Bangladesh Protests Over Factory Tragedy

By MAYU SAINI and ARTHUR FRIEDMAN

AS THE DEATH TOLL mounted from the building collapse at Rana Plaza in Savar, a suburb of Dhaka, Bangladesh, the outcry locally and around the world got louder on Thursday.

With the city and the apparel industry in turmoil, efforts continued to rescue victims trapped under debris at the eight-story building that housed several garment factories.

The number of deaths reached 230, according to estimates from officials of the fire department in Savar, leaving hundreds injured. According to police officials, the owner of Rana Plaza, Sohel Rana, is being held liable in a case filed at the police station in Savar. The building housed five garment factories, a branch of Brac Bank and a shopping complex.

The five factories included Ether Tex, New Wave Bottoms, New Wave Style, Phantom Apparels and Phantom Tac, with New Wave Style being the biggest, with more than 1,000 employees. All the companies catered to export production.

The situation on Thursday was an eerie reminder of the aftermath of the Tazreen factory fire in Dhaka in November when 112 people were killed — violence incited by mobs protesting working conditions, angry speeches by labor leaders demanding the arrest of the factory owners and placating announcements of money for the families of the dead.

“We’ve all been through this so recently,” said garment worker Mariam Sheikh, who works in Savar and had friends in the building. “And we’re still fighting for survival. It’s basic safety too much to ask.”

Union leaders gave speeches, including one by Mahbubur Rahman Ismail, president of the Bangladesh Textile Garment Workers’ Federation, in which he said that keeping costs low comes at a high human cost. “Fatal health and safety faults remain,” Ismail said. “Faulty electrical circuits, inadequate escape routes and unsafe equipment are some of the major causes of deaths and injuries in accidents.”

SEE PAGE 12

George Soros Buys 7.9% of Penney’s

By EVAN CLARK

GEORGE SOROS apparently sees opportunity at the ailing J.C. Penney Co. Inc.

Soros Fund Management bought 17.4 million shares of Penney’s, giving the prominent liberal philanthropist and investor a 7.9 percent stake, according to a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Soros, who famously rocked the Bank of England by shorting the pound in 1992, was greeted heartily by other Penney’s investors. Shares of the company shot up 7.2 percent to $16.35 in after-hours trading. At that price, Soros’ stake is worth $283.9 million.

“The investment shows his confidence in the company,” said Walter Loeb, retail consultant. “It also shows that he thinks the return to a more promotional attitude will generate enough sales to return the company to profitability.”

Penney’s lost nearly $1 billion last year and 25 percent of its sales as former chief executive officer Ron Johnson tried to eliminate coupons and remake the store into a series of shops-in-shop.

Price promotions are now making a return and veteran Myron ‘Mike’ Ullman 3rd is again at the helm as CEO, working to calm vendors and deciding how to proceed with the shop-in-shop strategy. The company

SEE PAGE 3
Revlon Records Q1 Loss Amid Heavy Charges

By ALEXANDRA STEIGRAD

NEW YORK — Shares of Revlon Inc. fell 6.7 percent to $19.16 Thursday after the beauty company swung to a first-quarter loss on a charge related to the 2013 refinancing of its senior notes and the amendment of its bank term loan.

First-quarter sales edged up 0.4 percent to $331 million from sales of $330.7 million in the year-ago period.

Wall Street anticipated earnings per share of 26 cents on sales of $331 million in the year-ago period.

In the U.S., which makes up roughly half the company’s business, sales were up 4 percent to $192.1 million, driven by demand for Revlon and SinfulColors color cosmetics and Pure Ice.

Sales in the Asia-Pacific region declined 4.5 percent to $85.6 million, due in part to the impact of unfavorable currency fluctuations and the impact of the strong dollar on color cosmetics in China. Currency volatility also affected sales in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region, which logged a 11.1 percent decline, or sales of $40.7 million.

Higher sales of Revlon color cosmetics boosted the firm’s Latin American and Canadian businesses to $85.6 million, representing a 3.2 percent increase.

“The consumer is out there still buying product,” president and chief executive officer Alan Ennis told WWD. “The opportunity for us is to continue to bring innovation to the marketplace.”

According to the CEO, products such as nail art and lip products will continue to drive business in the U.S. At the same time, some of the trends from the Asia market, such as beauty balms and bar soap face creams, are catching on in America as well.

“We believe we’re under the cost curve of new products,” said Ennis. “In Asia we hit the West market and noted executive vice president and chief operating officer Chris Elshaw, who added that Western trends are becoming increasingly popular in Asia, as well.

“The lines are evolving,” Elshaw said.

Next up for Revlon, which just entered the Russian market at the end of March, will be the debut of a line of liquid color lip balms, CC creams and eyeshadow.

Revlon, which improved its capital structure by refinancing its senior notes, amended its bank term loan, reduced interest rates and extending maturities on its debt over the first quarter, has its sights set on more acquisitions in the future.

“We’re always looking for new opportunities,” the CEO offered.

In a separate filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission Thursday, Revlon disclosed Ennis’ compensation.

During fiscal 2013, Ennis’ total compensation rose 5.2 percent to $3.23 million from $3 million in 2012. His salary increased 1.2 percent to $921,233, as his nonequity incentive plan total compensation expanded 26.5 percent to $2.2 million. Ennis’ other compensation, which includes health and retirement benefits, rose 4.8 percent to $1.1 million. The company’s 401(k) contributions and life insurance premiums, remained relatively flat.

Because of vesting schedules and fluctuating stock values, stock and option awards aren’t necessarily realized by the named executives but, in accordance with SEC requirements, are reported to the SEC in a delayed fair value.

