

New York Shows Present Fabric's New Dynamic

By ARTHUR FRIEDMAN

NEW YORK — Trends at the forefront in fabric and apparel sourcing — from producing more in the U.S. and Western Hemisphere to innovations in sustainability and technology — will be highlighted in the textile shows taking place here over the next two weeks.

Kicking off the season today is *Première Vision Preview New York* at the Metropolitan Pavilion & Altman Building on West 18th Street, featuring spring-summer 2013 fabrics and trimmings, primarily from top European companies, with a strong emphasis on eco-friendly fabrics. PV Preview includes "Fabric Forum" — a tool for finding suppliers and discovering the season's major trends — and a "Trend Tasting" presentation, with an image-driven demonstration of the collections of the weavers exhibiting at the show.

Sandrine Bernard, executive vice president of Solstiss USA, said, "The past shows have been very successful for Solstiss and Denis & Fils, and it is a great opportunity in many ways." Bernard said this includes seeing many clients — existing accounts looking for last-minute fabrics and new ideas, and new companies and designers — noting the Solstiss booth had more than 120 visitors at the July edition.

"Hopefully, the fluctuating economy will not affect the morale of the textile industry," Bernard added.

"Last July was the first time Liberty participated in the *Première Vision New York* show, which was very busy for us and quite a success," said Ioana Banu, director of sales for Liberty Art Fabrics North America. "Many of our customers like to visit our showroom, where they can relax and take their time reviewing collections, but it's definitely important for us to have a presence at the show, see out-of-town customers and have the opportunity to connect with new ones."

Running concurrently with PV Preview is *Indigo*, an international exhibition of textile design, including prints, embroideries, knits, appliqués, jacquards and transfer papers for the fashion and home markets.

Though built on a strong contingent of Asian mills, *Texworld USA*, considered the largest textile and sourcing show in North America, is putting a major emphasis on North American resources in its 12th edition set for the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center Jan. 16 to 18.

Alexandra d'Archangelo, market de-

velopment manager for New York textile shows at *Messe Frankfurt Inc.*, which produces *Texworld USA*, noted that in a post-show attendee survey conducted after the show's July edition, 53 percent of respondents indicated a desire to see North American exhibitors more fully represented at the show, compared to 48 percent a season earlier.

"This January, it will be possible to source garments through the fiber, yarn, knitting, cut, make and trim to the embellishment stage on the *Texworld USA* show floor," d'Archangelo said. "Most North American resources will be found in the *Lenzing Innovation Pavilion*."

Lenzing's seminar series at *Texworld* will include a session on "Made in America Stories," featuring three companies — *Buhler Quality Yarns Corp.*, *Laguna Fabrics* and *Fessler USA* — that have been successful manufacturing yarns and fabrics in the U.S. They will tell how in today's volatile global market, brands and retailers are rethinking costs related to offshore supply chains and seeking efficient alternatives close to home and how the ability to tailor a product to fit customer needs in a timely, cost-effective manner is a big part of the American advantage and can often outweigh price differentials from low-cost Asian countries.

David Sasso, vice president of sales and marketing at *Buhler*, which specializes in Modal and Tencel yarns, said, "In this economy, when the consumer sees something they like, it isn't always about the price. The smaller brands get it, but some of the big-box stores can't seem to get past the mentality of price being the primary factors in sourcing decisions."

Buhler, with U.S. headquarters and manufacturing facilities in Jefferson, Ga., has also built a strong business exporting yarns to Central America, which are then made into finished garments and exported to the U.S. duty free under the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

"We have some very consistent programs in Central America with some national brands and big-box stores in volumes in which they need the speed, price and logistics that Central America offers," Sasso said.

Sasso is on the *Made in America* panel with Brian Meck, vice president of sales and marketing at *Fessler*, which will be showcasing some new base-layer apparel products, fire-retardant apparel using *Lenzing FR* and a fiber called *TBI*, and performance apparel at the trade fair, and David Roshan, president of *Laguna*

Fabrics, a Los Angeles-based maker of cellulosic knits.

