



**Fashion Industry's Challenges and Opportunities:  
Local and Global Sustainability and Social Impact**

Monday, April 15, 2024 | 6:00 – 7:15 PM (Reception to follow)  
Cooperman Commons, Geffen Hall, Columbia Business School  
(645 West 130th Street, New York, NY 10027)

[Register](#)

**Biographies:**

**Kikka Hanazawa** is an internationally recognized social entrepreneur and nonprofit leader focused on social impact, women's entrepreneurship, and sustainability in the fashion world. Ms. Hanazawa's passion aligns with businesses and projects that make a positive difference to society. She is also the co-Founder/CEO of Yabbey, a digital fashion library and a co-founder of Fashion Girls for Humanity, an award-winning nonprofit organization. Previously she was the CEO of VPL, a global fashion brand and a certified B Corporation. Prior to VPL and her social entrepreneurship, she played a senior leadership role at Theory, managing its strategic development, M&A activities and IPO and was the CEO at Cygne International, where she led a management buyout of the international business. Hanazawa began her career at Itochu Corporation and worked at the New York office.

Born and raised in Tokyo, Ms. Hanazawa graduated magna cum laude from Columbia University's School of General Studies in Art History in '00 and holds an MBA from Harvard Business School. Ms. Hanazawa has served on Columbia University Board of Trustees and the School of General Studies Board of Visitors.

**Miki Higasa** is the founder of Kaleidoscope Consulting a brand strategy and media relations company with a focus on brand development, content creation and media and marketing planning. The company also specializes in creative direction consulting. Some of Kaleidoscope Consulting's clients and past projects include, Thom Browne, Sacai, Repossi, Brooks Brothers, Moncler and LeSpotsac. Prior to Kaleidoscope, she was an International Press officer and Special Projects director at Comme des Garçons in Tokyo and New York for 16 years. She is also the co-founder of Fashion Girls for Humanity. Born and raised in NYC, Ms. Higasa received a Bachelor of Arts in Asian Studies from University of Michigan.

**Ngozi Okaro** advocates for a fashion industry that honors planet and people. She founded Custom Collaborative to support no/low-income women launching sustainable fashion businesses and careers. Custom Collaborative serves fashion-industry entrepreneurs, workers, corporations, and consumers. Ngozi is a Commissioner of the NYC Equal Employment Practices Commission, and a Director of the NYC Economic Development Corporation. Distinctions include: 2022 Goldman Sachs Black Woman Impact Leader, Vogue Business 100

Innovator, and Conscious Fashion Campaign & United Nations SDG Honoree; 2021 AARP Purpose Prize Fellow, and Crain's Notable Woman in Business; 2020 "World-Changing Women in Conscious Business" winner, from Conscious Company Media and Kate Spade; 2019 NYC Fair Trade Coalition "Changemaker of the Year", and New York Women's Foundation "Spirit of Entrepreneurship" awardee. She is certified by New York University's Center for Philanthropy and Fundraising and was a 2014 Environmental Leadership Program Fellow. Ngozi graduated from Georgetown University Law Center and Morgan State University.

**Wendy Waugh** has worked for Theory for 23 years. Her current role focuses on the Sustainability of Theory from Raw Material Sources, the Farms, to the Final Product in the stores, the supply chain along the way and the Circularity of the Product. In addition to this she has an attention on educating and empowering our communities.

Prior to her current role, Ms. Waugh was SVP of Merchandising and Development for Theory and HELMUT LANG. Ms. Waugh was also responsible for developing and implementing the company's initial product lifecycle management program. Her experience at Theory spans many departments ranging from merchandising, development, design operations, computer implementation, and raw material procurement to the current innovation and sustainability team. Prior to Theory, Ms. Waugh ran private label divisions for Magaschoni Apparel Group, Tahari, and Cygne Design. Based in New York City, Ms. Waugh is an accomplished fine artist, focused on figurative art.

**Constance C.R. White** is an award-winning, multi-platform, independent journalist and content creator with an expertise in the areas of style and in black culture.

White is the author of *How To Slay: Kings and Queens of Black Style* from Rizzoli and the editor of *Essence: A Salute to Michelle Obama*, published by Time Inc Books. She has travelled frequently to Milan, Paris, London and Cote D'Ivoire covering fashion.

White was the first black woman to hold an executive position at a major fashion magazine becoming the executive fashion editor of Elle magazine and the first African American to cover the European shows for the New York Times. She has written extensively for The Chicago Tribune and her work has appeared on The Today Show and in The Wall Street Journal, Avenue, British Vogue and The Impression. A leading expert on fashion and black style, her work continuous to appear in major fashion publications including Vogue Business, New York magazine (The Cut) and many more. She co-created and hosted a 13 episode podcast for Univision called *How To Slay*.

Prior to becoming an independent journalist, she covered fashion for The New York Times, Elle magazine, co-created the news segment for Full Frontal Fashion and served as editor in chief of Essence. She worked for Tina Brown's start up *Talk* before joining eBay for seven years creating content, and serving as style and media adviser for style partnerships, live events, fashion and media strategy. Constance White holds an MBA from Kellogg and teaches at CUNY's School of Journalism on fashion reporting.

Opening Remarks by:

**David E. Weinstein** is the Carl S. Shoup Professor of the Japanese Economy at Columbia University. He is also the director of the Center on Japanese Economy and Business (CJEB), co-director of Columbia's APEC Study Center, co-director of the Japan Project at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), and a member of the Center for Economic Policy

Research and the Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee. He is the recipient of many grants and awards, including five National Science Foundation grants, an Institute for New Economic Thinking grant, a Bank of International Settlements Fellowship, and a Google Research Award. Professor Weinstein earned his PhD and MA in economics from the University of Michigan and his BA at Yale University. He is a recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, one of the highest honors bestowed by the Japanese government.