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iTALK@**FGI**

TREND PRESENTATION Fall 2015



A F VANDERVOORST

Fashion opts for options.

It's a season of either/or. Either a mini or maxi, she/he, tough/ tender, nice/naughty, romance/reality, minimal/maximal, crafts/technology, the ladies who lunch/the ladies who breakfast.

Best Bets:

The late '60s/early '70s: Flared Pants. Fringe • She/He: The Ambisexual Tuxedo

The Aviator Jacket • Shearling/Leather • Fur • Plaid • Knits: Sweaters

Fabrics: Denim. Velvet • Metallics • The Ruffled Shirt • The Cropped Pant/The Jumpsuit

The Tie-On Skirt/ The Wrap Skirt • The Floral Print Dress/The Graphic Dress

The Velvet Jacket/ The Relaxed Jacket • The Moto Update

The Hollywood Wrap Coat/The Reversible Coat • The Cape/The Poncho

Evening: Day Into Night/The Tuxedo.



From left: Christina Binkley, Ying Chu, Nicole Fischelis and Robin Givhan



BALENCIAGA



LOEWE



MALAN BRETON



CHRISTIAN DIOR

Fashion Group International's semiannual presentation of seasonal runway trends was held on April 9. After the audio-visual portion of the program, **Marylou Luther**, creative director of Fashion Group, welcomed all and proceeded to introduce this season's panel of experts.

Christina Binkley, fashion and style editor at *The Wall Street Journal* was joined by **Ying Chu**, executive beauty director of *Glamour Magazine*, and **Nicole Fischelis**, group vice president, fashion director and global forecaster at Macy's. Special guest moderator for the discussion was Pulitzer Prize-winner and celebrated author **Robin Givhan** of the *Washington Post*.

Givhan started the discussion by noting that this season was one of change as the news surrounding the revolving door of designers often superseded the fashion news itself. This movement was evidenced at the houses of Martin Margiela, Gucci, Nina Ricci, Hermès, and Oscar de la Renta. Sophomore collections, too, were noted at Loewe, Sonia Rykiel and Rochas. **Peter Copping**, stepping in at Oscar de la Renta and the return of the controversial **John Galliano** at Margiela were of particular interest. The question was then raised about how a new designer's DNA can be successfully meshed with the history of a storied house.

Binkley was impressed by Copping's first collection for Oscar de la Renta. She felt he paid homage to the brand's integrity but added French details seen in his previous work for Nina Ricci. Chu agreed and said she loved his use of color and was excited to see more of his own influences on future collections. Fischelis noted the international and global aspect of fashion today and how these influences are able to translate from one country to another.

Givhan asked Chu how the change of designer affects the beauty industry. Chu noted that many houses are now sponsored by beauty companies.

When a house changes designer, the latter brings in his own team adding a new layer to the vision. She felt that Galliano and Margiela were a good fit, as their mutual theatricality would combine to produce a compatible vision.

The next question involved the consumers and whether they can identify a brand's DNA and thus be affected by these changes. Binkley said the customer only recognizes the change in product. She illustrated by noting how this season the former femininity of Nina Ricci was replaced by a more oversize, chunky silhouette. Fischelis felt that most customers were not aware of a brand's legacy but were more interested in the product itself. Chu mentioned that **Alexandro Michele's** new interpretation at Gucci exhibits a changed attitude and it will be interesting to see how customers relate to the current look.

Givhan then questioned whether a designer brought on to bolster ready-to-wear at a company like Hermès would affect the sales of its iconic handbags. She also asked whether the company needs to focus on ready-to-wear in order to boost the brand's image. Fischelis mentioned that these events occur in order to assure more editorial coverage and to offset a line's declining revenues. Accessories and fragrance are usually not affected.

Chu mentioned how contemporary designer **J.W. Anderson** brings new attention to famed leather house Loewe. By starting to energize accessories he could then spread his cool factor to ready-to-wear.

Givhan then turned the discussion toward the inevitable effect of social media on a brand. She mentioned that Balmain was only featured in today's accessory portion of the trend presentation while the label's ready-to-wear gets big play on social media. She questioned if the way a collection is reviewed affects the customer's response. Binkley mentioned that social media is really successful in reaching Balmain's targeted audience. Chu concurred, saying that the noise around the brand translates to sales.

