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TRADE SHOW REPORT

Bustling Aisles at L.A. Textile Show

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

There were several new exhibitors and the aisles were crowded with designers at the March 28–30 run of the **Los Angeles International Textile Show** at the **California Market Center**.

Show organizers reported a 25 percent increase in attendance over last year's show.

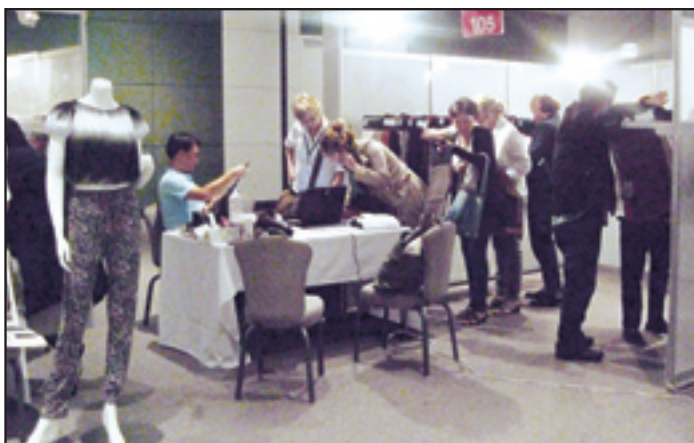
This was the first L.A. Textile show since rival textile show **Globaltex** shuttered last year, and many noted the increase in traffic at the longer-standing CMC show.

In recent seasons, the CMC has stepped up its vetting process at registration, requiring two forms of business identification to ensure an attendance base of qualified buyers. (This season, the CMC began charging a \$20 fee for buyers' guests, as well, and requiring they be accompanied by a registered buyer at all times.)

Among the designers and labels shopping the show were Karen Kane, Rami Kashou, Kevan Hall, **The Battalion**, **Single**, Christopher Collins, **7 For All Mankind**, Thomi Lee, **Splendid**, **Ella Moss**, Marcello Soltan, **Vince**, **BCBG-Maxazria**, **Bebe**, **Disney Store**, **Michael Stars**, **PJ Salvage**, **Whitley Kros**, **William Rast**, **Trina Turk**, **Robert Rodriguez**, **Rory Beca**, **Forever 21**, **Fox Racing** and **Black Halo**.

"It's very well-attended," said Ned Pilchman, sales manager for Greensboro, N.C.–based **American Fabrics International**. Pilchman said it made sense for an East Coast company such as his to show at the L.A. Textile Show. "All the companies are here on the West Coast," he said.

Designer Kevan Hall started his shopping in



BETTER BUSINESS: Many exhibitors noted the increased traffic and an improved mood at the L.A. Textile Show. (Pictured: The Duksung P&T booth in the Korean Pavilion in the CMC Fashion Theater)

the Korean Pavilion in the CMC's Fashion Theater. Hall said he was looking for findings and trimmings, as well as novelty fabrics—"things that aren't all over the market." He said, "After a while, it seems everyone has the same thing."

The designer, who was in between stops on a national trunk-show tour, said he planned to spend at least two days at the show.

Galina Sobolev, designer of **Single**, said she found new items at **Classic Silks**, **KBC** and **Miroglio** at the show—and dropped by the **WGSN** trend seminar.

Overall, she was pleased with this season's offerings and the number of people shopping the show.

"I'm impressed. Compared to last time, I think everyone will be pleased," she said.

Designer Rami Kashou was looking for jerseys for a capsule collection he is planning to launch for his new online store. Kashou said the new line, which will retail for \$300–\$560, will address women's evening, cocktail dress and

day-to-night dressing needs at a more affordable price point.

"Not everyone can afford a \$45,000 gown," he said.

Gordon Morikowa was shopping the show looking for knits and high-end printed fabrics for the **Katharine Kidd** collection.

"I love the direction of the Spring colors," he said during a stop at the **Texollini** booth.

Improved mood

Exhibitors noted the improved attendance and mood from last season.

"It's better than last time," said Jay Kim, senior manager at Seoul, Korea–based **Duksung P&T Ltd.**, which was showing in the Korean Pavilion for the third time.

"The last couple of years, the economy was really down and everyone was in a bad mood. Now it's a little better; we're getting a better response."

Duksung manufactures luxe faux leather and fur made from polyester and polyurethane.

Kim said he was seeing a mix of large companies such as **BCBG** and **Disney**, as well as small start-ups looking for low minimums. (Duksung's basic minimum is 500 yards, but the company will take smaller orders with a nominal surcharge.)

Most of the L.A. Textile exhibitors showed in open booth space on the CMC's 13th-floor Penthouse Pavilion, although some opted for showroom spaces on the same floor. In addition to the 13 mills showing in the Korean Pavilion,

➔ **Textiles** page 2

Textiles *Continued from page 1*

organized by the **Korean Textile Trade Association**, there were also those textile resources with permanent showrooms on the CMC's seventh floor.

Eclat Textiles opted not to show in a temporary space on the 13th floor but out of its seventh-floor showroom.

"We've been busy," said sales rep Ann Davis on the second day of the show. "People have been coming in all day."

Last season, **Twin Dragon Marketing Inc.** and its partner, **Blue River** wash house, exhibited at Globaltex in a large space within the show's denim pavilion. This season, the company participated in the **Lenzing Innovation Pavilion** on the 13th floor. Austrian fiber maker **Lenzing**—which manufactures **Tencel**, **Modal** and **Viloft**—brought 20 mills and manufacturers to show in the pavilion.

The Twin Dragon/Blue River partnership gives manufacturers the opportunity to source its denim supply chain—from mill to wash

house—in China or Mexico. The company operates a design studio in Gardena, Calif., and offers full-package production through partnerships with cut-and-sew facilities in China and Mexico.

"We're the only denim mill showing here," said Twin Dragon sales and marketing director Bo Dean. "It's been very interesting. A lot of industry people came in. It exceeded my expectations."

Cotton price in flux

The rapidly rising price of cotton was a key concern for many of the exhibitors showing at the L.A. Textile Show and was high on the agenda at a seminar titled "Fabric Sourcing: Today's Challenges & Innovations," hosted by Lenzing.

"This is a great opportunity for retailers; the efficiency of the supply chain is under their control," said David Sasso, vice president of international sales and marketing at **Buhler Quality Yarns**. "You have to trust your supply chain

that their goals are the same as yours. We want our supply chain to be very successful."

Pilchman, with American Fabrics International, also advised manufacturers to work with their suppliers.

"Prices are going to go up another 50 percent," he said. "People are scrambling to figure out what to do. How do you price your garments if the prices go up every week? Speak to your suppliers. Try to get some idea what the price will be—if possible."

Pilchman said his company was offering lighter-weight goods and blends to offset the rising cotton prices.

Denim mill Twin Dragon was also offering a wide range of blends, including cotton/Tencel blends and a Tencel/linen blend and Tencel/rayon/cotton and Lycra.

"People who weren't interested in Tencel before are taking another look," said Twin Dragon's Dean. "Now, the price differential is not that high. Tencel appears to be growing in importance." ●