As the death toll mounted from the building collapse at Rana Plaza in Savar, a suburb of Dhaka, Bangladesh, the outcry locally and around the world got louder on Thursday. PAGE 1

Soros Fund Management bought 17.4 million shares of J.C. Penney Co. including George Soros, the investment philanthropist and investor, a 7.9 percent stake in the company. PAGE 1

Kenneth Cole moderated a panel following the screening of the documentary “The Battle of amfAR” at the Tribeca Film Festival Wednesday night. PAGE 3

The judge in the Christopher Finazzo criminal trial gave her final instructions Thursday morning before sending the case to the panel of 12 to begin their deliberations. PAGE 3

Lancôme has teamed with Alber Elbaz to conceive his first signature makeup collection. PAGE 6

Designer Olivia Putman has left her mark on the newest L’Air du Temps limited-edition bottle. PAGE 6

E.J. Cosmetics quietly opened its first retail flagship in New York’s Greenwich Village last week. PAGE 8

Fuegula 1833, a body and home fragrance brand, is setting sail this year in Europe and the U.S. PAGE 8

Eau de Lacoste L12.12 Noir, out in May, is the fifth installment in the men’s fragrance line inspired by the sports brand’s iconic polo shirt. PAGE 8

Chanel packed a capacity crowd into The Odeon in New York Wednesday for its annual dinner in honor of the Tribeca Film Festival Artists Program. PAGE 9

The after party for the new one-woman show about Sue Mengers, “I’ll Eat You Last,” in Wednesday in Manhattan was a star-studded affair. PAGE 5

London was clearly calling Millard “Mickey” Drexler, who was spotted multiple times around that city this week. PAGE 11

EYE: This season’s Gallery Weekend in Berlin got an exceptionally high kickoff Thursday night with “Cutting Away,” a runway show of iconic pieces spanning much of Yoshio Yamamoto’s career. For more, see WWD.com.

REVOLV RECORDS Q1 LOSS AMID HEAVY CHARGES

By MILES SOCHA

PARIS — Weakening demand in China and a sluggish Europe continue to rain on luxury’s parade, with France’s Kering the latest big player to report single-digit gains in the first quarter.

Kering, the parent of Gucci and Bottega Veneta that was previously on a high, Thursday reported sales in its luxury division, which accounts for 15 percent of its revenue, grew 1 percent in the three months ended March 31 — a steep deceleration from the 21.2 percent gain registered in the same period a year ago.

Luxury revenues in the first quarter totaled 1.52 billion euros, or $2.01 billion, compared to 1.46 billion euros, or $1.91 billion, in the year-ago quarter. Stripping out the impact of acquisitions and currency fluctuations, the increase slowed to 1 percent.

During a conference call, chief financial officer Jean-Marc Duplaix said greater China is far less buoyant than in recent years, dragged down by Taiwan and Korea, adding that he did not detect any signs of a pickup in the region. Mainland China registered a 10 percent increase in luxury sales in the quarter, he noted.

Duplaix trumpeted that Gucci continues to outpace upscale leather goods in Asia, with no logo bags now accounting for more than 50 percent of sales in Korea, versus 9 percent two years ago, for example.

He also said that Gucci would slow down the pace of openings in China to “safeguard the exclusivity of the brand.”

In Europe, market conditions deteriorated in the second half of the first quarter, according to the company, due to a reduction of fashions and accessories.

By contrast, the U.S. — remains quite sound and we don’t see why it should change,” Duplaix said. There is one exception: Sales in Hawaii are less robust as Japanese tourists spend more at home, driven to do so by a weak- ening of the yen, he noted.

In Kering’s luxury division, sales improved 3 percent in Western Europe, 6 percent in Asia-Pacific, 8 percent in North America, 10 percent in Japan and 15 percent in central and eastern Europe.

Revenues at flagship brand Gucci climbed 4 percent in the three months ended March 31. Only Yves Saint Laurent, now under the creative direction of Hedi Slimane, posted a double-digit gain, with revenues up 16.9 percent.

Duplaix said the initial results of Slimane’s new direction confirm its strong momentum despite late deliveries of spring merchandise, particularly in its directly operated stores.

The company is highlighting “significant growth” of men’s ready-to-wear at Saint Laurent along with “hats, scarves, gloves, leather handbags and a promising start for new shoe styles.”

As a whole, sales of fashion and leather goods gained 7 percent in the quarter.

Duplaix described a contract- ing picture for “other brands,” with gains in excess of 20 percent at Bottega Veneta, Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen offset- ting weakness at Sergio Rossi and Paul & Joe. Kering’s brands Girard-Perregaux and JeanRichard sold 10 percent of the group, for the sales, the group’s overall sales rose 1 percent, from 2.57 billion, or $3.12 billion, from 2.56 billion, or $3.08 billion, a year ago.

Dollar figures are converted from euros using the exchange rates for the periods to which they refer.

Francois-Henri Pinault, Kering chairman and chief executive officer, said in an interview that a comparison for luxury, up 18 percent in the same period last year, and blamed a “jumper environment, notably in Europe,” for a 4.9 percent decline in its nascent sport and lifestyle division.

Managing director Jean- Francois Palus noted that Europe accounts for about one third of revenues in the sport and lifestyle division, which grew 14 percent in the ap- pointment last weekend of Pandora’s Bjorn Gulden, once a professional soccer player from Sweden, as the brand’s new chief executive officer.

Kering’s results dovetail with slowing sales at its luxury players, which face strong currency headwinds, withering demand for raw materials and a lackluster European economy.

As reported, first-quarter sales at Hermès International rose 12.8 percent, the firm’s lowest pace since 2008, while LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton said revenues rose 5.3 percent in the first three months of the year as the Asia-Pacific market slowed.

Burberry reported sales in its fiscal fourth quarter ended March 31 rose 9 percent, while Compagnie Financière Richemont in January said fiscal third-quarter sales rose 9.3 percent.
Finazzo Guilty on All 16 Counts

By VICKI M. YOUNG

NEW YORK — Guilty, guilty and guilty again: 16 times in total.

Juries in the Christopher Finazzo criminal trial took less than four-and-a-half hours to reach a verdict of guilty for all 16 counts.

Finazzo, a former chief merchandising officer at Aeropostale Inc., was charged with 14 counts of mail fraud, one count of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy.

All the counts, as noted in his indictment, are in connection with an alleged kickback scheme that involved one of the retailer's key vendors, South Bay Apparel.

The trial lasted 13 weeks and is expected to last another week. The conviction means he is seeking more than $21 million, two investment accounts and four pieces of property from Finazzo, Bail was continued.

Mauskof gave her final instructions Thursday morning before sending the case to the 12-member jury past noon. She was present at the exit interview in which Finazzo was fired.

