

## Première Vision Paris Dynamic Despite Ongoing Market Challenges

**Design-led performance fabrics, sustainability and a return to proximity sourcing were among the key topics.**

By [Katya Foreman](#) on February 21, 2017



**PARIS** — Blame it on the high-stamina ath-leisure trend — performance, comfort and easy care were among the watchwords at the recent edition of [Première Vision Paris](#) here, with mills presenting all-terrain, user-friendly technical fabrics geared to the urban commuter lifestyle without compromising on style.

Take Schoeller Textil's denim with a reflective yarn woven in and tweeds with a reflective finish, men's outerwear specialist Newman Global's waterproof polyester in a reflective camo print or [François Girbaud's](#) playful capsule for Eurojersey — the Sensitive Performers — focused on fit, form and function. Produced by Petrutex and using Eurojersey's patented Sensitive Fabric fitted with 3-D stretch properties — including

a deep stretch — the line included a pant with inner back pockets filled with silicon pouches to enhance the wearer's curves, à la Kim Kardashian.

“Tomorrow, the new way of commuting will be the e-bike, but people won't want to compromise on elegance,” said Andrea Crespi, general manager of Eurojersey. “What we are offering is a fashionable product that can be used on a bike — because it's stretch — and that, when they enter the office, won't be creased. If they get dirty, they can just brush it off with a little soap and water. And just in case they ever get the impulse to jump in a swimming pool, these are fabrics that Arena uses for its swimwear.”

As for show turnout, there was a 2.3 percent uptick versus last February's edition to 56,250 visitors, but Gilles Lasbordes, general manager of Première Vision Paris, said he remains “prudent.”

“The salon was dynamic and I found people to be more relaxed, but business is still challenging,” Lasbordes said. “Sales on apparel in 2016 were low, it's still an industry in turmoil.”

Japan and South Korea were “back in force,” up 27 and 19 percent, respectively, he said, also citing a strong turnout from Russia and Turkey, among “other surprises,” adding, “whether it's a sign of a tempering of economic tensions remains to be seen.”

France held onto first place in terms of attendance, with Italy moving into second place, nudging the U.K. and Germany into third position. U.S. attendance was slightly lower, impacted by the overlap with New York Fashion Week.

The resurgence of proximity sourcing was among key topics.

“Companies are reshoring. The mantra is ‘close to the markets, not the rivers,’ as textile companies used to be, and away from the Far Eastern geographies,” said Chiaretto Calò, co-chief executive officer of Imprima SpA, a new global holding company dedicated to development and innovation in the textile printing and finishing sector. Private equity fund management company Wise SGR recently acquired two textile printing firms — Germany's KBC and Italy's Guarisco — through the holding company, which is funded by a pool of financial investors led by the Italian private equity fund Wisequity IV. Two other top-level acquisitions are in the pipeline, according to Calò, and possibly a third U.S.-based firm. The aim, he said, is to bring in six or seven brands “on a global scale.”

“The idea is to create a group capable of working alongside the big retailers and focused on the new standards set by Horizon 2020,” continued Calò, adding that in the U.S., “which is a great end user,” there is a big pull from local retailers such as Forever 21 to achieve something closer to the fast-fashion business model of European brands.

Imprima aims to be in position, with the creation “over the next few months” of the first platform geared to fully industrial, scalable and replicable digital printing.

“We have to be able to respond to the supply chain in different geographies with the same print and color result,” Calò said. “There is strong demand on all levels to build — especially for the prints and accent colors — a shorter supply chain that is not dependent on Far Eastern geographies. Countries like China have been overexploited, today it's very difficult to get a new license to open a print or dyeing mill there; this model is not sustainable. What we are trying to do is approach sustainability from an environmental, financial, logistical and creative standpoint.”

Key spring 2018 trends included light weights and breathability, with fabrics bordering on transparent, along with a range of dynamic, bouncy handles.

“Today being visual without an interesting hand isn't enough,” said Ariane Bigot, associate fashion director of Première Vision Paris.

A strong element of seduction was at play, with mills folding in surprise elements like solid, thick looking fabrics with a supple, creamy touch or fabrics mixing artificial-looking colors with natural hands. Marzotto Tessuti's new line of high stretch performance wools had a linen or cotton-like touch.

Hi-tech fabrics were more creative in aspect, with performance fusing with fancies.

“It's about being less obvious about the performance-tech thing. In terms of where things are going in sportswear, and men's wear, for us it's about being contemporary and ahead of the game so innovation is important, but classic luxury is too,” said [Cottweiler](#) cofounder Matthew Dainty, citing a technical satin they have developed with a mill.

“People are looking for an immediate impact on the eye,” said Gianmarco Schiatti, creative director at Frizza, whose collection featured an inverted mesh design with mesh lining flipped on the outside to give a 3-D aspect to prints, and 3-D latex prints resembling paint drips on fully waterproof, translucent materials. “We have strong demand for non-textile product.”

With sustainable smart fabrics firmly in play — many using recycled fibers — a range of innovations were geared to the circular economy.

Japanese synthetic fibers specialist Toray, which aims to shift to 100 percent plant-based bio yarns by 2020, presented its new UTS-FIT yarn combining a shape memory touch and stretch properties.

Smart cotton specialist Marchi & Fildi had bulked up its Ecotec range made from 100 percent pre-consumer cuttings using a process that involves 70 percent less water, energy consumption and CO2 emissions.

