Keeping It Real

Beauty has a new look on the runway and it’s all about individuality.
Lessons in Sustainability

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By ARTHUR FRIEDMAN

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Lessons in Sustainability

CFDA designers take part in CLASS workshop.

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It was a teaching moment. Brands and designers chosen to participate in the CFDA + Lexus Fashion Initiative were schooled in sustainable innovation in textiles this month as part of their 7-month virtual residency program.

An integral aspect of the program, designed to inspire thought leadership, facilitate the implementation of innovative business practices and create meaningful change within American fashion, is to elevate the level and percentage of sustainability within apparel, jewelry and accessories design businesses.

Doing the teaching was Giusy Bettoni, founder of CLASS, whose purpose at the two-hour workshop of CLASS, or Creativity Lifestyle and Sustainable design businesses, is to remain engaged with the CFDA + Lexus Fashion Initiative, which focuses on the environmental, social and financial challenges faced by the industry today with the intention of problem solving through new materials, processes and systems, including responsible sourcing, ethical manufacturing, supply chain transparency, scalable business strategies and consumer literacies.

Among the finalists in attendance were Christopher Kunz from Nicholas K, Prabal Gurung, Britt Courges and Marina Polo from SYLV, Erin Isakie of Erin Snow and design team members from Tunto and Zevi + Maria Gurung. Kunz agreed with a key point Bettoni made during her presentation that “sustainable fabrics take on great designs and are eco-friendly.” He said he “loved the recycled and cashmere” and was looking into using some in his collection. Kunz said Nicholas K also uses a lot of cotton in the collection and is sensitive to yarns and fabrics produced with methods that use less water. In the end, he said, “It’s more difficult to sell sustainability to the consumer. It’s easier to sell a product and then explain it to the consumer in some way that it shows an added benefit.”

During the workshop Bettoni also stressed the commercial viability of the sustainable product and then explain it to the consumer. It’s easier to sell a product and then explain it to the consumer in some way that it shows an added benefit. The average consumer still believes sustainable doesn’t equal with quality,” she said.

“Why’s that? To use a new generation of fabrics ‘responsible innovation’ with a 3-D approach: creativity, innovation and responsibility - three distinct elements when combined guarantee a competitive market advantage.”

Bettoni explained and showed several examples of fabrics that are part of CLASS. Fromo by Marzio & Filali, which drew Kunz’s interest, transforms pre-dyed fabric clippings into high-quality cotton yarns, thereby saving water and energy and reducing landfill space.

Re-Verso is a line of re-engineered wool and cashmere upcycled using post-consumer-fabric cutoffs. Bettoni showed a Gucci fall 2016 coat being made using Re-Verso cashmere.

New Life’s polymer, made using post-consumer plastic bottles, is now being utilized by Gruppo Cinque in a new range of jacquard prints, while Asahi Kasei’s Botca Eco-Smart stretch is made from 50 percent pre-consumer recycled elastane that saves water and has better dye uptake due to its lower oil content.

There was also Asahi Kasei’s Kupra, a cellulose fiber made from recovered cotton waste that’s being used by such mills as Jeytex, which also uses the company’s Botca fabric.

Gurung, like many of the attendees, seemed impressed by the hand and look of the materials presented, as pieces were passed around the room for the old “touchy-feely.”

While not part of Milan-based CLASS, many Italian mills have been pioneers in textile sustainability and innovation. Cariaggi’s Systema Naturae collection of cashmere yarn is dyed with herbs, berries and roots such as the blue-indigo tones of the wool plant from the spinners’ native Cagli territory. At the most recent Pitti Filati fair, Lanificio dell’Olivo showed off its sustainable “Going Green” project that uses organic cotton yarns for a cleaner, more classic approach.

Today’s 1000 has stressed in investment in sustainability through areas such as methods to decrease water usage, and in more energy-efficient machinery, and Zegna Baruffa has developed a special technology with Turin’s Polimix Centro that was applied to wool to manufacture H2Dry, a high-tech yarn that’s washable for travel wear and activewear.

Additional finalists for the CFDA + Lexus Fashion Initiative are Dannes by Sara Helou, Katie O’Gorman and Michael Miller from Killer Collection, and Whisker’s Wing Yin Yau.

At the conclusion of the program, the three brands that have most significantly advanced their companies’ ethos to a higher standard of sustainability and social responsibility will be awarded $10,000 and the grand prize winner will be named the CFDA + Lexus Fashion Initiative’s 2017 Award winner. Each runner-up to the grand prize and two runner-up prizes will also be awarded.

Yarns for Contract and Apparel

At the Pitti Filati fair, Lanificio dell’Olivo showed off its sustainable “Going Green” project that uses organic cotton yarns for a cleaner, more classic approach. Today’s 1000 has stressed in investment in sustainability through areas such as methods to decrease water usage, and in more energy-efficient machinery, and Zegna Baruffa has developed a special technology with Turin’s Polimix Centro that was applied to wool to manufacture H2Dry, a high-tech yarn that’s washable for travel wear and activewear.

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Re-Verso™ is a certified manufacturing platform, a first to market business based on the re-engineering of wool, cashmere and camel materials from pre-consumer cut outs. Its process cycle is fully traceable and completely Made in Italy.

Re-Verso™ is an evolved circular economy based on a fully integrated Italian supply chain, and boasts the following certificates: Global Recycling standard (GRS), ISO 9001 and SA8000.

Re-Verso™ works well in many applications from fashion to product design, interior design to furniture and packaging, and in turn, always conferring its unique value to all.

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