

# Initiatives

in Art and Culture

# VORTEX:

## PARADOX, PROMISE, POSSIBILITY

20TH NEW YORK FASHION + DESIGN CONFERENCE

THURSDAY – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8 – 9, 2018

Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana for Dolce & Gabbana, *Ensemble*, Autumn/Winter 2013 – 2014, courtesy of Dolce & Gabbana. Image: courtesy, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, digital composite scan by Katerina Jebb.



Paul Nadar, *Comtesse Adhélaume de Chevigné*, 1885. In: Anne-Marie Bernard, *The World of Proust, as Seen by Paul Nadar*, MIT, 2004.



Constance C. R. White, *HOW TO SLAY: Inspiration From the Queens & Kings of Black Style*, Rizzoli, New York, 2018. Front jacket: model, Gaye McDonald; photo, Ilaysha Jordan.

Rebecca Minkoff, *I Am Many* campaign, 2018, featuring Nadine Sierra, Clementine Desseau, Deja Foxx, Roxiny Rivas, Rebecca Minkoff, Nadya Okamoto, Alessandra Brown-Cepeda, and Autumn Greco.



# VORTEX: PARADOX, PROMISE, POSSIBILITY

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Ladies and Gentlemen: please hold on to your hats and keep your hands inside the vehicle at all times.

In this, the 20th New York Fashion, Jewelry + Design Conference, we consider the times in which we are living, a swirling vortex suggesting constant change and possibility, characterized by uncertainty. The vortex of contemporary fashion, a product and a mirror of this broader context, is the specific whirlpool into which we jump head-first: dizzying and disorienting, yes, but also dazzling and transporting. Whether by disruptive experimentation, the radical use of cutting-edge technologies, or astonishing cross-functional collaborations, we are swept off our feet.

But we are not simply caught in a maelstrom of novel design, novel techniques, novel materials, and novel garments. We are caught as well in a revolution in how contemporary fashion is sold. We are caught in a communications revolution, as sellers seek new ways to capture the consumer's attention. Social media might reign but other approaches, such as narrative film and photography that tell a story, putting objects in compelling contexts, overtly seek to leave behind the distractions of social media, as well as the limitations of conventional print and television advertising.

So why the revolution, the upheaval? Because we want it. And we'll have our revolution customized, thank you very much. And we want it fast, delivered—or so it would seem—even before we complete our on-line order.

The shifting of the ground beneath our feet is not to be feared. Not least when it entails a growing recognition of the environmental impact of human activity across the fashion industry and the importance of chain of custody. Not least when it entails an increased understanding of the value and contribution of diversity in everything we do. Disruption, after all, gave us Dior.

But despite the storm, despite the drang, some things don't change. Authenticity will remain prized: thus a return to natural dyes and fibers, to hand production, and the recognition, that when it comes to diamonds and much else, that "real is rare."

Welcome to the Vortex.

**The Louis and Lena Minkoff Foundation is gratefully acknowledged for its generosity.**

**Initiatives in Art and Culture expresses sincere thanks to the Hilldun Corporation, to Platinum Guild International, and to UNLEASHED for their generous sponsorship (as of September 29, 2018).**



Alexandra Mor, *Carved Tagua Rudraksha Et Red Wood Flower With Baroque Pearls Necklace*, rudraksha beads, baroque South Sea pearls, and sawo wood, with gold filigree and tagua seed.

The Louis and Lena Minkoff Foundation

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# Thursday, November 8

Formal sessions will take place at The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 5th Ave & 103rd Street.

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

**Registration, continental breakfast, and networking**

9:00 – 9:10 a.m.

**Introduction.** Lisa Koenigsberg.

9:15 – 9:55 a.m.

**Rebecca Minkoff** in conversation with **Gary A. Wassner.**



Jason Wu, *Sketches for Grey*. Photo: courtesy, Jason Wu.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

**La Ligne.** Meredith Melling, Valerie Macaulay, and Molly Howard in conversation.

10:35 – 11:15 a.m.

**An Inclusive Vision: Fashion's Future.** Ivan Bart in conversation.

11:15 – 11:30 a.m.

**Break, networking, and book signings**

11:30 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

**HOW TO SLAY: Inspiration from the Kings and Queens of Black Style.** Constance C. R. White in conversation.

12:15 – 12:55 p.m.

**What is Precious Now? Collecting Jewelry in the 21st Century.**

Alexandra Mor.

12:55 – 2:10 p.m.

**Lunch (on your own) and book signings**

2:10 – 2:40 p.m.

**Stefano Tonchi** in conversation with **Lisa Koenigsberg.**

2:45 – 3:15 p.m.

**The Price of Illusion.** Joan Juliet Buck.

3:20 – 3:55 p.m.

**Jason Wu** in conversation with **Gary A. Wassner.**

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**What is Luxury?** Wendy Brandes, Melissa Gonzales, Mickey Alam Khan, Jyothi Rao; moderator, Gary A. Wassner.

Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia, *The Emerald Tree Brooch*.



Alex Prager, *Cate Blanchett in Uncanny Valley*. Cover, *The Female Gaze*, *W Magazine*. Vol. 5 (2018), a special issue photographed, styled, written, and directed by women, about women, starring guest editor Cate Blanchett.

# Friday, November 9

Formal sessions will take place at The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 5th Ave & 103rd Street.

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

**Continental breakfast, networking, and book signings**

9:00 – 9:40 a.m.

