

2012

**FEATURE
FRONTLINERS:**
Double Dossier

3

2012 NIGHT OF STARS & RISING STARS 2013

4

FGI REGIONAL DIRECTORS:
In League With The Future

6

APPLIED BRILLIANCE

7

IN MEMORIAM
Eleanor Pitts LaVore

FGI TO HONOR NICOLE MILLER
Miami Fashion Week

8

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FRONTLINERS: DOUBLE DOSSIER

Tuesday morning, August 21, The Fashion Group International held its Frontliners event, **DOUBLE DOSSIER: Fashion Designers on Home, Home Design Redefined**. A continental breakfast was served while guests mingled and networked before the discussion commenced. Creative director for WGSN-Homebuilidlife, **Lisa White** served as the moderator of a distinguished panel including lingerie legend **Josie Natori**, founder and CEO of the Natori Company; American couturier **Ralph Rucci** of Chado Ralph Rucci, and **Dan Saginario**, operating vice president of brand marketing and home at HSN.

While there has always been a connection between fashion and the home, HSN's Saginario explained why it may be greater today. "Most Americans are nesting more; therefore they want to make their homes beautiful." He continued, "The customer sees his or her home as an extension of his or herself and wants it to reflect their personal style."

According to Saginario, the "home" category accounts for the largest percentage of HSN's business today, surpassing both apparel and jewelry. Considering that HSN reaches 96 million homes across America and broadcasts seven days a week, 24 hours a day, we can surmise that the home goods business is a lucrative one. So, it makes sense that designers of fashion might want to moonlight as designers of home furnishings.

With that in mind, White began the discussion by asking the two designers on the panel what inspired them to take their businesses from fashion to the home.

"Most of the clothes I make for the clientele that I'm focused on are being worn privately in other people's homes. So, I have always thought about how people live and what the rooms look like," Rucci said. Perhaps the fact that Ralph Rucci is a painter who often transfers his artwork onto fabric for his runway collections backs up the idea that a progression into the home market is an organic and logical one. Rucci is recognized for his exquisite, museum-worthy clothes, but the designer synonymous with "weightlessness" ventured into heavy merchandise in 2011 when he partnered with Holly Hunt to design an exclusive collection of furniture. It might be the perfect union considering both Rucci and Hunt are known for superior quality and impeccable workmanship.

In the late Seventies, while working as vice president of investment banking at Merrill Lynch, Josie Natori decided to do something about the limited selection of lingerie offered. Natori filled a niche between what she referred to as lewd and frumpy, and introduced a line of beautiful, comfortable intimates. Answering White's initial question, Natori said that she's always had a hand in the home furnishings market. In fact, during the early stages of her career, Natori recalled, "I made embroidered place mats out of the Philippines and pedaled around trying to sell them." From there, she moved into embroidered blouses and then lingerie. Today, her fusion of East-meets-West aesthetic has grown into a complete lifestyle brand which includes lingerie, ready-to-wear, home, fragrance, eyewear and swim.

"So what inspires you?" White asked.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 →



FRONT LINERS

PEOPLE & TOPICS THAT MOVE THE DESIGN WORLD FORWARD

Being an artist and a painter, Rucci is, of course, very immersed in fine art, but he didn't cite any one specific thing from which he drew inspiration. He did say that he has the most clarity when he's in Paris and his mantra is, "...to keep my mind open all year long and absorb like a sponge." Rucci admitted that he obsesses before starting a collection and attacks a project with voracious research. "There's a multiplicity of things that I'm trying to encapsulate. The struggle is finding the essence of the garment," he said. Whether he's working on fashion or furniture, one practice that Rucci follows while working on a collection is restraint. "You can have all the details, but it has to have purity," he said.

Josie Natori is continually influenced by color and pattern (although she claims only to have slept in white sheets for the past eight years). "Reds and bright colors have always been important to the Natori brand," she said.

