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Final Report

Interstoff Asia

The Home of Cutting-Edge Textiles

12 – 14 March 2008, Hong Kong

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Interstoff Asia Essential in Hong Kong fulfils a vital role in the thriving world of eco-friendly fashion

Over 8,000 buyers from 50 countries & regions visit the Spring 2008 fair

Exhibitors and visitors strongly endorse the concept of a niche event for eco-textiles and functional fabrics

As the only tradeshow with a strong focus on eco-textiles and functional fabrics, Interstoff Asia Essential in Hong Kong fulfils a vital role in the thriving world of eco-friendly fashion. The Spring edition of the fair, held 12 – 14 March, attracted thousands of designers, merchandisers and garment-makers from all over the world, hungry for information about the latest eco-textile and functional fabric products available in the global marketplace. Pioneering manufacturers of such products from China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea were onsite to meet the demand, while specialists from recognised eco-textile certification bodies were on hand to offer information and answer questions at the fair seminars.

“I decided to come to this show after I saw the brochure mentioned eco-fabrics. In New York, everything is eco-fabrics,” said Mr. Parmi Cheena of International Clothing USA – one of over 8,000 visitors to the show. “It helps that the fair is so close to our factories in China. We attend a lot of shows; this one will definitely be on the list.”

“We came to this show to promote our product eco-softener, a

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technology that dramatically reduces the water, energy and time consumption in denim processing,” said Ms. Capri Jin of Dow Corning (Shanghai) Co. “We have participated before in other textile shows that include eco-textile elements, but nothing like Interstoff Asia Essential which makes eco-textiles a main focus of the show. This is a very good idea; it helps us to attract the right buyers. We have received lots of serious enquiries.”

Similar positive feedback from both supply and demand sides of the textiles industry suggests that the new focus on eco-textiles and functional fabrics at the show is a welcome move. With a high number of cutting-edge products from leading suppliers, product display forums and a strong series of relevant informational seminars to support the show, buyers found Interstoff Asia Essential to be a key source of information.

“I came to the show for the seminars,” said Mr. Ken Lau of Luenthai Garment Co. in Dongguan, China. “We are trying to develop our organic cotton wash and cotton dye, so I came to the show to learn more on the topic. There is a good level of technological information here. I will come back again next year, just for the seminars.”

The seminar series at Interstoff Asia Essential regularly attracts audiences upwards of 500 people, and this year was no different. In an effort to demystify the array of eco-textile accreditation programmes, four top certification bodies – Control Union, the Japan Organic Cotton Association, the Institute for Marketecology (IMO) and the Testex Swiss Textile-Testing Co. – were invited to speak about their programmes, the technical criteria involved and the benefits of certification. The seminars were a huge success, with over 100 people crowding into each session.

The Design & Trend seminars – hosted by Elementi Moda (Italy), the Society of Dyers & Colourists (UK), Carlin International (HK) and Italtex (HK) – also attracted healthy numbers of designers and garment manufacturers.

Spring 2008 also saw the launch of a new eco-labelling system at Interstoff Asia Essential. Developed by the fair organisers in association with Sachiko Inoue, one of Japan's leading trend forecasters and textile experts, the system explains clearly what elements of a product are eco-friendly (the raw materials, the manufacturing or the finishing process) allowing greater transparency for buyers and easier marketing for exhibitors.

"The new eco-labelling is a good system; it helps buyers to better understand the materials or the manufacturing process of the eco-textiles," said Mr. Akira Kawashima, Senior Director of JFW – Japan Creation Steering Committee, who brought a group of 20 top Japanese companies to the show for the first time. "Eco-friendliness is still at the beginning stage in the industry. For example, we still need to do dye fabrics for the eco-market because natural dye colours are still limited. But the trend for eco fabrics is to combine eco with fashion. In Japan, we have advanced technology in producing eco-textiles, so we are trying to produce fashion garments with eco fabrics and good design."

"We are very happy as we were well located and had lots of visitors who had a high interest in Japanese fabrics. Most of the buyers are buying agents based in Hong Kong who belong to overseas companies from Italy or France. Buyers here have more specific aims, they know about quality and they are really focused," said Mr. Kawashima.

In total, over 220 exhibitors participated in the fair, with products ranging from fashion fabrics to garments and accessories. Those not directly involved in eco-textiles or functional fabrics found their participation to be no less rewarding: "This show is an important source for high quality designers and garment converters," said Mr. CL Wu of Fabrix Plus, Taiwan. "The visitor traffic level is just right, so we have enough time to discuss business with every customer. We met lots of high quality clients here and are very happy with the result."

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Representatives of major fashion labels and high-street retailers came in their droves to see what new and innovative products were on offer. Buyers recorded onsite included Adidas, Benetton, Billabong, Burberry, Columbia, DKNY, Donna Karen, Eddie Bauer, Esprit, French Connection, Gap, Giordano. H & M, JC Penny, Jockey, Juicy Couture, Levis Strauss, Li & Fung, Liz Claibourne, Macy's, Marks & Spencer, Nike, Polo Ralph Lauren, Quiksilver, Rip Curl, Tesco, Triumph, Victoria's Secret, Vivienne Tam, Wal-Mart and Warnaco.

Speaking at the end of the show, Ms Wendy Wen, Director of Trade Fairs for Messe Frankfurt in Hong Kong said: "We are delighted with the results of this year's Interstoff Asia Essential Spring. Our consultations with exhibitors and visitors confirm that the direction of the show is right; the Asian apparel textile industry wants a forum where it can learn about cutting-edge developments in textiles, especially in eco-friendly products and functional fabrics. The response to our seminars and trend forums only serves to reassure us that our concept is correct – we will continue to work hard to promote the show as a high-quality, niche event and a source of unparalleled market information and ground-breaking products."

The next edition of the show will be held from 8 – 10 October 2008 in the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. For more information, visit www.interstoff-asia.com.

For information on all Messe Frankfurt apparel textile fairs around the world, visit <http://interstoff.messefrankfurt.com>

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Background information on Messe Frankfurt

Messe Frankfurt is Germany's largest trade fair organiser, with 423 million euros in sales and more than 1,400 employees worldwide. The Messe Frankfurt Group has a global network of 14 subsidiaries, five branch offices and 48 international Sales

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Partners, giving it a presence for its customers in more than 150 countries. Events "made by Messe Frankfurt" take place at more than 30 locations around the globe. In 2007, Messe Frankfurt organised a total of 113 trade fairs, of which 69 took place outside Germany. Messe Frankfurt's exhibition grounds, 578,000 square metres in size, are currently home to nine exhibition halls and an adjacent Congress Centre. The company is publicly owned, with the City of Frankfurt holding 60 percent and the State of Hesse 40 percent. For more information, please visit our website at: www.messefrankfurt.com