**Trail-blazing in a Challenging Environment: Designer Jewelry 2018.**

Deepa Lakhani, Freida Rothman, Elizabeth Suda, Jennifer Zeuner; moderator, Karen Giberson.

9:45 – 10:25 a.m.

**Ablaze.** Deirdre Featherstone in conversation with Jenny Luker.

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.

**A Royal Legacy.** Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia in conversation with Caroline Weber.

11:00 – 11:20 a.m.

**Break, networking, and book signings**

11:20 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Melding of Old and New: The Power of Culture to Inspire.** Mellissa Huber.



AMUR, *Floral Wrap Dress With Cutouts*. Photo: courtesy, AMUR.

12:05 – 12:35 p.m.

**The Three Faces of Proust's Duchess.** Caroline Weber.

12:35 – 1:50 p.m.

**Lunch (on your own) and book signings**

1:50 – 2:30 p.m.

**New Approaches to Championing Fashion.** Vanessa von Bismarck and Carrie Ellen Phillips.

2:35 – 3:05 p.m.

**Evolving in Retail: From St John to Grayse.** Kelly Gray.

3:05 – 3:25 p.m.

**Break, networking, and book signings**

3:25 – 4:15 p.m.

**Sustainable Luxury: Rethinking Materials.** AMUR, David Breslauer, Patricia Ermecheo, Cullen Schwarz; moderator, Nina Farran.

4:20 – 5:15 p.m.

**The Power of Image.** Robert Verdi in conversation.



Featherstone Fine Jewelry, *Tourmaline Kite Earrings*, platinum, blue tourmaline, green tourmaline & diamond. Photo: courtesy, Featherstone Fine Jewelry.



Grayse, *2018 Fall Collection* at El Paseo Fashion Show. Photo: courtesy, Grayse.

# Monday, November 12

## VORTEX: DAY OF LIGHT

Baruch College 151 East 25th Street (between Lexington and Third Avenues).  
To register on-line: [www.dayoflightiac.eventbrite.com](http://www.dayoflightiac.eventbrite.com)

Diamonds and gemstones—traditional repositories of wealth—are at the center of discussion in these exciting times of change in the luxury world. We consider ways to increase sales; new trends in jewelry, color, and marketing; and significant issues facing the jewelry industry.

Among speakers are:

- **Rob Bates**, Senior Editor, *JCK*
- **Wendy Brandes**, Blogger and Jewelry designer
- **Alan Bronstein**, owner, Aurora Gems
- **Brandee Dallow**, Founder/President, Fine Girl Luxury Branding & Communications
- **Leatrice Eiseman**, Executive Director, Pantone Color Institute
- **Pat Henneberry**, Vice President of Global Learning and Development, Hearts on Fire
- **Grant Mobley**, Trade Lead, Diamond Producers Association
- **Hedda Schupak**, Editor, *Centurion Newsletter*
- **Ronnie Vanderlinden**, President, Diamex Inc, President, Diamond Manufacturers & Importers Association of America, and Chair, United States Jewelry Council
- **Benjamin Zucker**, authority on precious stones who joined the family gem business, and author



## Presenters

**Lisa Koenigsberg**, conference director and President and Founder, Initiatives in Art and Culture; formerly, she served as Advisor to the Dean for Arts Initiatives, and Director, Programs in the Arts and adjunct professor of arts, NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies. She established the series of fashion conferences which explores fashion, materials, and process. Former positions include: Assistant Director for Project Funding, Museum of the City of New York; Executive Assistant, Office of the President, American Museum of Natural History; architectural historian, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission; and guest curator, Worcester Art Museum and Yale University Art Gallery. Her writings have appeared in books and journals, and she has organized symposia and special sessions at universities, museums, and professional organizations.

**AMUR**, a clothing collection created in New York City based on the concept that great style does not have to come at the expense of our environment and that design can strike a balance between beauty and good intentions. It's an approach that's woven into AMUR's very name: A Mindful Use of Resources. Sustainably sourced materials fit effortlessly into a modern urban lifestyle, while the details—vivid prints, sharp tailoring, a dash of feminine flou—lend each piece an element of novelty and adventure. These are silhouettes for a contemporary woman confident enough to live conscientiously and carry a look from day to night with ease. All materials are sourced with an eye toward environmental good, whether organic and natural fabrics, reclaimed fibers that conserve material resources, or trims made by artisan collectives in the developing world. Each piece in the collection embodies a singular philosophy: mindful living will always be in style.

**Ivan Bart**, President, IMG Models and Fashion Properties; an international leader in talent development, Bart oversees the management of IMG Models' A-list talent roster, including Alek Wek, Bella Hadid, Gigi Hadid, Gisele Bündchen, Kate Moss, Joan Smalls and Miranda Kerr. After