"Speaking of color, would either of you, Josie or Ralph, have any interest in starting a line of paint colors?" White asked. Natori stated that she would consider it. Rucci, on the other hand, believes that the market is cornered. He said, "Benjamin Moore is perfection, just like Levi Straus is perfection. There are some things that just shouldn't be challenged," he said.

In terms of fashion designers migrating into the home, HSN's Saginario stressed that authenticity is key. "It's very easy to jump into things," he said. "We (HSN) work with a lot of authorities and celebrities in our network who want to delve into other areas like perfume or lifestyle just because they can. But, it's not genuine." Saginario said that it was important to "stay true to who you are" because everything is so transparent today due to the Internet, so the customer can tell if it's not authentic.

"How quickly does runway influence home furnishings?" White asked the panel.

While Rucci didn't think runway has much influence on home especially at a certain level of taste, Saginario said, "There is an influence, but it develops over time. People don't buy a new sofa every year. But trend, color, print, etc. can be translated easily into textiles and accessories that can change over more quickly." He added, "Seasons also dictate what happens in the home market—again through color—and often the influence is cultural, such as sustainability."



From left: Josie Natori, founder and CEO of the Natori Company; Dan Saginario, operating vice president of brand marketing and home at HSN; Ralph Rucci of Chado Ralph Rucci and moderator Lisa White creative director for WGSN-Homebuildlife.

Sarginario also brought up the importance of technology. "Everything has become digital. People are using their homes as a platform to communicate and stay connected," he said.

Picking up on Saginario's point, White questioned the panel about their social media tactics. "How do you engage with your customer?" she asked.

"What I'm noticing more than anything is that the conversations are happening outside of our network. The community is dictating what they want," said Saginario. For example, Saginario revealed that home decor is the number-one category being referenced on Pinterest (an online content sharing service). "Pinterest is in HSN's top-five search channels coming into the network," said Saginario. HSN also uses Google analytics to determine what the public is searching for and with that information they are able to direct shoppers to their Web site by incorporating key words and phrases. In fact, HSN noticed a spike in sales for specific products when they applied the search engine information.

"People don't need anything today," Natori said. "It's a question of want, not need and I think that marketing is so important nowadays." She went on to say, "I tweet. Though, I don't know who does it (for me)!"

Rucci agreed on the importance of social media, but said that he still liked to engage directly with clients by traveling to stores throughout the country, like Neiman Marcus. "You can really create a bond that way," Rucci said.



From left: Josie Natori, with Margaret Hayes, president of The Fashion Group International.



— Stacy Lomman
Contributing Writer



Star Power

Stars are in Alignment for Two of FGI's Biggest Events

2012 Night of Stars

FGI president **Margaret Hayes** announced the honorees for the 2012 Night of Stars gala, to be held October 25 at Cipriani 55 Wall Street. The superstar award will be presented to **Carolina Herrera**, "one of Fashion Group International's most illustrious and inspiring long-time members, and I am pleased and proud that we are honoring her with this richly deserved award," said Hayes, noting that the only other member in the organization's ranks to be similarly honored was **Donna Karan**.

"Carolina is an international icon and a brilliant business woman," Hayes continued. "For over three decades, she's remained true to her elegant design aesthetic in everything—from her signature collection to her bridal, accessories and fragrance collections—while presiding over a global business with a singular focus on excellence. She has an innate understanding of what smart, chic women everywhere want when it comes to style and beauty."

In accepting the superstar award, Herrera joins a list of illustrious past honorees that includes **Giorgio Armani**, **Valentino**, **Karl Lagerfeld**, **Nicolas Ghesquière** and **Oscar de la Renta**.

Others who will be presented with a coveted crystal trophy include **Haider Ackermann**, **Derek Lam** and **Gareth Pugh** for fashion; **Annabelle Selldorf** for architecture and **James Gager** for beauty. The Brand Heritage award will be presented to the **Maramotti family** for Max Mara, the Sustainability award to Tiffany & Co., the Humanitarian award to **Wynton Marsalis**, and the Corporate Leadership award to **Karen Katz** of Neiman Marcus Group. Lord & Taylor's Fashion Oracle award will be presented to **L'Wren Scott**.

