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FRONTLINER

The Migration of Fashion Apparel Trends into Home Goods

NY NOW

Fashion Group International welcomed a full complement of aficionados to a Frontliner presentation at New York's Javits Center on Tuesday, August 20. The event, titled The Intersection of Fashion Design and Lifestyle: The Migration of Fashion Apparel Trends Into Home Goods, took place during New York Now, a comprehensive exhibition highlighting home, lifestyle, and handmade collections showcasing dinnerware, textiles, fair trade, artisanal and sustainable objets d'art, wellness and beauty.

The extensive product categories are designed to reflect the way retailers are shopping and sourcing today, as well as provide a glimpse into the trends that are relevant, design-forward, and synergistic in today's market. The subject of FGI's presentation clearly kept the spirit of the market top of mind, as the expert panelists explored the multifaceted world of fashion and its overarching effects.

Moderator **Beth Brenner**, publisher of *Traditional Home Magazine*, welcomed panelists **Sherri Crisenbery**, vice president of Lenox Brand; **Michelle Israel**, vice president, DMM at Bloomingdale's; and **Joan Karron**, vice president at CHF Industries, and invited their insights into the growing intersection of fashion and home design. "Each one of our panelists is extremely vested in the multifaceted world of fashion," said Brenner, noting that Crisenbery was responsible for fine dining and marketing of Lenox china, as well as social media and PR; while Israel had held various positions within fashion and cosmetics, including as the former fragrance buyer for Bloomingdale's, and that Karron orchestrated bedding-design partnerships with Donna Karan and other designers in her role at CHF.

Brenner offered a slide presentation of *Traditional Home's* latest issue, which provided a glimpse of the effect of fashion on the home, vis-a-vis visits with designer Josie Natori, as well as fashion icon Iris Apfel, menswear designer Joseph Abboud, and dinner with designer and Marchesa cofounder Georgina Chapman around a table set with Lenox china.

Heritage Meets Lifestyle

Crisenbery provided a look at the Lenox story, an American saga that continues to anchor the brand. "Lenox, which was founded in 1889 in New Jersey, by Walter Scott Lenox, is part of our American heritage. We are extremely proud of our heritage and we design for Americans in America," said Crisenbery. The company's fine dinnerware, marketed under the Lenox, Gorham and Dansk brands, produces china and crystal, with Lenox being number-one in the category.

Crisenbery noted the importance of growing the upscale tabletop market through designer franchises. In 2003, Lenox entered a partnership with Kate Spade. While Lenox may be perceived as an older, heritage brand, Kate Spade's customer was young, hip and edgy. "This was a perfect way to expand the brand beyond the base that it had," said Crisenbery, noting that the company also offers the Marchesa by Lenox collection, featuring opulent, couture tabletop designs.

The key to the fashion and home synergy, according to Crisenbery is to have an aspirational name or an attribute that makes a brand unique, and then collaborate with a designer tie-in that expands the



Frontliner

From left:
Panelists
Joan Karron
Sherri Crisenbery
Michelle Israel, and
moderator Beth Brenner

2013

FGI

Frontliner

established entity into new territory. She cited Scalandre by Lenox, inspired by the high-end textile house, as having provided a bevy of patterns that could be encapsulated into dinnerware; and noted that collaborating with designers allowed both partners to expand their brands, particularly when something doesn't necessarily fit with the original perception of the Lenox brand.

Marching Rather Than Migrating

According to Israel, there's no doubt about the way home fits into fashion in today's market. "Home is not having a migration into fashion—it's a march," she said. "At Bloomingdale's we have a brand that we protect and shepherd every day, and we ask, 'What are we doing for our brand and what are we doing for your brand?'" she said, alluding to the Ralph Laurens and the Kate Spades. "Seventy-five percent of our home brands are designer brands," said Israel, adding that customers at Bloomingdale's come to the store in all life transitions, making it particularly important to have varied selections, such as Vera Wang and Kate Spade, among other designers.

"Further, it's not a year-long process to get designers into home, it's as fast as you want it," she said, citing the Bloomingdale's catalogs, which include interviews with such designers as Oscar de la Renta, as an example of media as the message. "At Bloomingdale's, fashion and newness are our commitments, and at the end of the day our customers love brands," she said. Karron noted CHF's 100-year heritage, its beginnings in Rhode Island as a kitchen-curtain company, and its clear textile orientation, including a strong link to the early seamstress tradition and the creation of window treatments

and bedding. "Often we can curate designs for the marketplace that aren't associated with a designer, and we ask our own designers to give us what they see as the newest designs every season," said Karron. CHF offers a Donna Karan collection, made of 100 percent silk charmeuse, to evoke luxury and glamour; as well as DKNY Pure, a more casual, feminine, relaxed and pretty execution that follows Karan's apparel line.