Lenzing launched a fiber made from pre-consumer off-cuts boasting the same features as the brand's standard Tencel fiber.

“It's more or less a virgin fiber,” said product director Sonja Zak. “There is pressure to really think about how to make processes more sustainable.”

Andreas Röhrich, director of product development and research/textile sourcing at Wolford, which unveiled the first prototypes for a biodegradable lingerie set and tights due to launch in fall 2018 and spring 2019, said the challenge set when brainstorming the project was: “‘How to transform lingerie into a salad?’ Meaning: we want to create a product that is biodegradable, without any negative influence on the environment.”

The designs are made from Lenzing modal, a cellulosic fiber derived from sustainable forestry, together with a specially modified oil-based biodegradable polymer — infinito by Lauffenmühle — and a special, high stretch Roica premium smart yarn, which is able to degrade without releasing any harmful substances.

“With our [current methods], we use polyamide, mix everything together, and in the end it goes up the chimney, this raw material is gone forever. We strongly believe this has to change and we think we can be a catalyst even for other producers,” said Röhrich, adding that the aim within the next five to 10 years is to have 50 percent of product sustainable. But the team is still busy perfecting the formula.

“We do not want to compromise in terms of fit, durability or elasticity. Our aim is to mimic the skin and we're working with partners like Asahi Kasei to get the right stretch at the right position.... With tights, our vision is not only invisibility, it's unfeelability, and we want to extend this into lingerie.”

The show's spotlight on leather reflected the industry's resilience in challenging times. The creative leather market in the first semester 2016 registered an 0.8 percent increase compared with the equivalent period in 2015, largely outperforming the UN index, which was down 2 percent, according to the *Première Vision Barometer*.

“The discussion today is, leather should not be a commodity, it should be the highest level of value, because it’s a biowaste material, you need to put a lot of technology inside,” said CLASS founder Giusy Bettoni, who organized a program of roundtable discussions exploring responsible creation in the leather industry. Participating in one of the talks, Rossella Ravagli, head of corporate sustainability and responsibility at Gucci, which works mainly with local tanneries, said: “We are working on new methods of tanning processes with the aim of reducing the use of heavy metals.”

Visiting the exhibition stands, accessories designer Yaz Bukey said she’d seen some interesting novelties, including a variety of sparkly finishes, and “a transparent leather with a touch like bresaola” by the Turkish tannery Anil.

But the key direction was natural-looking grains. “Even on the more sophisticated leathers, they’ve managed to do a natural touch, which is great because there’s been such a focus on coated skins,” said Sophie Delafontaine, artistic director of Longchamp. “We pay high attention to raw materials, we don’t source from low-cost territories,” she added. “When it comes to sustainable skins, there’s a lot of talk about vegetal leathers, which have been around for an age, my grandfather used to work with them. But it has its inconveniences like water stains, and the fact that it fades in sunlight. There are some beautiful products being made today by tanneries with major know-how that work in a correct way.”

“With all these foils and effects, a lot of people here have lost sight of the beauty of [heritage] leathers,” said Pauline-Joy Richard, a young designer working at LVMH Moët Hennessy-owned Tanneries Roux. The tannery presented a range of handsome boarded leathers, which are pressed between cork cylinders to create a natural-looking grain. “People are looking for durability, this idea of protection and leather that will age well, with a natural feel, and this grain creates an aspect of sturdiness, with a heritage feel,” she said.

Highlights from the show’s Maisons d’Exceptions section, meanwhile, included a new line of textiles by Caresse d’Orylag — one of 12 producers of orylag fur in the world — whose clients include Hermès and Chanel. “We play the rabbits classical music,” said the firm’s president, Jean Boutteaud.

Wearables was another talking point, with a range of innovations on display in the salon’s Wearable Lab, including sound-activated clothing covered in pins that bristled like hedgehog spines by Ying Gao, and Digitsole’s connected insoles.

“There is talk of a world with 50 billion connected devices by the year 2020, and the fashion and textile industries are going to be part of making that happen,” said Hilary McGuinness, global marketing director, new devices, at Intel, speaking at a conference dedicated to the subject.

McGuinness cited products brought to market by Intel such as Oakley’s Radar Pace intelligent glasses, and the Tag Heuer Connected watch, before sharing insights. “Smart fabrics are still at the inception phase. There are two areas, one is aesthetics — I can get my dress to light up, and to change color. The other is sports — I can measure wind, resistance, heat, temperature, and those areas will continue to move forward and offer huge business opportunities.

“We’re moving to the next phase of wearables, they’re going to be integrated in everything from our shoes to sporting goods, they’ll be everywhere,” she continued. “But the one thing they have in common is, they need to be hidden, and they need to be attractive enough that the wearer, should they go off the functionality part, will want to continue wearing it.

“This space requires new ecosystems, new ways of doing things. We’re learning, we’ve been totally excited by our journey, but we recognize that for people to buy a product, it’s got to be durable, it’s got to be washable, to provide a value, and to be secure,” McGuinness added. “The industry has a lot of initiatives that they need to work on. Take standards, if I ship this product, what am I shipping? Am I shipping a smart garment? Am I shipping a technical product? Secondly, all of these devices are going to be generating a lot of data. Who owns the data? What does it mean for privacy? All of these rules need to be addressed.”