Fischelis added that seeing a collection in person is more important to her than the surrounding publicity. She feels that the traditional customer has a more personal relationship with a brand. Valuing its craftsmanship, she orders the pieces that are specific to her personal needs.

Givhan asked about the difference between seeing a collection on the runway and viewing it up close and personal in the showroom. Binkley felt that runway is important but that she gets a totally different view when seeing the clothes in the showroom. Besides the quality of the items, she gets a different perspective on what the designer was trying to convey. Saint Laurent is a case in point for Fischelis. **Hedi Slimane** works on the DNA of the company by updating many of the historical silhouettes (peasant dress, moto jacket, bowties) in a modern way. The runway does not do the brand justice while in the showroom you can see the qualities that have resulted in the brand's current success at retail.

Talking about the runway, Givhan next asked whether over-the-top hair and makeup details prove distracting to the clothes. Chu felt that the theatricality of Saint Laurent and Givenchy was noted but in reality the clothes spoke for themselves.

The question returned to runway versus presentations. All agreed that designers feel that presentations often do not guarantee the press coverage that a brand needs. Sacai was able to grow its brand when it switched to a show format. Binkley mentioned that Rebecca Taylor opted to put her show money towards a more professional look book and digital marketing this year. The subject will continue to be up for debate but Fischelis reminded the audience of the impossibility of seeing all of the available shows and presentations. She mentioned that a good resource will always be found whether they have a show or presentation. She pointed to contemporary collection Clover Canyon as an example.

Givhan then asked the panel to pick their three favorite shows of the season. Fischelis opted for Ralph Lauren in New York, Antonio Marras in Italy and Dries Van Noten in Paris. Chu chose the styling and layering of Dries Van Noten, the long silhouettes and fun appearance of the Zoolander duo **Ben Stiller** and **Owen Wilson** at Valentino and the head-to-toe looks at Prada. Binkley loved the Chola romance at Givenchy, the Mary Poppins looks at Marc Jacobs and **Julie De Libran's** second outing at Sonia Rykiel.

Due to time constraints, there was no question-and-answer period. There was, however, time for cake and song to wish Luther a very happy birthday. Here's hoping for her continued presence as our resident fashion guru.

— Carolyn Moss

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Rebecca Minkoff

NEXT GEN

As part of Fashion Group International's Next Gen program designed to encourage a new generation of fashionistas, a three-part series will be devoted to educating those who are poised to become the standard bearers of the fashion industry's future. The first of this series was held on March 3, at the new Space 530 and showcased **Rebecca Minkoff's** life as a designer.

Maryanne Grisz, the chair of this committee, welcomed the audience and explained the mission of this new program. This was a night of firsts. It was the premier of the projected series as well as the first time that a program was live-streamed to FGI members. Grisz introduced Minkoff, the cocreator of her namesake global lifestyle brand.

Minkoff thanked everyone for coming and began her story with the tale of an 8-year-old who knew early on that fashion was in her future. This interest in fashion propelled her at age 18 to take a job with her mother's friend. At the latter's company, Minkoff literally started from scratch. Her mentor felt that she should be exposed to all aspects of the business and started her in the stockroom. This was a point that she referenced throughout her talk, as this early grunt training is something she feels is not beneath any future executive.

After three years she was literally fired. The company's owner realized that it was time for Minkoff to create her own vision. So on her own, she created a small, five-piece T-shirt collection. One of her shirts was worn by **Jenna Elfman**, then one of the stars of the hit show *Dharma & Greg*. The profits from the sales were earmarked for charity.

Minkoff's new business venture soon hit roadblocks caused by circumstances out of her control. Working out of a residential apartment because she couldn't get a business lease, her

first handbag was almost her undoing. A small boutique in Los Angeles had stocked twelve of her bags. After a mention on Daily Candy, an early entry in the world of social media, the bags sold out and Minkoff realized that she couldn't fill future orders. She realized that in order to grow, she needed capital as well as a serious business plan. Her father suggested that she involve her brother in her business. Thus began a partnership that has led to the current success of her brand.