CHF also offers an Ivanka Trump collection, with style at an affordable price, and counts Kohl's, Target, Bed Bath & Beyond and Neiman Marcus as customers. The company also produces private label lines, including for Vera Wang and Daisy Fuentes, who have licensed lines at Kohl's. Karron noted the importance of being selective in order to energize consumers to buy products, and acknowledges the brands that are created by retailers as well. "There is a tempering of the endorsement of designer brands as retailers create their own brands. For example, Macy's has created several lines," she said.

Karron asked, "Why has Donna Karan succeeded while other design collections haven't? The filters that happen and how you decide on the brand are key. It's about finding the perfect intersection between retailer, designer and consumer. It has to hit that sensitive spot and deliver that special message," said Karron.

A Unique Point of View in The Market

"No matter what you do in dinnerware, it's still white that sells the most," said Crisenbery, "so the challenge in the dinnerware world is to have a unique point of view." Karron concurred, "Consumers are eager to have newness." Brenner said, "You have to still have your white sheets, but you can have handiwork from India, ruffles from

Pakistan, or some other element of interest. It can be complex, but we can still bring something to market in six months." While speed to market appears to range between six and eighteen months, all agreed that relevance is the key to success today.

Israel said, "It has to have something solid if it's going to be relevant, but the right trends bring it excitement. It also depends on price point and what your mission is, so a lot depends on which part of the business you're running." Clearly, social media, choice of retail venues and targeted messaging all impact success in the market.

"We launch at different stores, depending on the brand, and we also use social media including a Pinterest page, and we're very careful to make sure the message is right," said Karron. She cited Daisy Fuentes at Kohl's, where packaging was very important; and the training and education components at Bloomingdale's, which enable seamless communication of a line. "Breakfasts, trainings and social media are all important. How we are educating our teams to be merchandisers at the point of sale is very important. It's a big challenge," said Israel.

Finding Value and the Role of Research

"We're lucky at Bloomingdale's. Our customer is looking for a price that is fair, and when something new hits the floor, our customer will find it," said Israel. She explained that Bloomingdale's looks at total-ensemble selling, so it is particularly important to be smart about price points. "It could be a cashmere sweater or a fragrance, but the price point has to be right," said Israel. Creating a need through aspiration was also a recurring thread. According to Crisenbery, "For dinnerware, at the end of the day the



Don Loftus and Margaret Hayes



Top row, first and second from left: Alexandra Wilkis Wilson and Loris Diran, all others, “Next Gen” guests



“Up a steep and very narrow stairway...” (A Chorus Line, remember?) In that case, everything was beautiful at the ballet. For our purposes, it was the rooftop terrace of Lividini & Co.’s penthouse offices on New York’s far west side.

It was the perfect setting for an End-of-Summer Soirée, a Fashion Group membership outreach, and a dazzling sun fired up a nearly 360-degree view of the Manhattan skyline, in bas-relief, against an ethereal, painterly blue sky.

With an eye trained on the growth and future of Fashion Group, Board members were asked to invite three or four young, midlevel professionals—the next generation of business leaders—who, the idea was, would become the committed FGI members who will lead the organization into the 22nd century.

The evening began to hum as the crowd of attractive “next gen” guests gathered around the bar and a table of summer-perfect cruditées, fresh fruits and cheese, to mingle and network with each other and with the folks who brought them.

The lack of a sound system no deterrent, Fashion Group’s own **Bruce Borner** (tech-guy in chief)

called for attention with a Yo! Noo Yawk whistle and FGI president **Margaret Hayes** stepped up to welcome the group. “If there’s anyone here who’d like to go to a Fashion Week opening night party, please raise your hand,” she asked and, as might be expected, dozens of hands were, at which point Miss Hayes issued a caveat. To wit: Admittance to the September 5th charity gala would be restricted to Fashion Group members only. Hayes went on to explain the role FGI plays in the industry and the many benefits of membership which, she said, would be offered to those who signed up within the next few days at a special rate, along with an invite to the party (to be held at the Empire Hotel and hosted by Patricia Field; eye-witness coverage in this issue).

