WWD Summit: Guardians of the Industry on Stage

The upcoming WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit is stacked with high-profile retail leaders.

By David Moin on July 23, 2018

In a period of blistering change across brick-and-mortar stores, digital selling, technology and consumer spending habits, retailers must quickly adapt their businesses — and they’ll explain just how they’re doing it at the next WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit.

Set for Oct. 30 and 31 at The Wagner at the Battery in Manhattan, the WWD CEO Summit has a speaker lineup stacked with leading innovators; design forces; industry veterans — such as Gildo Zegna, chief executive officer of Ermenegildo Zegna; Mike George, president and ceo of Qurate Retail Inc.; Spencer Fung, group ceo of Li & Fung; Antoine Arnault, ceo of Berluti, and Ulric Jerome, ceo of Matchesfashion.com — and the new guardians of retail, among them Jeff Gennette, ceo of Macy’s Inc. since March 2017; Geoffroy van Raemdonck, Neiman Marcus Group ceo since February; Michelle Gass, ceo of Kohl’s Corp. since May, and Fran Horowitz, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. ceo since February 2017.

There will also be a strong representation from the design community, with Virgil Abloh, artistic director of men’s, Louis Vuitton, and founder of Off-White; Olivier Rousteing, creative director at Balmain; Paul Smith, chairman, ceo, chief designer
and founder of Paul Smith; Gabriela Hearst, designer at Gabriela Hearst, and Eileen Fisher, founder and chairwoman of Eileen Fisher, set to address the industry audience. Executives from Mastercard and McKinsey will also participate.

True to form, the two-day summit will tackle many of the most pressing topics, like how modern luxury is embracing inclusivity and collaboration. It’s also about the convergence of all channels of selling, creative influences shaping the next generation of fashion design, sustainability, and the rise of women entrepreneurs redefining business culture. The summit is themed “The Consumer Age: Deciphering the New Codes.”

Beyond the formal presentations on the WWD stage and the chance to learn from the experiences of others, the summit provides networking opportunities to establish new business connections and rekindle old ones. And for the third year in a row, individuals with standout creative vision and business leadership will be recognized during the WWD Honors award ceremony, on the evening of Oct. 30. Leonard A. Lauder, chairman emeritus of The Estée Lauder Cos. Inc., will receive the third annual John B. Fairchild honor, named after WWD’s legendary late chairman and editorial director. The remaining 2018 honorees will be revealed in September.

Other industry luminaries in the summit lineup are:

- Libby Wadle, president of Madewell at the J. Crew Group.
- Tyler Haney, founder and ceo of Outdoor Voices.
- Steve Hasker, ceo of Creative Artists Agency Global.
- Greg Petro, ceo and founder of First Insight.
- Julie Rice, chief brand officer of WeWork.
- Heidi Zak, co-ceo and cofounder, ThirdLove.
- Yael Aflalo, ceo and founder, Reformation.

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