

Mayor, NJAL Host Meeting With Apparel, Creative Community at City Hall

By Alison A. Nieder Executive Editor

Mayor Eric Garcetti and Not Just a Label, the organization that represents independent designers, hosted a meeting featuring members of Los Angeles' creative community.

Held in the Tom Bradley room atop Los Angeles City Hall, the Sept. 7 event was billed as "Cities and a Bold Vision for Retail." It was the third event NJAL has hosted in Los Angeles.

"Creativity is the currency of the future," said NJAL founder Stefan Siegel. "Not Just a Label leverages one of the most creative communities on the planet. We are proof of the concept that change in fashion is possible."

Earlier this year, Siegel expanded NJAL from its London roots and opened its first U.S. office in Los Angeles. The organization is currently working on building "the first intellectual-property marketplace," Siegel said, explaining that rather than shopping

for garments, retailers can shop for design rights.

In Garcetti's speech to the crowd of apparel designers, retailers, manufacturers, publicists and event organizers, the mayor said one of Los Angeles' greatest assets is its diverse population, which includes people from 39 countries that have their largest populations outside of their own country in Los Angeles.

"Not Just a Label came here because it recognizes something in Los Angeles that we're all familiar with," Garcetti said. "This improbable collision of cultures is, in many ways, the face of the world today. For those of us who are Americans, I would offer it's the face of this country tomorrow. It's a place where we don't see the division between us, but we see the strengths of this currency, where we don't divide one another but we look at what it is to propel one another. We don't make enemies of one another; we make new alliances with one another. In Los Angeles, creativity is around every corner. Collaboration is inevitable here."

The mayor's speech introduced a panel dis-

cussion that included Doris Raymond, owner of the vintage clothing boutique and consultancy **The Way We Wore**; Zach Brooks, general manager of **Smorgasburg LA**; Brent Davis, brand measurement lead for **Snapchat**; Chris DeFaria, president of **DreamWorks Animation**; Jen Guarino, vice president of manufacturing for **Shinola**; Dan Katz, transportation policy counsel for **Hyperloop**; Jay Luchs, vice president at **Newmark Knight Frank**; Phil Pavel, former managing director of the **Chateau Marmont** and managing director of **NoMad Los Angeles**; and Ari Popper, founder of **SciFutures**.

Sophie Hackford, resident futurist at NJAL, moderated the panel. "I believe in 30 years you will look back and say 2018 is the very beginning of the Internet. Social media is not the pinnacle," Hackford said.

She believes data and artificial intelligence will define our experience of cities. "Sensors are everywhere and all of this is leaving digital breadcrumbs," Hackford said. "Cities are becoming a virtual version of the Internet, a physical web. We're going to be able to Google the world the way we Google the Internet. After a while your **Amazon Echo** will order your toothpaste or **Uber** before you knew you needed it."

Several speakers mentioned how their ar-

eas of expertise—from food to hospitality to transportation—will affect apparel and retail. "Retail needs to completely change—even if it wants to be the same," Hackford said.

For **The Way We Wore's** Raymond, many of the high-tech ideas discussed by the panel, such as virtual environments that blur entertainment and shopping, have little impact on her business of buying and selling vintage garments. "I feel like I want to be a dinosaur—I don't want to change," she said. "Our store is a little anomaly. I sell one item, in one size and one color. People feel my passion and enthusiasm. I'm able to tell the history of a piece."

Los Angeles remains a draw and a home base for many designers, including Jeremy Scott, Hedi Slimane, Rem Koolhaas and Tom Ford, Raymond said.

"There's a reason creatives come to Los Angeles," she said. "We are the center of the universe for design."

But while her vintage clothing business sets her apart from traditional apparel retailers, Raymond faces the same challenges of other retailers in Los Angeles. "There are so many little details we are responsible for as retailers, but we need the support of the city," she said. "Small businesses create the flavor of a neighborhood. I think it's time for the city to look at the micro scale rather than the macro scale." ●



Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and NJAL founder Stefan Siegel

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Surf Expo *Continued from page 1*

show down to two, then ultimately shortened the run to one day. By the Sept. 7 opening day, traffic headed out of Orlando was at a standstill as emergency and disaster-recovery

convoys headed into the area.

Tavik's Florida rep, Logan Watters, met with buyers from **Everything But Water** and the **Curl Surf Shop**, both based in Orlando. The rest of her 30 to 40 appointments



James McDonald from Lost Dog

canceled right before the show.

"I was truly worried about every single one of them," she said.

Watters was also worried about her husband, who drove six hours from Orlando back to their Brevard County home (typically an hour drive at most) to pack up their two children and the dog.

Buyers from retail mainstays **17th Street Surf Shop** and **Ron Jon** kept their appointments. And while a rumored 40 or so exhibitors were no-shows, many noteworthy brands made a point of showing up. Absent for the last few years, **Nike's Hurley** returned to the aisles, with Hurley founder Bob Hurley himself putting in an appearance.

Show management later told exhibitors that 1,400 registered attendees showed up on-site. Yet it was obvious on the show floor that buyers from across the Caribbean, the Mid-Atlantic, Texas and Florida canceled.

Responding to Irma was a moment-to-moment maneuver for show management. Because setup begins at least a week before the show opens, it was impossible at the start to pinpoint Irma's exact threat—for commuters, travelers and the show itself. During its 40-year history, Surf Expo had never had to tweak a show schedule due to a hurricane, despite having to deal with numerous storm-related hassles over the years. By 2 p.m. on opening day, organizers announced plans to close the show at 6 p.m. and not reopen the next day "due to the progressive conditions of Hurricane Irma."

Among those taking Irma's chaos in stride were many first-time show exhibitors looking to make their marks in Surf Expo's ac-



The Tavik booth

tive-lifestyle segment. **Simplex Apparel** and **Shaka Wear** consolidated the company's two lines into one booth. **Lost Dog's** James McDonald made do without his new line of artwork tees, which were lost in shipment.

Ramtin Sadeghi's **RuckJack**—a new line of outdoor wear that converts into a daypack—plans to return in January. "It's obvious that it's a huge opportunity for us," he said.

East Prairie, Mo.-based **A-Game Camo**, a just-launched line of technical outdoor wear founded by former big-game hunting guide Rex Burney, made its Surf Expo debut to a mostly empty aisle. Still, he said, "We saw five or six accounts who were interested."

After a few days at her Orlando hotel, Daley, from Turks and Caicos, returned home to find her store had escaped damage and her family, including her one-month-old grandson, safe. Tavik's Watters and her family returned home after spending two nights in a hotel near the Convention Center that she described as a "hotel for dogs."

In retrospect, Watters said she thinks Surf Expo should have canceled the show altogether. "They should have known that everyone was worried about their stores," she said. "How could people buy for Summer 2018 when they don't even know if they will be around?"

Surf Expo organizers noted that all decisions were made with the exhibitors' and attendees' safety in mind.

"We hope that all attention can be focused on helping those in need," the company said in a statement. ●

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