Minkoff then talked about how her company owes its success to breaking the rules. One of their earliest beliefs was in the importance of speaking directly to their customers. Through an early blog, they were able to hear directly from their audience. By conducting a real dialogue, they were able to understand their girls' true needs. By listening to their concerns, they realized in 2009 that the recession was affecting the price of their bags. They knew that they had to adjust prices in order to retain their customer base. By not skimping on quality, they were able to address shipping and lining issues. Success was not overnight, but after four months they knew they were on the right track.

A second guideline was visiting stores. This allowed them to personally engage with their customers. The world of social media is key to their demographic. Their customer communicates via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Traditional advertising is less successful. Bloggers have also been useful in spreading the message to their target consumer. Showing during New York Fashion Week and taking advantage of the latest technology is imperative in keeping their momentum.

The company opened its first brick-and-mortar store last year in San Francisco. Attention was specifically aimed at improving the customer experience via new technology available in the dressing rooms, such as special lighting and

devices that enhance personalized service. This enables the company to receive constant feedback about their product. Although they have good relationships with their retail partners, their own stores allow them to merchandise their product in line with their own vision.

Before opening the floor to questions, Minkoff reiterated the need for a company to challenge itself by thinking outside of the box. The need to move forward is constant and complacency is dangerous to a company's future.

This target audience asked diverse questions that ranged from the importance of having female mentors to the differences between requests received from their domestic versus Asian (Japan and Korea) audiences. Internships were discussed as well as Minkoff's global color direction for Essie nail polish. Asked about building a brand, she said that it was important not to micromanage and be willing to give up some control in order to get the best out of people.

When questioned about the future of the company, she mentioned the growth of the men's division, opening more stores and perhaps adding a fragrance in the near future. In closing, she advised the audience to work hard, have a strong support team and stay true to their vision. There is no doubt that Next Gen Series is a great step in providing for the future. Gauging by the turnout, this is a much-needed tool for learning about any industry. Stay tuned for news of the next installment, as those in attendance are sure to be the leaders of tomorrow.

— **Carolyn Moss**

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From left: Annemarie Frank, Jason Goldberg, Aslaug Magnusdottir and Vikram Bhaskaran

On Thursday, April 16, Fashion Group International assembled a panel of digital-industry experts to lead an engaging discussion on the future of social shopping at the FGI headquarters in New York City. The discussion was moderated by **Annemarie Frank**, VP of digital marketing at HSN, and included commentary from **Jason Goldberg**, GVP of commerce strategy at Razorfish; **Vikram Bhaskaran**, who manages strategic partnerships at Pinterest and **Aslaug Magnusdottir**, CEO and cofounder of Tinker Tailor and Moda Operandi.

The evening kicked off with the panelists giving a brief overview of their companies and their unique perspectives. “What Google did for search, Pinterest is doing for discovery,” is how Bhaskaran described Pinterest’s core mission. Magnusdottir shared Tinker Tailor’s ability to allow consumers to customize women’s luxury items from top brands including Marchesa, Preen and a mix of other emerging and established designers. 3-D technology allows Tinker Tailor customers to design their own pieces, which are produced in New York City. “We provide a couture-like experience at a ready-to-wear price,” said Magnusdottir. Goldberg, who runs the commerce practice at digital-focused agency Razorfish, rounded out the panel.

Frank continued the conversation by asking each panelist to define social shopping. Bhaskaran insisted that Pinterest is a unique social platform since people don’t go there to socialize with other people; instead users are there to engage with brands. He described Pinterest as a “massive shopping-discovery tool.” Magnusdottir’s definition was “any kind of online or digital shopping with an element of interaction.” In Goldberg’s opinion, “shopping has always been social.” Consumers want to know other people like them made a purchase and had a good experience, which is known as “social proof.”

Frank then asked the panelists to share the biggest social shopping trends. Goldberg discussed social media’s ability to drive purchases in China. For example, many Chinese

consumers frequently make purchases through the popular messaging app WeChat. However, in North America, social media has yet to prove its ability to drive purchases. Goldberg did argue that social media plays an important role in the North American purchase funnel in generating awareness and starting the consideration process.