Faces in the crowd included a number of Board members: **Roseanne Morrison** of The Doneger Group; Givaudan’s **Kate Greene**; **Louise Evins**, president and COO of the eponymous PR firm she runs with her husband; **Karen Young**, CEO of The Young Group; Hearst’s **James D’Adamo**; Avon’s **Beth Neumann**; **Liz Rodbell**, long time Lord & Taylor exec recently named president of the store and of the store’s parent company, Hudson’s Bay, and **Alexandra Wilkis Wilson**, cofounder of The Gilt Groupe. Parlux president and CEO, and FGI Board chairman **Don Loftus** joined Hayes in the speakers’ circle and spoke with sincerity and enthusiasm about the pleasures, rewards and friendships garnered from his long association with FGI.

Also on deck were past competitors in the annually held Rising Star design contest that recognizes emerging talents in men’s and women’s apparel, fine jewelry, beauty, retail and accessories. Among them were **Stacy Lomman**, 2012 women’s apparel finalist; **Loris Diran**, 2011 Menswear Apparel winner, and 2012 accessories finalist **Michelle Vale**. Diran and Vale, both of whom now run successful companies, spoke about the challenges and risks of starting a business and what they learned from their Rising Star experiences.

Remarks concluded, Hayes thanked all comers, event organizers and, most especially, Lividini & Co.’s CEO and FGI Board member **Jaqui Lividini** (looking very cool in city shorts and stilettos) for her generosity, hospitality and the use of her spectacular rooftop terrace.

— Wendy D’Amico

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Patricia Field



Gavin Keilly



Margaret Hayes



Hard Candy Cosmetics sponsors booth at Celebrity Lounge

FGI, GBK Productions and renowned fashion stylist and designer **Patricia Field** collaborated on September 5, 2013, to kick off New York Fashion Week with a cocktail party benefitting the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising's Fashion Education Foundation. Field graciously hosted the event at the GBK Celebrity Suites Style lounge at the Empire Hotel, just steps from Lincoln Center, ground zero for NYFW.

GBK Productions is known for its celebrity gift and styling lounges held in tandem with such events as the Academy Awards, the Cannes Film Festival and New York Fashion Week, among others. GBK donates a gift bag worth at least \$30,000, which is auctioned or raffled to raise funds, on this occasion, to benefit the Fashion Education Foundation at LIM. The cocktail party, attended by FGI members, celebrities and fashionistas in support of the initiative was sponsored by Sparkling Hill Resort, Hard Candy, Viva Diva Wines and Pilot Pens, which created a signature pink Patricia Field gel-ball pen specially for the occasion.

Gavin Keilly, president and founder of GBK Productions, and **Margaret Hayes**, president of FGI, brought the organizations together in a philanthropic partnership to enable fashion students to pursue their studies at LIM. "Celebrating the opening of Fashion Week with

Patricia Field seems particularly fitting as she epitomizes the spirit of the industry and is an iconic style maker," said Keilly. Hayes said, "Fashion Group is thrilled to partner with GBK on this exciting event to benefit LIM's Fashion Education Foundation."

Thanking FGI, GBK and Patricia Field, Michael Palladino, director of student life at LIM, said, "To many, Patricia Field is a fashion icon and a party girl. To me, she has opened doors when others closed them and when others walked away. She did not hesitate when I asked her to support this event. Patricia Field understands the value of education and has been an educator all her career. The House of Field became a home for so many. Pat believed in them and helped them believe in themselves." Palladino noted that without the Fashion Education Foundation scholarships many students would not be able to fulfill their academic career potential.

Field said, "I am so happy to support this evening and this great cause. I believe in it and support it completely." Field, a native New Yorker and a fashion visionary, is an Academy-Award nominated, and Emmy-winning film and television costume designer. Since the opening of her first boutique in Greenwich Village in 1966, Field has been a doyenne of the downtown aesthetic, and a leader in creating the urban style of New York's

nightlife. She continues to create a full line of clothing and accessories, as well as support the careers and professional ambitions of young designers, students and stylists.