There is no evidence of a government witness in the case. Lawyers for Finazzo objected to his presence, even though both sides had already rested. Before government prosecutors could state why he should be able to stay in the courtroom, Slezak made the decision easy, stating, "I'll leave it to the government's case, the Finazzo's statements, was played for jurors. Both Julian Geiger, chief executive officer at the time, and Michael Cunningham, chief financial officer and president, have since retired from the teen retailer. Like Geiger and Cunningham, Slezak also alleged a government witness in the case. Lawyers for Finazzo objected to his presence, even though both sides had already rested.

The government paid more than $350 million for orders with South Bay, and the government paid more than $350 million for shares of his profits.

Dey in September pled guilty to a conspiracy charge, which carries five years imprisonment and the forfeiture of $7.5 million. He too awaits sentencing.

Soros Takes Penney’s Stake

(Continued from page one)

is said to have burn out $1 million in the first quarter and has engaged a number of consultants to help it raise funds beyond the $850 million recently drawn from its credit facility.

Penney's stock fell between 5 percent during Johnson's tenure and is having to regroup just as retail shares roar to new highs. It is a dichotomy that sets up the company as a potentially attractive investment, if it can reconnect with consumers.

On Thursday, the S&P 500 Retailing Industry Group gained 1.4 percent, or 12 points, to 755.35, setting a new record of 758.73 in midday trading. Retail was bulllish versus the broader market. The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended up 0.2 percent, or 24.50 points, to 14,700.80.

Lo interest rates have helped push the stock market to new heights even as the recovery has remained shaky.

Soros is Penney's fifth largest institutional investor. At the end of 2010, Ackman's Pershing Square Capital is the company's largest investor; he owns a 17.8 percent stake.

Soros, who agitated for change at the retailer and lost, said in June that he was sticking by his investment. Rounding out the top five was two institutions: T. Rowe Price Group, a mutual fund investment company; and the B ridden private equity firms and their subsidiaries.

Penney's stake is worth approximately $5.67 billion. That includes 1.3 million shares of Wal-Mart Stores Inc., worth $983 million, and 1.1 million shares of Macy's Inc., valued at $464 million.

Penney has dabbled elsewhere in fashion, for instance, repeatedly pumping money into e-commerce company Bluefly Inc. And last year, his Crystal Financial fund extend-
ed American Apparel Inc. $80 million in financing, allowing the racy U.S. producer to retire other debt.

The investor's reach is long on Wall Street and several retail analysts declined to comment on the investment, citing Soros as a client. A spokesman for Soros also declined to comment, as did a spokesman for Penney's.

Colin's amfAR Doc Hits Tribeca Film Festival

By LISA LOCKWOOD

NEW YORK — “We’ve made lots of progress. The drugs are still not perfect. There are a number of areas we need to focus on to make the drugs made in research,” said Mathilde Krim, cofounder of amfAR, speaking on a panel following the screening of the documentary “The Battle of amfAR” at the Tribeca Film Festival Wednesday night. (For more on the festival, see pages 9 to 11.)

The film, released by HBO Documentary Films, will air on cable networks in May coinciding with World AIDS Day. It was produced and directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, the creative team behind “The Celluloid Closet” and “Lovelace,” and executive produced by Kenneth Cole.

The film tells the story of how Krim, a research scientist, and Elizabeth Taylor launched the country’s first AIDS research foundation and changed the way people think about HIV/AIDS. To date, two people are believed to have been cured of HIV/AIDS, and things are progressing quickly in terms of finding a cure. “That is our goal, to have a cure that works and that works in a lifetime,” said Cole, chairman of amfAR.

Cole, who moderated the panel with Kim Roper, chief medical officer of amfAR; Regan Hofmann, a journalist, and Anna Chlumsky, wife of Jeffrey, said that historically the stigma was as devastating as the virus itself.

“People are afraid of it,” said Hofmann, who is HIV positive. “We have a chance to repopulate this disease. It’s at a tipping point, but it’s very much still an issue.”

Frost added, “We’re going to cure this disease. We’re going to see a lifetime. It’s a lifetime at a time when [life expectancy] is 80 years.”

Following the film and panel discussion, guests moved to Colicchio & Sons for a cocktail party to celebrate the documentary.

Uma Thurman said she attended because she’s a personal friend of the directors. “I’m looking forward to working with them. I’m inordinier of their work.”

She said this wasn’t her first amfAR event and her friend, the late Natasha Richardson, was a board member, and Thurman had joined her in her efforts.

She’s a strong supporter of amfAR and it’s important to realize that “this work is not done and how active the disease in our community today.”

Cole said it took a year and a half to make the film. They began working on the project after Taylor’s death and they wanted to do the movie while Krim, 86, “was still strong and willing.”

“I asked to tell her story, and she said, ‘I prefer you tell it a story,’” said Cole. He believes the timing is right to come out with a documentary such as this.

“There’s no better time than now. AIDS films create this false sense of hope. It’s as big a threat as it ever was,” he said. AIDS research has made significant break throughs and progress the last few years.

“We’ve literally learned how to keep everybody safe, which is huge,” he said.

Soros, the star of the HBO show “Veep,” said she was glad she was able to attend the screening.

The Chief Foundation was ready to take on the cause.

Hofmann said she does a lot of speaking about HIV/AIDS in schools and there’s a real need to awaken America’s youth. “This is a real risk. The President has been a strong sup-

porter of HIV (programs). You need to have the budget match the commitment. We can end AIDS. We need the political support and financial capital to get it over the end line. We’re closer than people realize,” she said.

Soros, who was chosen to make the film because people don’t know the history. “People think AIDS is a problem that’s been solved and it hasn’t. Young people don’t understand what it means. It’s good for classrooms. We’re really close to a cure.”

Although Woody Allen didn’t attend Wednesday night’s festivities (he was listed on the invitation), he did make a cameo appearance in the film, showing up at a dinner party at Krims’ apartment. Asked what Allen was doing in the film, Friedman replied, “Mathilde [Krim] called him and he said he’d do anything for her. He adores Mathilde.”
Shining Moment

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Elbaz: Fashions Art of the Eye

By JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — The prominent peepers in Alber Elbaz’s charming fashion illustrations foreshadowed his first eye-opening venture into makeup.

Lancôme has teamed with the fashion designer to conceive the limited-edition collection, called Hypnôse Show, which includes mascaras, eye palettes in black and white, and nail color. It is due to hit counters worldwide on June 13.

