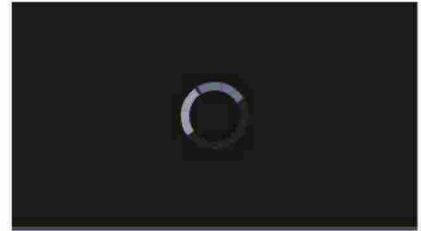


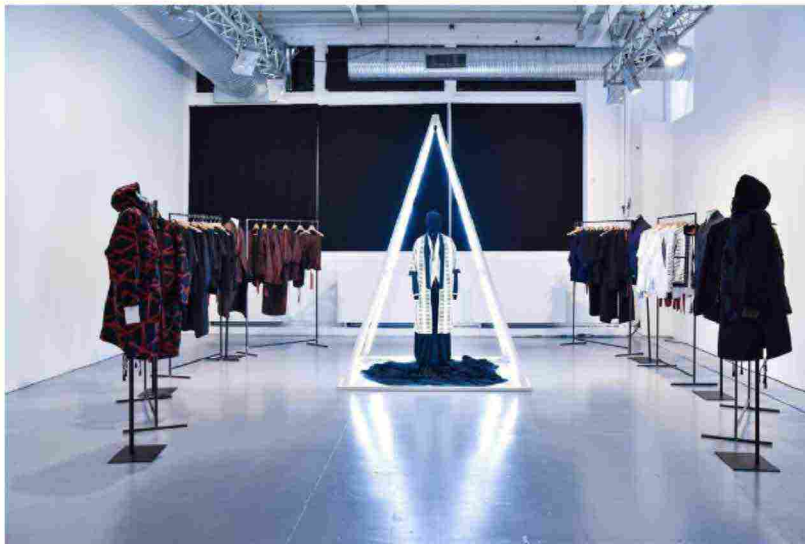
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WHITE Milano Develops A Global Fashion Platform For International Exhibitors, Buyers And Consumers



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ForbesLife

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WHITE MILANO WHITE TRADE FAIR

The rules of the fashion business must be known but treated as tools for understanding, rather than as precepts. There is every indication that marks fashion trade shows as a healthy measure to bring a greater per capita consumption which will benefit the entire trade consequently resulting in reaching higher margins. A trade fair (trade show, trade exhibition, or expo) is an exhibition organized so that companies in a specific industry can showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services, meet with industry partners and customers, study activities of rivals, and examine recent market trends and opportunities. In contrast to consumer fairs, only some trade fairs are open to the public. But that is all about to change. At present, they are held on a continuing basis in virtually all markets and normally attract companies from around the globe. For example, in the U.S., there are currently over 10,000 trade shows held every year, and several online directories have been established to help organizers, attendees, and marketers identify appropriate events.

For me, and hopefully for you, I find it intriguing to see how it all began. To start, modern trade fairs follow in the tradition of shows established in late medieval Europe, in the era of merchant capitalism. During this time, produce and craft producers visited towns to sell and showcase products at trading fairs. Since the late eighteenth century, industrial exhibitions in Europe and North America became more common reflecting the technological dynamism of the Industrial Revolution in the modern age. Trade fairs play important roles in marketing as well as business networking in market sectors that use them. People will seek to meet people and companies at their own level in the supply chain, as well as potential suppliers and potential buyers. Business makes business.

Generally, there will be a central trade show floor with booths where people exhibit their goods or services, and throughout the day there will be seminars for continuing education on matters relevant to the industry, like best practices, trends, and regulation. There will also be some shared meals with keynote speakers, and social events in the evenings. Booths range from simple tables to elaborate constructions.

Trade fairs often involve a considerable investment in time and money by participating companies. The planning includes arranging meetings with other attendees beforehand and resources to follow up on opportunities that are created at the fair. Costs can include space rental, booth design and construction of trade show displays, telecommunications, travel, accommodations, and promotional literature and items to give to attendees. In addition, costs are incurred at the show for services such as electrical, internet services, and drayage (also known as material handling). This local spending on logistics leads cities to promote trade shows as a means of local economic development, as well as providing opportunities for local businesses to grow, and attract new businesses to come.

