

British Model Spot Checks Could Begin in '08

By Nina Jones

Spot checks to enforce some of the British Fashion Council's Model Health Inquiry recommendations could be under way at London Fashion Week by the fall 2008 shows, which begin Feb. 15.

The BFC plans to appoint auditors at London Fashion Week — whom the organization hopes to employ by February — to monitor that models aren't under 16 and that show venues are free of drugs. Since London's spring shows in September, the BFC has asked designers to sign contracts to guarantee that they won't use models under 16.

"An independent auditor will be employed to carry out spot checks at 10 percent of shows on the official show schedule, and take action to tackle any examples of contract breaking," the BFC said in a report Friday, which addressed the implementation of the recommendations in September's Model Health Inquiry study. The organization added that the auditor could prevent designers who "flagrantly breach the age rule" from participating in London Fashion Week.

The inquiry was set up by the BFC in March after a ban on models with a body mass index of less than 18 was imposed by Madrid Fashion Week, and recommen-

dations on improving model health were made by the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana in Milan and the Council of Fashion Designers of America in New York. The Model Health Inquiry's panel members include designer Giles Deacon, model agent Sarah Doukas and physician Adrienne Key, clinical director of the Eating Disorders Unit at London's Priory Hospital.

The BFC said in the report that it also hopes to launch a pilot program to introduce health certificates for models at London shows by September 2008. BFC chief executive officer Hilary Riva met with the CFDA and the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana in Milan to discuss developing an international code of conduct for model health. "The BFC strongly believes that an effective medical certification scheme will require the support of all the major centers," the organization said.

In addition, the BFC said it had written to the British Society of Magazine Editors, the Periodical Publishers Association and the Advertising Association in the U.K. to suggest "a voluntary code covering the use of digital manipulation [in photography]."

"Criticism of digitally enhanced body images, and the part [they] play in perpetuating an unachievable aesthetic was raised during the inquiry," the organization said.

Organic Labeling Debated at Summit

PARIS — How to bring order to the natural beauty world is a hot topic among industry executives.

That subject, among others, was debated during the Natural Beauty Summit, held here recently and organized by Beyond Beauty and Organic Monitor.

Horst Rechelbacher, founder of Aveda and Intelligent Nutrients, for one, said the industry needs to create global unity of certification. He believes the 30-odd certification labels existing today on organic and natural beauty products might do more harm than good.

"They're beautifully designed logos, but I simply haven't found space on my packaging [for them]," he said. "If the consumer gets confused, labels will become meaningless."

"The vision should be one — it's best for

do not plan to create one logo.

Instead, once the standards are agreed upon by those certifiers, they will be presented to others in the European Union. The next step is for such standards to be reviewed by the European Commission.

Once this system is in place, a company could be inspected by Ecocert and then its products would carry both Ecocert's label and that of another certification body if the company wishes.

While one manufacturer pointed out that labeling has become a business unto itself, the Soil Association argued that companies may not necessarily support a single European label.

"Businesses don't want to lose their national logo," said Helen Taylor, the Soil Association's director of marketing and corporate relations, referring to a recent outcry in the U.K. against plans for a single Europe-wide logo for organic food. She was suggesting that one label for cosmetics might meet with similar opposition.

While the labeling authorities working to harmonize certification have already agreed on some common ground, such as the need for separate standards for natural and for organic products, and the types of preservatives permitted under their guidelines, other issues are proving more complex. For example, chemically processed natural ingredients are a sticking point, as is the minimum percentage of organic ingredients required for organic certification.

As well as finding a middle ground on content criteria, the fact that there are many other ethical issues to tackle could create further complications. Ecocert, for example, has developed fair trade certification, while the Soil Association is considering excluding airfreighted organic goods from its organic certification. One delegate even called for certification to be further expanded to take locally sourced products into account and suggested another label be created for them.

"We want to respect our local growers," he said.

Given all of these complications, at least one manufacturer has decided to forgo certifying bodies altogether. When developing its Botanic Organic line, Boots the Chemists created its own label. With 40 different standards in use, introducing a certifier would have led to confusion, explained Stephen Johnson, sustainable development and scientific advisers manager for the U.K. retailer and manufacturer.

However, he lauds harmonization.

"As a retailer, I hate gray areas," he said. "We need a level playing field."

