

WeAr DENIM

Casual Fabrics and Sustainable Technologies



Artist: Ian Berry

VOICES OF INNOVATION

Conversations with the visionaries
redefining the future of denim.

COMMUNITY & CRAFT

How makers, mills, and stores keep
tradition alive while adapting to new
demands.

NOW, WHAT'S NEXT?

From heritage revivals to technical
finishes: the trends to watch.

CHEMICAL SOLUTIONS

Practical alternatives and safer
processes reshaping denim finishes.

WELCOME ...

... to the October 2025 issue, framed around Ahead & Afield: a conversation between rapid innovation and a return to familiar forms. This edition explores how the industry is simultaneously leaping forward and looping back, as new materials, processes and tools sit beside revived traditions, handcraft, and heritage techniques.

Whilst there were many concerns voiced earlier this year, it seems the industry is on steadier paths now. Important is to remain positive and active. Only this can break the cycle and help each individual player of the industry leap forward.

It is apparent how tightly bonded this community remains to its roots. The energy of makers, mills, laundries, designers, and retailers

shows that denim's future will be built through collaboration as much as innovation.

Inside this issue you will find technical reports, practical case studies, and voices from across the supply chain, all aimed at helping professionals make better decisions today. Whatever your work in this industry, the conversations here are intended to be useful, honest, and action-oriented.

Let us keep asking hard questions, sharing real solutions, and honoring the craft that still matters. We hope you enjoy your read. As always, get in touch – we love to hear your opinions!

Ezequiel Cevey &
Shamin Vogel
WeAr Denim Editors

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FIVE POCKETS FOREVER



LOREN CRONK

Loren Cronk is the Co-Founder and Head of Operations and Curation at The Denim Institute and Museum. He has a well-rounded denim career, having worked as a designer for leading brands, and as a denim retailer and fabric designer.

I love seeing forward-thinking denim design. I am inspired when designers push the material in abstract, unexpected, and high-fashion ways. Over 25 years as a denim designer I appreciate watching it evolve over the years. I love what the younger “maker” generation is doing with upcycled, one-off pieces that push what is possible. We cannot ignore that AI is here and will change the landscape. Like it or not, it is here. I think we will see fascinating work because of it, and I hope designers both challenge it and embrace it.

But the classic jean is still the classic jean, it is our foundation, the root of everything denim. The basic shape of the automobile still defines what a car looks like: the frontend with a grill and headlights, the back with a trunk and tail-lights, the side doors, windows, four wheels, seats. It is refreshing how electric vehicles are pushing car design forward, but I remember seeing the first electric car without a grill, it did

not look right. Maybe these things are hard for us to accept if the design is changed rapidly? Are we old-fashioned?

It is not too different from the classic five-pocket jean. The coin pocket, scoop front pockets, rivets, classic back-pocket shape, back yoke, and belt loops are all embedded in our minds. It is the true definition: Jeans (the garment) are five-pocket, riv-

eted pants – traditionally made from denim, though the term now covers similar twill pants.

It has a distinct feel and visualization. I think we will always appreciate it. I know I will, while also remaining inspired by the new.

Yves Saint Laurent said it best:

“I have often said that I wish I had invented blue jeans: the most spectacular, the most practical, the most relaxed and nonchalant. They have expression, modesty, sex appeal, simplicity – all I hope for in my clothes.” (1983)

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KEY DENIM TRENDS

EZEQUIEL CEVEY

S/S26 and Resort 26 confirm that denim is operating in multiple registers at once. On the runway the material functions as both archive and experiment: familiar silhouettes are reinterpreted through contemporary finishes, while technical gestures and playful construction push denim into new territories. Below are four primary categories that capture the season's denim language, drawn from recent collections and shows, and point to future trends.

SURFACE WORK

Surface work defines the season. Designers create deceptive or X-ray-like effects, where denim appears torn away to show floral motifs, or bleached from the inside so the garment appears see-through. **Acne Studios** uses trompe l'œil where denim appears 'torn away' to reveal retro florals. **Roberto Cavalli** incorporates prints with exaggerated whiskering, and **Etro** adds botanical embroideries. **R13** brings bandana and barbed wire motifs with studded trims. Laser marking, targeted ozone, and selective abrasion are deployed to produce painterly fades and precise, almost architectural, wear patterns. Artistic prints elevate denim.

R13



SLOUCHY AND WIDE SILHOUETTES

Comfort and volume dominate through wide-leg, baggy, pleated, and cropped forms, often paired with skewed or low-slung fits that combine structure with relaxed ease. **Tibi** applies double zippers to wide-leg jeans and shows slouchy, relaxed styles, while **Ulla Johnson** refreshes boho with wide legs in a fresh aesthetic. **Nº21** introduces pleated baggy jeans with center creases, and **Balmain** expands to wide-leg overalls in vibrant blues. **Collina Strada**'s oversized cargos feature pleated peplum waists, and **Aknvas** experiments with cargos, lacing, ruffles, and low-rise lace-up legs. Men's denim from **Feng Chen Wang** includes loose baggy and barrel-leg options with waistband innovations like stacking or pleats. **Khaite** adds cropped turn-ups and pencil skirts in inky blues.



Balmain

Diesel



DESTROYED

Heavy deconstruction with rips, shredded knees, exposed seams, and destroyed effects channels 90s grunge while altering the standard denim silhouette. **Simkhai** pushes boundaries with nearly fully deconstructed jeans, while **Brandon Maxwell** features knee rips on slim fits. **Diesel**'s treatments explore inside-out logic and structural play: multi-pocket utility garments bonded with jersey and denim bleached from the inside create garments that reveal their making. These tactics foreground process, turning seams, hems, and pocket bags into both visual and functional features.

VINTAGE

Heritage is not reproduced literally, it is processed. The season privileges garments that read as passed down, repaired, and lived in. Classic five-pocket references and boot cut shapes are reissued with a sense of lineage, from mended low-waist jeans to narrow cuts. Drawing from eras like the 1970s and 2000s, vintage trends focus on faded washes, mended iterations, and sun-bleached hues for an authentic, worn-in appeal. **Acne Studios** introduces slim-cut '1979' jeans and low-waist '2010' mended styles, evoking generational nostalgia. **Brandon Maxwell** adds vintage fading to distressed blues, enhancing a timeless vibe. **Dsquared2** revives 2000s-era medium washes on low-rise and cargo jeans, complete with reverse-fabric pockets for added depth. Colors lean toward beiges, browns, and faded blacks, recalling traditional formal attire with sportier contours.



Dsquared2



WeAr

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REVITALIZING RETAIL

EZEQUIEL CEVEY

In-store experiences are gaining momentum, and many fashion retailers are enhancing their flagship stores with hands-on activations to draw shoppers back. Rather than just selling clothes, some denim stores are becoming activity hubs: think repair workshops, customization labs, artist installations, and even cafés. In this all-digital era, it is refreshing to see brands delivering impactful and elevated shopping experiences, rather than just selling jeans.



Diesel "Denim Cave"

One example is **Diesel's** Milan flagship, which was transformed into an immersive 'Denim Cave' installation. In this pop-up, the entire interior – walls, floor and ceiling – was covered in shredded indigo denim and mirrored silver panels, creating a bold brand environment. Such in-store sculptural displays encourage shoppers to linger and engage with the brand's heritage, making the visit an event in itself. For their S/S 26 show, Diesel sent the public on a wild egg hunt. Life-sized translucent eggs filled with new collection looks were hidden across the city. Shoppers followed a digital map to find them, blurring the line between event and retail. Other brands focus on practical services to ensure customers return time and again. **Levi's** offers in-store tailor shops where customers can get jeans or jackets altered or personalized on the spot. These shops allow customers to make their garments their own through embroidery, patches, pins, fabric paneling, and more. This makes a pair of jeans a long-term investment:

Similarly, Swedish label **Nudie Jeans** guarantees free lifetime repairs on its denim. All Nudie stores include built-in repair stations, and the brand even runs mobile repair vans, so customers worldwide can bring in any Nudie jeans to be patched or restored.

Spain's slow-fashion brand **Bustin Jeans** created 'Atelier', a guided tour of its Costa Brava workshop, and invites the public to make their own pair of jeans from scratch. This transforms a simple store visit into participation in the brand's 50-year history.

G-Star RAW teamed with artist Maarten Baas for a design exhibit on denim waste. They collected old jeans from stores, made a new textile from recycled denim, and crafted furniture and a 15-meter jet entirely of denim scraps. These playful yet functional pieces – which look like ordinary jeans and can even store denim items – were displayed in a historic church.

The exhibit invited customers to bring old jeans for silkscreening and showcased G-Star's commitment to sustainability through creativity.

To mark **Guess's** 40th anniversary, the brand hosted an immersive pop-up in Harajuku, Tokyo. The exhibit featured **Jeanologia's** eco-friendly Airwash technology (eliminating pumice stones), a live 'Airwash Lab', and interactive areas. Visitors could customize denim tote bags using laser engraving machines, guided by local artists, merging technology, and craft in-store. Guess even equipped its new Shibuya flagship with in-store Nano-laser engraving for instant personalization. This helped consumers understand sustainable actions in the industry further, whilst actively involving them – both educationally and experientially.