At Tinker Tailor, they have developed a “Tink Tank,” a shoppable social media platform that allows consumers to show off their Tinker Tailor designs, which other users are able to like and shop. If someone buys a consumer’s design, they receive a merchandise credit to the site.

The importance of content was another major topic of discussion throughout the evening. Magnusdottir’s experience at Moda Operandi showed her a huge disconnect between the most-liked merchandise on social media and the best-selling items on the site. However, she has seen a shift at Tinker Tailor and shared the example of **Claire Distenfeld**, owner of influential boutique Fivestory, posting a picture of her Tinker Tailor creation on Instagram, which quickly became the most-liked image in her feed and resulted in customers calling and asking to purchase the item.

Meanwhile at Pinterest, the focus is on providing social proof. According to Bhaskaran, Pinterest is a future-looking platform. Users are thinking about what they want to buy in the future in the context of major life events like a wedding or the birth of a child. Utility is also key for the most popular Pinterest content. “The single most important attribute is helpfulness,” said Bhaskaran. “If you create helpful content, people will share it because it’s giving people utility and value.”

Goldberg believes that content presents challenges for brands since most content doesn’t perform and consumers do not trust brand content. “Part of the solution as we get more information about shoppers, then we need individual content,” said Goldberg. He suggested brands should focus on becoming curators of user-generated content instead of creating their own content.

The role of paid media in social campaigns was the next subject Frank asked the panel to tackle. “Sometimes paid is the fastest way to test what’s working. It allows you to quickly test and learn,” said Bhaskaran. Goldberg focused on Facebook, saying, “It’s pretty clear we need to think of Facebook as a media network,” versus a social media platform. There was an early misconception that brands could earn an audience through organic reach and great content on Facebook. Instead Goldberg suggested that brands should leverage social networks to drive traffic to a social experience on their own Web sites.

Next, Frank steered the conversation to social media’s role in the post-purchase phase of the shopping journey. According to Magnusdottir, “it’s absolutely critical. In post-purchase, that’s where I want them to actively put content out there.” Tinker Tailor works with influencers, bloggers and editors to encourage them to post on social media about their designs.

Goldberg echoed the importance of social media in the post-purchase phase. “Social has become the preferred channel to resolve issues,” he said. “The best brands are plugging social into their customer-service structure,” he continued. Social proof comes after the purchase and brands need to solicit content from consumers, according to Goldberg.

Frank also asked the panelists to share some important issues facing social media teams. Goldberg said social media teams often overlook important functions like reputation management on sites like Yelp. Another important focus should be measuring reviews and sentiments on owned sites. “Customers are giving us clues. It’s a shame when we’re ignoring those signals,” he said. “Social proof only works when it’s authentic. We need negative reviews for authenticity. Sales go up when there are some negative reviews,” Goldberg said.

Towards the end of the evening, Frank shared some her best practices from her time at HSN. She offered examples of integrating Pinterest into their on-air programming. Pinterest integration has worked particularly well for HSN in the fashion, beauty and culinary sectors. The evening concluded with the panel taking questions from the audience on topics ranging from how small designers can leverage social media to the importance of original content.

— **Melissa Pastore**

Contributing Writer, Melissa.Pastore@swarovski.com



From left: Anne Bridges, George Shaw, Luis Velazquez, Sahal Laher and Robin Lewis

There were no April Fools at FGI's panel discussion "Technology & Fashion: The Intersection Between Art and Science" on April 1. There were no empty seats either: The room was at maximum capacity and latecomers had to be turned away to comply with Fire Marshal regulations for this timely discussion moderated by **Anne Bridges**, senior vice president of technology and customer experience at Bloomingdale's and featuring insights from **Sahal Laher**, executive vice president and chief information officer at Brooks Brothers; **George Shaw**, head of R&D at Retail Next; and **Luis Velazquez**, director of business development at Lectra North America.

Robin Lewis, CEO of The Robin Report, introduced Bridges and asked her to outline her key successes and biggest challenges in leading Bloomingdale's into this brave new "higher tech, higher touch" world. She pointed to new fitting-room technology that provided item details and the ability to reach associates, as well as associate devices for mobile point-of-sale. "The store feels more mobile," she said. Her biggest concern is that customer expectations just keep getting higher. She turned the questions to the panelists.