— Ellen Groves

From Streetwalk to Catwalk

By Mike Kepp

RIO DE JANEIRO — Some might call it eveningwear, but in this case, it's really apparel for ladies of the evening. Or women who just want to look like them.

A prostitute-rights advocacy group here is promoting a clothing line with proceeds aimed at helping women in the world's oldest profession with health and safety issues and battling discrimination against them.

Daspu, the casual label of Davida, the nongovernmental organization advocacy group, was launched to raise money for AIDS-prevention courses and free condoms distributed in red-light districts, and to print a monthly newspaper. It features stories about laws affecting prostitutes, free health benefits for them and editorials denouncing prostitution involving minors (those under 18), which is rampant and illegal. Prostitution is legal for women 18 or older.

If the word Daspu sounds vaguely familiar, it may be because of its similarity to the Brazilian luxury fashion emporium Daslu. In fact, Daspu got unintentional marketing help from the retailer, which threatened to sue the brand even before it was launched.

those who modeled the apparel.

In June 2006, Daspu's collection was inspired by the world of truck drivers. It featured T-shirts, jumpsuits and dresses, some with prints of tire tracks and silhouettes of female hitchhikers. The theme of Daspu's next collection was famous art inspired by prostitutes. Tops featured prints of Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger" or Marlene Dietrich in "The Blue Angel."

Daspu's latest collection, launched in July and inspired by the Copacabana beach district, includes pieces like a black-and-white sequined dress with wave patterns resembling Copacabana's seafont sidewalk; a flower-print cheintz summer dress with a white gauze midsection; a bra made of a patchwork of viscose circles, pinched into flowers and worn with slit-leg pants, and a sky blue summer dress with patchwork midsection. The pieces retail from \$50 to \$150.

"Daspu is selling sexy, colorful, body-contoured casualwear that is common among Brazilian brands," said fashion consultant Gloria Kalil. "Mostly, what makes the label sell is the marketing coup its name generates."

Daspu designer Silvio de Oliveira,



PHOTOS BY FREDERINE STRACK

In November 2005, Daslu sent the NGO a letter saying that its brand's tongue-in-cheek reference to the emporium — "Pu" is short for *puta*, or prostitute — denigrated its name and image and told Davida to change the name or face a lawsuit, according to Daslu owner Eliano Trancheschi.

Ultimately, Trancheschi said, "Daslu decided not to sue Davida because we had more pressing priorities, even though I think it was using our name to promote its brand."

Gabriela Leite, a 56-year-old retired hooker who heads Davida, responded, "We decided not to change the name because Daspu means 'of the prostitutes' and it fit like a glove. Daslu's threat created bad publicity for Daslu and good publicity for Daspu."

In December 2005, Daspu began selling slogan T-shirts. One of the big sellers: "Somos más, podemos ser piores," or "We're bad, but we could be worse."

"Davida launched Daspu not just to fund the NGO's social outreach, but also to send the message, 'It's OK to be a hooker,' and to fight discrimination against prostitutes," said Leite.

Daspu opened its store here in March 2006 and began launching its new collections during fashion weeks in Rio and São Paulo, but at alternative venues — public squares, music houses and bars — not surprisingly, drawing big crowds. Prostitutes were among



"Hooker chic" looks from Daspu, a prostitute-rights advocacy group in Brazil.

51, agrees.

"We put our label on the outside of 80 percent of our apparel because women who wear the brand identify with it," said de Oliveira. "Fashion is attitude."

Daspu sells to 10 multibrand stores, five of them in São Paulo, Brazil's fashion capital. In October, it began exporting and sent 450 pieces to Jamarico, a four-boutique chain in Zurich.

Daspu estimates revenues of \$100,000 this year.

BEAUTY BEAT



Boots the Chemists' Botanic Organic items.

consumers; it's best for manufacturers, for ease of shopping," added Mike Indursky, chief marketing and strategic officer of Burt's Bees, who is working with beauty companies in the U.S. to create common standards for cosmetics there. Their goal is to establish U.S. standards in line with Europe's, he said.

However, it looks unlikely there will be a single logo for Europe, where private certifiers have been working for four years to agree on harmonized standards for natural and organic cosmetics. While representatives of France's Ecocert, Germany's BDIH, Italy's AIAB and the U.K.'s Soil Association have set a June 2008 deadline to harmonize standards within the European Union, they