The red-carpet event is among the season's premiere events, attended by A-listers and icons from New York, Hollywood and Europe. Artist **Ruben Toledo** will design exclusive artwork for the event's invitation and program around the "Dreamcatchers" theme, and **Simon Doonan** will return as emcee.

The lead sponsor for the Night of Stars gala is Lord & Taylor, and participating sponsors include Arcade Marketing, bebe, Givaudan, InStyle and Movado.

Rising Stars 2013

Hot on the heels of the Night of Stars, literally and figuratively, is the Rising Stars event—the festive luncheon recognizing the icons-to-be in fashion, beauty and retail—held in late January. FGI has put out the call for nominees; applications are due November 1. Categories include women's and men's ready-to-wear, accessories, fine jewelry, beauty/fragrance entrepreneur, beauty/fragrance corporate, home/interior design and retail.

Nominees are judged by members of Fashion Group and winnowed down to a handful of finalists in each category, followed by a second round of judging by members. Previous winners and finalists for the Rising Star awards have gone on to make their mark in the industry, including Rising Stars **Jason Wu**, **Christian Cota**, **Tory Burch** and **Joseph Altuzarra** and finalists **Alexis Maybank** and **Alexandra Wilkis Wilson** of Gilt and **Ivanka Trump**.

Katie Kretschmer

Editor/Contributing Writer

2012 Honorees



Carolina Herrera



Jon King
Tiffany & Co.



Wynton Marsalis



Karen Katz
The Neiman Marcus Group



L'Wren Scott



Haider Ackermann



Derek Lam



Gareth Pugh



Annabelle Selldorf



James Gager



Nicola Maramotti
Max Mara

In League With The Future

As the dawn came up over the “Big Apple” on May 10, 2012, directors from more than 30 regions across the country and around the world cast their collective iOnTheFuture and converged in New York for the annual Regional Directors Conference. Three event-packed days of seminars, workshops and networking kicked off with a buzzy bang at Material ConneXion: Culture & Commerce, where the company’s VP, **Susan Towers**, hosted a reception: cocktails and nibbles enjoyed by all.

Friday’s programming was held in the Condé Nast auditorium—thanks again to that company’s generosity—and featured a roster of speakers including **Maggie Gilliam**, a retail maven who spoke about the business-altering changes in that arena, and **Debra Duneier**, whose expertise in the application of Feng Shui in life and work was pretty enlightening. Not new but still startling in

their influence are bloggers whose opinions weigh heavily on consumer views of companies and products. A panel of bloggers discussed that. Fascinating stuff, but particularly interesting was a presentation by FGI Board member **Alexandra Wilkis Wilson**, and her partner **Alexis Maybank**, cofounders of Gilt Groupe, and coauthors of a book about the experience of building the billion-dollar, mega shopping site, which now ships merchandise to more than five million “luxury obsessed bargain hunters” in 100 countries. The pair posed for photo ops and signed copies of *By Invitation Only: How We Built Gilt* and *Changed the way Millions Shop*.

The day wound up at A-lister watering hole The Cosmopolitan Club, with drinks, dinner, awards and a conversation between FGI’s own **Marylou Luther** and the iconic, albeit madcap, designer, **Betsey Johnson**.

Saturday found the group gathered at FGI headquarters for breakfast and a presentation by forecaster Pat Tunsy, who delivered a heads-up on the new and next in color, fabrics and trends. FGI social media consultant **Maryanne Grisz** updated the group on that subject (did you know that you can follow FGI on Facebook and Twitter?), followed by a discussion moderated by **Susan Glick**, in which Rising Star panelists shared their stories of determination, passion, triumphs and defeats.

An afternoon of workshops concluded with a wine and cheese reception where attendees echoed Mexico City Regional Director **Carlota de la Vega Pietrini’s** assessment: “The New York conference really enriches, motivates and informs.” iOn the Future was a resounding success!