Zara introduced their 'El Apartamento' home-style concept stores in Madrid and Paris. These flagships resemble furnished apartments, complete with premium Zara and **Zara Home** merchandise displayed as décor. Crucially, the shops also feature a high-end café to allow customers to relax and socialize, treating shopping as a multifaceted lifestyle experience. This blend of retail and hospitality makes these stores a destination beyond clothing sales.

These examples demonstrate how brands are rethinking the store visit. By adding workshops, art and entertainment, they give shoppers a reason to keep coming back – something that pure e-commerce cannot match. These activations and concept stores turn shopping from a routine task into a vibrant, immersive event – precisely the draw that pulls customers back through the doors and away from their 'black mirrors'.



ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: ALINA TROYAN © GUESS, INC. 2023



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MICROPLASTICS: REALITY AND SOLUTIONS

EZEQUIEL CEVEY

Microplastics remain a critical issue in the industry and sustainability efforts often conflict by neutralizing material-level progress through plastic-intensive downstream practices. Addressing microplastic pollution requires action at every stage of the value chain – from fiber to landfill. **WeAr Denim** talked to experts to highlight practices limiting microplastic consumption throughout the industry.

Supply-Chain Actions and Innovation

Supply-chain requirements: Brands can request mills to track fiber loss (using standardized tests) and meet targets. Accountability along the chain is key. As Lewis Shuler of **Alpine Group/Paradise Textiles** notes, companies aim to “identify processes and strategies that mitigate fiber pollution through informed textile design and manufacturing.” Shared goals like the industry’s ‘Behind the Break’ initiative (involving **Adidas**, **Levi’s**, **Under Armour**, and **Inditex**, among others) seek exactly this type of data sharing and process improvement.

Capture technologies: Textile mills should upgrade wastewater treatment with fine filtration or adsorption systems to catch microfibers before discharge. Likewise, consumers and launderers can use washing machine filters (now mandated on new machines in the EU by 2025) or wash bags to trap fibers. While filters alone will not solve the problem (they only address the laundry ‘shedding point’), they can immediately reduce pollution.

R&D on fiber fate: Support innovation in fiber science, such as fibers and finishes that biodegrade faster or bind pollutants. Treatments exist which make polyester strands break down in seawater within years, and bacteria-based processes are being explored to degrade textile microplastics. **H&M Foundation** and others are funding projects that use sound waves or microbes to capture or digest shed fibers during production.

Waste management, circularity, and education: Programs exist to capture post-consumer denim (which is almost pure cotton) and recycle it into insulation or new fabrics. **Cotton Incorporated’s** ‘Blue Jeans Go Green’ denim recycling network has diverted more than 2,800 tons of denim from landfills since 2006. Jesse Daystar, VP and Chief Sustainability Officer at Cotton Inc. argues that prioritizing natural fibers and improving textile waste systems is cost-effective at scale. Expanding such programs for all textiles, and improving global waste infrastructure, will shrink the macroplastic pool that eventually fragments into microplastics.

Material and Design Choices

Fiber selection: Favor 100% natural or biodegradable fibers. Synthetics such as polyester and nylon account for over half of global fiber use and shed persistent microplastics, whereas cotton and other natural fibers do not. Even among human-made fibers, newer cellulose (lyocell, modal) biodegrade far faster than conventional synthetics.

Yarn and fabric engineering: Petr Valenta of **bluesign’s** Chemical Substance Evaluation team emphasizes upstream measures: “Choose continuous-filament or high-twist yarns and tighter weaves; avoid heavily brushed surfaces; and run controlled pre-washes with filtration at mill level to capture loose fibers before garments leave production.” He also highlights standardized testing (ISO, AATCC methods) to measure shedding consistently and the immediate value of investing in capture technologies to prevent fibers reaching waterways.

Durability: Build garments to last. Well-engineered, low-pilling denim not only extends product life but also reduces fiber release over time. Features like reinforced seams, proper yarn twist, and finishes that bind lint (e.g. anti-pilling treatments) help. As an example, **Under Armour** aims for 75% of its fabrics to be ‘low-shed’ by 2030.

Textiles now produce a sizable share of global plastic pollution: an IUCN-backed analysis estimates that eight to nine million tons of plastic through the apparel industry are leaked per year. While most of this microplastic leakage comes from discarded synthetic garments that eventually fragment, microplastic fibers are also released during use – for example, when washing polyester garments. This highlights a double standard: Natural fibers (cotton, wool) or cellulosic fibers (hemp, lyocell, modal, etc.) reduce plastic pollution – unless the garment is delivered in single-use plastic bags, of which the fashion industry still uses about 180 billion per year. Clearly, a holistic approach is needed as no single fix exists and a portfolio of solutions as outlined above is reliable. Education and policy are as important as fiber choices, circular technology, intelligent design, and strict supply-chain standards. Only then can we turn textiles from a microplastic problem into part of the solution.

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THE FUTURE OF COTTON:

SOLUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY

As sustainability scrutiny shifts to cotton, denim's most crucial raw material, the industry faces pressure to cut its environmental footprint. **WeAr Denim** spoke with **Avalo** and **Materra** – two innovators taking very different paths, from biotech-driven crop development to regenerative farming with transparency and equity – spotlighting solutions that could redefine denim's future.

Avalo is an AI-powered plant breeding company. It uses machine learning and computational biology to accelerate the development of climate-resilient, low-input crop varieties through its Rapid Evolution platform. According to Nick Schwanz, their Chief Marketing Officer, "denim has a sustainability problem that starts in the field. Upstream gains in recycling and washing have not addressed the core issue: most global cotton is Upland grown from a narrow set of seed lines. That genetic uniformity forces producers into input-heavy systems of irrigation, fertilizer, and pesticide use. This happens because the same varieties are planted across very different climates. Our view is that a practical route is to evolve what we grow, rather than only how we farm. Advances in machine learning and computational biology now let us design varieties adapted to specific eco regions. These new varieties can require far less water and fertilizer while still delivering the fiber quality brands need. At Avalo, we are developing regionally adapted lines. One is an Upland variety for the plains of West Texas that needs no irrigation and uses substantially less fertilizer per acre. Another is an extra-long staple line tailored to California. If varietal innovation can move at the speed and scale logistics allow, choosing lower-input cotton becomes routine sourcing practice rather than a premium niche."

Materra develops regenerative cotton sourcing and production programs. These pair on-farm regenerative practices and greenhouse hydroponic trials with digital traceability tools such as Co:Farm. The goal is to deliver traceable, lower-carbon, more equitable cotton supply chains for fashion brands. Edward Brial, CEO and Co-Founder, states that "the risks for brands start with visibility. Many companies do not know the true origin of their cotton and so are exposed to labor abuses, deforestation risk, and regulatory compliance problems. Our approach is holistic: regenerative practices, rigorous measurement, and equitable commercial terms. We measure greenhouse gas emissions, green, blue and grey water footprints, and soil health at farm level. We are also developing biodiversity and soil carbon monitoring where feasible. Data capture is central to that work. Our Co:Farm tool and its data quality assurance program feed tailored feedback to farmers so they can adopt practices that rebuild soil health and reduce resource dependence. We test technical adaptations, including hydroponic cotton as a climate adaptation to produce extra-long staple fiber without relying on arable land or consistent rainfall. Equity is equally important: farmers should share in both risk and reward. That is why Materra signs long-term, multi-year partnerships with brands and guarantees premiums to farmers. We recently announced a regenerative cotton partnership with **Mango** and plan to scale our programs to work with more than 3,000 farmers as we roll out our mobile and web applications."

The paths are not mutually exclusive. Region-adapted varieties can reduce input needs while regenerative practices and long-term commercial partnerships address soil health and equity. What both contributors make clear is that change requires alignment across science, farm practices, and commercial contracts. For brands to move beyond pilot projects, new norms are needed: transparent sourcing, credible measurement, and a willingness to underwrite transitions at scale. Cotton sourcing will only shift from optional sustainability projects to standard industry practice when technical breakthroughs are matched with reliable market signals.

DENIM CONTRADICTION

ZENNURE DANISMAN



Fashion thrives on contradictions, and denim is its most compelling storyteller.

The catwalks are alive with contrasts where a biker jacket crafted from distressed Japanese selvage shares the stage with architectural denim suiting treated like jewelry – two dialects of the same cloth. This extends to materials: silky fabrics that drape like satin but are made of hemp and lyocell; rigid twills with sun-faded character achieved through laser marking; and basics that appear timeless yet carry QR-coded transparency.

Across the globe, mills and laundries are chasing this duality. On one end, softness dominates – summer blends of **TENCEL™** Lyocell, cotton, and linen evoke resort glamour. On the other, nostalgia resurfaces: washed-down rigid jeans, chore coats, and 90s-style shirting weights revived with botanical dyes and low-impact laundry processes. Vintage is not just an aesthetic; it is a technical achievement, balancing authenticity with innovation.