“Elbaz’s affection for Lancôme is longstanding. When I launched Lancôme International, told WWJD. (In the U.S. last year, for instance, the L’Oréal-owned brand ranked first among prestige mascaras and its Hypnôse line was the category’s top franchise, according to The NPD Group.)

“Elbaz’s affection for Lancôme is longstanding. After school, I moved to New York, and every time I would go back home I would stop at Lancôme and buy my mom a gift,” he explained. “I have this kind of nostalgia, and these memories of being around that band.”

Elbaz and Nabi met four years ago and recently decided to do the joint project centering on peppers. At first, Elbaz questioned what he could bring to the world of cosmetics, but then he had a flashback to a holiday.

“Once I was in a fancy place where there was this group of people that were all shining. The shoes were shining, the hair was shining, the skin, watches and diamonds — but the eyes were not shining,” he explained, sitting in a suite of Paris’ Le Bristol hotel. “I thought if I were to do a project I would love to do a happy eye project to make the eyes shine.”

Elbaz said the idea was to rework “in a different way, with a different perspective” Lancôme’s best-selling mascaras. So the designer began by conceiving the approximately 90-second video advertising campaign featuring his hand-drawn characters, which goes online June 3.

Elbaz said its story line was meant to feel like a fairy tale — “to go back to a fantasy, to go back to a dream, to a happy ending. I think we always remember stories more than objects.”

“Phyllis” the whole story was about going back to authentic and going back into a project that is less global and a little bit more personal and emotional,” he continued. “It was less generic. It was less glossy.”

Elbaz dressed Lancôme’s eye product packaging, including the Color Design 5 Shadow & Liner Palette.

“Here it was taking some of the best Dior [asking] what is it that you can do with it,” he said, adding they opted to maintain the Lancôme logo and iconic rose.

For Elbaz, it was evident what he would do for each product.

“It was all very easy somehow. When I saw Hypnôse Star, I thought, I’ll do stars. But I’ll do it my way,” he said. “When I saw [Hypnôse Doll Lashes] I thought, ‘Hearts will be right.’ And when I saw [Hypnôse Drama], I thought, ‘Dots — crazy dots, jumpy dots — will create drama.’

Elbaz and Lancôme executives together picked the colors of the makeup products.

“We wanted to choose colors that we know sell,” said Nabi, adding there are some hues new to the market as well. The Star mascara’s formulation, for example, is chockablock with black-blue pigments billed to make the whites of people’s eyes seem whiter.

According to Elbaz, best known as the designer of Lanvin, the process of creating the makeup collection didn’t differ much from that of crafting a fashion line.

“[I] think that making a cake or a perfume or a dress or jewelry — in a way it’s the same process,” he said. “You might speak French or English or German or Chinese, but in the end we speak with the eyes. It’s an international language.”

The collection will be sold through Lancôme’s traditional distribution channels. In the U.S., the makeup is to be available at the brand’s counters and through lancome.com, while the false lashes will be exclusive to Nordstrom.

Also in the U.S., the limited-edition Hypnôse mascaras — including Doll, Drama, Définicils and Star — are to be priced at $29. Each of the four corresponding eye palettes will be $51, and the false lashes, $33.

Lancôme executives would not discuss projections, but industry sources estimate the Hypnôse Show line will generate in excess of $15 million in retail sales globally. That’s higher than what Lancôme’s prior limited-edition collections usually have made, according to the industry sources.

The brand has long had a fashion focus. In November 2010, Lancôme introduced a holiday makeup collection with D’Yan Scott. More recently, it joined forces with Olympia Le-Tan for a one-shot minaudière containing her favorite shades of lipstick and nail polish. A limited-edition color cosmetics offering with Jason Wu will be on counter in September.

We speak with the eyes. It’s an international language.

— ALBER ELBAZ

Azature’s Diamond Shade

By MOLLY PRIOR

LAST FALL, while Kelly Osbourne was busy defending the $250,000 black-diamond manicure she wore to the Emmy Awards, Azature Pogosian saw the makings of a new business venture.

The Los Angeles fine jewelry designer and creator of the $250,000 nail polish rushed to release a more affordable collection with formulas infused with glitter and a small pave black diamond, dropped by hand into each bottle. His vision is to have the talons of the masses dripping in diamonds. Meanwhile, the one lone bottle of the $250,000 nail lacquer — which contains 267 carats of full-cut and faceted black diamonds — is on view at Selfridges. “[It] has not sold yet,” said Pogosian.

The initial $25 Azature Black Diamond Collection includes colors inspired by different types of diamonds, including black, red, pink, champagne, blue, green and canary. The latest color collection is set to launch in the next several weeks, and includes an assortment of softer, pastel shades including white, lilac and gray, among others. Pogosian emphasized the colors are not seasonal, but intended to flesh out the permanent collection.

The polishes are currently sold at Selfridges, Harvey Nichols Saudi Arabia, Ron Robinson, Ron Herman Japan and Kitson.

Pogosian has a particular fondness for black diamonds, even using the term “black mosaic.” He bought a mother and grandmother, and said they convey women’s empowerment.

Pogosian said the brightly colored collection is a marked change from the bespoke jewelry pieces he crafts using principally black and white diamonds. His jewelry has been worn by Rihanna, Fergie and Beyonce.

PARIS — Designer Olivia Putman has left her mark on the newest L’Air du Temps limited-edition bottle, which is due out worldwide in early May.

“It’s been my perfume for 30 years,” she said of the Nina Ricci scent that was launched post-World War II, in 1948. “I really wanted to bring something precious to it and something light at the same time.”

The original L’Air du Temps bottle, created by Robert Ricci and Marc Lalique, had doves engraved in its stopper and contained the eau de parfum juice by perfumer Francis Fabregas. Three years later, Ricci and Lalique introduced another flavor in the collection, with a pair of doves kissing, which remains its iconic bottle.

The design of L’Air du Temps’ flacon for the eau de toilette, meanwhile, underwent numerous iterations. What linked them all was that each featured the kissing birds. Most recently, in 2010, Philippe Starck reworked the bottle.

For her part, Putman colored the doves on the stopper blue and gave the flacon’s ridges the same hue. She said the blue came to her since it gave an airy feeling.

