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35TH EDITION OF MILANO UNICA, 12, 13 AND 14 JULY 2022: UPCOMING CHALLENGES FOR THE TEXTILES AND ACCESSORIES SECTOR IN A SCENARIO OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Today, at Fiera Milano Rho, the curtain goes up on the 35th edition of Milano Unica, returning to its three-day format with a host of top-quality exhibitors who, thanks to the recovery of the international markets and the lifting of restrictions on travel, can count on a significant increase in visitors from abroad. The Trade Show of high-end textiles and accessories for womenswear, menswear and kidswear confirms again its status as a point of reference for the entire system.

There will be **389** exhibitors represented, **324** of which Italian and **65** from other countries, and their new proposals for the Autumn/Winter 2023/2024 season send a signal of a strong economic recovery.

The exhibition panorama is filled out by numerous special areas and projects, raising



the **total number of exhibitors present at the 35th edition to 445.**

Among these, the **Korea Observatory**, the **Japan Observatory**, **Origin Passion and Beliefs**, the **Innovation Area**, the space dedicated to **Startups** and the **Designers Area**.

The Woolmark Company, **Linen Dream Lab** and **Filo Sustainability** will provide additional innovations and the results of their research on fibers and yarns.

Retex Green, the new consortium that acts as an accelerator of circular fashion, will be present for the first time.

Another important first for this edition is the presence of **Sustainability Certification bodies**.

Milano Unica's longtime partners, **Banca Sella** and **Lauretana**, will provide their customary support.

The Trade Show expands back to occupy four Halls, and from the main entrance, in Hall 8, visitors immediately plunge into the itinerary of **MU Tendenze & Sustainability**, a unique area that provides a striking introduction, with its visual, tactile and sensory stimuli, in a creative progression that goes beyond seasonality and is increasingly oriented towards respect for the planet and its inhabitants, increasing the visibility of a broad range of products that manifest a growing commitment to **Sustainable Creativity**.

In order to present a broad spectrum of the season's proposals, the spotlight will be on the many companies that produce **women's collections**, with a focus on the textiles and accessories designed specifically for **womenswear**.

Inspired by the three Tendenze themes proposed by Milano Unica for the Autumn/Winter 2023/2024 season, the **focus on women** is expressed in three areas that eloquently display the fervent creativity directed at the world of women.

The spaces follow one another in an itinerary that crosses through many proposals: from the opulence of precious materials, sophisticated workmanship and ultra-decorative elements, like jeweled buttons and floral embroidery, that whisper tales of women of the Far East, to details inspired by the natural world.

Micro-organisms become prints, or *matelassé* jacquards, lightness gives way to transparency, lace alternates between glossy and opaque and accessories are *animalier*-inspired.

Shiny and iridescent materials take on ample volumes in blends with velvets and wool, enveloping the female figure. Jerseys, stretch fabrics and knits are light and soft,



delivering hyper-performance tailored to suit the multitasking day of the contemporary woman.

The Opening Ceremony opened with the speech given by the Italian Minister for Economic Development, Giancarlo Giorgetti, who, due to unforeseen and urgent government commitments, could not attend physically the event as planned.

The Minister offered an overview of the major issues influencing the future challenges Italy faces.

“I am proud of our textile and accessories sector: despite all the difficulties it is in strong recovery and with excellent growth prospects in the coming months. Made in Italy stands out for its beauty, functionality and uniqueness, and it is no coincidence that it is highly sought after and coveted all over the world. But, like other sectors, it suffers from two dramatic problems: a shortage of raw materials and rising energy costs. The government is putting in place important measures to overcome these obstacles, and the Ministry for Economic Development will work with the sector, furnishing the necessary tools to promote the development and innovation of materials and technologies. Only in this way can fashion also win the challenge of the future and remain competitive”, concluded Minister Giorgetti

Following the institutional greetings by **Alessia Cappello**, Milan City Councilwoman for Economic Development and Labor Policy with special focus on Trade, Fashion and Design and **Enrico Pazzali**, President of the Fiera Foundation, this morning’s Opening Ceremony presented the audience of sector operators with a detailed analysis by **Claudia D’Arpizio**, Senior Partner at **Bain & Company**, on the most pressing topics of interest to the textiles and accessories market, which is currently undergoing a profound transformation that must translate into future opportunities and new horizons for the entire production chain.

