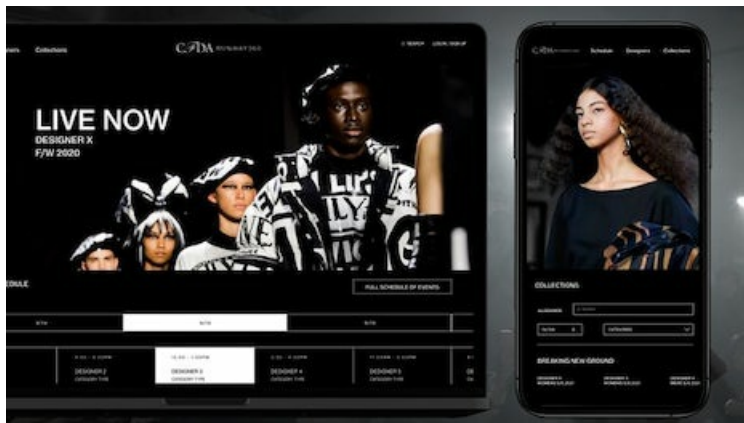


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## CFDA, responding to new reality for US fashion, turns to DE-YAN, NuOrder for digital portal

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*The Council of Fashion Designers of America, with Runway360's launch, is turning to a digital portal as a one-stop resource for its U.S. fashion designer community and those who interact with it. Image credit: CFDA*

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

The Council of Fashion Designers of America in September will debut a new platform as a digital hub to help bring all aspects of a collection launch in a one-stop-shop environment.

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Called Runway360, the portal offers myriad forms of support to designers, including fashion show, media, sales and consumer activations to connect the entire ecosystem as COVID-19 has upended the business. New York design studio DE-YAN will develop the portal, and business-to-business ecommerce NuOrder will lend key support to this initiative.

"What we are most excited about with our partnership with the CFDA is the support and tools we will be able to bring to emerging designers and designers of color," said Olivia Skuza, founder of Los Angeles-based NuOrder.

"Now more than ever, there are so many challenges with growing a business and to be in a position to be able to provide our services and resources and empower these individuals and organizations is where we feel we will bring the greatest value," she said.

"We are also setting up the brands that join through the CFDA program on a NYFW-specific platform where retailers will be invited to review the looks and the product in more detail, as well as engage with the designers to place orders directly in the platform.

"As the showcase is active during the same time as Coterie, Project and MICAM, which are hosted on the NuORDER platform, the CFDA participants will also benefit from the added traffic generated through those partnerships."

In its latest move, the **CFDA** is following in the footsteps of the watch business, with Geneva-based **Watches & Wonders'** debut as an industry-embracing digital portal for Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie's watchmaker members.

Show and sell

Runway360's arrival will chime with New York Fashion Week, which for this season only will run Sept. 14-16.

The platform will become a permanent feature and primary destination for consumers, media, trade and retailers to connect with U.S. fashion collections and the community.

Indeed, designers on the CFDA Fashion Calendar's Official New York Fashion Week schedule and year-round will be able to present their collections, providing each participating brand with a modular, customizable page for their storytelling and digital activations, the CFDA said.

The portal will support augmented and virtual reality, 360-degree capabilities, live video streams, ecommerce extensions, consumer shopping features and social media integrations.

Additionally, Runway360 will let designers host virtual press conferences, present press kits and show product images.

On the ecommerce side, fashion brands will be able to activate the integrated shopping elements on their pages to directly target consumers, the CFDA said.

DE-YAN is creating the portal.

NuOrder will offer a virtual sales showroom to support emerging and established designer businesses. The focus will be on rising talents and designers of color.

"The activities post-show/presentation is where NuOrder plays a role," Ms. Skuza said. "We are enabling brands and designers to conduct the market process virtually by offering them access to the platform's market leading tools including digital linesheets and catalogs, ordering and virtual showroom technology.

"In the absence of travel and face to face interactions, now more than ever brands and designers need solutions to facilitate the end-to-end market process," she said.

"Additionally, the participating designers are able to incorporate all the assets they produce from their shows and presentations during NYFW into the experience of their NuOrder portals.

"By connecting their creative work directly to the featured products and designs in the NuOrder platform, brands are able to translate their participation in fashion weeks into orders, thereby seeing a direct ROI."

In line with online

New York-based CFDA was founded in 1962, now boasting 477 members comprising the U.S.' leading womenswear, menswear, jewelry and accessory designers.

The organization hosts the annual CFDA Fashion Awards, owns the Fashion Calendar and runs the official New York Fashion Week schedule. The CFDA Foundation is its allied nonprofit for members to raise funds for charitable causes and events.

Since the COVID-19 lockdowns, the fashion industry worldwide has been thrown into turmoil.

Established and emerging U.S. designers took a major hit and in the process of adapting to a new reality of social distancing, slowed footfall in stores, stalled international travel and tourism, and the rise of ecommerce, compounded by sluggish consumer spending.

"This transformational time in fashion requires innovative business tools," said Steven Kolb, president/CEO of the CFDA, in a statement.

"The CFDA is proud to launch Runway360 and champion the talent of our members and our industry," he said.

"Runway360 is more than a response to social distancing and restricted travel. The digital platform will help designers faced with short-term needs caused by COVID-19 and support future market weeks including live fashion shows."