

# Back to Business in Style

**H**oused in the MOC fairground in north Munich, Munich Fabric Start is becoming a must-visit event for ready-to-wear sourcing. Originally focused towards the domestic German market, the timing of the show combined with the offering from the 1,050 exhibitors is attracting European buyers eager to start the season's sourcing early. Additionally, the atmosphere of the Munich Fabric Start appeals: it is less frenzied than other shows on the schedule, with a calm, well organized, friendly and business-like atmosphere combined with access to the international companies exhibiting.

The recent event, held September 4-6, took the theme of 'Brave New World', illustrated in the interactive trend forums at the entrance of the show that showcased an interplay of contrasts for Fall/Winter 19/20; for example High Fashion vs. No Fashion,



Munich Fabric Start kicked off the new season and proves to be a key contender in the European show schedule.

Futurist vs. Realist, and Optimist vs. Activist. The trend areas positioned at the entrance to the ready-to-wear exhibitors were well received as they allowed visitors to walk amongst the fabrics that were suspended from the ceiling as well as being able to collect coordinated colored yarns that connected to the season's proposed color palette.

As with all sectors of today's textile industry, sustainability featured at the show. ReSOURCE is a new sourcing area that has succeeded the original organic selection. This platform is a great place to start, especially if you are looking to source recent commercial sustainable products, especially those with an array of certifications.

Across the street from the main exhibition building, is Blue Zone, a denim heaven housed in a renovated industrial building hosting over 100 of the top textile denim brands from Europe and further afield. It has to be said, if denim is what you dig, then this show is essential, again for its atmosphere – this season it took on a festival approach – but also as a perfect platform for

companies to launch new developments. From Italian favorite Candiani to spandex fiber provider creora, denim players dominated like a who's who of the industry. Here, too, sustainability was a key theme.

Jeanologia used the Blue Zone to introduce sustainable-ization, with innovative finish 5.Zero, zero waste, zero manual scraping, zero potassium permanganate spray, zero stone wash and zero bleach as the standard in the denim industry, improving the look and quality with a neutral cost through its lasering. Spanish denim giant, Tejidos Royo highlighted its Dry Indigo, a new water-free indigo dyeing process that uses no water in the dyeing and 90 percent less chemicals than conventional indigo denim.

Brazilian denim mill Vicunha highlighted its Reduce: Re-Use: Recycle campaign, confirming a strong commitment to sustainability. For Reduce, the company runs a biodegradable waste water system combined using new dye technology that uses 80 percent less water compared to conventional processes. For Re-Use, the company focuses on conservation, collecting 100 percent of caustic soda, which is separated from the water, with both ingredients then able to be re-used. On the Recycle front, there is no waste as every single piece of BCI cotton is recycled and reused. Recycled cotton is re-spun and woven back into fabrics and when the fibers become too short to use, they are compressed to make briquettes with the fuel the boilers.

As with all of the European denim shows, Blue Zone is pulling the aficionados in a relaxed and funky environment to source and exchange ideas in the denim market.

## Slated for the Future, Textiles Weird & Wonderful

Adjacent to the Blue Zone building, Keyhouse is an innovative exhibition with a wide variety of, sometimes weird, but also wonderful innovations that may define the future of the textile industry. Those intrigued about forward thinking developments must attend, as you won't be disappointed. Again a great atmosphere to explore the wonders of our industry from embedded apparel light systems at Lunative through to the innovative seamless Den/m collection, a collaboration between Tencel and Santoni.

But perhaps the most curious forum at Keyhouse was the Sustainable Innovations sector organized by Munich Fabric Start and curated by Simon Angel. This area showcased concepts that could be a fixture in the sustainable grail of the future. From fish skin leather to ceramic textiles in origami and 3D format, taking a rigid ingredient to create a fluid fabric featured, alongside chemical - and water-free and resources dyeing processes using bacteria, to the bark of pine trees as a vegan alternative to leather. Nothing was off limits, and whilst some of the concepts proved a little gruesome, for example cow stomachs and blood as textile ingredients of the future, the area certainly ignited discussion.

Verdict: Yes, Premiere Vision still leads the way for the global ready-to-wear market and no one is looking directly to take the crown away from the grande dame of the textile scene, but there is room for diversity and this is what Munich Fabric Start is offering. By incorporating Blue Zone and Keyhouse, it is a perfect event to start sourcing the new season just that little bit earlier in a really great atmosphere. As they say, don't knock it until you have tried it. I have tried it and I will be going back. ●