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# White Milano's Shifted Format Gains Traction

Renamed White Street Market and open to the public, the trade show turned out to be an opportunity for brands to meet with final customers.

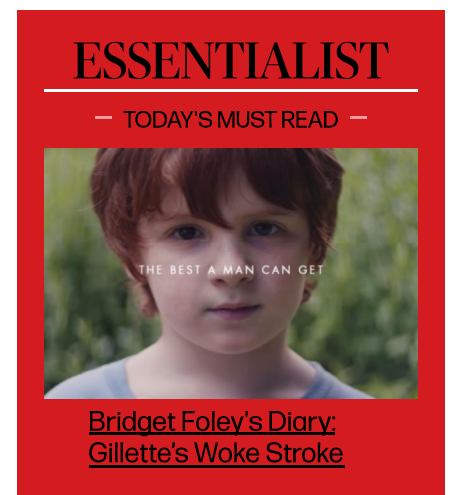
By [Martino Carrera](#) on January 17, 2019



 The scene at White Street Market in January. Courtesy Photo.

**MILAN** — A half-pipe mounted in the center of Milan's Superstudio Più venue stole the scene at the latest edition of the [White Milano trade show](#), the men's editions of which are renamed White Street Market. The structure hosted a performance by American female skaters collective Skate Kitchen on Jan. 13.

The fair's new moniker reflects a changed format, which combines the business-to-business and business-to-consumer



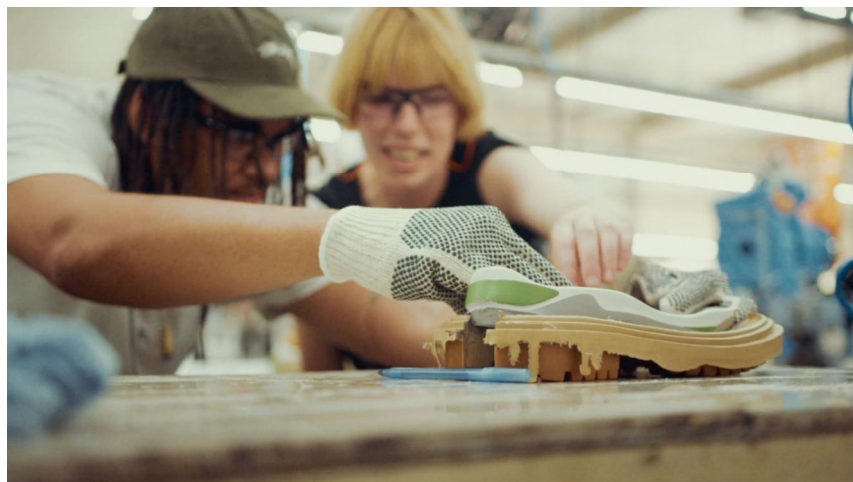
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platforms allowing final customers to attend the event and buy fashion pieces. Opening up to consumers proved a smart move as the fair, which ran Jan. 12 to 14, attracted 14,797 visitors, including buyers, up from 8,800 in June, when the White Street Market was teased.

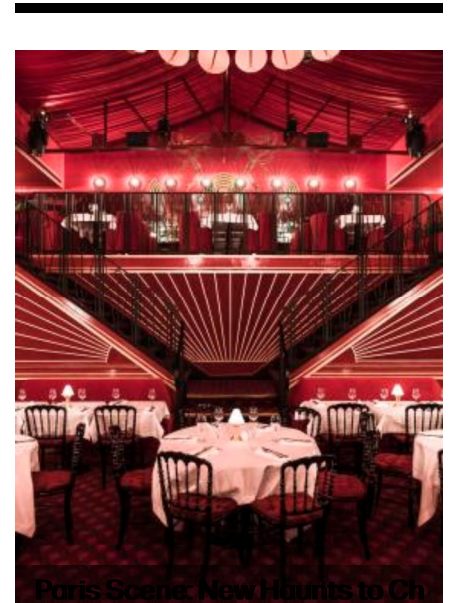
The shift will affect only the [trade show](#)'s men's editions in January and June and was described by founder and president Massimiliano Bizzi as "the right path [to follow], opening to the city, similarly to what [Milan's] Design Week has been able to do already." Amid a shrinking men's schedule in Milan, the format is aimed at "adding culture to the fair and fashion altogether, in addition to brands, to excite young people and give back to fashion what's needed to fight fast fashion," said Bizzi.