"There seems to be a lot of indicators pointing toward good reasons for *Made in America* for a lot of our customers," Meck said. "We've picked up quite a few new customers over the last six to 12 months. More so now than ever, people are coming to us because they are talking about *Made in the U.S.* as being an important part of their diversification strategy, their risk management from a supply chain perspective and...helping to support and create jobs in the U.S. We've gone through several exercises in the last two months, upon customer requests, that they wanted to see an analysis of 'If we give you X amount of business, whether its revenue or volume, how many jobs would that create?' I have no recollection of anybody ever having that sort of conversation, and now we're having multiple people doing it at the same time."

Meck said these are retailers that produce their own brands. He said *Fessler*, with headquarters and production facilities in Orwigsburg, Pa., has been seeing more business from larger brands, while many smaller boutique brands have gone out of business in the last two years.

"Our business is up 20 to 30 percent over the last 12 months," Meck said.

He said the strength of the business is in the outdoor industry segment, including base-layer and climate-control performance apparel.

The contingent of North American suppliers also includes novelty yarn spinner *JH Textiles* and knitter *Mansfield*, both of Vernon, Calif., and Canadian specialty yarn manufacturer *Oratex*.

The seminar series also features "Dimensions in Denim — Fiber, Finish and Fabric," and "Innovation and Sustainability through Chemistry." The denim session will discuss the latest innovations in denim, from fiber to garment washes to fabric developments. In the innovation presentation, speakers will focus on how chemical companies are leading the way to more sustainable processes, such as collaborations with fiber and fabric firms that propel growth, support environmentally friendly processes and provide novel solutions for leading-edge products.

In addition, "Source4Style's Tips, Tricks and Trends in Sustainable Material Sourcing" will feature co-founder *Summer Rayne Oakes* discussing current trends in sustainable material sourcing.

In addition to sponsoring its pavilion and the seminar series, *Lenzing* will be highlighting *Modal Edelweiss*, which uses a new production technology to make its Modal fiber even more environmentally responsible, noted *Tricia Carey*, USA merchandising manager for the textile fiber business unit. The company will

also be presenting information on its U.S. Department of Agriculture Bio Base Certification, which encourages government agencies and contractors to purchase products that are bio-based or made from significant amounts of bio-based materials, and its *Lenzing Partner Cooperation*, where company technicians work directly with mills in Asia to develop new fabrics.

"Our exhibitors in the *Lenzing Pavilion* are from North America, Europe and Asia, which is parallel to current sourcing strategies beyond China," Carey added.

Texworld will include the *Apparel Sourcing Pavilion*, showcasing companies from around the globe, notably from China and other Asian countries, offering finished garments, contract manufacturing and private label development.

The *Kingpins Show*, the boutique denim fabric and clothing venue, runs Jan. 17 and 18 at Center 548 on West 22nd Street. Sponsored by *Invista* and *Certified FiberMax Cotton*, *Kingpins New York* will feature live demonstrations of the *Jeanologia Twin GFK 3e* laser that creates "wash" denim using light. *Kingpins* will also feature seminars including "Lyca Present: Fiber Recovery" with *Jean Hegedus*, global marketing director of ready-to-wear for *Lyca* parent *Invista*, discussing *Lyca's* latest fiber innovations targeting the denim market, and a *Cotton Incorporated* "Denim Trend Forecast" by product trend analyst *Abbey Cook*, offering an overview of color, fabric, finishing and silhouette inspirations.

Andrew Olah, chief executive officer of *Olah Inc.*, which produces *Kingpins*, said mills are facing difficult margins because the apparel market won't accept the prices that need to be charged as a result of increases in raw material and labor costs. Olah said, "The European and Japanese markets are both in troubled times, and the U.S. is more price conscious than ever."

He said the crux of the problem is that even though cotton prices have decreased substantially from their peak of more than \$2 a pound last March, many mills still have old inventory and demand remains low, yet apparel manufacturers see current prices of less than \$1 a pound and want that reflected in the prices they want to pay for fabric and yarn.

"In reality, the lower cotton prices will help the mills by June of 2012," not now, said Olah. "We don't expect business to pick up. The economy has not shown us any real reason to expect a more buoyant 2012."

Kingpins will also help launch *The Continuum*, a trade show focusing on the latest innovations in sustainability that will run independently but concurrently at the same venue.





The Lenzing Innovation Pavilion at Texworld USA.

PHOTOS BY JOHN AQUINO AND ROBERT MITRA



Checking out the trends at Première Vision Preview.



Tricia Carey