— Wendy D’Amico

Creative Consultant, Wendy7d@aol.com



Maggie Gilliam, president, Gilliam & Company “Changes in Retail.”



From left: Linda Lizzio, district 1 director; Cheryl Ingersoll, director of regional services; Susan Towers, VP, marketing & communications of Material ConneXion, at the kick-off cocktail reception.



From left: Cheryl Ingersoll with Debra Duneier, president/founder, EcoChi, LLC, at “Design Your Business and Your Life with Feng Shui.”



From left: Alexandra Adame, The Dressing Room Boutique & Bar; designer Betsey Johnson, guest speaker; Marylou Luther, International Fashion Syndicate; Margaret Hayes, at The Cosmopolitan Club



Special recognition award recipient Tammy A. Apostol, membership chair of South Florida



From left: Siobhan ‘Shawny’ Burns, regional liaison; Susanne Taylor, district 4 director; Margaret Hayes; Susan Glick, regional liaison, at the Cosmopolitan Club



From left: Kristofer Taylor and district 4 director Susanne Taylor at the Cosmopolitan Club.



From left: Leesa Butler, co-regional director; Margaret Hayes; Farley Chatto, regional director, and their Toronto programming award.



From left: Karin Cadena, regional director, and Aba Kwawu, regional director-elect of Greater Washington, DC and their special recognition award.



From left: Farley Chatto, regional director, Toronto; Michelle Pratt, regional director, Detroit; Carlota de la Vega Pietrini, regional director, Mexico City; and Kim Prodan, secretary, Detroit, at the Cosmopolitan Club.



From left: Alexis Maybank and Alexandra Wilkis Wilson, cofounders of the Gilt Groupe, at the "By Invitation Only" presentation and book signing.



From left: Denver special recognition award presented to Jenny Baker-Strasburg, secretary and Linda Bowen Scott, membership chair.



From left: Cheryl Ingersoll, director of regional services and Margaret Hayes at the Cosmopolitan Club.

“You must give birth to your images. They are the future waiting to be born.”

Rainer Maria Rilke



Nick Fortugno



Ami Ronneberg



Dylan Thuras



Dr. Greg Stock



Barry Svigals

Fashion Group International Presents: Applied Brilliance

On July 10th at the Time & Life theater, Fashion Group International presented Applied Brilliance, a forum of inspired talks by five thought-leaders who redefined how imagination and inspiration spark creativity and innovation. Applied Brilliance, the brainchild of its executive director **Deborah Patton**, was developed to provide leaders, influencers and industry professionals a macro view of cutting-edge trends and cultural paradigm shifts.

www.appliedbrilliance.com

Here's the rundown of the program:

Ami Ronneberg – *Symbologist, Curator, ARAS*

Ami Ronneberg thinks that it all begins with imagination. Images are universal, eternal. “Everything starts when we imagine something new. Potential begins to stir in us like a seed in the ground. We see images all the time; an image can transport us into places we never imagined,” she said. It is as if the image knows something that we don’t—it acts as a messenger or guide from somewhere else. Ronneberg is the editor in chief of *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Imagery*, and she likes to tell the story of the deeper meaning of symbols. Archetypal images provide a rich source of inspiration, such as a circle as a symbol of creation, light of consciousness, the beginning of manifestation. All images inspire personal and psychological journeys and explorations. When you tap into your imagination, there’s always a sense of wonder. It’s how every creative act begins as we follow our inspiration. That’s how the world keeps changing, developing, as we, as human beings, change and develop within ourselves.

www.aras.org

Barry Svigals – *Experiential Designer, Founder, Svigals Partners*

Barry Svigals deals with geometry and form all the time. He pointed out that a diamond’s brilliance comes from reflected light, not from within. “We tend to marginalize our creativity—there’s a creative possibility in every act,” he said. He likes to quote David Schenk’s book, *The Genius in All of Us*. He believes in the “genius within” and feels that everyone has a certain contribution to make.