For Laher, technology has rendered the age of the consumer. He explained how Brooks Brothers has implemented omnichannel master tracking of customers so that the store can provide impeccable service across the board. "Factory stores and main stores are the same from the customer's point of view," he said. What's keeping him up at night? "The challenge of understanding the customer at an individual level and satisfying their needs—being able to tell a customer, 'These are the things in the new collection that you will like.'"

Velazquez pointed out that Lectra has been in the digital space for 40 years, providing product development, textile design and pattern-making technology—including 3-D—as well as marker making, cutting equipment and P.L.M. systems. "Our most exciting projects are those companies where we are working with them from start to finish." For him, as the company has been pushing boundaries when it comes to technology, his fear is that "I don't think we've been putting enough emphasis on art—the real skill and art behind textile design."

Retail Next works to gather as much information as possible about what happens in a store in order to help the retailer manage and maximize its business. "We focus on the store rather than sensors that track loss prevention and door count—We look at the different ways people shop in the stores, on line, and try to understand the interaction between the customer and the associate," said Shaw. The biggest challenge he sees, like Bridges, is that customer expectations keep getting higher. But his customers are the retailers. "I worry about getting a question I can't answer." Bridges asked how they balance gathering so much customer data with privacy concerns.

Shaw responded that it comes down to clarity and transparency: "It's about letting the customer know, asking permission. Many systems require an app so a customer needs to opt in, give permission," he said, explaining that it usually involves a customer agreeing to share information in exchange for something in return, usually a discount or special offer.

At Brooks Brothers, while they are boosting technology across the board with fitting room technology,

beacons, customer and product tracking and RFID—Laher said privacy is always a concern and they try to err on the conservative side with customer data.

Looking to the future, Bridges asked Shaw and Velazquez to talk about how they know what's next in terms of technology and retail. "We ignore trends completely," said Shaw. "If you are trying to stay ahead, you are already behind." Instead, Shaw said they start with a question. "A retailer comes to us and says, 'We need this data.' We drive technology to answer the question." Similarly at Lectra, Velazquez said they spend a lot of time listening to clients to discover the underlying question that they don't know they are asking.

Bridges asked Laher about the future of retail for Brooks Brothers. He said customers expected seamless personalization across all channels. "It requires a nimble supply chain. It shouldn't matter where a product is, we should be able to get it to you quickly," he said.

Bridges wondered how fashion companies could respond to fast-changing trends. Velazquez said he didn't think trends existed in the same way any more, as a result of globalization. "It's more like little populations of interest—geographic, but not always." So palazzo pants and skinny jeans can be a "trend" at the same time but in a different place or for a different group. "It's not about speed to market," he said. Rather, he stressed the importance of knowing your target market and letting that drive all your other decisions.

With that in mind, Bridges asked Laher what role technology played in cross-selling or upselling to a Brooks Brothers customer. Laher said it was "all about how you mine the data." He said online they use algorithms to provide suggestions, much like Netflix and Amazon use to suggest films or books. "In stores, many associates have long-standing relationships with customers. But when a customer is on vacation and goes to a new location, we can access their info and present a selection anywhere." And here is where the art of retail comes into play: "A store associate who knows their customer can be more proactive" for example, making a call when an item comes in and setting things aside.

Ultimately, the art and the science need to find a perfect balance: Technology can enhance the art or it can overwhelm it.

— **Katie Kretschmer**
Editor/Contributing Writer

HOW TO FIND AND SELL YOUR UNIQUE VOICE IN THE MARKETPLACE.
STAY SOLVENT SANE AND TRUE TO YOURSELF



From left: Gary Wassner, Jason Alkire, Julie Haus Alkire, Susan Sokol, Ji Oh and Alex Sumner



Funeral services for **Mary Ann Restivo**, who died on Sunday, January 4th, were held at New York's St. Ignatius Loyola Church on January 8th. Known for her intuitive sense of what working women—those in the elite

corps of industry—needed in the way of a wardrobe, Restivo designed exquisitely tailored clothes with a sense of understated luxury, in the fine fabrics she loved best: wool jersey, gabardine and wool crepe. Among her most ardent fans were **Candice Bergen**; **Matilda Cuomo**, New York's first Lady at the time and **Gloria Steinem**, who has been quoted as saying that Restivo's clothes "were the kind that, after you've died, another woman would find in a thrift shop and like."

