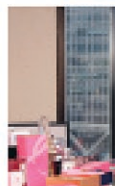


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WWD WEDNESDAY

Sportswear

White Heat

At Gucci, Frida Giannini lightened up for spring — at least in terms of her palette. She opened her show with an all-white series, which veered both sultry and sporty. Here, her racy little dress with cutout details. For more on Milan's alabaster trend, see pages 6 and 7.

With Consumers Wary, Fashion Seen Lagging Any Economic Upturn

By **Evan Clark**

WHATEVER ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS out there just might pass the fashion world by — for now.

A handful of new reports Tuesday painted a dim picture for retail and apparel after the nadir of the recession. Consumer confidence dipped unexpectedly this month, and 60 percent of retail finance chiefs said they feel excess inventory will pose a bigger risk to sales than stock shortfalls this holiday season.

Policy makers and economists have generally agreed the recession is over, but the apparel world isn't expected to see any significant upturn until spring at the earliest — which, for some firms struggling with losses and high debt, might be too late. The recent rally in retail stocks notwithstanding, stores

See **Long**, Page 4



The Prada Transformer's Final Evolution

By Luisa Zargani

PRADA'S TETRAHEDRON STRUCTURE, THE TRANSFORMER, WAS ROTATED AND reconfigured for the fourth and last time for "The Student Takeover" project, a day of events to be held today in Seoul.

The PVC-covered Transformer designed by Rem Koolhaas, which sits on the grounds of the city's 16th-century Gyeonghui Palace, will allow South Korean students to exhibit new design ideas and artwork hinging on the theme of transformation. Students will discuss the future of art, design and society.

For two weeks, the Transformer became a workshop for 130 Korean students from 10 prestigious Korean universities and 13 disciplines, including architecture, fashion, film, fine art and graphics working under the direction of OMA architect and Transformer design architect Alexander Reichert. They developed an exhibition of innovative art and design, "whose aim is to investigate and bring global attention to the best of Seoul's creative young talent," said Prada.

Among the events is a panel discussion on the future of the creative industry, cutting-edge dance and musical performances, creative presentations by "Pecha Kucha With Students," and a party.

Students re-elaborated the structure of the Transformer graphically, redesigning flyers, pins and T-shirts that will be distributed free throughout the day. Also, its architecture "will be painted on, wallpapered, covered in graffiti and torn apart to create a new spatiality that engages with the students' content," said Prada.

Curated by the Fondazione Prada, the Transformer previously served as a venue for "Turn Into Me," a selection of works by Swedish artist Nathalie Djurberg. Prior to that, the structure contained a cinematic event and displayed the "Waist Down: Skirts by Miuccia Prada" exhibition, which opened the current series of interdisciplinary projects in April.

The Transformer can be rotated on each side depending on the event, with four facades and floor plate configurations, so that floors become walls and walls become the ceiling. Each of the four programs functions on unique steel-framed shapes: a hexagon, a cross, a rectangle and a circle.

The Prada Transformer's latest incarnation.



Selfridges Unveils 3rd Central

By Samantha Conti

LONDON — The third floor at Selfridges' Oxford Street flagship just got a fresh jolt of energy thanks to a dedicated space for denim brands and young and contemporary labels including Christopher Kane, Alexander Wang and Markus Lupfer.

The new space, which spans 26,000 square feet, is called 3rd Central, and it stocks 64 denim and ready-to-wear labels, including William Rast, Marc by Marc Jacobs, Helmut Lang, Anglomania, Juicy Couture and Chloë Sevigny for Opening Ceremony.

"The denim wall is as long as two back-to-back London buses and offers body imaging, a specialist fitting service, and labels such as Superfine, Hudson, R13, and Paige Denim.

"The floor needed a new lease of life, and we've split the space evenly between cool contemporary and denim brands," said Anita Barr, Selfridges' women's and children's wear buying director who spearheaded the project. "We see the target audience as ageless — from teenagers through to 60-year-olds," she added.

Barr, who declined to give sales projections for 3rd Central, said the store had some high-energy events planned to promote the new space.

Earlier this month, Jeremy Scott was in the store to launch his Adidas Originals by Originals collection at an event where the Misshapes DJ'd. On Thursday, Georgia May Jagger — the face of Hudson jeans — will launch the label's autumn collection.

This weekend, the store will host a Denim Rocks event, featuring personal appearances by denim designers, live music, and styling sessions. Alexander Wang will make an appearance at his new concept store in 3rd Central on Oct. 13.

The brands that had previously been on that floor — including Jaeger, Max Mara and Caroline Charles — have been moved

to the second floor, which now stocks classic bridge lines.

In other changes at Selfridges, chief executive officer Paul Kelly has expanded his role. He will now also oversee operations at Brown Thomas Group, the Irish luxury retail chain that, like Selfridges and Holt Renfrew in Canada, is also part of Galen Weston's retail empire.

Kelly ran Brown Thomas between 1992 and 2003, and had until now been serving as

Looks at Selfridges' third floor.



deputy chairman of the chain. A Selfridges spokeswoman said Kelly was not replacing anyone specifically at Brown Thomas, and would report directly to Weston, with whom he's been working since 1984.