developing his career at leading agencies including Ice, Wilhelmina, and Ford, Bart was approached by IMG Models to become creative director in 1994. During Bart's tenure at IMG Models, the agency has developed and propelled clients including Carolyn Murphy, Chrissy Teigen, Karlie Kloss, Lily Aldridge, Liv Tyler and Stephanie Seymour. After WME acquired IMG in 2012, Ivan was appointed president of IMG Models. In this role, Bart has led the charge in evolving the global definition of beauty by promoting and encouraging diversity and inclusion. IMG Models has also added Ashley Graham, Candice Huffine, Hari Nef, Halima Aden, Jillian Mercado, Precious Lee, and Zach Miko to its boards. Bart has helped uncover next-generation stars including Hailey Baldwin, Kaia Gerber, Millie Bobby Brown, Paris Jackson, and Patrick Schwarzenegger. In 2012, Bart relaunched IMG Models' men's board and welcomed Bonner Bolton, Cameron Dallas, Clement Chabernaud, Garrett Neff, Lucky Blue Smith, and Miles McMillan. That same year, Bart launched IMG Models Sydney office, and in 2017 opened shop in Los Angeles. Deemed the "model mogul" by *The New York Times'* Alexandra Jacobs, Bart has been named one of Business of Fashion (BOF)'s 500 leaders shaping the global fashion industry. In May 2018, IMG announced that Bart would also oversee the company's global fashion events business, LENS and Made to Measure. IMG's fashion events group owns, operates and/or commercially represents fashion properties as varied as New York Fashion Week: The Shows, MADE, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Australia, Shenzhen Fashion Week, IMG Fashion Camp, and the Condé Nast International Luxury Conference. LENS is IMG's youngest agency representing a new era of multi-faceted image makers across art, film, and fashion. Made to Measure, the world's premier fashion video network, features original programming, classic fashion films and documentaries, and runway shows. Bart's leadership contributes to the overall IMG fashion portfolio, which also includes Art + Commerce, and The Wall Group.

**Wendy Brandes**, jewelry designer; her 18 kt gold signature line—inspired by the true stories of powerful women—is known for its fierce designs, attention to detail, and “covert luxury,” including hidden gems and surprising mechanical elements. Supermodel Christy Turlington captured the spirit of the collection when she called Brandes’s Empress Wu dragon ring “a bit scary, but really a cool piece of art.” Brandes’s designs have been featured in publications such as *The New York Times*, *InStyle*, *ELLE*, *W Magazine*, *Paper*, and *British VOGUE*, and spotted on celebrities including Rihanna, model Bella Hadid, Britney Spears, and Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter Skylar Grey. Brandes received the Women’s Jewelry Association Award for Excellence in Design (2017) and Fashion Group International’s Rising Star Award for fine jewelry (2012), and her work has also been recognized by the American Gem Trade Association Spectrum Awards, JCK’s Jeweler’s Choice Awards, the InDesign Awards, and the American Jewelry Design Council New Talent Competition. Brandes led the luxury goods industry into social media when she launched her blog in 2007, and the playfulness she displays online is also seen in her “punk platinum” and silver emoji lines. Before becoming a designer, Brandes spent over a decade as a journalist at *The Wall Street Journal*, *CNN*, and *People* magazine. She received her BA in English from Columbia University.

**David Breslauer**, co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer, Bolt Threads; Bolt Threads is a fast-growing bio-materials innovation company based in the San Francisco Bay Area that harnesses proteins found in nature to create versatile and sustainable high-performance biomaterials and consumer goods. Overseeing the Research and Development teams, Breslauer guides the design, production, and testing of new silk polymers and fibers for desired performance properties. Bolt Threads is working to harness the astounding materials found in nature to build products that combine innovation, performance, and sustainability. The basis of much of their work stems from his graduate research—and that of his cofounders—on silk.

**Joan Juliet Buck**, American novelist, critic, essayist, actress, and editor; her most recent book is *The Price of Illusion* (2017). She served as editor-in-chief of French *Vogue* from 1994 – 2001. A former contributing editor to *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Traveler*, and *The New Yorker*, she currently writes for *Harper’s Bazaar*. She has been seen onscreen in *Julie & Julia* and on television in *Supergirl*.

**Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia**, designer and gemologist; he and his partner founded the Prince Dimitri Company, opening a jewelry salon at 5 East 57th Street in New York in 2008 to showcase one-of-a-kind jewels designed with an innate understanding of the meanings of jewels, a passion for the power of gemstones, and a well-honed instinct for design layered with cultural references. One of twin sons born to Prince Alexander of Yugoslavia and his first wife, Princess Maria Pia of Savoy, the eldest daughter of King Umberto II of Italy, Prince Dimitri grew up in Versailles, attended boarding schools in Switzerland and France, and graduated with a degree in business law from the University of Paris. He then moved to New York City where he pursued his true passion: jewelry and jewelry design. During his 16-year tenure at Sotheby’s he became a senior vice president in the jewelry department, overseeing all jewelry auctions; he also studied gemology and became a top jewelry expert. In 2001, he joined Phillips de Pury & Luxembourg as head of the jewelry department. Concurrently, Prince Dimitri had begun to design jewelry, beginning with a collection of gemstone cufflinks sold at Bergdorf Goodman. He later added a women’s line exclusive to Barneys New York and Neiman Marcus. Dimitri also designed *The New Look of Pearls*, a collection for Assael, and is now one of New York’s premier high-end jewelers. He is working on a book with Rizzoli due out in March 2020 that will feature his work and vintage family photos and stories such as those posted on his Instagram @prince.dimitri.