He noted that the idea of a combined platform was triggered by many of the 60 brands showing at White in January, which had been asking organizers for more visibility. "The enthusiasm of companies willing to meet their final customers makes sense and I hope trade shows and fashion in general will start speaking more directly to consumers," he said. A number of established brands decided to support the initiative; they include New Balance, Arena, Kappa and Timberland, to name a few.

The latter, owned by VF Corp., chose White Street Market to showcase the results of a collaborative-based design project. Named "Timberland Construct: 10061" after the company's code for the iconic yellow utilitarian boots, the pilot initiative was launched in fall 2018 with a group of seven talents specialized in footwear — material innovators, designers, artists and creatives — who were taken to Timberland's premises in the Dominican Republic to rethink the boot-making process and eventually create six boots hitting stores next fall.



Designers working at Timberland's premises for the "Timberland



In order to engage final consumers, each project phase has been documented through the brand's web site and a dedicated Instagram account. Along with VF Corp. Global Innovation Center footwear design director Alex Dardinski, the company enlisted communication agency KesselKramer and creative consultancy firm Concept Kicks' founder Daniel Baily to spearhead the project.

"We tried to innovate within the company, with their factories and machinery, we thought it's been refreshing to make that community [of creatives] transparent, working together, give all the designers and artists the credit for what they're doing, but also highlight what skills the people that are in factories have," said Baily, who served as a mentor to the group.

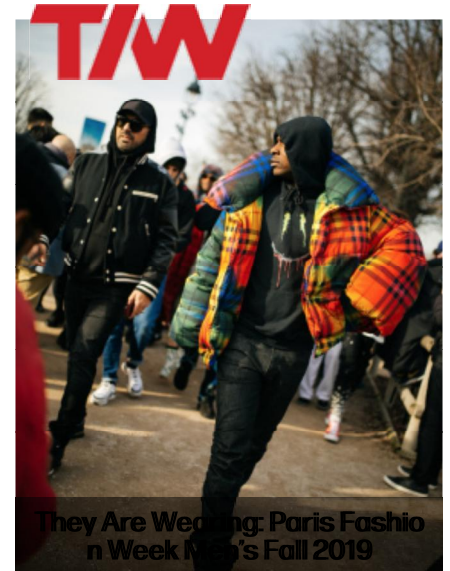
He underscored the value of the project sits in its ability to captivate the audience as "the more you know about the product the more you care about it...I think so many people see the final glossy image, but don't see all the challenges and why [the product] ends up looking the way it does," he remarked.

One of the seven designers involved, Helen Kirkum, a London's Royal College of Art graduate with a penchant for recycling and a background in men's footwear design, praised the initiative's innovation. "If big brands choose to interact with individual designers in that sort of way, you can get a stronger and much freer design process," she said.



A boot sample from the "Timberland Construct: 10061" project. Courtesy Photo.

The yellow boots reinterpreted via patchwork designs, knitted fabrics and different soles put on top of one another were



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showcased at White Street Market inside glass cases, as in a museum-worthy exhibition. The fairgrounds also hosted Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto's famous sculpture "Venus of the Rags" as well as a collection of old skateboards from Primitive Skateboarding Belgium. Along with talks on sustainability, the Sneakerness booth and a space took over by Constanza Cavalli Etro's Fashion Film Festival Milano, they helped enhance the fair's underground and urban atmosphere.

