

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Daphne Guinness, Jason Wu, Ralph Rucci, Zac Posen to speak at New York Fashion + Design Conference Nov. 10-11

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*Gianfranco Ferré white blouse exhibition at the Prato Museum of Textile. Image courtesy of Initiatives in Art and Culture*

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

Attracting speakers such as fashion giants Daphne Guinness, Jason Wu, Zac Posen and Ralph Rucci, Initiatives in Art and Culture on Nov. 10-11 will host in New York the 19th annual New York Fashion + Design Conference with the theme, "White: Palette, Prism, Possibility."

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The **event** comes on the heels of two other fashion conferences hosted by IAC on themes such as Gold and Pearl. This year's event is being held at the CUNY Graduate Center in midtown Manhattan.

"The fashion and design conference takes a color or a concept and uses that as an organizing principle, celebrating and subverting to arrive at multiple meanings as well as applicable strategies for career and intellectual approach," said Lisa Koenigsberg, founder/president of **Initiatives in Art and Culture**, New York.

In this interview, Ms. Koenigsberg explains the thinking behind the **conference**, its speaker lineup and what attendees can expect to learn from the two-day event. Please read on:

Why the focus on this theme of palette, prism and possibility?

The conference has three different principle emphases.

The first is to differentiate between the idea of an optic hard stop white and the white that is comprised of many shades and tones and is actually a spectrum within a color.

The second is to explore how white is used idiomatically in such phrases as "it's in black and white" to describe something or to suggest that something is true because it has been published.

Another phrase is "white noise," which is a constant sound that in effect is no longer heard or "white space," which suggests a place of possibility for opportunity.

Finally, the conference considers the wealth of fibers and precious substances that begin their life in one of the

tones within the spectrum of IAC's fuller conception of white to suggest that instead of a hard stop white is the color of beginning or origins and therefore of possibilities and hope.

How is this year's event going to be different from last year?

This year marks **IAC's 19th annual design and fashion conference**.

Last year, our conference was on pioneers and pioneering, which includes an examination of those who are first or innovations that revolutionized and designs that became iconic.

This year is the third year we focus on a color. And, hence, the approach is distinctive.

Why is the world fascinated with white?

Black and white are often seen as the opposite of such colors as red, yellow and blue.

In fact, white's reflective prismatic and nuanced possibilities indicates that it embraces all colors and it is perhaps that duality of being both one and all that is its most compelling and absorbing characteristic.

Your speaker line-up: what was behind the choices?

Four words: quest for the best.

First and foremost, Initiatives in Art and Culture searches for the authoritative voice and expertise in relevant areas to which we are thrilled to welcome color authority Donald Kaufman; renowned photojournalist Harry Benson; Shaun Leane, who transformed the relationship between fashion and jewelry with such trailblazing works as *Contramundum*, the diamond glove for Daphne Guinness.

At the same time we dive deeply into natural fibers with a panel lead by industry legend Walter Wilhelm and celebrate the blinding light of diamonds with leaders from the stone world.

Our speakers have both wisdom and the ability to invert the expected and take us on an adventure.

Once again, we are also delighted to welcome leading lights. Among them are Zac Posen, Jason Wu and Ralph Rucci. And industry architects such as Gary Wassner.

What can attendees expect to learn from this edition of White?

This year's fashion and design conference, it's 19th year, explores the full spectrum of a color superficially seen as the absence of such color.

Attendees will glean knowledge related to materials and substances that begin their use for life as one of white's hues. They will learn about and meet experts and jewelry and fashion trailblazers. They can explore new strategies and solutions in areas ranging from social media to models of doing business and grasp that our understanding of history is often shaped by those who capture our moments.

Importantly, we hope all will be encouraged to approach the future and next steps within their own lives and careers with the hope that is an essential characteristic of white.



*Ralph Rucci textile manipulation, black and white fashion. Image courtesy of Initiatives in Art and Culture*

How is organizing the White conference different from others that you host, such as Gold and Pearl?

The fashion and design conference takes a color or a concept and uses that as an organizing principle, celebrating and subverting to arrive at multiple meanings as well as applicable strategies for career and intellectual approach.

The gold conference uses gold jewelry as a lens for a 360-degree examination of all aspects of gold from technique to ornament, from teaching to sourcing and sustainability to further every aspect of the gold world.

By contrast, in American Art, we look at American visual culture from the Colonial period through 1945-1950 in order to understand excellence cultural identity and expression, and the network of individuals such as artists, dealers and collectors, institutions including museums and galleries and auction houses, and such critical networks as the marketplace and forum.

All of these are essential to a thriving art culture. Yet another approach is that taken in the annual Arts and Crafts conference which explores the manifestation of ideas and concepts throughout every aspect of cultural expression to foster understanding of and a market for all related cultural output as well as that created subsequent to the era but in one way or another relating to the movement's essence. [This] in contrast to assigning specific stylistic characteristics to arts and crafts.

IAC sees art, architecture and organizations as expressions of core at times, contradictory complex mandates for cohesion.

[Please click here to register for the New York Fashion + Design Conference Nov. 10-11](#)