“For me it really evokes liberty,” said Putman. “I wanted discreetly to underline the work of Marc Lalique.”

The 100-ml. limited-edition bottle will retail in France for 85 euros, or $110.65 at current exchange. About 30,000 flacons are to be available in all, said Caius Von Knorrting, marketing director at Nina Ricci, which is owned by Puig.

He explained artistic iterations on L’Air du Temps — with the likes of Andy Warhol and Jean Cocteau — have been part of its tradition.

“The aim for us is to give the most freedom possible to artists with whom we collaborate, so they can interpret L’Air du Temps in their own fashion,” said Von Knorrting. — J.W.
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E.L.F. Cosmetics Opens First Flagship

By FAYE BROOKMAN

E.L.F. COSMETICS quietly opened its first retail flagship in New York’s Greenwich Village last week. A grand opening of the 1,200-square-foot space is planned for May 22.

It didn’t take fans to fure consume the news. A large, well-packaged neighborhood coupled with word of mouth on E.L.F.’s social media ve-

hicles contributed to the opening volume that has been above expectations, according to Joey Shamah, E.L.F.’s chief executive officer.

E.L.F.’s portfolio is now sold online, in retail partner stores and the branded store, which is believed to be the first mass value retail door in the industry. L’Oreal operates stores but prefers to use them as experimental laboratories for concepts to roll out to chains.

Industry sources estimate the boutique will achieve first-year sales exceeding $2 million. Two more stores are planned prior to the end of the year, said Shamah who added New Jersey is on E.L.F.’s expansion bucket list.

E.L.F.’s total revenues are estimated to top the $150 million mark.

E.L.F. is borrowing a page from prestige companies such as MAC Cosmetics, Bare Escentuals, Aveda and Origins, which sell products in vertically integrated distribution. Shamah isn’t concerned retail partners will feel E.L.F. stores compete with their offer but thinks that they will actually benefit from what E.L.F. learns in its own environment.

E.L.F. is rapidly expanding in major chains such as Walgreens, Wal-Mart and Target.

In particular, the company continues its strategy of trading consumers up to its Studio collect-

ing premium-priced products, which accounts for most of the merchandise in the store. E.L.F.’s portfolio also includes Essentials, the entry line available for $2, and Studio for $3 to $8.

The flagship offers about 550 stockkeeping units out of E.L.F.’s total lineup of 1,000 items.

“Can we bring our online experience to a store where women can touch and interact with the products,” said Shamah. “It also differenti-

ates us from the other companies in mass.”

The store sports gleaming white fixtures al-

lowing the merchandise to pop off the shelf. There are testers for all products, which Shamah said are cleaned frequently and changed out to keep them fresh.

Ten large television screens reinforce E.L.F.’s online messages with makeup artist how-tos and editorial coverage. Free makeup lessons by professional makeup artists as well as compli-

mentary makeovers are offered in the store. “We are getting great response and many people are booking appointments,” said Marianne Moreno, corporate retail liaison at the store.

Shoppers can sign up for appointments on-

line and place orders for in-store pickup as well. Currently, the store is open 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

As with other stores, those entering the store appeared to know the E.L.F. brand, but there were also tour-

ists and New York University students ventur-

ing in to check it out. Some compared the value-

ing prices to purchases received at a nearby MAC Cosmetics store.

With customers flocking to the store, E.L.F. has made some early tweaks such as planning bigger shopping baskets. “Yes that’s needed,” said one customer with her hands full of pur-

chases at the checkout.

La cocote Back With Black

By JENNIFER WEIL

PARIS — The Eau de Lacoste L.12.12 franchise is getting dressed up for evening — wear-

ing black, of course.

Noir, making its debut in May, is the fifth installment in the series to be released this year. The sports brand’s iconic polo shirt that was launched in early 2011 with a trio of fragrances, the third, fourth, Rouge, came out in 2012.

“(Noir) still remains in the field of territory, but it’s a bit more intense,” said Carla Liuni, vice president of fash-

ion and beauty at P&G Prestige, La cocote’s fragrance licensee. She explained the woody ar-

omatic juice, which was created by P&G with International Flavors & Fragrances, con-

trasts watermelon and dark chocolate notes. It also in-

cludes notes of Egyptian basil, lavender, verbena, cashmeran, coumarin and patchouli.

As with the other fragrances in the L.12.12 line (which name integrates the first Lacoste logo shirt’s moniker), Noir’s bottle has a textile crocodile logo and is partially textured to evoke the polo shirt’s cotton material.

The single- and double-page print campaign was photo-

graphed by Kay Mucke. Bo Plat directed a video adver-

tisement, which comes in 20-, 15- and 10-second versions and will be shown on TV, movie screens and the Internet. The spot features an origami’s hands manipulating a white Lacoste polo shirt into a cres-

cent moon shape and then transforming a black polo shirt into the Noir bottle.

We continue to build on the strength of the original L.12.12 campaign,” said Liuni. For digi-

tal, there are to be some customized local activities, such as QR code-initiated videos, as well.

Noir will be launched in May in the U.S., the U.K., the Middle East and parts of Europe. In July it’s to come out in France, Spain, Benelux, Germany and the Asia-Pacific region. Then Russia and Latin America will get the scent in August.

En Europe the 30-ml. eau de toilette spray will retail for 40 euros, or $52 at current ex-

change, while the 100-ml version will go for 67 euros, or $87.13.

Although P&G executives would not discuss numbers, indus-

try sources estimate Noir will generate $50 million in sales over its first year retail sales.

The L.12.12 franchise has been growing by double digit since its launch and currently ranks among the top ten men’s prestige scent lines globally, ac-

cording to industry sources.
NEW YORK — Joan Smalls (and her romper) stopped traffic Wednesday at the door of The Odeon, where Chanel packed a capacity crowd into tight quarters for its annual dinner in honor of the Tribeca Film Festival Artists Program. For more, see page 10.
CHANELS ANNUAL DINNER in honor of the Tribeca Film Festival Artists Program can feel like a lesson in particle physics. The combined draw of a coveted fashion house and New York film and art insiders packs about 200 into The Odeon in Tribeca, tight quarters to begin with. The lack of much personal space can make for some easy observational work, as was the case at the party’s eighth annual go-round on Wednesday night. There was David Neville of Rag & Bone hearing from a man he had just met who owned “two pairs of your jeans,” or there was Michael Pitt sneaking a cigarette in the downstairs bathrooms, or there was Sophie Auster trading great moments in cocktail history with Salman Rushdie. “Apparently the Odeon invented the Cosmopolitan,” Auster said. “Is that right?” Rushdie said. “I didn’t know that. I knew that the St. Regis invented the Bloody Mary.”