Sometimes inspiration reaches further back. **Tonello's** Denim Renaissance and Urban Flora illustrate how fashion thrives on the dialogue between radical change and revival. Denim Renaissance reinterprets iconic silhouettes and details through advanced, responsible technologies. Urban Flora brings antique natural dyeing into modern practice with Wake, transforming peels, husks, and flowers into new color expressions. Together, they show how past and future merge through technique and craft.

In the same spirit, **Lenzing** is launching **TENCEL™** Lyocell HVI00. This pat-

ented fiber looks like cotton and feels like **TENCEL™**, offering textured surfaces that evoke vintage denim while retaining modern softness and a distinct handfeel.

Performance-driven denim is also gaining momentum, with stretch making a thoughtful comeback. Catsuits and high-recovery skinny silhouettes nod to the early 2000s while using advanced elastane that resists sagging. Even minimalist labels are adopting subtle stretch and comfort fits, reshaping wardrobe staples for lifestyles that demand movement and encourage storytelling.

This variety is mirrored in retail. From upcycling events to tailor shops offering custom patchwork, brands are experimenting with physical experiences. Meanwhile, the EU's Digital Product Passport is turning hangtags into storytelling devices, enabling customers to trace each jean's journey via QR code.

Denim may look familiar – a straight-leg jean, a workwear jacket – but each piece reflects radical innovation. The season demonstrates that denim does not need constant reinvention to be transformative; it remains a fabric that remembers its origins while leading the industry forward.

Zennure Danışman is the founder of Denim Theater, a platform that showcases innovative denim craftsmanship. She also contributes part-time to communications at Denim Deal.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

IAN BERRY



Ian Berry, one of the most renowned contemporary textile artists, recently successfully presented "Secrets are in the Garden" at the Presidential National Library in Ankara, Turkey. Personally requested by Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of Turkey and founder of the Zero Waste Foundation. The exhibition reimagines denim as a medium for storytelling and reflection.

At its heart is the Secret Garden Installation, where discarded denim is transformed into roses, lavender, vines, koi ponds, and other natural elements, alongside key works such as Zodiac Compatibility, Paradise Lost and Denim Legends. Through 13 pieces, Berry invites viewers to see denim not just as fabric, but as a narrative of memory, renewal, and connection.

Secrets are in the Garden runs through October 2025.

ianberry.art

CHEMISTRY MEETS CREATIVITY

Andrea Venier, Managing Director of Officina+39, explains to **WeAr Denim** how chemical solutions and process innovation transform artisanal indigo effects into scalable, lower-impact finishes for production-ready denim.



How do you make indigo easy? What practical steps has Officina+39 taken to simplify indigo without compromising quality?

We developed a room-temperature chemical package called EASYINDIGO that removes hydrosulphite and caustic soda. Using a 'pull & push' mechanism, it employs three formaldehyde-free agents to optimize dye uptake on raw garments. The system cuts water and energy use while delivering bright, deep indigo with strong wash, rub and lightfastness, ensuring consistent production without compromising quality.

In your view, what has been the single greatest achievement in denim chemistry in the last five years, and why does it matter?

I believe our greatest achievement is ZeroPP|ALL.IN. It's a one-cycle, on-garment workflow that replaces potassium permanganate by combining spray/nebulize application, laser marking, a dry ozone reaction on laser areas (no rinsing) and standard washes. The process reproduces PP-style corrosion at industrial scale while improving safety, transparency, and resource efficiency, providing a practical, cost-aligned alternative to a hazardous legacy chemical.



Realistically, how long would it take the industry to phase out PP at scale, and what are the main barriers (technical, economic, supply-chain)?

Although many chemical and mechanical technologies have been developed to replace potassium permanganate, it is still widely used in the denim and fashion industry. The main reason is cost (PP is particularly inexpensive) but barriers are both technical (differences in fading, spray behavior, elastane damage, tool corrosion) and commercial. We engineered ZERO PP ALL.IN to be effectively cost-neutral versus PP. With proven, price-aligned alternatives and robust verification, widescale phase-out becomes realistic – if brands commit to the transition and verification processes.

What is the best expression you've seen of creativity and chemistry combined in denim?

From our perspective, products like MARVEL COATING, which creates textural, leather-like, and painterly effects, and NOVAPRET BLOCK & FIX, a non-reactive blocker/fixative for high-low reserves, best express the combination of creativity and chemistry. Paired with Aqualess All-In-One, Novakor, Recycrom™ RTD and EASYNDIGO, they enable striking, durable looks while remaining production-ready.

How does Officina+39 approach reproducibility – turning an artisan finish into a repeatable, brand-ready production run?

Our goal is always to develop processes that are creative and innovative, but also reliable, repeatable, and scalable, even when they involve very specific or artisanal fashion effects. Our R&D department refines formulations and application protocols for machine compatibility. Recycrom™ RTD is a clear example: what began as a concept is now a standardized, ready-to-dye range that integrates into industrial lines while preserving the original aesthetic.

Looking ahead three to five years, which chemical or process innovation at Officina+39 are you most excited about, and why?

We are particularly excited about two developments: Smart Bright (Deterpal Bluecast + Noamin AZ 2.0) for brighter, stable indigo without yellowing, and the Aqualess family – especially Aqualess All-In-One, a waterless pumice substitute. Together under our Trustainable approach, they aim to deliver creativity, performance, and measurable water and energy savings.

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SS'27 CLOUD NINE

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time did not steal.

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ANGELA FUSCO
CREATIVE CONSULTANT
DENIM & WOVENS

In recent years, the most significant change in my design process has been the integration of AI and image generation tools. These technologies have transformed the way I develop and visualize concepts, allowing me to explore a broader range of ideas more efficiently and with greater precision. AI has enabled rapid prototyping and enhanced experimentation with washes, textures, and silhouettes. It also allows refinement of complex denim details before sampling. However, what remains unchanged is the way we research and gather inspiration. Within the fashion and denim industry, our creative foundations are still built on traditional methods: visiting vintage archives, studying fabric behavior, and immersing ourselves in cultural references. While AI amplifies the speed and scope of design development, the essence of inspiration remains rooted in tactile exploration and storytelling, ensuring that technology complements rather than replaces the craft behind every piece.



HERVÉ DENOYELLE
SALES DIRECTOR
THE FLAX COMPANY

One of the biggest changes we face today is the demand for certifications, which was not the case a decade ago. It is no longer enough to offer a sustainable product, you must also substantiate it with verifiable guarantees. Meeting this expectation while guiding spinners toward fibers that address both technical needs and market requirements remains at the core of our work.

Marmara hemp is not entirely new to us. Initial trials and small production batches were made 20 years ago, though without major commercial success, so the project was set aside. Interest resurfaced about eight years ago, and this time we focused on creating a fiber with verifiable sustainable qualities. The priority became achieving certification and ensuring consistent industrial-scale availability. Both objectives have now been realized, making Marmara hemp a reliable solution for today's market demands.

AHEAD & AFIELD

This roundtable invites industry experts to explore the push and pull between innovation and return to form.

The denim industry is not simply moving forward in a straight line. In some areas it loops back, while in others it leaps ahead. To reflect this dynamic, **WeAr Denim** invited key industry voices to share their views on one central question: **Which part of your work has changed the most in recent years, and which part remains unchanged?**



VIVIAN WANG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
KINGPINS SHOW

I can still remember seeing a laser finishing machine in action for the first time. Technology using no water and no manual labor could recreate the look of stone-washed denim. Though initially impossible to scale, it eventually transformed the industry. Over my career I have watched denim evolve with new fibers, lighter fabrications, and innovations that reduce water and environmental impact. At the same time, a new generation is embracing raw denim and the tradition of breaking jeans in through wear. What excites me is how denim balances respect for its past with curiosity for the future. That is the spirit we want to foster at **Kingpins**: a platform where the industry connects, learns, and collaborates to push denim forward.

Nothing drives a project or product more convincingly than the spark of innovation. It is the pushing of boundaries, the shattering of beliefs, the energy of novelty, the adventure of discovery, and the excitement of sharing. The entire process universe – including creatives, industry, suppliers, and customers – is constantly challenged and reorganized. The search is always for solutions to increasingly complex problems that at first seem unsolvable. In turn, this pace of innovation and demand leads, paradoxically, to a yearning for the trust and excellence of processes and products, anchored in our industrial history. It reminds us that at the core lies secure, lasting, almost timeless value. Today, preserving tradition, industrial heritage, and craftsmanship anchors a bolder, more avant-garde facet of a visionary plan.



SOFIA VALE
I&D MANAGER
SOMELOS GROUP

There is an increasing need to look deeper into the whole ecosystem around circularity and learn more about innovative materials, repair service capabilities, and garment end-of-life, focusing on sorting and pre-processing.

I also find myself monitoring the regulatory landscape much more often than a few years ago. Manufacturers must be prepared for regulatory changes way before the enforcement date of new legislation. It is also more common to see customers' requests regarding environmental footprint reduction and information disclosure. What I feel remains unchanged is that the industry's usual race to the bottom – particularly on price – often comes at the expense of quality and responsible manufacturing, though exceptions do exist.