Her father was a master tailor, and retail and design was the focus of her education. In 1961, Restivo landed her first job on Seventh Avenue. She went on to work for a number of firms until she launched her eponymous label in 1980. Clearly, fashion and design were in her DNA. In fact, she once said, "I cannot imagine any other career that could be more rewarding to me, except perhaps singing like Jo Stafford."

An important and valued member of Fashion Group International for more than three decades, Restivo was also a longtime member of the Council for Fashion Designers of America and received several awards, including the Mortimer C. Ritter Award from the Fashion Institute of Technology and the 1993 Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Restivo is survived by her husband, **Saul Rosen**, several close family members and legions of friends and admirers who knew her, as did her husband, as a woman without "a mean bone in her body. She could not say or do anything mean. What the world really needs," he said.

— Wendy D'Amico

Creative Consultant, Wendy7d@aol.com

Stay Solvent, Sane and True to Yourself: How to find and sell your unique voice in the marketplace. The goal of every budding fashion star is to grow their business without breaking the bank or selling out, and a lineup of recent Rising Star winners and a couple of fashion-business pros took the stage to address the topic at the March 18 Rising Star Dialogues event.

Moderator **Gary Wassner**, CEO of Hilldun Corp. both moderated the discussion and shared his advice. The panel included fashion industry consultant **Susan Sokol** as well as designers **Julie Haus Alkire** and **Jason Alkire** of Haus Alkire, one of this year's two Rising Star winners for womenswear; designer **Ji Oh**, a 2015 Rising Star finalist for womenswear, and designer **Alex Sumner** of Alexander Nash, 2015 Rising Star finalist for menswear.

Wassner, who heads up the company that handles factoring and finance for some of the top labels in fashion, began by pointing out that in order to succeed, designers must find the balance between art and the commerce, and the best designers know what they cannot do. "Fashion is an industry of collaboration," he said. Sokol agreed, explaining that her role as a consultant is often to be "fresh eyes" for a company to help them work through growing pains.

Along with knowing where your skills and abilities lie, it's important to know who you are as a designer, and therein know your customer. "It's the first thing I do with young brands," said Sokol, "Who is your girl? What else does she buy?"

Alkire said that, having been in business 12 or 13 years, it took them five to really figure it out and define their DNA. "At some point, you have to put on blinders and stop looking at what other people are doing," he said.

At the same time, Wassner asked, "How much of the design process is calculated and how much is evolution? The discussion looked at not only the overwhelming process of timing and planning layered over the creative process, but also the role of analytics and offering what buyers want versus your vision. "Where do you draw the line—when do you look at an item that's been doing well and decide its time to move on?" said Haus Alkire. Sokol underlined the importance of getting out on the retail floor, especially if you don't have your own store, to see what your customer reacts to. For Sumner, the challenge is different: "We're custom, so we work directly with every customer, but also it's menswear, so we don't exactly have to reinvent the wheel."

Wasserman's final question: Is making money the most important thing, the least important thing or a consideration? For the designers of Haus Alkire, staying in business is the most important thing. "All the money goes right back into the business." For Oh, it's important to keep money flowing, but for her it is more important to be true to design. Words, perhaps, of a younger designer?

— Katie Kretschmer
 Editor/Contributing Writer

LIM's Pam Linton Steps Up

"It's a pleasure to play my small role in helping to develop the next generation of leaders in the fashion industry," said **Pam Linton**, who went on to say that fashion is "an industry I personally love and one that is so important to New York, my favorite city!"

Having joined LIM in 2003 as senior director of strategic initiatives, as of November, 2014,

Linton traded in that title for that of vice president. While her focus will remain on industry relations and government relations, her role in those activities will continue at a higher level, to wit: active engagement in finding fresh opportunities for new business and for positive brand association, as well as targeted interaction with government officials at the state and federal level.