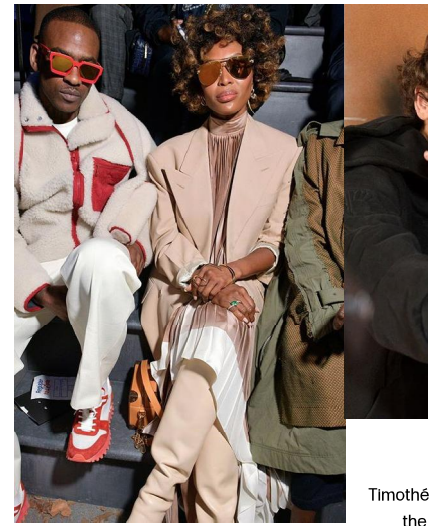
The street mood was reflected in the labels presenting their fall 2019 collections at the fair. Along with established brands, a group of up-and-comers were selected according to the new format. "We had to involve those brands which are already talking intensively with their customers and with a more sporty, street appeal," said Bizzi.

Groups of young visitors, some of them in their teenage years, crowded in.

A young guy approached the Daily Paper booth asking for prices and information, as he was willing to buy a logoed T-shirt from the brand's spring collection. Founded by African-born Jefferson Osei, Hussein Suleiman and Abderrahmane Trabsini, the Netherlands-based brand delivers Nineties-inspired uncomplicated clothing, heavy on prints and loose silhouettes. For fall, the range of nylon tracksuits and tie-dye denim pieces was elevated with the introduction of relaxed double-breasted suits in a gray tartan pattern and a yellow tartan raincoat crafted from vinyl, which telegraphed the edgy attitude of the brand as well as its commitment to move beyond just streetwear.



A look from Daily Paper's fall 2019 collection. Courtesy Photo.



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a and Naomi Campbell take in the Louis  
1 men's fall 2019 collection together. □:  
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Italian label Grip was among the standouts at the fair with a collection entirely made of cotton in different textures, such as fleece, terrycloth and brushed, which gave a tactile feel to the clothes. Subtle details such as drawstrings and zippers peppered a genderless collection of wardrobe staples with loose shapes.

“We hail from the working class, this is our heritage,” noted Francesca Bartoletti, one of the four founders, pointing to a few denim pieces, a new fabric for the brand. The label had already presented its fall collection at Florence’s Pitti Uomo.



A look from Grip's fall 2019 collection. Henrik Blomqvist/Courtesy Photo.

White Street Market was not the only showcase for Lyph, as well. An acronym for Live Young Play Hard, the brand was planning to present its fall collection in Paris, too, as founder and designer Frederick Edmondson noted not many buyers

attended Milan's trade show. Informed by the aesthetics of his teenage years as a Manchester-born kid, Edmondson, who's designed for Comme des Garçons and Tommy Hilfiger before launching his own label in 2017, said he took inspiration from Nineties' TV broadcasts and VHS recording systems which were splashed as prints on T-shirts and sweatshirts. The most intriguing pieces featured utilitarian detachable pockets and tapering, which could be easily transferred from trousers to hoodies. "It's not where you take things from, but where you take them to," he contended.



**A look from Lyph's fall collection. Courtesy Photo.**

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As sustainability — along with streetwear — is one of today's fashion priorities, White Street Market didn't miss the opportunity to showcase a group of eco-friendly fashion labels including Tiziano Guardini, Wrad and Vanta.

Based in Rome, Vanta's approach is rooted in upcycled designs, as founder Carlotta Robbe Di Lorenzo sources dismissed fabrics scraps, especially denim pieces used for stretch tests, patchworking them into oversize clean silhouettes. Utilitarian pieces referenced New York's underground scene in the Seventies, as in a denim suit with flared pants worn loose over a lime green T-shirt.

"Our aim is to combine sustainability and design and we've reached the 90 percent eco-sourcing benchmark in just two years," explained Robbe Di Lorenzo, noting the next step is banking on packaging that can be reused up to 20 times.



A look from Vanta's fall 2019 collection. Courtesy Photo.

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The next edition of [White Milano](#) dedicated to women's wear will take place Feb. 22 to 25, in conjunction with Milan Fashion Week.

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