JOÃO MATIAS
SENIOR SUSTAINABILITY
SPECIALIST
YKK



CARMEN SILLA
GLOBAL MARKETING DIRECTOR
JEANOLOGIA

The biggest change in recent years has been the way denim is created and produced. Digitalization is transforming design product development, enabling us to design and develop collections virtually before producing a single garment. This makes the process more agile and creative, while reducing lead time and waste. It also connects design directly with production, since finishing can now be automated and simplified with technologies such as Laser and G2 Ozone. Our Environmental Impact Measurement (EIM) has made sustainability measurable and transparent, enabling creative decisions based on real data. Together with innovations in laser, ozone, nanobubbles, and our H2Zero water recycling system, we have revolutionized production, drastically reducing environmental impact while improving efficiency and cost.

What remains the same is the essence of denim. Its authentic soul, vintage spirit, and aesthetic power continue to inspire creativity and connect brands with consumers across generations. Denim is still about storytelling, cultural identity, and emotion. We aim to show that denim can stay authentic and creative while moving forward with innovation and sustainability.



CATHRYN YI XU
OWNER AND CEO
DINGHUI

I have seen many changes in our industry, but one thing has never shifted: our dedication to quality and the trust we build with every client. What has changed, however, is the framework in which we operate. Sustainability is no longer optional, it defines the future. From advanced water recycling and clean laser technologies to AI-driven production and 3D design, our processes are leaner, smarter, and greener than ever before.

The industry has shifted from volume-driven production to value-driven partnerships. Today, brands look to manufacturers not just for output, but for innovation and vision. At **Dinghui**, we see this as an opportunity: to preserve denim's timeless soul while integrating sustainable and digital innovations that carry it forward. We are ready for the future.

ROUNDTABLE

I officially joined the company two years ago after graduating from Babson College, where I led a project to cut water pollution and textile waste. That experience made me passionate about sustainability. Since then, the biggest change I have seen is how strongly the textile industry is moving toward cleaner and more responsible practices. It is not just about what customers ask for. Brands and regulations across Europe now expect suppliers to meet higher standards, and that pressure is helping the whole industry improve.

What has not changed is the daily work of making it happen. We still need careful planning, teamwork, and steady effort to turn big goals into real action. I am amazed to see how much progress is possible when everyone, from factories to fashion brands, commits to protecting the environment while still delivering quality products.



ARMAN MALIK
CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER
MASTERTEX



LUCA BRASCHI
MARKETING & TECHNOLOGY MANAGER
SOKO ITALY

We could say that the transition of recent years towards a lower-impact industry has transformed working methods and washing processes, creating new operational challenges for laundries. For an innovation partner like us, this has increased the need to develop specific and rapid solutions, from addressing the evolving demands of brands, to treating ever more complex fabrics and blends, and ensuring compliance with regulations and certifications. What has never changed is our creative and innovative spirit, the drive to surprise with new solutions and to keep improving, because every solution is great until the next one makes it even better.



AMY WANG
GENERAL MANAGER
ADVANCE DENIM

I have two main ideas I care about for improvement. My first focus is on people. It's important to help everyone in the team learn and grow. When we share knowledge and collaborate, we work faster, better, and increase efficiency – leaving more time to be creative. My second focus is on creation while taking care of our planet. I love to invent amazing products, but I also want to ensure we don't hurt the environment. So, I will never stop implementing sustainable technology to use less water and energy, and reduce waste throughout the denim process. Technology should contribute to sustainability. I believe that if we help each other grow and stay mindful of our planet, we can build a happy and healthy future for everyone!



PAOLA MAESTRO
CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER
PEPE JEANS

The biggest change has definitely been the speed and influence of digital. From social media to e-commerce, we now react to customer feedback and market trends faster than ever. At the same time, sustainability has become central, whether it is sourcing fabrics or rethinking production methods, and it is changing the way we approach everything. What has not changed is the soul of denim and our dedication to quality. Denim has always been about telling stories, and our goal is still to create pieces that last, age beautifully, and feel lived in. That timeless bond with our customers remains at the core of what we do.

The most significant shift I have experienced during my career is the move toward radical transparency. Where gatekeeping once protected innovation and competitive advantage, true value now lies in collaboration. Sharing knowledge, particularly around sustainability and responsible production, is no longer a risk – it is a responsibility. This shift has fostered a more open, purpose-driven culture across the denim industry. What has not changed is the relentless demand for more. The pressure to deliver new and trending products quickly remains constant, even as we evolve how we design, manufacture, and communicate. Balancing this demand with integrity remains one of our greatest challenges, but it also serves as a call to action for the industry to keep driving progress.



KATIE TAGUE
SVP DENIM MARKETING
AND SALES
ARTISTIC MILLINERS



INTIZAR ALI
GENERAL MANAGER
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
US GROUP

The biggest shift for **US Group** in recent years has been forecasting and visibility in fashion. With trends now moving at lightning speed, fueled by digital platforms and consumers' demand for immediacy, staying ahead requires constant anticipation and adaptability. Rising price pressures add complexity, making it harder to balance quality with cost efficiency while driving innovation across sourcing, processes, and strategy. Yet, what has remained unchanged is the true DNA of denim. Its authenticity, versatility, and spirit continue to anchor every development. This duality, navigating modern challenges while holding onto the essence of denim, is what makes our work both demanding and deeply rewarding.



WOUTER MUNNICHS
DENIM CONSULTANT
FOUNDER OF LONG JOHN

Most of my work has remained consistent over the past 15 years. I continue to work on various projects, both online and offline, for the same companies within the denim industry. Visibility is crucial today, and many projects are designed to highlight the stories and unique developments of companies. At the same time, I remain deeply committed to offline projects, as in-person interaction continues to be invaluable and rewarding.

The biggest change in recent years is the rapid rise of digital tools and the use of AI across creative fields. From sourcing to style creation and merchandising, this digital era is providing valuable support, while also accelerating timelines and removing boundaries to collaboration. Although we now face an abundance of information and endless inputs about trends and market data, our purpose remains unchanged: to continue offering premium fabrics and services that are relevant to our denim community.



LAURA TORROBA
DESIGN DIRECTOR
SANTANDERINA

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BOSS' CREATIVE MIND

WeAr Denim gives an insight into the creative mind of Marco Falcioni, Creative Director of **Hugo Boss**, on how he balances heritage, innovation, sustainability, and sources of inspiration.

What inspires your work the most?

The primary source of inspiration is always the brand's archive – its legacy and history. I love exploring the 80s, the glorious 90s, and the early 2000s. I am particularly interested in how tailoring has evolved in proportions, fabrics, technology, and craftsmanship. Beyond that, art is a constant source of inspiration for me. I also draw ideas from sports, especially when it comes to performance fabrics, like those in our performance tailoring group. This approach allows me to keep the brand connected to its roots while ensuring it remains relevant and aligned with contemporary market demands.



This approach adds a fresh spin to the suiting wardrobe while maintaining our brand's elevated aesthetic.

How do genderless pieces influence your design process?

We embrace the genderless narrative in denim by sharing the same fabrics and washes across men's and women's collections. Certain fits in the women's wardrobe, like the boyfriend fit, are directly inspired by men's silhouettes. However, adjustments in patternmaking are necessary to accommodate the anatomical differences between men and women. Consistency comes from using identical fabrics, washes, and treatments, ensuring a unified aesthetic across genders.

What do you do completely differently now, and what part of your creative process has stayed the same?

The creative process is never linear; it evolves with each season and often requires different methodologies. What has changed significantly is the access we now have to data. This allows us to make sharper, more informed decisions and create more balanced collections. Another major shift is the transition from physical prototyping to 3D prototyping. This serves as a digital first draft and helps refine proportions and designs before moving to physical samples. This results in fewer prototypes – often just one or two – compared to the three or more we previously required. What remains unchanged is the passion and dedication we bring to every collection, regardless of the tools or methods we use.

How big a role does denim play across your collections?

Denim is an essential element in both men's and women's wardrobes. At HUGO BOSS, however, we approach denim as a complementary piece – pairing it with tailoring or elevated sportswear rather than pushing full denim looks, except in more casual lines, such as **HUGO Blue** or **BOSS Orange**. Sometimes, we even reinterpret denim-inspired aesthetics using tailoring fabrics, like a beautiful wool with a denim-like weave, to create double-breasted jackets or tailored trousers.

How do you communicate the importance of sustainability to your final customer?

We are deeply committed to sustainability and strive to communicate this clearly to our customers. Each garment features a hangtag highlighting its sustainable elements, whether it is made from recycled fibers, sustainably farmed materials, or recycled polyester. Additionally, we include internal labels that serve as a lasting reminder of the garment's sustainable attributes, even after the hangtag is removed. Beyond the product, we provide detailed information on our website, offering customers deeper insights into our sustainability practices. This multi-layered approach ensures that the message is both accessible and impactful.

Aside from your career, what feeds your creativity?

I have a deep passion for discovering and following emerging artists. This pursuit takes up much of my free time. I regularly explore galleries and art fairs, whether through social media, digital platforms, or in-person visits. My travels often revolve around art and architecture, which continuously inspire me. I have developed a trained eye and growing expertise in this area – something I may build upon in the future.