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In the late 19th century, the concept of annual industry-wide trade shows gained traction, spreading from European manufacturing centers to North America. By the 20th century, specialized companies came into existence simply to manage the trade-show industry, and permanent trade show grounds or convention centers were established as venues that featured a rotating calendar of trade shows. In the 21st century, with the rapid industrialization of Asia, trade shows and exhibitions are now commonplace throughout the Asian continent, with China dominating the exhibitions industry in Asia, accounting for more than 55 per cent of all space sold in the region in 2011.



WHITE MILANO WHITE

For now, our focus on trade shows is fashion. In my opinion, Milan has most certainly become center stage as a global player. Moreover, it is an epic center for the fashion and overall creative business. WHITE is the most important international showcase, for trendy and glam fashion, under the patronage of **Comune di Milano**, since its inception in 2000 and it takes place during the Milan fashion week(s). Founded by Massimiliano Bizzi and managed by his wife Brenda Bellei Bizzi, two pioneers in scouting and emerging brands, that year after year gained White Milano a solid reputation. Designers, stylists and artists consider the exhibition a valuable take on for their business. WHITE Milano keeps a strong focus on its research with respect to the most interesting styles from all over the world, bringing in the fashion capital around 600 clothing and accessories collections for each edition, on a total area of 20 thousand square meters. WHITE Milano focuses on creativity, innovation as well as the culture of tradition and business making.

WHITE has changed the way to organize fashion trade show, realizing a special set between art and design, created especially by Massimiliano Bizzi. Each season WHITE is able to present 200 new brands with a special focus on upcoming scouting and avant-garde labels.

I recently had the privilege of speaking with Brenda Bellei Bizzi about the criteria that a designer has to satisfy in order to be included in the Salone, the new menswear focus on streetwear and sportswear and how White's is renowned for scouting new talents and launching their careers!



Brenda Bellei Bizzi CEO of WHITE MILANO WHITE MILANO

Joseph DeAcetis : In your own words, talk to us about the next edition of White.

Brenda Bellei Bizzi: We have much news. *Fiorucci* will be our special guest. We will relaunch the brand in Milan with a pop-up store. There will also be an area dedicated to *Fiorucci* inside the trade show for both buyers and consumers to come visit. Also, we are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of *A.F. Vandevorst*, which will show within the Camera Della Moda Official Calendar with a very important catwalk. This is a demonstration that Milan is very international. Many designers decided not to show in Paris but in Milan. Also we have *Fila*, which will host a celebratory event closing Milan Fashion Week. White will also provide the brand a showroom inside the Tortona Fashion District, in addition to offering a booth at the Fair.

JD: When you say the people are you talking about the consumers?

BB: The consumers, yes. It's a very nice and new idea, in my opinion.

JD: Is this your strategy for the next edition in September.

BB: Yes, it's our new format that we launched last June for the White Street Market Fair. The show was both B2B and B2C. In the Women's world, we are the most important trade show in Italy and Europe. We decided to dedicate different containers to Men's and Women's because it's impossible to mix all brands together.

JD: Talking about the Men's edition called White Street Market. Concept wise, how does that differ from the Women's Edition?

BB: The first difference is the selection of the brands, because during Women's Fashion Week we have 600 brands. Our selection is focused on glam fashion brands with a different positioning in the market. We have avant-garde, urban, cutting edge designers, as well as artisanal brands and very few streetwear brands. During Men's we are focused more on streetwear and sportswear. For Women's Fashion Week we only have women brands, from beachwear, to sunglasses, accessories, and jewelry. During Men's we also show Women's and unisex brands.

JD: You don't like to call White a Trade Show but a Salone instead. Why?

BB: White is not a typical trade fair. At the beginning, when we started 18 years ago, it was a real shock for the fashion system in Milan. We wanted to do something as far away as possible from a usual fair. We integrated music, furniture, design pieces, and special food. This was 18 years ago. This kind of exhibition was very groundbreaking for the fashion world. We love to claim that we are not a typical fair.

JD: Because the consumers feel more comfortable?

