWD, the French fashion house touted the English actress as a "bold, unique" personality with a "magnetic charisma" and "profoundly independent presence."

Best known for her roles in horror movies including "Suspiria" and "MaXXXine," Goth is about to appear in a series of high-profile projects, starting with Guillermo del Toro's "Frankenstein," in which she stars opposite Jacob Elordi and Oscar Isaac.

"Having long been a fan of Mia and her work, collaborating with her is a dream come true for me. Her presence and empathetic personality are compelling both on and off screen, making her a perfect Dior woman of today," said Anderson.

Advance images of Goth as the bride of Frankenstein, dressed in a striking sapphire blue gown with a face-framing feather fascinator and a Tiffany & Co. necklace, have heightened anticipation for the remake of the horror classic, set to hit screens from October.

During the Venice Film Festival, she walked the red carpet for the film's premiere in a chocolate silk satin gown with an oversize bow designed by Anderson.

But she underlined her edgy style by mixing in archival Versace and Mugler looks sourced from Tab Vintage for her other photo calls.

"I am grateful to be in partnership with Dior in this new era under Jonathan Anderson. His unique vision combined with the timeless elegance of Dior resonates with me personally. I am honored to represent a brand and a designer whom I have genuinely admired for a long time," she said.

The "Emma" star, who was among the celebrity guests at Anderson's menswear show for Dior in June, joins Mikey Madison

Paul's Pick

Paul Smith has named retail veteran Ewan Venters to the new role of executive chairman, effective Oct. 1.

Venters has been serving as non-executive director of Paul Smith since February, and was most recently chief executive of the art gallery Hauser & Wirth.

Prior to Hauser & Wirth, he was chief executive of Fortnum & Mason, where, over a period of eight years, he oversaw the transformation of the brand and a growth surge in the business. He has also held leadership roles at retailers including Selfridges.

"I'm delighted to welcome Ewan to the team on the cusp of celebrating our 55th anniversary," Smith

said. "In his time at Paul Smith as a non-executive director, Ewan has brought boundless energy and a welcome perspective to help propel us into our next chapter. I'm very excited to continue working together."

Venters described Paul Smith as "one of Britain's most enduring, captivating and beloved brands. I have known and admired Sir Paul for some time, and I regard it as a great privilege to work alongside one of Britain's greatest living designers and entrepreneurs."

In an interview, Venters said he's eager to help write a new chapter for the business, and to work with a brand that has an impact that goes far beyond fashion, into culture, community and British history.

"There are jobs - and then there are jobs like these. Paul Smith is a business, a brand, an iconic designer - and it's also part of British history," said Venters. Going forward, Venters plans to "work side-by-side with Paul on expanding, developing and running the business."

Venters will remain in other positions, including as chair of the private sector council of the Great campaign, which seeks to enhance the U.K.'s business reputation overseas. He was awarded an OBE in 2024 in the King's Honors List in 2024 for services to international trade.

— SAMANTHA CONTI

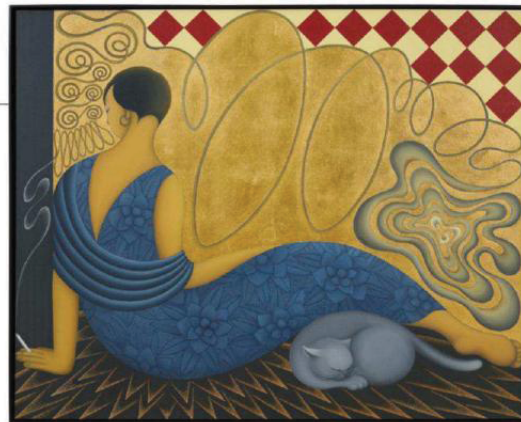
Fashion And Art

Art Basel is partnering with two prominent fashion industry figures to curate public events at its upcoming fair in Paris, as it continues to broaden its reach amid a challenging art market.

The global platform has tapped French journalist and filmmaker Loïc Prigent to curate Oh La La!, its special initiative inviting galleries to present new works at their booths for two days during the event, which is set to run at the Grand Palais from Oct. 24 to 26.

In parallel, British fashion editor Edward Enninful will oversee a full-day strand of Conversations 2025, Art Basel's flagship talks program, marking the launch of his new media company EE72.

Taking place at the Petit Palais, across the road from the show venue, the talks will serve as a taster for his exhibition "The '90s,"



Takako Yamaguchi, "Patricia and Dusty", 1993.

scheduled for next year at the Tate Britain museum in London.