**Patricia Ermecheo**, founder, Osom Socks and Osomtex; Ermecheo sells socks made from waste fabrics, an idea stemming from an earlier business, Novafiber, which she began five years ago, shipping cartons of used clothing to South America to sell at affordable prices. Osom Brand is a sustainable brand that embraces the idea that we are all one. All products are made entirely of high quality upcycled thread from discarded garments, saving thousands of tons of textile waste from going to landfill. No water or dyes are used. Ermecheo launched Osom Brand in January 2016 with a \$23,000 Kickstarter campaign, manufacturing the socks in solar-powered, fair-trade factories in Guatemala; nearly 2,000 pairs of socks have been sold and sent around the world, and Ermecheo projects that sales will double by the end of this year. She has relocated her operations from Miami, Florida to a rural location in Bend, Oregon, where she has bought a tiny house with her partner; this solar-powered structure will become both her home and Osom Brand headquarters. Ermecheo, who is in talks with an Oregon sports brand about using her fabrics for their product lineup says that Oregon is a good fit in terms of both work and lifestyle: “I wanted all aspects of the business to show a commitment to sustainability, and it just made sense to downsize our footprint as a company as well.”

**Nina Farran**, founder and CEO, Fashionkind; in 2014, Farran founded Fashionkind, an initiative to change the world using luxury fashion as the vehicle. Fashionkind vets leading ethical and sustainable luxury brands,

and designers from around the world, curates collections of their designs, and collaboratively creates exclusive products for its online global platform, Fashionkind.com. Fashionkind.com marries a top-of-the-line shopping experience with a one-of-a-kind storytelling platform that champions the people, places, processes, and materials behind each piece and each brand. While at the University of Pennsylvania, she launched an on-campus extension of a humanitarian fashion effort that built schools in sub-Saharan Africa. More recently, she initiated, built, and successfully launched the impact investing program at a national investment and wealth management firm, enabling high net worth and endowment/foundation clients to construct 100 percent impact-aligned diversified portfolios. Selected to participate in Vital Voices’ Global Ambassadors Program (March 2017), Farran was named one of the 50 most influential young women in the world by *Town & Country Magazine*; she serves as an advisor for the New York Academy of Science’s Change Fashion Initiative and for Trade+Impact, a trade association of members from the craft and natural cosmetic sectors with

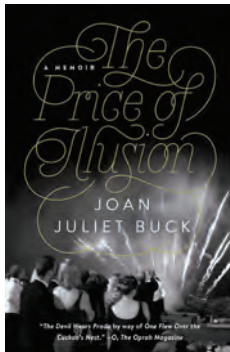
a focus on women-led social enterprises in Africa and the Middle East, as well as a board member of Power Up Gambia, a not-for-profit that transforms healthcare services in The Gambia via solar energy.

**Deirdre Featherstone**, private jeweler based in NYC; Featherstone is known for her bold use of color and love of platinum. In 1985, she left the world of antiques auctioneering for the world of fine jewelry, marrying an appreciation of the exquisitely beautiful with understanding that even the most stunning objects need to run smoothly and feel right, and she engineers her jewelry for convertibility and comfort as well as beauty. Featherstone has received 11 American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) Spectrum Awards and judged the 2016 Awards. Named a Master American Platinumsmith by Platinum Guild International, she speaks at platinum and jewelry forums. This year, she introduced a permanent collection at the Bergdorf Goodman Fine Jewelry Salon and won the 2018 AGTA Spectrum Award for Best Use of Platinum and Color.

**Karen Giberson**, President, Accessories Council; in her role as president of the Accessories Council, a nonprofit national advocacy group, she represents more than 300 of the biggest brands in the fashion industry. At the Council, she oversees production of events including industry-related panel discussions and fundraising galas. She advocates for policy that positively affects the accessories industry and partners with member companies to promote the industry as a whole. She also runs the ACE Awards, one of the fashion industry’s leading events. With over 30 years’ experience in merchandising, marketing, and public relations, Karen began her career in the executive training program at Macy’s and then in Macy’s jewelry buying department. She later joined QVC; among the positions she held there were director of event marketing and director of accessories, footwear and intimate apparel. She has also been a consultant for many companies including QVC, Esteé Lauder, HairZing, ElyseRyan Jewelry, Anomaly, Jack Rogers, The Council For Leather Exports India, FAME Records, and Tracy Reece. An EMMY award-winning executive producer of *Avec Eric*, a PBS television show featuring star chef Eric Ripert that was named Outstanding Culinary Program in 2011, she holds a BA from Susquehanna University. She is a Wharton Fellow and serves on the board of directors of the Fashion Service Network.

**Melissa Gonzalez**, founder, The Lionsque Group (TLG). TLG is a firm of award winning retail strategists and pop up shop experts who have strategized and produced more than 150 retail experiences in major cities across the United States. In 2017, Gonzalez also launched Clark, an interactive platform for physical retail that empowers consumers to truly connect the online and offline worlds while giving brands real-time transparency into store performance. Some of her clients include major brands such as COTY, Estée Lauder, Intel, M.Gemi, The RealReal, YUM brands, and others. She reflects on her work in her book, *The Pop-Up Paradigm: How Brands Can Build Human Connections in a Digital Age*. In 2018, she was named one of Design:Retail’s Top 10 Retail Design Influencers of the Year. In 2017, her team’s work for the GGP brand IRL was selected as a Glossy Award finalist for Best Pop-Up/New-Concept Store. In 2016, Gonzalez was awarded Design:Retail’s 40 under 40; in 2015, she was named Innovator of the Year for pop-up retail experiences by Retail Touchpoints; and in 2014, her work was honored with the CLIO Image Award for experiential engagement, and was a finalist for the New York Design Award for marketing and branded experiences. She has also been awarded *The Wall Street Journal’s* Donor of the Day, one of the top 20 Most Inspiring People in New York City.