BB: At the beginning our fair was only open for buyers. Now we are approaching for the first time the consumers - because we think that brands also need marketing now, and not only support with the commercial aspects of the business. Now that social media is taking over, this is the reason why we approached also the marketing side, not only the commercial one.

JD: White is renowned for scouting new talents and launching their career. Can you share some success stories?

BB: Yes - we have, for example, the case history of Uma Wang. We discovered the brand in a little showroom in Paris and we asked her to come and showcase in Milan. We organized all activities for her, from the PR to the production of the show. She also found an Italian manufacturer. We love to support the brands from an event standpoint as well as from a communication and event production standpoint. For example, we organize and produce catwalks during Milano Moda Donna, thanks to an agreement with Camera della Moda that allows us to support the new brands and place them in the official calendar of the fashion week. We did that also for Situationist (a brand from Georgia that is currently gaining more and more recognition), Ssheena (a brand from Italy designed by the head designer of Off-White), Wood Wood (a Danish underground brand that is now distributed in Italy), Yohanix (a Korean brand very popular in Asia thanks to the digital popularity of its Creative Director), IN NOM UH NIT (US brand designed by celebrity Creative Director Chaz Jordan and worn by stars of the likes of Jay-Z and Jared Leto), and Matthew Miller (a UK based brand that, thanks to his presentation in Milan, is now approaching the Italian and the International market). White is a booster for new talents.



WHITE TRADE FAIR IN MILANO WHITE

JD: So you are launching them basically by bringing them to Milan and showcasing them in different presentations.

BB: Yes, but presentations are only a small part of the picture. We also support designers and involve them in road shows. For example, at Project New York this past July, we hosted *Wrad*- one of the first sustainable brands out there, which we launched in Milan in June. Milan is now very "green friendly." At White we host the Green Carpet Fashion Awards, that *Wrad* will be part of. We also introduced the brand to top American fashion directors and buyers of the most important department stores. White is not only about exhibitions but also about commercial opportunities that can help brands grow in an organic way.

JD: What are the criteria that a designer has to satisfy in order to be included in your Salone? What do they need?

BB: They need first of all to be "fashion cool," and have a fresh and trendy image. Then we look at the company profile to check the distribution, and, if they have some stores, which kind of stores. Lastly, we look at the way they communicate and how press and influencers represent them. We get a total overview on the brand.

JD: A new brand that is coming on will have to have distribution already or will you take someone that doesn't?

BB: One store is enough for us, as long as it's a good one.

JD: As the CEO of White, you have been creating very strategic alliances with worldwide associations, like the Italian Trade Commission. Can you tell us about the importance of these partnerships?

BB: Years ago I started to sign cooperation agreements with other trade shows. This is a key factor to develop brand awareness all over the world. Now we are collaborating with UBM in the U.S, for instance. At the beginning, the Italian Trade Commission gave us great support in doing many trade shows and road shows all over the world, during fashion weeks and market weeks in Dubai, Tokyo, Shanghai, and many other strategic cities. All these alliances gave us international exposure and allowed us to have thousands international guests every edition.



WHITE TRADE FAIR IN MILANO WHITE

JD: What is the greatest achievement for White?

BB: Milan. You know, it's an international platform. We really want to be considered the international fashion *Salone*. I work a lot to be an international brand not only for the buyers, but also for the consumers. White stands for current trends, high quality and good ratio between price and image.

JD: You are telling me all the good things about White. What is the greatest challenge?

BB: The greatest challenge is to communicate a global multifaceted platform like White on the web and on social media.

JD: It's a transitional time for media...

BB: Yes, we cannot ignore these fast paced changes and how they affect the fashion system as well.

JD: If you gave me three adjectives of what White is, what would they be?

BB: White is sustainable, fashionable, and correct.

JD: Would you say White is a leader in the industry?

BB: Yes, I also think being a leader is a secondary stage though. The first step is to be a coherent brand. Then you can become a leader.

I am the former Creative Style Director for Forbes Media. My interest lies in the ever evolving industry of fashion and lifestyle and how as both a consumer and authority I perceive these changes. The focus being, power dressing to compliment one's corporate ascension.