From Bain & Company’s presentation we learned that the fashion sector (premium and luxury only, not the mass market segment) accounted for nearly 280 billion euro in 2021 (+28% vs. 2020), a sharp recovery led by China, America and Europe. In apparel, womenswear has bounced back more vigorously than menswear, although it is still below 2019 levels. Overall, the first months of 2022 have recovered solidly, spurred by the dynamic American market and domestic European consumption. In China, instead, after the initial months of steady growth, demand dropped drastically, influenced primarily by the zero-Covid measures applied in March. For the fashion sector, expectations are that the premium segment will also return to pre-Covid levels between the end of this year and the start of 2023. This, coupled with an ongoing positive



performance in the luxury sector and encouraging projections, is providing impetus for the strong comeback in textiles, with orders already equal to or greater than 2019 levels for the SS23 season (a trend projected to continue in AW23/24) and an overall turnover for the segment that should thus return to pre-pandemic values starting with the first semester of 2023 – about a year earlier than expected. These projections are not only supported by a substantial increase in volumes, but also by higher prices, in response to higher costs. The present recovery of the textile market is thus driven by the return of demand for formal wear, but also influenced by the current difficulties in the supply and production chain.

*“In light of the dynamics that are emerging, in the coming months textile manufacturers will find themselves faced with three fundamental challenges in further loyalizing their customers and promoting their business: cutting delivery times, innovating the offer by developing new, high-performance sustainable materials, suitable for the new hybrid casual-formal occasions of their clients, and investing in a value proposition that will attract talented new recruits and then train them effectively. This scenario also offers an opportunity the segment cannot afford to pass up: defining industry-wide procedures and standards for the certification of textile sustainability, collaborating at the level of production chains and industrial districts and leveraging on the unique experience and excellence of Italian producers. This would ensure further impetus and underscore the sustainable know-how behind Made in Italy products, in addition to conferring an important competitive advantage on the client brands and the final consumers”, commented **Claudia D’Arpizio**, Senior Partner at Bain & Company.*

In his introductory speech, the President of Milano Unica, **Alessandro Barberis Canonico**, highlighted the recovery of the textile sector and the effectiveness of the Fair and its offer as a tool for accelerating the process.

“The Textile - Clothing sector is in strong recovery. It is expected that by the end of 2022 we will return to pre-pandemic levels. This is clearly confirmed by the presence of 445 exhibitors who are returning to invest in the physical fair. This is an excellent signal of growth and an injection of confidence for the future. I would also like to underline the completeness of Milano Unica’s offer: not only menswear, in this edition there are 157 exhibitor companies offering a broad range of products for women. Today more than ever: United to be Unique”, affirms the President.

After the President’s introductory remarks, the round table was led by **Sergio Tamborini**, President of Sistema Moda Italia, who explored the topic of the sustainable



challenge facing textiles and apparel and the necessary measures for the supply chain. *"In a context of growth, as manifested by sector data, but also of widespread uncertainty," explained Tamborini, "companies and investors in the textile and apparel sector are in the front lines in tackling the changes the supply chains are undergoing, emphasizing cooperative solutions aimed at sustainability. After having formed the first consortium to face the issue of manufacturers' extended responsibility, SMI is promoting new measures to protect the sector against the effects of inflation and rising energy costs."*

Unable to attend, Giancarlo Giorgetti, the President of the Italian Trade Agency ICE, left a statement and was represented by the Director General Roberto Luongo.

"The big Italian trade fairs are back in person, and in full force. This week, with Milano Unica, the Italian system is offering its contribution with support actions, and on this front, as ICE, we have launched 19 new actions that, in short, help companies move towards digitalization, sustainability and product traceability at various stages in the production chain, all key issues for companies, including those in the textiles sector. Milano Unica is also the right occasion to remember the synergies of the system: the cyclamen jersey from the Giro d'Italia, a vehicle for the promotion of Made in Italy and for the Be.IT campaign promoted by ICE during the 21 stages of the race, is on display at Milano Unica, a standout for the excellence of the fibers used and the advanced workmanship: an example of innovation based on the traditions of Italian textile manufacturing. And that is certainly satisfying. A big thank you to Sistema Moda Italia and Milano Unica, and the very best to all the participating companies and the organizers," concluded Carlo Ferro, President of ICE Agency.

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