— Wendy D'Amico

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Fashion Group Philadelphia

On October 7, 1949, fashion leaders, philanthropists, and magnates of industry gathered at the Philadelphia Museum of Art for an elaborate candlelit dinner. The occasion? The unveiling of the Museum's new Fashion Wing.

The groundwork for this project had been laid two years prior, when Esther Cole Richardson, Regional Director of Fashion Group's Philadelphia chapter, approached then-Museum Director Fiske Kimball about the Institution's significant costume and textiles collection. The Museum has collected costume and textiles since its founding at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876, but in 1947, these artworks were stored at the Museum's former site, Memorial Hall. Cole, a fashion merchandising and consumer relations expert for Gimbels department store, persuaded the Director to move the collection to the Museum's new home in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia, and offered the Fashion Group's assistance in securing financial support for the installation and maintenance of the collection.

But why was Fashion Group Philadelphia interested in the Museum's collection? 1947 marked the Philadelphia Chapter's tenth anniversary; in honor of this occasion, the Group sought a civic project that would be of enduring interest to the fashion community. As Cole reflected during a Regional Directors Meeting in 1964, "We decided...[to] sponsor a Fashion Gallery...to display the treasures that were stored away in boxes." The Group wanted the Museum's collection to be easily accessible, particularly to students and designers; as they noted in a 1947 press release, "familiarity with the history of apparel and the history of fabrics is an integral part of the equipment of great designers."

With Kimball's approval, Fashion Group Philadelphia publicized their plan. They organized at the Museum a display of costumes and accessories from 1760 to 1947, and gave the Museum creations by then-leading American fashion designers, jumpstarting the Museum's collecting of contemporary fashion. Additionally, the Chapter met with fashion experts and Philadelphia community leaders to secure financial support.

Within two years, the Fashion Wing's first gallery opened, showcasing eighteenth-century costumes, accessories and textiles. A second set of galleries, for nineteenth-century artworks, followed soon after in 1951. Both galleries were funded by philanthropist Edith Scott Breyer. Galleries devoted to twentieth-century designs completed the wing in 1953, sponsored by Thomas Wriggins, President of B.F. Dewees department store, Philadelphia.

Over the ensuing years, the Chapter built support for the collection and raised its profile as a design and technical resource through a variety of programs and events, such as The Crystal Ball, their famed bi-annual fashion show and gala party. For thirty years, the Crystal Ball was not only one of most important fundraising events for the collection, but an impetus for collecting contemporary fashion, as the designs presented at these events were often donated to the department. An array of style arbiters were honored at the Balls, ranging from movie star Marlene Dietrich to Princess Grace of Monaco.

Today, the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Costume and Textiles collection boasts nearly 30,000 artworks, which are showcased in three permanent galleries as well as in special exhibitions. The Fashion Group Philadelphia's goal of providing the public with access to this rich collection has become a splendid reality.

— Laura L. Camerlengo

*Exhibition Assistant, Costume and Textiles,
Philadelphia Museum of Art,
Fashion Group International Member,
Philadelphia Chapter*

Thursday, May 14th, 2015 Beauty Symposium Breakfast

*Beauty Visionaries—From Vision to Venture:
Meet the creators who had the foresight, created
the plan and changed the landscape.
What do they see on the horizon?
What's new and next? What's their future vision?*

8 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

New York Hilton
1335 Avenue of the Americas

Thursday, June 4th, 2015 Retail Symposium

Retail Reality Check
Learn how new trends and solutions are creating
a customer experience that matters.

New York Hilton
1335 Avenue of The Americas (at 54th Street)

Doors/Breakfast: 7:45 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Program: 8:45 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Wednesday, June 17th, 2015 Next Gen

Reimagining Bill Blass with creative director,
Chris Benz

Space 530 / 530 7th Avenue
Reception: 5:30 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.
Program: 6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 9th, 2015 FGI Tastemaker

Rose Marie Bravo in Conversation
With Pamela Baxter

A breakfast at The 21 Club.
21 West 52nd Street

Seated Breakfast: 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.
Conversation: 9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

For more information and to purchase tickets
and/or tables
Visit www.fgi.org or call 212.302.5511