It's all part of Art Basel chief executive officer Noah Horowitz's ongoing efforts to tap new revenue streams by bringing the Art Basel brand to a wider audience, which includes expanding the scope of its partnerships with luxury brands.

"We're really listening to our audiences. We're closer and closer to our clients and customers and there's new generations of art-loving audiences that are coming to art through luxury, through fashion," he told WWD last year.

Louis Vuitton and Audemars Piguet are associate partners of the Paris fair, while Miu Miu is the official partner of the public program. Host partners include Guerlain.

Earlier this year, Zegna said it had struck a global multiyear partnership with Art Basel, with a presence across all four editions of the fair: Basel, Miami Beach, Paris and Hong Kong. In addition, Boss came on board to support the inaugural Art Basel Awards.

With all signs pointing to a deepening relationship between art and fashion, Prigent - known for documentaries including "Signé Chanel" and his YouTube channel - has been tasked with selecting the works that will feature in the rebranding initiative, which is being expanded following a successful pilot edition last year that drew 40 participating galleries.

Exhibitors are invited to bring out new works on the Friday and Saturday of the fair, in line with this year's theme, "À la mode." The idea is to create an engaging journey for members of the public attending the second half of the show week, following sessions reserved for VIPs and collectors.

"Fashion and art have always been deeply entwined, shaping and mirroring each other over time. Likewise, the concept of 'trends' has long sparked debate among critics and

creators, leaving a lasting imprint on both fields. With 'À la mode,' visitors are invited to explore these intersections, tracing a conceptual thread across the Art Basel Paris 2025 show floor," the fair's organizers said in a statement.

"Style, the political and social meaning of garments, elegance, timelessness, dress as an expression of culture or identity, textile design, the role of avant-gardes in both art and fashion, and the elusive quality of chic are all potential areas of inspiration," it added.

The list of participating artists and galleries will be revealed shortly before the beginning of the fair. Prigent will also collaborate with Airbnb, another partner of Art Basel Paris, to personally guide tours of the initiative, bookable via the Airbnb platform.

Enninful, co-founder and chief creative officer of the media and entertainment company EE72, will host one-to-one talks with leading personalities who shaped the 1990s: British artists Yinka Shonibare, Sonia Boyce and Mark Leckey, and German photographer Juergen Teller. The ticketed event on Oct. 24 is free to the public.

"These conversations are about more than nostalgia - they're about tracing the roots of how we see and express ourselves today. The 1990s was a moment of change, and its energy is still very much alive. This project is about capturing that spirit and understanding its lasting impact," Enninful said.

The former editor in chief of British Vogue, Enninful featured prominently in the Hulu documentaries "In Vogue: The '90s."

The Tate exhibition, set for October 2026, will focus on the visual language of the decade, with a focus on subculture, rebellion, diversity, and innovation - from underground magazines to runways, clubs and galleries. — J.D. ▶



Ewan Venters

WWD



The Gisou x Cédric Grolet pastries will be sold during Paris Fashion Week.

Sweet Temptations

Premium hair and beauty brand Gisou is taking its affection for honey to a new level. During the upcoming Paris Fashion Week, the brand is partnering with pastry chef Cédric Grolet on three limited-edition creations made with Mirsalehi honey and inspired by Gisou's new shades of lip oil.

Negin Mirsalehi, Gisou's founder, has six generations of beekeeping in her family. The Gisou brand was born from her passion for bees and honey.

The pastries will be sold at Cédric Grolet Opéra on Oct. 4 and 5, with the chef and Mirsalehi in attendance the first of those days.

The new shades of Honey Infused Lip Oils include Vanilla Glaze, Sticky Toffee and Milky Mocha.

"Collaborating with Gisou has been a truly exciting experience," said Grolet, in a statement. "Their respect for heritage and dedication to quality reflect my own approach to creating - where tradition meets innovation.

"Just as I reinterpret classics in my work, Gisou honors its beekeeping roots while reimagining beauty," he added. "It's a true celebration of craftsmanship, creativity and excellence."

"I've always admired Cédric's incredible talent for transforming pastry into true works of art, and I'm so excited to see him bring our new fall lip oil shades to life in a creative and irresistible way," said Mirsalehi.

"Knowing that our very own Mirsalehi honey is

an ingredient in each of these recipes makes this collaboration even more special," she continued. "It's the perfect way to celebrate the launch, bringing together the worlds of beauty and pastry in three delicious creations."