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DENIM FABRIC NEWS

ANA PAULA ALVES

Innovation in denim today moves in three directions: hybrid aesthetics, sustainable material development, and performance-driven functionality. Together these directions expand denim's identity, showing that the fabric is no longer tied to a single category but is hybrid, responsible, and forward-looking.

Hybrid denim is crossing borders into tailoring, sportswear, activewear, and even couture. It gains new forms while preserving authenticity. Rigid twills are reinterpreted into fluid drapes, and rugged indigo is paired with experimental finishes. Cultural storytelling, digital graphics, and cross-category collaborations push denim into fresh creative spaces. Brazilian mill **Canatiba** exemplifies this with its Nanjing blend, which combines cotton, viscose, polyester, and elastane to deliver refined construction and finishes without losing denim's cultural DNA. **Freedom Denim's** Ramie Bionic Denim – a mix of lyocell, ramie, and polyester – offers durability, breathability, moisture control, and resilience in one fabric.

In the area of functionality, denim is being engineered to stretch, recover, and endure while retaining heritage looks. **Advance Denim** has created Free-Cross, a four-way stretch denim with vintage character and stable shrinkage, and Reflex, a **Lycra**-based fabric with a retro aesthetic that delivers ninety percent recovery and lasting comfort. **Vicunha** expands with V.Laundry, an advanced laser and digital laundry platform enhancing both performance and creative potential. Freedom Denim's Sister Denim – a blend of cotton, recycled cotton, recycled polyester, and anti-slip Lycra – is designed for garments built to last.



Sustainability and circularity remain central. What was once framed as 'eco denim' has evolved into deeper material innovation. Mills are rethinking ingredients and processes to prioritize longevity over obsolescence. They are introducing alternative fibers, bio-based dyes, and closed-loop business models. **ORTA**, in collaboration with **Lenzing**, has introduced TENCEL™ Lyocell HV100, a fiber that mimics cotton's natural irregularities while delivering the sustainability and performance benefits of lyocell, enriching ORTA's Legend fabric. **TCE Denim** integrates fibers such as banana and pineapple, transforming ecological choices into new material stories. Advance Denim has achieved Cradle to Cradle Gold Standard 4.1 certification across more than 50 fabric references, from

regenerative cotton to stretch blends. Vicunha's Regen line advances circularity, combining regenerative cotton and Polygiene® Freshness technology to extend garment life and reduce frequent washing.

What unites these directions is not only technical progress but also a heightened sense of timing. Innovation matters only if brands and mills are prepared to adopt it before the moment passes. The denim ecosystem is a shifting global map, with logistics and supply chains being redefined. Asia – especially Vietnam and Pakistan – and Latin America, including Brazil and Mexico, are emerging as key denim production hubs. This redistribution is building supply chains that are more agile, integrated, and competitive.

The future of denim will depend on balancing heritage and reinvention, responsibility and performance, design and timing. Missing the moment risks missing the future, but for those who stay alert, denim remains one of the industry's most powerful fabrics of change.

Ana Paula is a fashion and textile specialist, denim designer and trend scout. She founded Be Disobedient, a strategic studio translating market needs into creative and commercial solutions, and trend reports.

INTRODUCING

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GOMMATEX-KELLY KONINGS

NEW VOICES AND ICONS

BY DENIM PREMIÈRE VISION

Denim continues to serve as a canvas for both radical experimentation and enduring reinvention. Each wave of aesthetic exploration brings forward directional brands whose signatures align perfectly with the spirit of the moment. From there, new designers emerge, or established ones ride the wave, reinforcing denim's dynamic ability to regenerate without losing its essence.

Recent seasons have seen surrealist effects and dreamlike finishes. Designers such as Dolev Elron and Dana Frid from **Déconner des Figures** explore visual distortions that push denim beyond its functional roots. Brands like **Paradoxe Paris** or **No Faith Studios** emphasize decorative rips; **GOOMHEO** works with sophisticated draped denim, while **Le Rêve Nazam** defines soft masculinity codes. On another front, **Badson.us** highlights extreme garment interventions, creating unique pieces that read as wearable artworks.

Textile design also plays a leading role in shaping the new wave. Projects such as **Threads Zeppelin** bring craft into focus. **Jiyong Kim**, winner of the LVMH Prize, creates innovative fading and discoloration techniques by exposing garments directly to sunlight. At the textile front, textile designer Kelly Konings recently showcased her collaboration with **Gommatex** during **Denim Première Vision** Milan, reinforcing the tight link between savoir-faire and industry. Boots, dresses, and jeans were made from jacquard denim in linen and GOTS-certified cotton, featuring motifs inspired by female craft practices such as crochet and homemade textiles.

Larger-scale players such as **Ganni** and smaller independent voices like **Lucia Chain** in Argentina serve as essential brands to follow, each providing insight into sustainable fibers, new technologies, and production approaches. At the same time, the ever-expanding influence of sports culture continues to redefine denim through collaborations such as **Nike x Levi's**, weaving performance into heritage.

Legacy remains a cornerstone. Designers and houses with deep roots in denim like **Junya Watanabe x Levi's**, **Acne Studios**, **Juun.J**, and **Who Decides War** consistently present pieces that reaffirm their place in denim history. The recent S/S 26 and resort runway highlights include **Doublet**, **Egonlab**, **Juun.J**, **PDF**, **Coach**, and **MM6**. In the end, denim is shaped by both loyalty and renewal: people hold on to the established names, yet also welcome emerging creative voices. This mix of tradition and change ensures denim remains rooted in its origins while opening up to new forms.



GUESS Jeans: The Next 40 Years of Denim exhibition

THE RISE OF DENIM EDUCATION

ANATT FINKLER

Behind every pair of jeans lies a story of labor, chemistry, craftsmanship, and innovation. Denim education shifts the focus from surface elements like washes, fits, and trends to empowering professionals to confront challenges, drive innovation, and spot greenwashing. Although there are currently no full university degrees in denim, many courses focus on practical skills, sustainable jeans design, and production techniques.

The House of Denim Foundation leads the charge as it founded **Jean School**, the world's first accredited program in denim development. Its Talent Incubator Program opens doors for emerging creatives from all backgrounds, providing a specialized educational program dedicated to training denim professionals in craftsmanship and sustainability. **The Denim Deal**, an initiative promoting sustainable and circular practices, emerged from the educational and collaborative ecosystem, naturally building on the knowledge and talent developed through these programs. The deal has expanded globally with a recent hub in India.

Still under The House of Denim umbrella, **Denim City Academy** arose as part of Denim City's expansion to Brazil. With practical courses and workshops tailored to industry professionals, such as developers, buyers, and sales staff, it aims at improving technical knowledge and industry vocabulary for denim professionals. Having an education facility in a key production country strengthens local supply chains, raises standards, and enhances the production hub's credibility.

The Mills Fabrica, with hubs in Hong Kong and London, champions sustainable fashion through events and exhibitions, including its Denim Futures showcase. Non-profit **White Oak Foundation** still runs Denim 101 courses twice a year, safeguarding history and know-how.

In 2026 the **Denim Institute & Museum** will open in the birthplace of premium denim – Los Angeles. It is co-founded by designer Loren Cronk, who previously hosted informal classes in his boutique, and Jonny Saven, CEO of **L'Agence**. The institute will merge a museum experience with hands-on training through the Los Angeles Denim School, with a mission to preserve denim heritage.

Denim education is driven not only by sustainability but also by the industry's need to secure future growth in the \$15 billion market. Training skilled professionals ensures new talent, fosters innovation, and keeps the industry competitive. Companies within the supply chain have also created programs, with workshops and factory visits aiming to provide practical skills and industry knowledge. **Orta** launched its Denim Academy in 2002. **Jeanologia** followed with The School in 2013, focused on sustainable jeans design. **Isko's I-SKOOL** ran through 2020, giving students an international stage. Others, like **Global Denim**, **Candiani**, **Calik**, **Naveena**, **Bossa**, and **Soorty** support education through university projects and collaborations.

Ultimately, for the industry to remain competitive, education must reach end consumers. Brands are beginning to take that seriously. **Levi Strauss & Co.** uses immersive pop-ups and its **Levi's Haus** locations to teach circularity, care, and repair. **Guess** staged 'The Next 40 Years of Denim' exhibitions across Florence, Amsterdam, and Tokyo. **Citizens of Humanity** pushes transparency and regenerative cotton practices, hosting forums like **Orta's** LA Regenerative Sourcing event.

Denim education is still a story in progress. From mills to museums, classrooms to consumers, every effort to teach and innovate adds to its evolution. The industry is working together – schools, initiatives, mills, and brands – to create transparency and knowledge, keeping denim and its cultural heritage alive while paving the way for future innovation.

WINDS OF CHANGE:

INNOVATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



Florian Klinder, Managing Director of **Munich Fabric Start**, talks about the pivotal shifts transforming the textile industry, from sustainability to responsibility, and highlights how denim is at the forefront of this change.



In recent years, our work has been shaped above all by digitalization and the profound transformation of the industry. The textile industry stands at a pivotal crossroads, a moment where past models of production and consumption are no longer tenable. The global dialogue has shifted from sustainability being a trend to becoming a central field of action. It not only influences the collections of our exhibitors but also the content and formats we develop as a trade fair.