“Creativity is as important as literacy.” On a trip to Paris, the gargoyles on the façades of buildings moved him. He felt inextricably connected through thousands of years of history and sculpture. Sculpture within architecture, now a signature trademark of Svigal’s work, bridges the gap between the experience of humanity in all of us that needs to be recalled and remembered. It harks back to a time when people decorated their environment based on who they were. He was elected to the Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA) for his contribution to the profession of architecture, specifically for “reawakening the tradition of figurative sculpture in architecture.”

www.svigals.com

Nick Fortugno – *Game Designer, Founder, Playmatics*

The world according to Nick Fortugno is about “experiences” designed for interaction. “Gamefication” is the design of interaction. Games give us a design methodology to think about “interactivity” and what it means to the end user. He told a story of how players become so engaged in playing they will experience immense happiness even though they have lost “time.” Rules make players engage in certain behaviors or train in a certain way; we can learn lessons about how people pursue goals. He referenced Nike+ as a well-designed game. Nike recognized that the nature of running is an isolated sport and that interaction would build a community of like-minded sports enthusiasts. By crafting a game for runners, Nike+ “gamers” are given constant feedback to meet their goals.

Fortugno talked about the “flow” of a game and the psychology of optimal experience as being intensely absorbed in an activity. “If we are given something challenging to do and possess the skill set to accomplish the task, we are happy,” he said. “If, however, the challenge is too high or too low for the skill level, then we can become bored and unhappy. The key with gaming is that the challenge and skill level must be in the middle, then there’s a surge of happiness and unmediated joy.”

www.comeandplay.org

Dylan Thuras – *Discoverer, Cofounder, Atlas Obscura*

As creative people, we go looking for inspiration for our work. Often we go looking in the wrong places. We think we have to find someone who has done it before. We go looking to our peers, the media, our competitors, or people who achieved success to find that spark of inspiration. Dylan Thuras would argue that you don’t have to travel far for inspiration—every block in the city, every building, is rich in wonder and inspiration. Every manhole cover that you walk by has a code about what subterranean labyrinth it’s connected through. For those working in fashion, the architectural details, the history that underlies our city streets can serve as inspiration. Thuras’ parting words: “Let yourself wonder and explore for no reason other than to explore. Let your curiosity be open to what you might find. Go through that strange door where you will find something that captures your imagination: That’s when you can run and chase it until you can wrestle it to the ground.”

www.atlasobscura.com

Dr. Greg Stock – *Human Sustainability, Bioscientist*

Greg Stock likes to talk about animating the inanimate world and appreciating the trajectory of where things might be going. According to Stock, no one likes to talk about the later stages of life—aging and death—and our own evolution. He believes that the next frontier is not traveling through space but our own selves—it’s about the inner journey. “Genetics and biology are changing who we are—we are learning to modify ourselves,” he said. “We are changing the way we have children, our emotional lives and our aging.” The future of healthcare will be predictive, personalized, preventive and participatory. In the near future, we are going to be hit by a tsunami of data about ourselves called systems biology—you will know more about your biological self, the sequencing of our genomes, and it will be inexpensive and made available to the masses. “Medicine is becoming an information science,” said Stock. The themes of science and technology will shape our future.

www.gregorystock.net

— **Mitria Di Giacomo**
Contributing Writer / Director of Special Events
& Brand Development, FGI
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Eleanor Pitts LaVove, an FGI LA member for nearly 70 years, died on August 24th, 2012, in Santa Monica, CA. She was 94 years old.

Following her studies at Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles (alma mater of FGI founding member Edith Head), LaVove went on to enroll at New York's Traphagen School of Fashion, now The Fashion Institute of Technology.

In 1941, LaVove joined the LA Times as an assistant to the fashion editor, a post she later rose to and held until 1943 when she joined Columbia Pictures as a fashion publicist for mega-watt stars Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell, among others.

