



CAF
CENTRAL ASIA FASHION
AUTUMN-2021

28 МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ВЫСТАВКА МОДЫ
INTERNATIONAL FASHION EXHIBITION

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september **2021**

Organizer / Организатор
CATEXPO

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The professional B2B fashion exhibition Central Asia Fashion Autumn-2021 held in Almaty diagnosed the problems of post-pandemic fashion retail.

Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Korea and Kazakhstan presented new collections at the CAF fashion show of the Autumn-2021 season. 68 manufacturers and suppliers brought collections to Almaty for the coming season for pre-order and purchase by buyers and exchanged information on the state of the industry.



The professionals of the fashion industry have been waiting for this event for a year and a half. Not all retailers survived the pandemic, but Central Asia Fashion has become not only a long-awaited fashion festival and a platform for exchanging opinions, but also gave hope for the restoration of the fashion business.

Metin Arslan, director of the international exhibition company CATEXPO, noted: "There was no exhibition for a year and a half. And now we see that people really miss full-fledged work, communication, new contacts, ideas and business inspiration, which is so necessary in this area. They, as never before, were waiting for our exhibition, and we are glad that we started working again".

The Central Asia Fashion exhibition became the first post-pandemic offline event for the fashion industry throughout Central Asia. At the same time, it retained all the basic elements, strengthening its position as the leader of the B2B direction in the exhibition business.

Meanwhile, according to the data collected from the exhibitors, the results of the project exceeded any expectations: "We have excellent pre-order and purchase indicators among the exhibitors, about 95 percent. And this means that all the exhibitors were able to find new customers, and the visitors-retailers of Kazakhstan were able to place an order and will soon receive a new product", - Metin Arslan added, "Of course, we are satisfied and look to the future with great hopes".

Preparation for the project took several months, complicated by the conditions of the new, post-pandemic reality, but the efforts of the organizers, despite observing the quarantine restrictions, made the project unprecedented. So the 28th season of the CAF exhibition opened with a bright show on a special transformer podium, which has no analogues in the world and changes its configuration several times a day. On the following days of the event, 15 fashion collections from 6 countries of the world showed the full scale of the preparation of exhibitors and the quality of the presented brands.



The presentation of a special project was also unique: a fashion show and a photo exhibition of the ethnic-mystical collection of the Kazakh designer Tarbia Aidymbaeva "Mystical heroes of the great steppe". All looks of the collection are the author's creative view of the mythology of the ancient land of Kazakhstan. Each has a cultural and ethnographic value and reflects the character and mystical properties of the heroes.

Collection "Mystical heroes of the great steppe". Designer Tarbiya Aidymbaeva.

The business conference on retail within the framework of the exhibition once again gave intellectual food for thought to all specialists in the fashion industry. Thus, experts and leaders of the fashion retail market spoke about the trend in online trading, omnichannel sales, forecasts and survival during quarantine changes.

The data presented in the retail analytics block by a specialist in working with retail chains in Kazakhstan NielsenIQ Kazakhstan, Sergei Bulanov, indicate that every fifth Kazakhstani has suffered from COVID-19 in economic terms, and 46% of respondents in Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Karaganda and Pavlodar of respondents began to actively save. However, despite this, the lockdown gave impetus to the development of online sales, and after the restrictions were lifted, there was a significant increase in sales in the fashion category.

At the same time, Elbegi Abdiev, deputy chairman of the board of the Union of Trade Networks of the Republic of Kazakhstan, said that Kazakhstanis began to pay more attention to the price of goods. According to the Union, the percentage of those who "tied their belts" increased by 20 indicators. The specialist also noted that trade employees make up 17% of the total employed population of the republic, and by the end of 2020, the volume of trade fell by 7.3%, which caused a reduction in jobs (about 35% of trade entities lost from 30 to 40% of personnel). "The country's retail business has become more competitive. Strong players have become stronger, weak players have become weaker," - the speaker concluded.