—Nancy Jeffries

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Deejay spins tunes for fashion and philanthropy at the Opening Party for New York Fashion Week, hosted by Patricia Field, and presented by The Fashion Group International and GBK Productions.

customer has to love the pattern. No matter how much pre-research you do, you can often be surprised by the result.” Israel said, “It’s who you aspire to be, whether china or a handbag, it’s aspirational.” While the customer is key, Crisenbery noted, “We’re selling the buyers first, so that is important.” Although details on approaches varied according to type of business and customer demographics, the role of lifestyle in today’s market is paramount. Whether reaching Millennials or collectors or targeting brides, it is most important to understand which brands land where and which life stage is being addressed. In addition, said Israel, “Anything that has to do with decorating also spurs the purchase.” Pre-summer, when many people are opening their vacation homes, brings new customers; bridal registrations, and seasonal or holiday times bring other customers. All of these factors influence consumer purchase. “It does depend on where you are in your life stage, as well as whether you’re urban or suburban,” noted Israel.

The Market of the Future

“As long as brands can help give designers the confidence to cross over, there’s always room for growth,” said Karron. If the phenomenon has shown us anything, it’s clearly that the audience is there and there are many possible combinations going forward. “There are home designer brands that can definitely cross over from bedding, for example, to china. There’s always room,” said Israel.

There are also product areas in which the fashion-designer experience can reach a wider audience. Since partnering with RTW designers and bringing them into the home space, there has been continual innovation at all price points. “Towels and shower curtains, for example, can be more trend-focused because they’re not as expensive,” said Karron. And with so many consumers interested in updating the environment in which they live, the future is bright for the category. According to Israel, two thirds of the American population owns a home, and therefore is decorating and updating regularly, which all contributes to the growth of the design and fashion phenomenon.

Another element in the future conversation is the concept of point of origin, as impetus to purchase, as well as such factors as fair trade and sustainability, which continue to impact consumer choice. Clearly, these factors, plus the significant impact of fashion and design will be major influences in attracting and exciting consumers going forward.

—Nancy Jeffries

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Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 2ND

Artisans of Scent

Meet the Creators, the Critics and the Curators

Moderated by:

Caroline Fabrigas, president of *Scent Marketing Inc.*

Panel discussion with:

Laura Slatkin, *CEO, NEST Fragrances*

Rodrigo Flores-Roux, *Senior Perfumer, Givaudan*

Victoria Frolova, *Writer and Editor, Bois de Jasmin*

Art Spiro, *Elizabeth Arden*

Space 530

6:00 p.m. – Cocktail reception

6:30 p.m. – Program

OCTOBER 22ND

Galaxy

Night of Stars 30th Anniversary

Hosted by: Simon Doonan

Outstanding individuals in the fashion, media, interior design, beauty, sustainability, business and humanitarian communities to be honored at a gala, red carpet black tie dinner.

Cipriani Wall Street

6:15 p.m. – cocktails

7:30 p.m. – dinner and awards

NOVEMBER 7TH

2014 Spring/Summer Ready –to-Wear

Trend Presentation

Time Life Building

Shows at 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.;

Noon show followed by a panel discussion

For more information and to purchase tickets and/or tables,

Visit www.fgi.org or call 212.302.5511

Rising Star Nominations

JULY 29TH

Nomination Registration Opens

OCTOBER 21ST

Nomination Registration Closes

JANUARY 23RD

Luncheon and Award ceremony at Cipriani 42nd Street

Visit www.fgi.org for nomination forms and nominate a Rising Star in:

- accessories
- beauty/fragrance
- fine jewelry
- home/interior
- men’s apparel
- retail
- women’s ready-to-wear

Member News

Fashion Group member-at-large, **Anita Garrett-Roe**, lives and works in Corpus Christi, Texas, as president of her eponymous design firm, and as an Independent Elite Executive National Sales Director for the beauty company, Mary Kay Cosmetics. Recently recognized by the company as Number One In the World 2013, Garrett-Roe was honored at a formal celebration to which she was escorted by Mary Kay CEO David Holl.

Help Wanted!

The FGI Publications Committee is looking for volunteers with editorial skills who would love to attend FGI events – gratis! And write about them for the FGI newsletter – iTALK.

Brief monthly committee meetings are held at FGI Headquarters. (Great opportunity for Next Gen members who’d love to network at FGI events and score a byline!)

Writers, beginners or experienced, contact: Wendy D’Amico at Wendy7d@aol.com.

More Talk From iTalk!

Fresher, newer, better, sooner... timelier coverage and updates starting this month. iTalk will now hit your inbox and the FGI website about 10 times a year! Look for it!