**Kelly Gray**, Creative Director, Grayse, and model; born into the world of fashion, Gray grew up at St. John, the high-end knitwear company founded by her model-turned-designer mother and businessman father in 1962. When she was only 12, her father hired her to work answering phones during summer vacation, and by the time she was 15, Kelly was modeling for the company. She rapidly became the face of St. John, appearing in the company’s iconic ads for over two decades. Having learned from her parents that fashion was about more than just appearances and advertising, she worked in shipping and accounting, in production and retail, to deepen her knowledge of the industry,



Joan Juliet Buck, *The Price of Illusion: A Memoir*, front cover. Atria Books, 2017; design: Roberto de Vica; photograph: Stuart Franklin/Magnum.

# Presenters

becoming the company's creative director in her mid-20s, and then CEO just before turning 30. While at the head of St. John, Kelly steered it through a period of substantial growth, quadrupling annual sales from \$100 to \$400 million. Though she left St. John in 2005, she returned less than two years later as a part-time creative consultant. In the interim, she and Nikki Sixx—whom she had met backstage at a Mötley Crüe concert—had formed Royal Underground, a men's (and later women's) clothing line with an edgy vibe. Having enjoyed her "love affair" with rock and roll, Gray ultimately realized how much she missed working with her family, and thus formed a new company, Grayse, with her mother, Marie Gray.

**Melissa Huber**, assistant curator, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Huber specializes in 20th-century fashion. Since joining the Costume Institute in 2012, she has assisted the department with research and content development for numerous special exhibitions including "Punk: Chaos to Couture" (2013), "Charles James: Beyond Fashion" (2014), "Death Becomes Her: A Century of Mourning Attire" (2014), "China: Through the Looking Glass" (2015), "Jacqueline de Ribes: The Art of Style" (2015); "Manus x Machina: Fashion in an Age of Technology" (2016), "Masterworks: Unpacking Fashion" (2016), and "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and The Catholic Imagination" (2018). Huber graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) with a BFA and a minor in art history. She holds a certificate in curating fashion from the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, and an MA in visual culture from New York University, where she is an adjunct professor in the Costume Studies graduate program.

**Mickey Alam Khan**, founder and Editor-in-Chief, *Luxury Daily*, the world's leading luxury business publication. He was also founder and editor-in-chief of *Mobile Marketer* and *Mobile Commerce Daily*, leading publications in the mobile space. He was previously editor-in-chief of *eMarketer* and *DM News* and, prior to those stints, a correspondent for *Advertising Age*. He is based in New York.

**Deepa Lakhani**, co-founder, Deepa Gurnani; the Deepa Gurnani brand was conceived in 2005 by husband and wife, Deepa and Jay Lakhani. While studying fashion at London's Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, Deepa beaded couture pieces for Alexander McQueen, Emanuel Ungaro, Fendi, and Marjan Pejoski. Working with these designers allowed Deepa to understand couture standards of quality, and compelled her to experiment with new and unusual beading and embroidery techniques. This experience and her own distinct style and sensibility inspired her to create her own line. Jay Lakhani, a jewelry designer, started his training at FIT and then worked with some of the leading houses in the fine jewelry industry, training under head designers from Tiffany and Bulgari. Also drawn to fashion, he wanted to combine the art of fine jewelry and fashion accessories to create easy-to-wear works of art. He noticed a trend for black and basic silhouettes in the marketplace, which he saw as blank canvasses for exquisite embroidered accessories. After marrying in 2005, the couple founded Deepa Gurnani to create distinctive embroidered accessories. Their first line was launched at Henri Bendel in New York City in November 2006 and was subsequently sold in stores worldwide. The brand has grown continually in a constantly changing industry. Customer expectations of exquisite craftsmanship and luxury are ever-present, yet in a challenging world economy the more price-conscious consumer must also be satisfied. In 2016, to satisfy the needs of global customers, Deepa Gurnani launched a second brand, Deepa by Deepa Gurnani, a more accessible collection. That year also marked Deepa Gurnani's exclusive license of the work of designer and artist, Erté whose Art Deco look inspired hand-embroidered pieces using Deepa Gurnani's finest techniques.

**Jenny Luker**, President, Platinum Guild International USA. In this role, she is responsible for the strategic development of the platinum jewelry industry in the US. With over 20 years' experience working with jewelry designers, manufacturers, and retailers, Luker leads her team in creating marketing and trade programs to promote awareness and education for consumers and the jewelry industry. She holds a BA from the University of Oklahoma and an MA from California State University at Fullerton, both in Sociology. She is deeply involved with the jewelry industry, serving as President, Women's Jewelry Association; Executive Board member, Jewelers Vigilance Committee; board member, Jewelers for Children, committee member for the GEM Awards, and member of the 24 Karat Club of the City of New York.

**Meredith Melling, Valerie Macaulay, and Molly Howard**, founders, La Ligne; Melling began her career at *Vogue* in 1999 in the fashion department, then became senior market editor. She oversaw the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)/ *Vogue* Fashion Fund from its inception in 2001, where she gained unique perspective on emerging brands, and in 2010 was named fashion director at *Vogue.com*. Three years later, Melling founded La Marque, a creative consultancy focused on bringing an editorial point of view to consumer and fashion brands with Valerie Macaulay. Macaulay after beginning her career at *Harper's Bazaar*, moved on to *Vogue* in 2004, where she rose to the position of Bookings Editor in 2008 when she was responsible for casting all models for the magazine and website. She worked closely with the CFDA in launching the CFDA Health Initiative. Macaulay provides invaluable insight regarding development of a personal brand to stand out and stay relevant in a crowded and fickle market. Molly Howard began working in the Financial Sponsors Group (focusing on Consumer retail) in the Investment Banking Division at Credit Suisse in New York City and then transferred to the London Asset Management office to focus on capital raising. In 2011, Howard returned to New York City to oversee business development at rag & bone, leading the company through the auction process and sale of

a minority position to a private equity partner. She was also responsible for creating and maintaining the company's growth strategy and financial plan.

