

Filo 59 is an exhibition with purpose: sustainability and collaboration

Filo, the yarn and fibre exhibition in Milan, happens twice a year and is one of the smaller - but nonetheless more important international yarn and fibre events; very much for professionals, serious and focused. **Janet Prescott** reports.

Filo 59, taking place in the first part of 2023, it opened with an increased level of visitors and exhibitors. Filo is now set in the Allianz MiCo Milan, gaining the much needed extra space as its popularity has grown. It deals in the direction of travel of the textile industries in modern times and is based firmly on sustainability and has introduced regular discussion events to air-important issues.

Filo's roots are in the famous Biella and Piedmont textiles area in Northern Italy. The exhibition has now become a multinational yarns and fibre event, showing some of the first directions in collections for each new season Autumn Winter 2024/2025. Its

systematic commitment to sustainability is longstanding and still evolving. For instance, Filo Flow is an area dedicated to ecologically sound practices and designs for natural and synthetic yarns. Filo is an intimate show with a chance for buyers to communicate one-to-one with the exhibitors. E-Filo, the exhibitions online shop, enables for constant contact with exhibitors to collaborate and discover new products.

The 59th edition of Filo saw 91 companies from Europe, Turkey and Poland, featuring German, Swiss and Italian specialist spinners, as well as big names like Lurex and Lenzing. Omafil, one of the season's newcomers, substantial Turkish spinners

of nylon yarn, say they intend to return, aiming to bridge the gap between their traditional quality and modern innovation and technology, having already achieved ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and Oeko-Tex certification. Delegations from Ethiopia, France, Jordan, India, Peru, U.K., Spain, South Africa, the USA, Switzerland, Turkey and Uganda were invited, with cooperation of the Piedmont Regional Government.

Three issues were linked together for this year's themes, as a challenge and opportunity for the textile industry: sustainability, traceability and the supply chain. This goal was introduced at the opening ceremony by managing director



Visitors admire Filo 59 fabrics

Paolo Monfermoso who described the aims as a path to make Filo a working platform for both visitors and exhibitors that focused on the supply chain in order to offer space and importance to both players. Monfermoso says: “The circular economy and recycling of materials are essential in the process to reach increasingly sustainable textile products, in environmental, economic, and social aspects.”

Filo’s creative director, Gianni Bologna, has pioneered a series of well attended Dialoghi di Confronti or Comparison Dialogue scheduled discussions on pertinent issues, relating to companies all along the supply chain which have now become a fixture. One of these protagonists was Alan Garosi of both Fulgar and Pompea, both companies hold expertise in performance yarns. As a leader in innovative and eco-sustainable man-made yarns, he put forward his ideas about sustainability, traceability and collaboration within the supply chain, concluding that one of the main issues was the very fast pace of change which had to be observed by stages all along the chain.

Manlio Carta, chief executive officer of Organic Cotton, based in Sicily described reviving cultivation of cotton fibre in the island, a premium product common until 50 years ago. He was hailed as one of the welcome additions to the Textile Supply Chain Integrated Project, which is promoted by Piedmont agencies and government.

New developments were also introduced by Carlo Covini, business development manager of Lenzing AG and Enrica Arena, chief executive officer of Orange Fiber, introducing Tencel Luxe, a continuous filament dedicated to the silk and fancy yarns sector. Tencel Limited Edition Orange Fiber is expressly aimed at high fashion production.

A new source of information was launched – ‘Sustainability from A to Z’ – carried out with C.L.A.S.S. (Creativity Lifestyle and Sustainable Synergy) by Giusy Bettoni the Italian pioneer in environmental initiatives. It is aimed to help companies by indicating good practice to reduce the impact of production on the environment. A new ZDHC Award, (Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals) to acknowledge outstanding chemical management by exhibitors proved popular and this will be carried forward to the next edition.

Trends coming through for Autumn Winter 24/25 indicated the complexity



Colourful fabrics were on display



Trends coming through for AW 24/25

of the industry where seasonality is less pronounced in many collections, with more seasonless yarns on show. Wool is still a major player, hairiness was a desirable feature for yarns, fabric and blends, and twists were common to emphasise this; blended, wool and silk mixes, linen and wool, for more formal looks, pointing to an emerging fashion for simple unadorned but high-quality designs, plain undyed looks for a new simplicity.

European Linen, now renamed, Alliance for European Flax-Linen & Hemp has been hailed as 2024’s most on-trend eco fibre on the horizon, blended and finished to show its versatility. The European sector forms 80% of world production, says Marie Demaegt, the Alliance’s textile and sustainability director.

Mixed yarns included camel hair and alpaca, mixes of Merino and linen, featherweight wool twisted with manmade yarns, cotton and wool. Synthetic and manmade yarns included viscose,

lightweight polyamide and micro polyesters. Recycling is rapidly gaining strength; yarns here include recycled wool, recycled polyester, reclaimed cotton, many blended with virgin fibre to retain resilience or feel.

Among Filo’s exhibitors are leading companies in recycling raw materials, the topic often at the core of the dialogues and discussions. The newest information for the next Filo60 is already online, in the form of a preview of Gianni Bologna’s trends, this session named Alchemies, leading on from the current season’s Imaginary Geographies, a video with creative proposals, which previously explored the themes of ‘Other Lands’, ‘Other Seas’ and ‘Other Skies’. Alchemies is based on eco, innovative bio and techno products for high performance, full commitment to the environment, not forgetting fun. More details seen at Milano Unica, where Filo exhibits. The 60th Filo edition will be held in September, the 20th and 21st at Allianz MiCo Milan. 