Joining forces, in 1974, with longtime friend Jackie McMahan, the two mounted an exhibit of dolls and miniatures as part of a fundraising effort for a school serving autistic children; an exhibit that proved to be so popular, it was moved from its initial location, McMahan's backyard, to the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium where it reportedly drew crowds upward of 10,000 viewers. Convinced, then, that the exhibit needed a permanent home, the two opened Angels Attic in a Queen Anne-style Victorian house in Santa Monica. Visitors from around the world visit this gem of a collection, which includes a miniature replica of Versailles, complete with marble and parquet floors, painted ceilings and gilded interiors; as well as an 1864 doll-sized English country house with a deeply personal touch: lace drapes made from a fragment of LaVove's mother's wedding dress. Until shortly before her death, LaVove continued to oversee the museum, which will remain open under the direction of Charles Phillips. In 2004, Angels Attic joined forces with the nonprofit human services organization, Volunteers of America of Greater Los Angeles; a merger that has expanded the mission of the museum to include art and music programs for disadvantaged children.

Included among LaVove's many accomplishments is the founding of The Costume and Textiles Department at Los Angeles County Museum of History. The gallery's first exhibit, "150 Years of Brides" included the founder's own Renie-designed wedding dress.

The widow of Arthur LaVove, who died in 1993, LaVove is survived by her twin sons, Timothy and Michael; a stepdaughter, Susan Curley; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren and legions of Fashion Group International colleagues and friends who remember her with admiration and affection.

FGI To Honor Nicole Miller At Funkshion: Miami Fashion Week

Nicole Miller

Nicole Miller, for all the obvious reasons, boasts a roster of A-list celebs who wear the Miller label for the designer's sexy yet classic approach to dressing, meticulous proportions, impeccable cut and the intricate draping she mastered in the course of her studies at L'Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne. "I've always been downtown and uptown...and always been a little bit of a renegade," she's been known to say, not mentioning the part about being a multifaceted, multi-tasker. Aside from the 20-plus Nicole Miller boutiques across the country, a collection done exclusively for JCPenney and home furnishings for Bed, Bath and Beyond, Miller has managed to squeeze in costume design for the Houston-based Stages Repertory Theatre production of Garcia Lorca's "Blood Wedding" and a Sesame Street line for babies and toddlers.



merchandising will oversee the work. Aptly, the venue will be located in the newly redone Collins Park, a neighborhood recognized as the cultural center of Miami Beach and home to the Bass Museum of Art and The Miami City Ballet, among other cultural entities. In tandem with the exhibit will be a cocktail reception and an award ceremony at which **Margaret Hayes**, president of Fashion Group International, will present Ms. Miller with the organization's Lifetime

Achievement Award in honor of her extraordinary career. At the same time, Ms. Miller will be presented with the key to the city of Miami in recognition of her charitable and artistic contributions to the city.

"I am so pleased and proud to say that Nicole has been an important and accomplished member of Fashion Group for many, many years," said Hayes. "I look forward to joining Charlene and all my colleagues in our South Florida region for this wonderful tribute to Nicole and to presenting her with the richly deserved Fashion Group International Lifetime Achievement Award."

— Wendy D'Amico

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Joseph Altuzarra
 Tammy Apostol
 Jenny Baker-Strasburg
 Tory Burch
 Siobhan 'Shawny' Burns
 Leesa Butler

Karin Cadena
 Farley Chatto
 Christian Cota
 Carlota de la Vega Pietrini
 Maggie Gilliam
 Susan Glick

Carolina Herrera
 Betsey Johnson
 Donna Karan
 Aba Kwawu
 Linda Lizzio
 Marylou Luther

Nicole Miller
 Josie Natori
 Deborah Patton
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Susanne Taylor
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 Alexandra Wilkis Wilson
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 Kelsey Hagelgans*
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 Seon Min Lee
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 Chris Mitchell
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 Ana Maria Pimentel
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 Jungin You

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Atlanta

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Sydney

Lisa Just
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