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## White Milano Trade Show Attracts Strong International Contingent

By GILL CRISP

**MILAN** — Trendsetting men's, women's and accessories trade show White Milano took advantage of its timing in the middle of the men's runway shows to draw buyers at the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the contemporary fashion fair. With more than 230 small and medium-size brands showcasing their fall collections from Jan. 16 to 18, the expo doubled in size from last year, and the number of international buyers rose 22 percent.

"Many of the buyers are already here in Milan for the men's shows so they can make the best of their time by dropping by (White) to research cutting-edge trends," said White organizer Massimiliano Bizzi. "Most importantly, this gives them a chance to access all of the women's pre-fall collections in mid-January — an enormous advantage."

He said buyers can place orders early in the season ensuring timely shipments and deliveries.

"The timing of White allows the buyers to be fresh and focused on the smaller, innovative designers without the frenzy of placing the luxury-brand orders in late February or March."

Marco Lanero, designer of Delirious eyewear, is one example of White's focus on young talent. "My idea of Italian-made high-quality, non-branded sunglasses was a missing part of the market," said Lanero, 26, who offers "bold shapes like large ovals and rectangles, cool colors like our opaque opal grays and blues and packaging using handmade wooden boxes and reindeer skins." The company has recently been asked to take part in Nordstrom's "Extraordinary Italian Style" project launching in March.

Lanero said he was "pleasantly surprised by so many Asian buyers, but especially Chinese buyers placing orders at White. The Middle and Far East markets are our next mission. So far, our clients from these regions are the most enthusiastic of all and I look forward to [studying] the region's facial traits and making a new line custom fit for them."

The Wok Room hosted well-known outerwear and sportswear designers such as Kappa, Le Coq Sportif, North Sails and Eastpak, as well as smaller brands including Myar.

“Myar is the word ‘army,’ taken apart and flipped around — a lot like the garments I create,” said designer Andrea Rosso, who deconstructs military wear in his line. “I have always loved the world of vintage, and especially military stuff. But every time I tried to wear original military pants or jackets, they felt wrong because of their wide fit and ‘anatomical’ shapes, so I started to take them apart, customize them and sew them back together into modern styles, with contemporary fits.”

Rosso, who is the son of OTB’s Renzo Rosso, said he “started Myar from zero at my house sewing together all the Army T-shirts I had with my Pfaff sewing machine. The Italian market appreciates the collection made from European military garb, and during White, I saw interest from the Asian market, too. Japanese consumers especially are in tune with my product and its origins. The Japanese seem to understand the Myar concept the best.”

Accessories brand Iuri had a busy stand. Slovenia-born Jure Stropnik, creator of Iuri, is a former model and a graduate of the Marangoni Institute. “We brought colorful socks with triangles and slanted squares to the scene at an affordable price when socks weren’t even considered an accessory,” said Stropnik of the brand’s success in the French and Asian markets. “We have showrooms in Paris and Hong Kong and over the last three seasons we have found that the European and Asian markets love simple and strong shapes and vigorous colors. Our accessories collection offers that last touch, that flare to every outfit. Our socks, beanie, leather backpacks and scarves can be spotted and recognized from a mile away.”

Cutuli Cult was buzzing with buyers and press in the “Tradition, value and beauty” artisan apparel and accessories area. “I am a designer and also a chemist,” said Claudio Cutuli. “This collection combines unisex black-on-black leather and fur jackets and scarves that celebrities want from us. The Italian, American and Asian markets are all showing interest in our hand-blotted, laser-cut and vegetable dyes on fur and calf leather. Our handmade and painted clothing and bags are dyed and treated on copper sheets and when we choose to paint the fur and leather, we do it by hand with vibrant, natural pigments including purple Tropea onions, red peperoncino peppers and elderberries.”

The “women only” section offered collections ranging from sportswear to the French-bohemian romance of Mes Demoiselles with see-through floral prints and cashmere turban beanies.

Also of note was Diego Dossola’s bright Ultràchic collection. “When I started designing our collections 10 years ago, I had in the back of my mind the Barbapapà cartoon from when I was a kid. Those bright, basic, strong colors continue to imbue the collections year in and year out,” said Dossola. “But other than the colors, Ultràchic has a Thirties and Fifties

vintage soul brought to fruition through color and mixing fabrics like cashmere, cotton, synthetics and silk, and busy and fun prints.”

The designer explained he aims to appeal to “a woman from 30 years of age onward, who really knows who she is and wants to be playful and ironic with the way she dresses. We don’t create outfits, our clothes create a style, an atmosphere. White Milano was a huge success with our Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean buyers.”