Others in attendance included festival cofounder Robert De Niro with wife Grace Hightower, Peter Brant and Stephanie Seymour, Griffin Dunne, Taraji P. Henson, Uma Thurman and, of course, a strong showing of starlets, models and socialites in Chanel such as Kiernan Shipka, Dree Hemingway, Riley Keough, Joan Smalls, Mickey Sumner, Sofia Sanchez Barrancos, Atlanta de Cadenet and Alexa Chung.

Julie Delpy was at the festival for the premiere of “Before Midnight,” the third installment of director Richard Linklater’s decades-spanning romantic narrative she’s costarred in with Ethan Hawke.

“So very few actors or even writers are allowed to do that,” she said of the film’s time span before bumping into fellow actress Radha Mitchell.

“How’s it going?” Mitchell asked.

“Good. I was doing an interview,” Delpy explained. “Finish the f--king interview!” Mitchell demanded. “What was the question?”

Thus instructed, WWD asked again about carrying a character over three films for 15 years. “I love that character,” Mitchell interrupted. “I didn’t get to see it, but it’s like the movie I want to see at this festival... It’s screening at the festival... I need to know what happens next.”

“You’re going to find out,” Delpy said. “A lot of action happens in that film.”


— MATTHEW LYNNCH

Deepa Mehta

EPIC IN SCALE and spanning 60 years of Indian history, Salman Rushdie’s Booker Prize-winning novel, “Midnight’s Children,” was once called un likable by literary critics. Oscar-nominated director Deepa Mehta has never bought into that rhetoric.

“Even with all its characters and grand themes, I could see this story as a film in my head. I never felt it was impossible to make into a movie, but it was a challenge — by far the biggest challenge of my career,” Mehta told WWD at the Toronto International Film Festival. In theatres today, Mehta’s sprawling yet faithful adaptation of Rushdie’s 1981 saga tells the tale of two boys, one rich, one poor, born at the exact moment in 1947 when India gained its independence from the British Empire. In a twist worthy of Shakespeare, the infants are switched at birth by a maternity nurse — an action that results in many tragic ironies, particularly in the life of protagonist Saleem Sinai (played by Satya Bhabha). Yet both babies, along with other children born at this precise moment in India’s history, arrive on earth possessing telepathic powers. Hero Saleem later uses these gifts as he matures to unite India’s chosen children and help them discover the true meaning behind their powers.

“When I first read Salman’s book in 1982, I remember feeling this sense of complete wonderment,” said Mehta. “I knew these characters he had created. They were just like aunts, uncles and other people I knew back in India. That’s why I wasn’t scared off by the book’s scale or surreal magic,” Mehta explained.

Instead, the Indian-born filmmaker focused on Rushdie’s message about family and the idea that the families we choose can be stronger than those we are born into. “Family and hope are everything in this story. That’s what makes this exotic tale relevant in today’s world,” said Mehta.

To date Mehta is best known for her Elements trilogy: “Earth” (1996), “Fire” (1998) and 2003’s Oscar-nominated drama “Water,” which told the story of an eight-year-old child widow in India forced to enter a house of widows for the rest of her life. As in those films, “Midnight’s Children” overflows with the painterly details and lush cinematography that have become the hallmarks of Mehta’s career. “Midnight’s Children” also features a screenplay and narration by Rushdie, who signed on in 2008 to adapt what is widely regarded as the book that made his literary reputation.

“We were having dinner together one night and I blurted out, ‘Who has the film rights to ‘Midnight’s Children’? It wasn’t planned. I just asked and Salman agreed,” said Mehta. Rushdie spent two years turning his 600-page book into a 130-page script. The final result delivers a fascinating look at India’s transition from British colonialism to independence. Rushdie’s script is also bolstered by a strong cast including Bhabha as Saleem and Siddharth Narayan as Shiva, the other character switched at birth. Shot in Sri Lanka in 2011, “Midnight’s Children” was filmed under the alias of “Winds of Change” to avoid any protests by fundamentalist groups and the production delays they might trigger.

Over the years, Mehta and Rushdie have both had run-ins with fundamentalists. While attempting to film “Water” in India in 2000, Mehta received death threats and saw effigies of herself burnt in the streets by angry crowds. Hindu protesters also destroyed the film’s sets and harassed Mehta’s crew. As a result, filming was relocated to Sri Lanka in 2003. Rushdie, too, was surrounded by one of the most notorious controversies in literary history, in 1988, with the publication of his fourth novel. “The Satanic Verses.” The work inspired book burnings and protests from Muslims around the world and the fatwa calling for Rushdie’s death issued by Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989 that sent the author into seclusion for several years. The Iranian government did make a complaint to Sri Lanka, so we couldn’t shoot for two days. But that was it for political setbacks,” Mehta said. The Toronto-based filmmaker also prepared diligently for the physical challenge of shooting 70 days of footage — twice her usual load — in 64 locations.

The first thing I did was get a trainer and get in shape. Then I stopped smoking,” Mehta grinned as she reminisced about the live costras, tanks, bombs and myriad of stunts crammed into the film. “You can’t shoot a mammoth story like this and work 18 hours a day if you’re not physically prepared.”

— CONSTANCE DROGANES
FASHION SCOOPS

PRIME CUTS: Berlin has always been a city that likes to link fashion and art, and this season Gallery Weekend got an exceptionally high fashion kickoff Thursday night with “Cutting Age,” a runway show of iconic pieces spanning the career of Yohji Yamamoto’s career along the cream-colored interior of St. Agnes Church, soon to serve as an exhibition space for Berlin gallery owner Johann König, the Audi-sponsored event drew an interdisciplinary crowd. Alicia Kwade was among the artists in attendance, joining collectors Thomas Grässlin and Christian Biega, his wife, Karen, walked the runway. Stefano Pilati, Cerrone Silver, singer Nadja Michael, and, most notably of all, Yamamoto himself. This was the designer’s first show of his work in Germany, outside of presentations of Y-3, his 12-year-long collaboration with Adidas.