The information is confirmed by data based on the history of search queries presented by an expert in fashion retail and chief-moderator of the CAF conference Milena Ershova: it is reported that 50% of survey respondents are not ready to spend more than 17 thousand tenge on buying clothes.

Panel discussions also aroused keen interest and attention of the participants. Experts agree on one thing: the pandemic has hit the trade sector, and the government's support measures are not enough.

The discussion with the participation of Kazakhstani developers became especially hot. "More than 1 million Kazakhstanis work in the field of trade. And what is happening all this time with shopping centers looks like a theater of absurdity", - shared the chairman of the Union of Retail Real Estate Developers of the Republic of Kazakhstan, co-owner of the Aport malls Dmitry Revn, - "Since the beginning of the year we have been waiting for information on the outbreaks coronavirus infection, no information available. However, according to officials, shopping centers are to blame for the spread of the disease. We just need support, expressed not only in easing quarantine measures, but also in terms of taxes."

At the same time, buyers who came from all over Kazakhstan and neighboring countries shared a common problem: it is difficult to pre-order and deliver goods in the new realities for a number of reasons. As the owner of the boutique in one of the pavilions of the Almaty shopping center Adem said: "We have been selling winter sportswear for many years. This year, from January until now, we are waiting for delivery from China. Fortunately, our product is seasonal and we will be able to sell the shipment that arrived with a delay next year. The exhibition literally saved us from empty shelves and lack of work as such. " Regional owners of the fashion business are no less pleased that the exhibition was able to bring a sufficient selection of



representatives of fashion brands to Almaty, thereby eliminating logistical problems and the need to travel abroad. "For ten years we have been purchasing goods in Italy, directly from manufacturers," says the owner of a chain of fashion boutiques from Uralsk. - "Now the usual scheme of work turned out to be impossible for us for a number of reasons beyond our control. At the exhibition, we found three manufacturers from Turkey, from whom we were able to make not only the purchase of goods for the near future, but also place a pre-order for the next season. The realization that planning for the future and stability in the new realities are possible is incredibly inspiring for further work. "



Russian buyers are also experiencing problems. According to specialists who arrived at the exhibition in Almaty, at present, goods from Turkey are poorly supplied to Russia. However, in order not to change the segment and the supplier, retailers are forced to go to Kazakhstan for pre-order, and then, having received the goods, send them under the terms of the Economic Zone of the Customs Union.

In addition to exchanging views and finding solutions to common problems, manufacturers and buyers received recommendations from marketing and digital specialists. In particular, a marketing and sales consultant, partner of the BMIND consulting company, an accredited consultant to the EBRD, Tatyana Soldatenko presented data according to which events are still the most effective sales tool, and fashion blogger and actress Yana Bobryka introduced the business case and on her own example, she told about the increase in the average check of a retailer during special events.

One of the most useful topics for business owners was the advice of fashion-beauty blogger Sabina Rustembaeva: however, as the master class showed, many representatives of SMB, whose sales rapidly went online, still do not have the skills to work in social networks. There were so many questions from entrepreneurs that it was unanimously decided to invite the speaker to the new season of the exhibition in March 2022, to an extended master class and a second session with updated data.

Recall that the international fashion exhibition Central Asia Fashion has been held in Almaty twice a year (March and September), since 2006. Each season, up to 200 fashion brands from around the world take part in the exhibition. Pre-order and purchase of collections are carried out at the stands, buyer's and design shows are held on the podium, the business zone is represented by a specialized business conference, within which panel discussions, analytical sessions, thematic seminars, round tables and master classes are held. All three main elements of the expo-business-show are aimed at making deals and actively conducting business processes.

The organizers thank the media representatives for their interest in the project and are open to cooperation. In the near future, as materials from the business conference are prepared, extended data from some panel discussions and analytical sessions will also be provided.

When using the release data, you must indicate the source: International Fashion Exhibition Central Asia Fashion.