**Rebecca Minkoff**, fashion designer; Minkoff's subtly edgy designs have made her a global industry leader in accessible luxury handbags, accessories, footwear, and apparel. Minkoff launched her brand in 2001 with an iconic capsule collection that landed her on *The Tonight Show* and she became an overnight sensation. In 2005, the "Morning After Bag," a.k.a. the "M.A.B.," ignited her career as a handbag designer, inspiring her "downtown romantic" sensibility in the years to come. In 2009, she returned to her roots of apparel design, introducing her first ready-to-wear collection. Today, Rebecca Minkoff is a global lifestyle brand that spans ready-to-wear, handbags and other accessories, footwear, jewelry, and watches, as well as men's clothing under the label Uri Minkoff and is sold in over 900 stores worldwide. An industry leader, Minkoff is an active member of the CFDA, has spoken at dozens of conferences such as SXSW, Northside, and TEDx, and supports multiple philanthropies. She is also an industry disruptor, pushing the boundaries of fashion and tech. She lives with her husband and three children in Brooklyn.

**Alexandra Mor**, haute joaillerie designer and artistic director of design for jewelry connoisseurs who are building collections of one-of-a-kind jewelry. Each piece is handcrafted by master artisans and created with a level of design sensibility found among Place Vendôme jewelers. Alexandra's pieces have been worn on the red carpet by Oprah, Olivia Palermo, Beyoncé, Kate Winslet, Naomi Campbell, Lupita Nyong'o, Mila Kunis, Demi Moore, Brooke Shields, among others. Alexandra finds inspiration in her clients' personal relationships, experiences, and strengths and create unique pieces that truly reflect the individual. Mor's work is distinguished by signature details of knife-edged wire and yellow gold interior lining designed to bring out the finest qualities of diamonds and rare, exceptional gemstones. After spending a decade in New York City working on her signature collections, Mor moved to Bali, Indonesia where she looked toward an inner compass of self-reflection. In Bali, Alexandra was inspired to create her new first of its kind, the Tagua Seeds Capsule Collection, with local artisans. As a leader in the fine jewelry industry, Mor is known for her commitment to purpose-driven, sustainable jewelry design. Alexandra Mor limited-edition & one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces are made in the USA, Bali, and Laos.

**Carrie Ellen Phillips and Vanessa von Bismarck**, founding partners of BPCM; they are two of the most established and respected global voices in fashion public relations. In the nearly two decades since they founded BPCM which now employs over 75 staffers across two continents, they have been instrumental in building the names of some of fashion's most recognizable brands including Celine, Stella McCartney, Longchamp, Aldo, and Alexander Wang. Both are expert in navigating both global and emerging brands through the ever-changing media landscape as digital, social, and B2B opportunities create new challenges and possibilities. The success of BPCM has been built on an ethos of proactive, personalized, and lightning-fast strategy that ensures clients maintain their positions as the leaders, innovators, and firebrands of the global fashion market.

**Jyothi Rao**, President, INTERMIX; Rao brings extensive experience in retail to her role as president of INTERMIX, where she is responsible for crafting the vision for the brand and for developing overall business strategy. Prior to joining INTERMIX in 2014, Jyothi served as executive vice president and general manager of Gilt.com where she was instrumental in growing the business into a leading digital fashion site. Before Gilt, Jyothi served as senior vice president and general manager at Calvin Klein, where she launched the Specialty Retail division. Previously, she spent 16 years at Gap Inc., where she held several leadership positions and was responsible for successfully growing domestic and international businesses for both the Gap and Banana Republic brands. Rao has resided in Africa, India, and Europe.

**Freida Rothman**, Brooklyn-based designer specializing in luxury jewelry and accessories; because she was continuing her family's tradition of working in the jewelry industry, she gained an understanding of its language and processes at a very young age. Established in 2010, her eponymous label shortly expanded into a lifestyle brand. She is recognized for her eloquent layered necklaces, bracelets, and stacked ring sets; her matte metal finishing and two-tone colored metals truly captivate and set her work apart from that of other designers. Freida Rothman has twice been recognized as a finalist in the Accessories category at the FGI Rising Star Awards (2016, 2017).

**Cullen Schwarz**, cofounder, DoneGood; with a background in communications and community organizing in the political and not-for-profit worlds, in 2015 Schwarz left a career in politics. Always passionate about manufacturing supply chains and ethical business practices, he partnered with Scott Jacobsen to launch DoneGood, a browser extension that makes it easier than ever for consumers to discover the products they need from businesses that are making the world better. The browser extension automatically shows people ethical and sustainable alternatives for big name companies when they search for products on Google or Amazon, while the app allows users to enter a product they're looking for and select values that are important to them. The foundation of DoneGood is the belief that the world's most underused force for change is consumer spending.