The industry is no longer defined by simple materials and linear processes. Science, data, and technology are driving a revolution, and it is our responsibility to provide a platform where these breakthroughs can be showcased, adopted, and scaled. Biofabrication is no longer theoretical. It allows living organisms to be engineered into materials, offering alternatives to resource-intensive conventional fibers. Similarly, smart and functional textiles are transforming how we interact with clothing, embedding technology to create products that are both beautiful and responsive. These innovations are reshaping the very definition of what a textile can be.

The urgency to decouple growth from environmental harm is clear. Our ReSOURCE platform highlights the shift toward bio-based and alternative fibers, showcasing materials derived from natural, renewable sources. This is complemented by a strong focus on circular recycling technologies. True circularity is the main path forward.

Denim serves as a powerful case study for this transformation. Once defined by resource-intensive cotton farming and chemical-heavy finishing, the sector now leads in sustainable innovation. Brands are starting to embrace bio-based fibers such as hemp and Tencel to create durable yet eco-friendly jeans. Circular recycling technologies are enabling true denim-to-denim repurposing, turning old jeans into new ones and closing the loop alongside environmentally-friendly dyeing approaches.

In parallel, digital transformation is gaining unprecedented momentum. AI and automation streamline production, reduce waste, and improve quality. In denim, AI optimizes water usage in washing processes, while laser-based automation delivers precise finishing previously done by hand. Traceability and digital transparency are essential. Consumers, brands, and regulators now demand verifiable supply chains. Digital solutions ensure every fiber can be traced from origin to garment, marking key steps toward a sustainable industry.

Communication, presentation, and networking now take place at a much faster pace and across new channels, from digital platforms to virtual showrooms. But our core of bringing people from all over the world together and providing them with a platform for inspiration, exchange, and business remains unchanged. Personal encounters and direct conversations remain at the heart of our events. Experiencing innovations firsthand and feeling fabrics physically continue to define the uniqueness of **Bluezone** and Munich Fabric Start.



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CRAFT, CULTURE, AND REINVENTION

WeAr Denim spoke with **Howa**, a company founded in 1965 in Kurashiki City, Japan. By the 1970s, Howa had entered the denim industry and pioneered wash processing techniques, including Japan's earliest stone-wash experiments. Today, celebrating its 60th anniversary, Howa has grown into a fully integrated factory, offering sewing, garment production, and advanced finishing capabilities.

What makes Howa stand out from other denim finishes around the world?

Our strength lies in vintage wash techniques that capture an authenticity almost indistinguishable from true vintage garments. Over the decades, we have refined processes that create fabrics with depth, character, and atmosphere.

How do you balance your heritage and Japanese history with current R&D priorities and modern finishing technologies?

Advanced technology can sometimes produce results that feel detached from fashion. For us, jeans and wash processes are never just about function –

they are about expression and style. Our approach is rooted in Japanese rag culture, where imperfection and wear are celebrated. By combining this sensibility with modern machinery, we ensure every process honors denim's role in fashion.

How does your in-house brand influence your service for external brands?

We do not operate an in-house brand in the traditional sense. Instead, we use exhibitions as a platform to present ideas and forecasts on jeans trends. Sharing concepts directly with designers and brands helps inspire collections and facilitates more effective collaboration.

Where do you see the biggest leverage point for reducing denim's environmental footprint in the near future?

We believe sustainability cannot be achieved through one single solution – it is the accumulation of many small, consistent efforts. As a Japanese manufacturer, we prioritize creating high-value products that justify continuous investment in environmental technologies. Our current focus is on reducing water and chemical use in finishing, ensuring that improvements in quality also benefit the planet.

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A VERTICAL VISION

WeAr Denim spoke with Christian Reca, Designer and CMO at **Pioneer Denim**, to explore the company's research and development philosophy, production strategy, and vision for denim's future.

Tell us about your facility and R&D lab: what capabilities are unique there?

At Pioneer Denim, research and development is at the core of our operations. As a fully vertical company, we integrate innovation from yarn production to fabric development and garment making, enabling rapid movement from concept to scalable production. Our owner, Mr. Mohiuddin Hamed, was among the first in our industry to experiment with unconventional fiber blends, such as combining pineapple fibers or Merino wool with cotton. That mindset continues today in our lab, where we explore constructions, processes, and finishes that expand denim's possibilities.



ourselves. Our engineers and experts continually refine machines to enhance efficiency, performance, and quality while reducing water, electricity, and gas consumption.

What is more important for Pioneer Denim: continuing successful fabric recipes or developing new products every season? How do you decide?

Investing daily in technology and creativity, we aim to develop new yarns, fabrics, and garments each season while maintaining consistent quality. We try to anticipate the market while also following key trends. Our close relationship with customers helps guide us, as they often suggest the directions they would like to pursue. This approach allows us to meet current market needs while anticipating future demand.

You have a production capacity target of 100 million yards by 2025. How are you balancing scale with consistency and sustainability as you expand?

Currently, our capacity is about 10 million yards per month, projecting roughly 120 million yards by 2026. Our long-term goal is 15 million yards per month by 2028. We are growing in this direction to support our garment factory, established almost three years ago. This allows us to continue serving our 160 worldwide clients while also supplying fabrics for garment manufacturing to new and existing customers. To maintain consistency and sustainability, we purchase only the best machinery from certified suppliers, allowing us to secure certifications

How do you see the future of denim in the next five to ten years – in terms of materials, finishing technologies, and brand expectations?

Today, consumers fall into two groups: those who follow denim trends and those seeking uniqueness in style and quality. We strongly believe the future lies with the second group. We see quality and style as the true drivers of the denim market – not just branding, innovation, and sustainability. By excelling in these areas, Pioneer Denim aims to remain a leader in the industry.



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FROM SOIL TO STYLE



WeAr Denim spoke with **Bossa** about denim's role in its business, the inspirations behind its new collection, and how the company is linking innovation with sustainability.

How central is denim to Bossa's business today, and how has that role changed in the last five years?

Denim remains at the core of Bossa's identity. It is not just a product but the foundation of our global partnerships. In the past five years, denim has shifted from being treated as a commodity to becoming a platform for innovation, creativity, and sustainability. We have advanced yarn blends, pioneered dyeing techniques that cut water and chemical use, and embedded circular design thinking into every stage of production. Today, denim – the heartbeat of Bossa – is elevated, more purposeful, and central to the future of fashion.

Tell us about the three concepts of the new collection.

This season's collection is built around three narratives. Pieced Together is inspired by imperfection and reconstruction. It celebrates denim as a medium for individuality and circularity, using patchwork aesthetics and reuse-inspired fabrics. Saturday Night Indigo nods to the glamour of disco-era style, exploring bold indigo depths with metallic notes, shiny finishes, and playful, nightlife-inspired details. The Art of Nature draws from organic inspiration, blending hemp, Tencel, viscose, and linen with natural dye techniques and soft, fresh finishes.

What are Bossa's most important recent innovations?

A major achievement is our fancy woven denim with multidimensional character, created using melange yarns and dyeing processes that consume far less water

and fewer chemicals. Most of our electricity now comes from solar energy, further reducing our footprint. Equally important is our regenerative farm initiative, which supports farmers in transitioning from conventional to regenerative practices to improve soil health and biodiversity. By connecting agriculture and textile innovation, we ensure denim's positive impact begins at the source.

How do you help brands balance performance with lower impact fibers and finishes?

Our Ready2Wear concept delivers denim with very low shrinkage during garment production, along with excellent stretch and recovery. Through specialized weaving and techniques, we reduce resource-intensive garment finishing while maintaining durability and fit. Combined with low impact fibers and dyeing methods, brands achieve strong performance with a lighter footprint.

How can brands convey the sustainability story most credibly beyond marketing statements?

The key is grounding the story in regenerative agriculture and measurable transparency. Showing how soil health improves, biodiversity increases, and carbon is captured connects denim back to the land. Platforms like **Renoon** allow brands to share LCA data, soil metrics, and supply chain traceability in accessible ways. When sustainability is supported by proof points and the real stories of farmers and makers, it becomes authentic and trusted.



INTERVIEW

Can you summarise CHT's strategic focus in denim finishing today?

