

Dear Readers,

This issue is coming out at the beginning of a year that is likely to bring significant geopolitical, and therefore economic, change. We asked some industry leaders about their expectations, hopes and fears. They came up with inspiring diverse responses, but the overarching idea was the same: if you know your customer inside out and offer an original product, you will be fine. There are many ways to get to know your clients – from online analytics to loyalty apps to focus groups. However, the retailers we interviewed for this issue seem to agree that nothing beats the good old-fashioned method of spending more time on the shop floor.

In the era of Instagram culture and market oversaturation, consumers are increasingly looking for individuality and originality. This means retailers need to be constantly on the lookout for new labels and limited editions. As always, there are plenty of those to be discovered in our Lookbook, Labels to Watch and Next Generation sections. Despite these labels' credentials, investing in new names can be risky. WeAr always aims to report on ways to get hold of exclusive and unique products while minimizing risks, be it through collaborating with established designers on capsule collections, offering in-store customization, or seeking out up-and-coming designer collectives.

Some product categories deserve your particular attention at this moment in time. One such example is denim, which is currently making a huge comeback, and active wear, the growing importance of which has been highlighted by a few of our experts. It is also worth noting that the aforementioned 'athleisure' trend is prominent not only in clothes but also in textiles: our fabric report will shed more light on this.

And do not stop at creating a unique and versatile brand portfolio: make sure your store environment is equally exceptional, capable of change and responding to customer demands. Our Storebook will help you to generate some ideas.

As A/W 2017 tradeshow are about to kick off, we are excited to reveal that WeAr has launched a private members club for international buyers to help with your individual requests and give buyers travel tips. If you feel you are eligible to join the club, email: sv@wear-magazine.com.

If 2017 is all about change, let us make it a year of positive shifts, of responding to consumers' demands and offering solutions to the problems the industry faces right now.

If the industry works together, everyone will benefit in the long term.

As always, we wish you every success in your business,

Jana Melkumova-Reynolds and Shamin Vogel
Editors