**Elizabeth Suda**, founder, ARTICLE22; Suda studied history at Williams College and Oxford University. Then, after two years at Coach, she

traveled to Laos. Upon arrival in Vientiane, she began visiting local women-based textile businesses on a mission to understand how local, sustainable crafts made by women could be plugged into the global fashion market. Recognizing that market linkage and design are major constraints on artisans, she founded ARTICLE22 when she met artisans in a rural village melting US bombs into spoons. Struck by her lack of awareness of the United States' "secret war" in Laos (1963 - 1974) which left a legacy of millions of unexploded bombs, she created the Peacebomb bracelet with the idea of buying back the bombs. PEACEBOMB, ARTICLE22's first collection, is jewelry handcrafted in Laos from Vietnam War shrapnel. A virtuous circle, each piece helps clear unexploded ordnance, making land safe and providing new metal to artisans. ARTICLE22 has developed into a global business, selling an evolving collection of jewelry and home goods to customers in 40 countries including thoughtful icons like model Angela Lindvall and actress Olivia Wilde.

**Stefano Tonchi**, Editor-in-Chief, *W Magazine*; W has been under his direction since March 2010 and during his tenure has garnered numerous awards, from being named Hottest Fashion Magazine by Adweek to receiving several Webby nods and more than 20 medals from the Society of Publication Designers, and most recently, winning the 2018 National Magazine Award for Photography. Tonchi oversaw the publication of *W: Stories* (2014), a behind-the-scenes look at some of the most memorable fashion portfolios from the past decade, and *W: The First 40 Years* (2012), a photographic celebration of the magazine's 40th anniversary. Prior to joining *W*, Tonchi was the creator and editor-in-chief of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, which he introduced in 2004 after serving as style editor at *The New York Times Magazine*. In 2008, *T* was named Magazine of the Year by the Society of Publication Designers. From 1998 - 2003, Tonchi was the fashion creative director for *Esquire*. In 2001, *Esquire* earned the Magazine of the Year Award from the Society of Publication Designers, as well as National Magazine Award nominations for Photography and Design. Tonchi is the co-curator of "Bellissima: Italy and High Fashion 1945 - 1968," (2016) an exhibition (with an accompanying book) that was on view at the MAXXI Museum in Rome and NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale. He is also the co-author of *Uniform: Order and Disorder* (2001) (which accompanied an exhibition at MoMA PS1), *Excess: Mainstream and Underground in the '80s* (2004) (which accompanied an exhibition at the Pitti Palace in Florence), *Human Game: Winners and Losers* (2006), and *Walter Albini and His Time* (2010). His latest book and exhibition is *Italiana: Narrating Italian History Through Fashion, 1971 - 2001* (2018).

**Robert Verdi**, entrepreneur, celebrity stylist, and television personality; Verdi has become one of the most recognizable faces in the world of fashion and design; his credits include his eponymous network show *The Robert Verdi Show Starring Robert Verdi*, *She's Got the Look*, *Surprise by Design*, *Brides Gone Styled*, *Full Frontal Fashion*, and *Fashion Police*. A style expert for *E! Entertainment News*, *The Wendy Williams Show*, *The View*, *The Today Show*, *Martha Stewart*, and *CNN Headline News*, he has had cameo roles in *The Devil Wears Prada* and *September Issue*. Verdi has worked with celebrities including Eva Longoria, Hugh Jackman, Terrence Howard, Kathy Griffin, Kristen Wiig, Joy Behar, Ana Ortiz, Sandra Bernhard, Mariska Hargitay, Bobby Flay, Fantasia, Joely Fisher, Bethenny Frankel, and Sami Gayle. He also makes waves in the media, both online and in print, having been profiled in *The New York Times Style Section*, *The Daily*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Post*, and featured frequently in publications like *OK! Magazine*, *Life & Style*, *US Weekly*, and *InStyle*. In 2015, Verdi launched Great Bag Co. and his signature series, The Model M., which was named an "It" bag by *The New York Times* and a "must-have" by Oprah. In 2016, BET announced its new series *Wendy's Style Squad* which covers the industry's red carpet fashions, and is co-hosted by Verdi and Wendy Williams.

**Gary A. Wassner**, CEO, Hilldun Corporation; Hilldun, known as the company behind many of Seventh Avenue's most prestigious fashion companies, has provided financing and factoring for many of America's most iconic designer labels. Derek Lam, Peter Som, Jason Wu, Maria Cornejo, Yeohlee, Alexander Wang, Nanette Lepore, Rebecca Taylor, Naem Kahn, Zang Toi, Vivienne Westwood, Chris Benz, Thom Browne, Betsey Johnson, Marc Jacobs and Alexis Bittar are among those who have benefited from his acumen. Recently named one of Fashionista's 50 Most Influential People in Fashion, Wassner is a member of the CFDA Advisory Board, a mentor for the Chicago Fashion Incubator, an advisory board member of Fordham Law School's Fashion Law Institute, an instructor for the Design Entrepreneurs NYC program, a member of Senator Gillibrand's Fashion Industry Working Group and of Mayor De Blasio's Fashion Working Group, as well as a supporter of the Save The Garment Center movement and all causes related to the fashion industry in New York City. In 2014, Wassner became a founding member and chairman of Interlux Holdings LLC, partnering with Lee Equity to

purchase equity stakes in luxury, designer, and contemporary apparel and accessory brands. He has since made a personal investment in Cushnie et Ochs alongside Farol Investment Management, and serves on Cushnie et Ochs' board of directors. A respected fiction writer and children's book author, he donates 50% of the proceeds from *Isabella Cucharella*, *Fashion Designer Extraordinaire*, to the CFDA Fashion Incubator Fund. The fifth and final book in his sci-fi/fantasy GemQuest series, *When Monsters Call Out The Names of Men*, was released in 2016.