Kelly has named Stephen Sealey, formerly director of women's wear and accessories at Brown Thomas, to the post of managing director. Sealey succeeds Nigel Blow, who left the group in a recent management shake up.

FASHION SCOOPS

TAKE TWO: The designs of **Kate and Laura Mulleavy's** Rodarte label will be featured at the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum next year. **Francisco Costa** beat the sisters to win this year's Fashion Design Award, but the girls from Pasadena, Calif., will get their due. The fashion installation, "Quicktake: Rodarte," will be on view in the museum's billiard room from Jan. 29 to March 14. It will be the second in a series of "Quicktake" installations spotlighting up-and-coming designers from around the globe. The Cooper-Hewitt's director of retail, **Gregory Krum**, is curating the installation with **Susan Brown**, assistant curator in the Textiles Department.



Rodarte's work will be on view at the Cooper-Hewitt.

DESIGN DEAL: Could a deal between Badgley Mischka's **Mark Badgley** and **James Mischka** and HSN be in the works? According to sources, the designer duo has been in talks with the home shopping network to create a special lifestyle collection, which could launch as soon as this fall. Details of the line could not be learned, but the move would further up the network's fashion quotient. HSN already offers fashion collections by designers such as **Loulou de la Falaise**, **Randolph Duke** and **Tina Knowles**, and in November will launch a special fashion jewelry collection by **Molly Sims**. HSN representatives could not be reached for comment.

GAGOSIAN'S CROWNED PRINCE: Now that Gagolian Gallery's first retail shop is up and running at 988 Madison Avenue, none other than **Richard Prince** will be headlining the opening party festivities. The art and fashion crowd will be well represented when the artist turns up Oct. 6 to tout his newest limited edition book, "Bettie Kline," produced exclusively for Gagolian.

ON HORSEBACK: Trotting along with its heritage, Gucci will be the main sponsor of the European Equestrian Masters, the international horse jumping show that will be held in Paris from Dec. 10 to 13. Gucci Masters, the name of the sponsorship, is the luxury brand's first equestrian funding in 20 years and is aimed at highlighting the house's roots and culture. "I've been an avid horseback rider since I was a child, so it's a pleasure for me to be involved in a program that is as close to my heart as it is to Gucci's rich history," said **Frida Giannini**, Gucci's creative director. During its four-day sponsorship, Gucci will set up an on-site store that also will carry a limited edition collection of scarves, boots and blankets.

Organized by Brazilian horseman **Nelson Pessoa**, the 24-year-old European Equestrian Master is an exclusive event where 40 of the world's best jumpers race at the Parc Des Expositions in Paris-Nord Villepinte. It draws more than 170,000 visitors and 400 exhibitors each year.

HEY, BIG SPENDER: It seems **Hugh Jackman** has friends with exquisite taste. Jackman, who begins his run alongside **Daniel Craig** in "A Steady Rain" on Broadway this week, received a gift of a stainless steel Piaget watch from none other than style guru **Robert Verdi**. According to a source, Verdi, who stopped into Piaget's Fifth Avenue boutique on Monday, had the watch inscribed with the phrase "Break a leg" on the back.

HAVING A BALL: Model **Coco Rocha** and **Bryan Batt** of "Mad Men" will cohost the Museum of Art and Design's first-ever young patron's gala on Oct. 14. The fete will celebrate the museum's one-year anniversary in its **Brad Cloepfil**-designed home on Columbus Circle, and is the first time the institution is targeting a younger generation of museumgoers and artists, with ticket prices starting at \$150 and dancing to DJs **Paul Sevigny** and **Harley Viera-Newton**. (The museum's annual black-tie Visionaries Gala has focused on more established artists and well-heeled patrons.) Dubbed the

"Paperball," the event also celebrates the opening of a new exhibit, "Slash: Paper Under the Knife," which features site-specific works made from paper. As part of the event, a raft of fashion designers, photographers and artists have designed works from paper — such as dresses and accessories — to be sold at the party, including **Matthew Williamson**, **Craig McDean**, **James Rosenquist**, **Issey Miyake**, **Gemma Kahng**, **Slava Mogutin**, **Donald Deal**, **Yeohlee Teng** and **Lela Rose**.

INDIAN FEAST: All eyes may be on Milan and Paris right now, but the fashion world is also considering Mumbai. In response to the November terror attacks there, industry members including **Yves Carcelle**, **Diane von Furstenberg**, **Evelyn Lauder**, **Silvia Fendi**, **Matthew Williamson**, **Rachel Roy**, **Kenneth Cole** and **Cynthia Rowley** have contributed artwork and text to the new tome "To India, With Love," being released in November by Assouline. Profits from



the book and its surrounding events and exhibits benefit Taj Public Service Welfare Trust in conjunction with Mumbai: We Got Your Back, an organization founded by the book's editors, **Waris Ahluwalia**, **Tina Bhojwani** and **Mortimer Singer**. "As funny as it seems, I've only been to India twice, but I'm inspired by it in an enormous way," says contributor **Tory Burch**, who first traveled to the country on a Semester at Sea program in college. Other big names who participated in the book include **Natalie Portman**, **Wes Anderson**, **Adrien Brody** and **Elizabeth Hurley**.