From current and past collections took to the runway, his signature visions in black sharing the stage with a number of highly colored stylish riffs. While melancholy is a word often used to describe Yamamoto and his work, neither the show nor the designer lived up to that characterization. It was a beaming Yamamoto who bounced on stage to accept the audience’s applause, pointing his fingers in a “you’re the man” kind of rock star gesture.

Asked if we should consider the show “Yohji’s greatest hits,” the designer said chance had a lot to do with the selection. “We have offices in Paris and Tokyo, and it was hard to find pieces in good condition in the archives. So we couldn’t include anything from the Eighties and had to start with 1992,” he told WWD backstage after the show.

While he hasn’t changed his critical stance regarding fast fashion, he said, “I feel a sort of wind starting to blow... because people are tired with fast fashion and too expensive accessories.”

And, no, he’s not the last of his kind. “It’s not a question of generation but of how hungry you are,” he said. “So new young powerful designers are coming from Eastern Europe, Korea, Taiwan, maybe Brazil. He’s ready to welcome them, noting, “I need rivals to fight with.”

“Cutting Age” was just the first part of a four-day Yohji-thon in Berlin, which continues with “An Evening With Yohji Yamamoto” at Soho House on Friday with Yamamoto commissioning with architectural designer Asif Kahn about fashion, his label, and what 2013 holds for him. On Saturday, the video installation “5 Cuts/ A Visual Dialogue” will premiere at the creative space Made, while on Sunday, Berlin’s leading conceptual retailer Andreas Freisam is premiering “Untitled Berlin,” an installation designed by Masaaki Nihei, Yamamoto’s longtime set designer of choice. — MELISSA DRIER

DOING A DREXLER: London was clearly calling William “Drexy” Drexl, who was spotted multiple times around town this week. At one point he was chatting with his pal Sir Philip Green in the lobby of the Dorchester Hotel — Green’s home away from home. There was another, he was at Claridge’s having bacon and eggs with Nick Ashley and James Eden of the men’s tailored clothing and accessories label, Private White V.C. J. Crew junks stay tuned: Private White V.C. is a vertically integrated Yohji-based company that specializes in men’s clothing, accessories and outerwear with a rugged, utility feel inspired by military garments and classic British men’s wear silhouettes. Ashley, a son of the late Laura Ashley, launched Ashley and former head of Alfred Dunhill men’s wear, is the designer. Expect to see the brand’s peacoats, raincoats, and Harris Tweed city-to-country jackets coming to a J. Crew outlet near you. — SAMA RANNA CONTI

REGULAR HOURS: “This time of day is very interesting — there’s this thing up in the sky I’m not familiar with,” said party photographer Patrick McMullan at the Architects & Personalities lunch Thursday at The Metropolitan Club in Manhattan.

The event, which was held to raise funds for the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club, honored McMullan along with Betsy Pitts and Claudia Overstrom of the Howard, Sandra Bernhard, Julie Taymor, Robin Roberts, Hannah Storm and Byllye Damron that she wanted to honor Ephinor with an award given to a writer or director with a distinctive voice that embodies her spirit and vision. “One of my earliest supporters in the business was Nora Ephron,” Rosenthal said. “She was so smart and always had on a crisp Armani suit. I wanted to do something so she’d still be part of this festival.”

The $25,000 prize, which was funded by vogue.com, went to Meera Menon, whose film “Farah Goes Bang” is a road trip comedy about a woman in her 20s who tries to lose her virginity while campaigning in 2004 across America for presidential candidate John Kerry.

“We have so much credit card debt from making the film,” moaned Menon as she accepted the prize. “For our film, we’re trying to follow [Ephron’s] lead in taking issues that are kind of painful and fear ridden.”

Wearing jeans, a tweed jacket and loafers, Close said she’s about to film an ensemble movie, “Low Down,” in L.A. and is working on a project with Julie Lynn and Bonnie Curtis, producers of “Albert Nobbs.” “I’m trying to do theater,” she said. “I’d love to work with Julie [Taymor]. She’s basically a genius.”

Also at the party was the former news anchor-turned-documentarian, who said she is working on a film for HBO about De Niro’s father, who was an Abstract Expressionist painter. Storm, another news anchor-turned-director, is currently shooting ESPN’s “Nine for IX” documentary series about compelling women athletes. Storm said her subject, basketball player Sheryl Swoopes, has been called to the female Michael Jordan. “I’m looking to expand and do more films about women and girls telling their stories.” — SHARON EDELSON

BEHIND THE VELVET ROPES: Decades after Richie Notar learned the ropes as a Studio 54 busboy, he is still working the fashion crowd. When his old boss, Ian Schrager, rang him up to throw an impromptu 20-person dinner party Saturday at Notar’s new swanky eatery Harlow in New York, Notar was at the ready. The Nobu cofounder even trekked to the flower district for the peonies Schrager requested. Tables were shuffled, candelaflas with 16-inch candles were found and staffers were repeatedly read the riot act. “All day I kept saying to them, ‘Do you know how important this is to me?’” Notar said with a laugh. “When I went by the table, Ian said, ‘Richie used to be a busboy for me. I’m really proud of him.’ That meant a lot to me.”

By chance, another Studio 54 regular, Stephen Burrows, was at Harlow that night. The East 56th Street address has age-old media ties, having been built by William Randolph Hearst, who gave it to his mistress, Marion Davies. “Half the people who dine out aren’t there for the meal — they’re doing it because they’re doing a deal,” Notar said.

Notar’s Studio 54 know-how will be put to use this fall when choosing uniforms, lighting and the decor for a new place in the same space. — ROSEMARIE FEITELBERG
The latest tragedy is leading to demands for greater action. Although none of this is new, passions have been heightened by the deaths, with growing demands from the factories to confront and tackle compliance issues. There were mourning processions and separate rallies by unions and other groups in the city. Mantu Ghosh, president of the Garment Workers Union Centre, called for the arrest of the owner of the building, a sentiment echoed by Abul Hossain Rubel, the president of the Co-ordinator of the Ganasanghati Andolan. Although compensation is one of the demands, many labor leaders said that it is hardly ever done to the right extent and often takes too long to process.