Gisou's Honey Infused Lip Oils were launched in 2022. The line's three products will be introduced in preview on Sephora North America and Europe apps starting Sept. 18. They will then be introduced globally on gisou.com and in Sephora on Sept. 22.

— JENNIFER WEIL

New Horizons

The Lede Company is expanding its talent division to Paris as it continues to strengthen its foothold in Europe.

The agency, which

represents celebrities including Rihanna, Reese Witherspoon and Pharrell Williams, is known for pioneering the integration between brand communications and talent management.

It plans to use its French office as a strategic hub to support brands in developing impactful and culturally relevant talent strategies; accompany its clients when activating projects, campaigns and appearances during key moments in the European calendar, including Paris Fashion Week, and explore international opportunities for local talent.

Led by Olivier Bourgis, president, and Carlos Freixeda, senior vice president of global communications and marketing for The Lede Company and Ritual Projects, Lede Paris will offer a full-spectrum



Lil' Kim at LaQuan Smith's spring show.

service spanning brand partnerships, events, media relations, public image consulting and representation.

Bourgis said it plans to work with a wide spectrum of celebrities, beyond those already signed to the agency. "If it's a Lede talent, all the better, but the idea is to devise a broader strategy for brands," he explained.

The launch of the Paris talent division comes on the heels of the creation last year of a similar branch in London, led by Matthew Avento. Lede, which also has offices in New York City and Los Angeles, gained a foothold in Paris with the acquisition of Paris-based communications and marketing agency OBCM in 2023.

"With this expansion, The Lede Company strengthens its position as a trusted partner at the intersection of talent, brands and media. By blending international expertise with local insight, Lede Paris aims to craft innovative campaigns, build meaningful partnerships, and amplify voices that shape contemporary culture," it said in a statement.

For instance, Lede handles both Rihanna's artist representation and

the singer's Fenty and Savage x Fenty brands, spanning beauty, fashion and lingerie, ensuring her persona, product launches and campaigns are tightly integrated across PR, branding and impact messaging. It also represents Hello Sunshine, Witherspoon's media and lifestyle company. — J.D.

Fast Fashion

On Tuesday night, LaQuan Smith closed out New York Fashion Week with a runway show held at the Classic Car Club at Pier 76. The room was packed with rare cars and VIPs alike, as guests navigated the hazy runway ahead of the show.

"We don't come to that many fashion shows. We pick and choose. So this is one of them we chose tonight," said Coco Austin, dressed in a fitted gold mesh LaQuan Smith dress, as she made her way from the outdoor cocktail area with husband Ice-T.

Asked how familiar he was with Smith's work ahead of the show, Ice-T said, "Not at all," adding that the pair were attending the show through a mutual connection with Busta Rhymes.

"He said, we gotta come to this fashion show. We don't do anything. I'm not a crowd person, but it's always fun to dress up and come out and do something," added Ice-T, who had just presented at Sunday's Emmy Awards, as part of a "Law & Order" tribute. "So we're here to support. But I'm waiting to see the fashion show. I think it's good to come to see a fashion show with virgin eyes. I don't even know what to expect."

Smith's VIP crowd was packed with musicians, including Ty Dolla Sign, who's gearing up to release his next album, *Latto*, Mariah the Scientist, Amerie, Ari Lennox and Ice Spice. Lil' Kim, in a bright blue two-piece, dragged her fur coat along the ground as she was led through the crowd by a bodyguard. Busta Rhymes also arrived ready for colder weather in a large fur coat, attending the show with sons Trillian Wood-Smith and T'Ziah Wood-Smith.

Shortly before the show's start, the crowd erupted in cheering as Wendy Williams made her way down the runway to her seat. The former talk show host, sidelined in recent years with health issues, had unexpectedly shown up at Bach Mai's show the day before. After Williams took her place in the front row, Ice Spice — who reportedly wanted to be the final VIP to sit — earned a slightly more muted welcome as she was rushed to her seat next to the Porsche 911 Speedster, one of several high-end cars on display throughout the space.

Other guests included Jordyn Woods, Valentina Ferrer, Adam Lambert and a few of Sean Combs' children, twins D'Lila Combs and Jessie Combs and their brother King Combs.

After Smith took his bow on the runway, a smiling Busta slowly made his way back out to 12th Avenue, obliging the many, many selfie requests along the way. — KRISTEN TAUER ■



Carlos Freixeda



Olivier Bourgis