**Caroline Weber**, professor of French & Comparative Literature, Barnard College, Columbia University. She received a PhD in French literature from Yale University and her BA in literature from Harvard University; she was an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a visiting professor at Princeton. Her most recent book is a cultural history & triple biography called *Proust's Duchess: How Three Celebrated Women Captured the Imagination of Fin-de-Siècle*



Intermix Store. Photo: courtesy, The Real Deal.

*Paris* (Knopf, 2018). Her other titles include *Terror & Its Discontents* (2003) and *Queen of Fashion: What Marie-Antoinette Wore to the French Revolution* (2006), which was selected as a Notable Book of the Year by *The New York Times* and a Best Book of the Year by *Washington Post Book World*. In addition to her scholarly writings on various 18th-, 19th-, & 20th-century literary figures, she publishes widely in such mainstream outlets as *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Town & Country*, *Bookforum*, *Washington Post Book World*, and *W Magazine*.

**Constance C.R. White**, award-winning journalist; White's career includes contributions across print, broadcast, and digital. White is a content creator, editor, and arbiter of culture and style who has helped steer brand and editorial direction for some of the most exciting companies. In her editorial career, she has served as a steward for many of the world's most trusted brands including *The New York Times*, *Elle*, *Essence*, and eBAY. White's most recent work is *HOW TO SLAY: Inspiration from Black Kings and Queens of Style* (Rizzoli, 2018). Twice named one of the top 50 people in fashion by *The New York Daily News*, White is a frequent television guest on *The Today Show*, MSNBC, and LXTV, and helped develop the first daily fashion news show which she co-wrote and hosted for Cablevision's *Full Frontal Fashion*. White has served as editor-in-chief of *Essence* magazine, where she edited the 2012 commemorative book *A Salute to Michelle Obama*, and as style director, brand consultant, and spokesperson for eBAY where she conceived the organization's first web-zine and developed content and strategies aimed at women. A consulting editor for Silicon Valley start-up Ozzy.com for which she has written "Memo to Michelle Obama" and a piece on Nicolas Ghesquiere's ascension at Louis Vuitton, Constance was most recently fashion features editor at *The Impression Magazine* (partnered with the CFDA); she was also editor-in-chief of *ZINK* magazine's Spring/Summer relaunch issue.

**Jason Wu**, Canadian artist and fashion designer based in New York City; his collection is sold globally and he dresses some of the most influential women in the world including First Lady Michelle Obama, Reese Witherspoon, Julianne Moore, Diane Kruger, Liu Wen and Christy Turlington, among many others. Jason has received many accolades, including being named one of the finalists in the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund in July 2008. In June 2010, he won the Swarovski Award for Womenswear at the CFDA Fashion Awards and in April 2011, he was nominated for the CFDA/Swarovski Award for Accessory Design. Jason was appointed artistic director of Hugo Boss womenswear Ready to Wear and Accessory collection in June 2013. More recently, Jason was honored with the Fashion Star Award at The Fashion Group International Night of Stars 2015, and he won the 2016 International Designer of Year at the Canadian Arts & Fashion Awards.

**Jennifer Zeuner**, jewelry designer; Zeuner's jewelry reflects her own personal style: simple with a spiritual twist. Her jewelry lends itself to being layered, and the same simple piece of jewelry can be worn in different ways. Zeuner is inspired by people who have their own unique style, and appreciates those who put things together in a creative and unexpected, yet cohesive way. Cameron Diaz was the first celebrity to buy Jennifer Zeuner's jewelry almost 10 years ago. Since then, many celebrities, among them Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé, Jessica Alba, Taylor Swift, Miranda Kerr, Rihanna, and Sarah Jessica Parker have been spotted wearing her jewelry. Jennifer Zeuner Jewelry is an international fashion jewelry business based in Boca Raton, Florida; all products are manufactured in the USA and can be purchased directly through [jenniferzeuner.com](http://jenniferzeuner.com) or through high-end retailers such as Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue, InterMix, and Shopbop.com. Jennifer Zeuner Jewelry pieces are available in rose gold vermeil, yellow gold vermeil, and sterling silver with select pieces available in 14 kt gold, rose gold, and white gold.



# Registration

**To register on-line:**  
[www.vortexiac.eventbrite.com](http://www.vortexiac.eventbrite.com)

**By phone:** Using American Express®, Visa® Card, Discover®, or MasterCard®, call (646) 485-1952.

**Fee:** The conference fee is \$350. The rate for full-time students is \$100 (with ID). Single-day registration options available. Please send inquiries to: [info@artinitiatives.com](mailto:info@artinitiatives.com) or call (646) 485-1952.

**Withdrawal and refunds:** Notice of withdrawal must be made in writing to: Initiatives in Art and Culture, 333 East 57th Street, Suite 13B, New York, NY 10022 or to the Program Office via e-mail at [info@artinitiatives.com](mailto:info@artinitiatives.com), or call (646) 485-1952. No refunds will be made after Oct. 26, 2018.

**Conference location:** Formal sessions take place at The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 5th Ave & 103rd St.






La Ligne, Nora Zehetner in the *Chez Toi Pants* and *La Nuit Shirt*. Photo: courtesy, La Ligne.

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