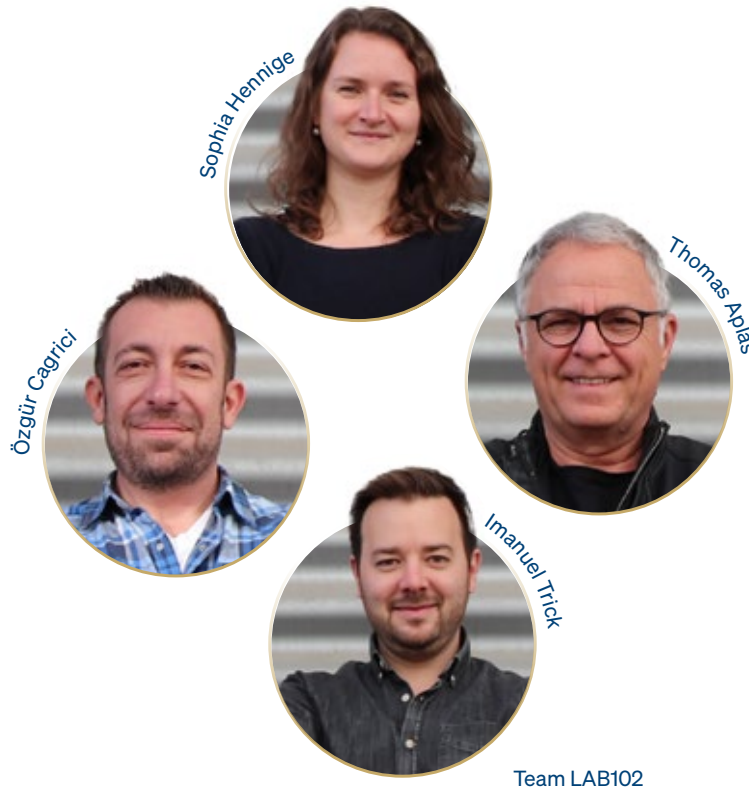
From the beginning, our focus has been on sustainable product solutions. LAB102, the garment division of the CHT Group, was the first chemical supplier to bring a true alternative to potassium permanganate to the market, and our goal remains to replace hazardous substances with environmentally compatible options. Our first permanganate replacement product was more than 99% biodegradable. We support the use of laser, nebulization, and ozone technologies in collaboration with machine manufacturers, while also offering fashionable finishes based on CHT's textile expertise. This allows us to provide customers with complete, ready-to-implement solutions.

What evidence proves organIQ removes the occupational and effluent risks that potassium permanganate holds? After all, it is one chemical replacing another.

It is true that one chemical is being replaced by another, but risks differ significantly. A parallel can be seen with formaldehyde resins: highly toxic in the past, they are now manufactured formaldehyde-free and applied only where needed. Potassium permanganate, however, is a persistent CMR substance with the highest level of water toxicity and risks to human health. Today it can be replaced by biodegradable products with far lower risks. While still chemically manufactured, these products are designed to be safer for both humans and the environment.

What are the main barriers that stop laundries from fully switching off permanganate today? Which of those barriers are technical and which are commercial?

Technically, alternatives can still have some limitations. These include slightly different color loss, less attractive spray patterns, occasional elastane damage, or corrosive effects on tools. Indigo is a large



Team LAB102

CHT: SAFER ALTERNATIVES IN DENIM FINISHING

WeAr Denim spoke with CHT's LAB102 team about their efforts to replace hazardous substances in denim finishing, and how economic considerations still outweigh sustainability in decision-making.

pigment molecule, and any agent that destroys it will carry certain challenges. That said, developments have brought us very close to perfect alternatives. Our first generation, organIQ BLEACH T, was almost universally applicable, but the price was the main barrier. Potassium permanganate simply remains cheaper – organIQ BLEACH T adds about €0.30 per pair of jeans to achieve comparable results. We are now finalizing the next generation of alternatives, with costs lower than before and significantly closer to permanganate. Safety and environmental compatibility remain central.

How does CHT ensure chemical traceability and transparency across the supply chain? Which actions would ultimately help the industry move to cleaner chemical solutions?

Traceability largely depends on labels and certification systems, which differ in how they evaluate chemicals and application methods. This allows some production to continue even with harsher chemicals. At least two major certifiers do not view permanganate use as negative enough to exclude products from certification. In 2018, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) classified potassium permanganate as a CMR substance, but only products containing it must be labeled – not the treated textiles. The situation would improve if treated textiles were labeled for consumers, similar to food packaging. Uniform standards among certifiers, banning harsh chemicals, are needed for real change.

Where is your R&D department headed next to reduce the trade-offs between cost, result, and sustainability?

Small savings on raw materials will not yield significant improvement and could compromise quality. Real progress depends on innovation. Our upcoming second-generation permanganate replacement aims to close the gap between ecological compatibility, cost, and performance.



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Elie Saab



Fatima Fransson

THE FABRIC OF CREATIVITY: UNCONVENTIONAL DENIM

EZEQUIEL CEVEY

Few materials possess the transformative quality of denim, evolving over time while maintaining its cultural and aesthetic appeal. Though traditionally associated with clothing, a growing number of designers and artists are pushing its boundaries, using denim in unexpected ways – from fashion accessories to interior design. One might even argue that everything looks better in denim.

Harry Nuriev's Denim Carpenters Workshop Gallery reimagines denim as a material for carpentry and furniture, harnessing its texture and durability for tangible design elements. This project challenges conventional perspectives, illustrating denim's versatility beyond fashion.

Similarly, **Bye Frisbie**, a design studio known for its meticulous craftsmanship and experimental approach, explores denim's potential beyond apparel. The studio transforms the fabric into handbags, home accessories, and even sculptural installations, incorporating techniques such as quilting, deconstruction, and patchwork to showcase denim's artistic and functional possibilities.

Copenhagen-Stockholm-based designer **Fatima Fransson** takes a sustainable approach, specializing in set design, furniture, and objects for the fashion and design industries. One of her standout projects – a collaboration with **Samsøe Samsøe** – featured an upcycled denim installation for their “Kaffebar” during last year's Copenhagen Fashion Week. This installation, consisting of a table and 30 stools crafted from repurposed and discarded denim, breathed new life into the materi-



Gabriella Meyer

al, demonstrating denim's potential in eco-conscious design. Gabriella Meyer, founder of **Denimcratic**, has also developed a denim furniture collection in collaboration with the talented artist Lorenzo Lorenzetti.

Even Haute Couture has embraced denim's reinvention. **Elie Saab's** collection, ‘Portrait of a Dream’, introduced unconventional denim creations. Inspired by the romantic radiance of an Impressionist garden, the collection seamlessly blended couture craftsmanship with artistic illusion. Among soft hues and signature brilliance, denim took center stage, featuring a denim sari, structured corsets, striking jumpsuits, and dramatic gowns, all adorned with crystal floral embroidery – elevating denim to new heights in luxury fashion.

Innovation and technology are advancing at an exponential pace, so these unconventional denim creations serve as a reminder that even the most established materials can be continuously reimagined. From art and interiors to couture, denim continues to inspire fresh ideas and alternatives to the broader landscape of design and production.



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SOKO CHIMICA INTRODUCES HYDROGEL

Soko Chimica, Italian denim-finishing chemical specialist, has launched Hydrogel, a compound for garment washing and finishing in denim processing. The technology turns water into a viscous gel state, which encases fabrics during treatment.

Hydrogel S supports stone-washing in a single gel bath, followed by a rinse. Hydrogel B is designed for hypochlorite bleach, where the gel limits chlorine penetration to protect cotton and elastomer fibers.

Water consumption is reduced by up to tenfold compared to traditional methods. The process aims to produce stone-bleached effects while preserving fiber quality.

The innovation was featured in a collaboration with **Pioneer Denim** and Adriano Goldschmied at **Pitti Uomo** in June 2025, demonstrating applications in denim collections.

sokochimica.com



KINGPINS EXPANDS GLOBAL 'MADE IN ...' SHOWCASE

Kingpins Amsterdam (Oct. 15–16, SugarFactory) will spotlight national creativity through its 'Made in ...' series, which connects heritage with the next generation of denim designers. The concept originated from CEO Vivian Wang's 2018 documentary *Indigo Story*. The film explored the craft of indigo artisans in China and inspired her to highlight the heart and soul behind textile production worldwide.

This season, **Made in España** debuts with **Tejidos Royo**, **Pinter Group**, **Jeanologia**, **Asutex**, **Textil Santanderina**, **Recover™**, and **Tintes Egara**, showcasing Spain's innovation in textiles, technology, and chemistry. An expanded **Made in Japan** area will feature leading mills and manufacturers, rare archival pieces, and a timeline of Japan's denim history.

For Wang, the series is more than products; it preserves and shares culture. "It is an opportunity to introduce young designers to the traditions, creativity, and innovation that define these regions," she says. The mission continues with **Denim 101**, a conversation-based program drawing on industry expertise to explore the denim supply chain – providing value to both seasoned professionals and newcomers. kingpinsshow.com



DIESEL EGG HUNT

Diesel unveiled its S/S 26 collection with a public Egg Hunt in Milan during Fashion Week, under creative director Glenn Martens. Using a dedicated web app, participants followed a map to discover 55 looks displayed inside transparent egg-shaped vessels across 18 city-center venues, from bars to churches. Piazza Beccaria acted as the hub, offering live music, entertainment, and bars. Prizes included custom pieces, full denim looks, and the IDR-Dome bag. Attracting 3,000 registered attendees, the event transformed Milan into an open-air runway, merging fashion, street culture, and performance.

diesel.com



US DENIM MILLS: WOMEN WEAVE THE FUTURE

US Denim Mills of Pakistan and Amsterdam's **House of Denim** have released Chapter 3 of the ROOTS project, titled Women Weave the Future. This edition highlights women's roles in the denim industry, building on prior chapters focused on heritage.

The capsule collection involves emerging designers from House of Denim's Talent Incubator and US Denim Mills' design and R&D teams. It combines craftsmanship with experimental design.