Compensation was one of the demands the government responded to immediately, revealing a donation of 5 million taka, or $70,500 at current exchange, to victims; 20,000 taka, or $250, to the families of the dead, and 5,000 taka, or $65, to the injured, officials of the labor union said.

An official of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association told WWD that although the agency is working to improve the situation of the millions who work in it also faced the wrath of the mobs as textile workers pelted their office with stones on Thursday. All five of the companies located in Rana Plaza were members of the BGMMEA.

BGMEA also held a press conference on Wednesday in which it unveiled the formation of three committees to oversee rehabilitation, compensation, and proper treatment of the injured. Other action items included the opening of two centers, one at the BGMEA offices and another at Savar, to collect information on the workers at the factories who were injured and three blood collection units.

Mushhid Khan Alamgir, Bangladesh驻新乡总领馆, confirmed that a five-member committee has been formed to investigate the situation and submit its report within seven working days. The report, which will probe the cause of the collapse, will be based on the number of casualties, will include a police official and be headed by an additional secretary of the home ministry.

Labels found at the location included those from Joe Fresh, the Canadian company owned by Loblaws Cos. Ltd. A Joe Fresh spokeswoman said, “We remain persistent in our effort to reach our vendor in Bangladesh to understand what caused this tragedy and to determine precisely how to support the affected families. We are committed to supporting local authorities in the investigation of the affected families.”

The garment company Loblaw “has robust vendor standards designed to ensure that products manufactured in these factories are socially responsible and ensuring a safe and sustainable working environment.”

“We engage international auditing firms to inspect against these standards,” she said, “and still not work with suppliers who do not meet our standards. Our audits align with those of industry around the world, however in light of the recent tragedies in Bangladesh, we recognize that these measures do not address the issue of building construction or integrity. Loblaw is committed to finding solutions to this situation by expanding the scope of our requirements to ensure the physical safety of workers producing our products.”

International organizations have been demanding that other companies whose labels were found at the location, including Primark, Matalan and Mango, be held accountable as well.

The British mass-market clothing chain Primark confirmed that one of its suppliers used the second floor of the Bangladesh factory. The company is shocked and deeply saddened by this appalling incident at Savar, near Dhaka, and expresses its condolences to all of those involved, a Primark spokeswoman said. "Rana to go uncharged, said the institute, which is run by longtime labor rights activist Charles Kormanyo.

The institute noted that the workers in the factories told it from 8 a.m. to as late as 10:30 p.m., often seven days a week. The workers are paid what the institute described as “starvation wages” — 12 cents an hour for helpers, 22 cents for junior sewing operators and just 26 cents an hour for even the most senior sewing operators.” About 80 percent of the workers are young women 18, 19 and 20 years old. The Bangladesh garment workers also want the U.S. government to support a General System of Preferences trade benefits to Bangladesh until the Bangladesh workers finally have the right to organize independent unions. The U.S. Trade Representative’s Office is currently reviewing and Means Committee, who were part of a group of House lawmakers that have pressed USTR to complete its review of Bangladesh’s compliance with labor eligibility requirements under the GSP said in a joint statement, “This tragedy mandates the need to immediately do more to address safety conditions in Bangladesh’s garment sector in a way that helps Bangladesh workers and respects their rights. We urge that anyone responsible for these deaths be prosecuted to fullest extent of the law.”

Rep. George Miller (D, Calif.), senior Democrat on the House Education & Labor Committee, called on Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which was also said to subcontract at the facility, to commit to improving conditions. “The recent actions taken by the company on a voluntary basis are not working to alleviate the deadly negligence that continues to cause such mass human loss and suffering,” wrote Miller, referring to Wal-Mart’s recent statement to stakeholders for improved factory health and safety initiatives, including a code of conduct policy for unaffiliated subcontractors.

A Wal-Mart spokesman said, “We are saddened by this tragic event. Our investigation has confirmed Wal-Mart had no authorized production in this facility. If we learn of any unauthorized production, we will take appropriate action based upon our zero-tolerance policy on unauthorized subcontracting, including severing ties and taking steps to promote stronger safety measures in factories and that workers are paid properly.”

In his letter, Miller wrote, “What is needed is the binding commitment on the part of Wal-Mart, in the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement, to maintain a role that is one of the nation’s wealthiest and largest employers. Wal-Mart has a unique role and responsibilities as the world’s largest retailer and set the best standard not just here in America, but in the rest of the world. The situation in Bangladesh remains unacceptable for any employer much less our nation’s largest.”

Judy Gearhart, executive director of the International Labor Rights Forum said, “We need the brands to make significant changes in how they monitor their suppliers and to make a meaningful commitment to improve conditions.” Gearhart said the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement, a binding agreement that has been endorsed by two global brands, would create rigorous inspections, transparency and oversight and ensure that workers and their organizations are in an active role to solve the problems.

The Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production organization that accredits the Bangladesh’s garment industry has grown into one of the largest in the world, so these are the challenges of establishing ethical working standards there. It is of the utmost importance to us to ensure that all WRAP-certified facilities maintain socially compliant practices on an ongoing basis so that responsible and safe manufacturing is interwoven into their daily operations.

WRAP said none of the five factories located in the Rana Plaza building are certified by the organization. One of them, New Wave Style Ltd, was certified in the past. Their first certificate expired in 2007, after which they did not renew it until 2011. An unannounced follow-up audit conducted at the facility by a WRAP auditor in March 2012 revealed that the facility was failing to maintain compliant practices in accordance with WRAP’s “12 Principles.” The factory failed to appropriately address health and safety, and their certification expired in October and was not renewed.

WRAP remains dedicated to promoting socially responsible manufacturing around the world, and will continue to devote significant resources to this goal in Bangladesh.” It said that WRAP, which is made up of over 1000 members, is committed to helping make the work it is doing through this tragedy feasible. The organization is already working with suppliers in the global garment industry, and will continue to work with them to ensure that the factory is making work that still needs to be done to make this tragedy feasible. The factory is working with suppliers and its partners to improve safety and products, and will continue to be a responsive and responsible supply chain management partner that helps factories maintain safe, responsible and ethical working environments.”

— WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SAMANTHA FEUER AND SHAYN EDelson