Fabrics are plastic-free, and dyed with natural indigo using eco-zero technology. Four bases feature sustainable finishing techniques, from vintage styles to future-oriented designs. The project promotes inclusion through cross-cultural partnerships.

The collection debuts at **Kingpins** Amsterdam in October 2025.

usgroup.org

THE FLAX COMPANY EXPANDS GLOBAL REACH WITH SUSTAINABLE HEMP AND LINEN

The Flax Company is seeing strong global demand for flax and hemp fibers as sustainability takes center stage. Both fibers are moving from niche status to becoming recognized commodities.

The company, led by Managing Director Hervé Denoyelle, has built its reputation on quality, innovation, and environmental responsibility, with more than three decades of expertise in the flax and linen sector. Two recent innovations highlight this approach. Marmara Hemp, widely recognized in Pakistan, is the only sustainable hemp fiber certified at the Cradle to Cradle platinum level and backed by a full Life Cycle Assessment. Meanwhile, Smart Linen, newly introduced in Pakistan, is the first Global Recycled Standard certified recycled linen fiber available on the market.

Looking ahead, Denoyelle sees flax-based textiles shifting firmly into the commodity category, ensuring steady growth over the next decade. Whilst domestic consumption of flax remains stronger in India, markets like Pakistan are becoming more important, as its appetite for sustainable materials is expanding.

theflaxcompany.com



GUESS JEANS OPENS TOKYO FLAGSHIP STORE

GUESS JEANS has opened its first Asian flagship in Tokyo's Jingūmae neighborhood, a four-story store designed collaboratively by Hiroshi Fujiwara of Fragment Design and ASA Architecture Firm. The concept blends Japanese and Californian craftsmanship, reinforcing the brand's positioning at the intersection of heritage and modern denim culture. The opening marks a strategic milestone for Chief New Business Development Officer Nicolai Marciano, who has placed cultural credibility and community engagement at the center of the brand's expansion. Celebrations included the exhibition 'The Next 40 Years of Denim', famed artist VERDY's exclusive 'Gift Shop with Friends', and a large-scale community party at hotspot ZEROTOKYO. The exhibition was first presented at **Pitti Uomo**, Florence. The events drew high-profile celebrities from across the Asian entertainment scene, underscoring GUESS JEANS' ability to connect with influential cultural voices. By embedding itself in Tokyo's street and fashion community, the brand strengthens its authenticity while expanding its global footprint. With flagships now in Amsterdam, Berlin, Los Angeles, and Tokyo, GUESS JEANS is positioning itself as a leading global denim lifestyle brand. [guess.com](https://www.guess.com)

THE LYCRA COMPANY ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The LYCRA Company announced two senior appointments past September. Robert Johnston, with 35 years at the company, is promoted to chief operating officer, expanding his remit from global manufacturing and IT to product development, R&D, and pilot production, focusing on innovation across fibers and fabrics, including denim. Doug Kelliher, formerly with **Timberland**, **Polartec**, **Velcro Companies**, and **Milliken**, joins as Executive Vice President, Product. Both report to CEO Gary Smith and will drive growth and high-performance solutions for apparel brands and retailers worldwide. [lycra.com](https://www.lycra.com)



DIGITAL APPAREL SCALES PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Digital Apparel, founded in 1986, is expanding capacity and pitching sustainability for global brand partners. The Karachi based manufacturer reports a production capacity of roughly 700,000 garments per month and a daily packing output of 18,000 pieces, supported by a fleet of more than 1,200 stitching machines and a cutting range able to process 22,000 pieces. Recent investments focus on washing and finishing technologies intended to reduce water use and improve effluent control: the company highlights new **Tonello** washing machines, advanced dryers, effluent treatment and reverse osmosis systems among its sustainability measures. Digital Apparel also cites large fabric inventories and an integrated product engineering team that combines European design input with local development to fast track range creation. The company frames its strategy around long term partnerships rather than transactional contracts, positioning collaboration and technical support as the route to higher value work for brands. Digital Apparel says these investments enable higher quality production at scale while meeting rising buyer expectations on environmental performance and compliance. digitalapparels.com

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MASTER TEXTILE PINECORE COLLECTION

Master Textile Mills Ltd presented their Pine Core Collection at **Kingpins** New York on July 25, 2025. The plant-based denim uses fibers from pineapple leaf waste, blended into lightweight, biodegradable fabrics. The collection features premium denim with sustainable production methods, including clean finishing techniques. Materials incorporate pineapple fibers for reduced environmental impact, alongside customization technologies. Developed through Master Textile's R&D, Pine Core marks a continuation of the company's 2020 PINECORE innovation, focusing on waste-to-value conversion. It supports eco-friendly practices, including reduced water use and biodegradability. The showcase highlighted denim's role in conscious buying, with applications in apparel for durability and comfort. mastertex.com



NEW DENIM INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM TO OPEN

The Denim Institute and Museum, co-founded by designer Loren Cronk and Jonny Saven, CEO of **L'Agence**, will open in mid-2026 in Los Angeles' Gerry Building. Spanning 1,000 square meters, it combines a public museum with an educational hub, dedicated to denim history and future innovation. The Legacy Brand Hall will showcase pivotal garments and 25 global brands that have shaped denim culture, while rotating exhibitions pair archival pieces with contemporary projects on sustainability and design. The adjacent Los Angeles School of Denim will provide hands-on courses in jean making, embroidery, laser finishing, and sustainable production. As a nonprofit, the institute plans festivals, forums, and interactive labs, positioning itself as a bridge between heritage, education, and industry collaboration. thedeniminstitute.org

ADVANCE DENIM EARNS C2C

Advance Denim, China's oldest mill, has become the first denim mill in China to achieve Cradle to Cradle (C2C) certification - one of the most rigorous global standards for sustainable manufacturing. The milestone reflects a shift toward circular design in denim production. Unlike traditional eco-labels, C2C evaluates products across material health, circularity, climate protection, water stewardship, and social fairness. To achieve this, the mill replaced harmful chemicals, redesigning fabrics for recyclability, investing in renewable energy, optimizing dyeing technologies, implementing closed-loop water systems, and ensuring ethical labor practices. The certification positions the company at the forefront of responsible denim production, providing brands with traceable, verified materials aligned with global sustainability frameworks and laws. It also sets a benchmark for the Asian textile industry, proving that circular manufacturing is achievable and commercially viable. Beyond compliance, this milestone fosters collaboration across the denim supply chain, enabling closed-loop systems where fabrics can be endlessly recycled. Advance Denim's achievement demonstrates that the future of denim lies in innovation and responsibility. advancedenim.com

Paige Adams-Geller Founder Paige	BRAND
Rohit Aggarwal CEO Lenzing	INDUSTRY
Omer Ahmed & Murtaza Ahmed CEO & Managing Director Artistic Milliners	INDUSTRY
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Ian Berry Denim Artist	ART
Nicolas Dreyfus CEO Frame	BRAND
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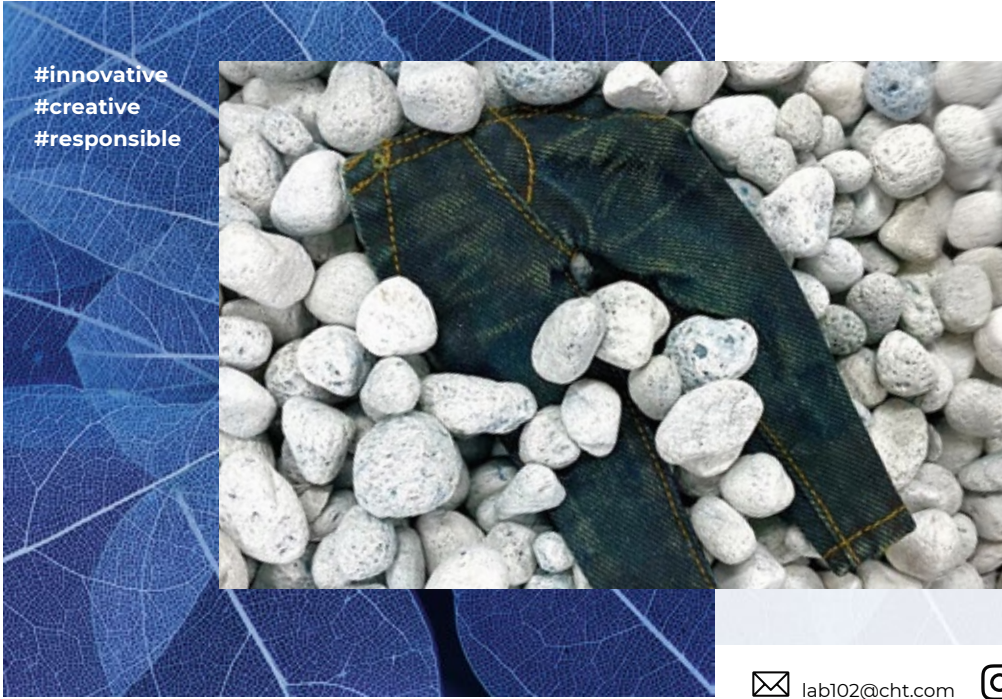


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