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BEST of the BRANDS

The 36th annual Licensing Expo, organized by UBM Americas and sponsored by the International Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association, took place in Las Vegas, Nev., June 21-23, at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center and played host to more than 16,200 attendees from all leading markets around the globe.

Inside, find highlights from this year's event and the top news from the more than 5,000 brands represented by 489 exhibitors on the Expo show floor.



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Brand Liaison Expands Programs

The Brand Liaison has been named to lead Stephen Joseph licensing, the licensing arm of children's gift and accessory company Stephen Joseph, known for its bright and colorful artwork featured on an expansive collection of close to 1,000 SKU's.

For more than 30 years, Stephen Joseph products have been available at specialty and better department stores. Now the Stephen Joseph brand and artwork are available for licensing on a variety of products including apparel, sleepwear, outerwear and accessories, home goods and home décor for infants through children, ages 2 to 10.

The Brand Liaison also debuted new collections by designer Debra Valencia at Licensing Expo. New designs include floral, geometric, animal, coastal and ethnic themes for dinnerware, home textiles and accents, wall décor, social stationery, paper goods, craft, apparel, fashion accessories, beauty products and more. Debra Valencia's newest endeavor is in the art of Shibori designs, which combine traditional Japanese techniques with a modern twist.

The Debra Valencia brand is successful in the adult crafts and coloring book categories. In 2015, Fox Chapel Publishing released Debra Valencia's crafting book entitled *Sewing Pretty Bags*, which features a dozen DIY accessory projects, followed by four Debra Valencia coloring books, which were featured as an endcap program at Michaels craft stores. The designer's desk pad calendars and planners from licensee Plan Ahead will be featured at Walmart and other retail outlets. Licensee Norcard is producing complete

Debra Valencia coloring kits in a custom tin with colored pencils at Costco and Calendar Club stores both in the U.S. and internationally.

New products hitting retail shelves include quilt and sham sets from Duke Imports; eyewear from Nouveau Eyewear; cell phone cases from Winner Wireless; over-the-counter fabrics from Fabric Editions; and an expanded holiday collection of bath and body lotions designed by Valencia exclusively for Aromance that has been a staple for holiday shoppers at Walmart for four consecutive years.

Building on the success of Debra Valencia licenses in stationery, fabric, cosmetics, bath/body products and home accents and personal accessories, The Brand Liaison is working with major manufacturers and direct retailers on unique collaborations and will look to grow partnerships across all categories.



NY Botanical Garden Blooms with New Partners

Jewel Branding's licensing program for the New York Botanical Garden is blossoming with introductions across a wide variety of categories.

The brand's latest offering is a jewelry and fashion accessory collection developed in partnership with Erwin Pearl. The multi-SKU line, which launched last holiday season, is available at Erwin Pearl stores nationwide and at the NYBG Shop.



The collaboration continues to expand with a new assortment inspired by Robert Tyas's Victorian-era book on floriography, *The Language of*

Flowers. The collection includes 10 necklaces including Jonquil (desire), Red Rose (beauty), Hepatica (confidence), Ivy (friendship) and Blue Bell (kindness).

The NYBG is also creating a line of 2017 calendars with Pomegranate, and a just-launched collection of paper napkins, stationery and gift wrap from Caspari.

It is also expanding globally with Surface View for a collaboration that brings to life a carefully curated selection of botanical, architectural and horticultural works of art from the rare book collections of the Garden's Mertz Library. Using floral imagery taken from hand-drawn studies and aged seed packets, this collection allows access to artwork rarely seen by the public.

Lastly, the NYBG is also opening its archives to offer an extensive

MGL Adds New Artists

MGL Licensing has added new artists and collections to its portfolio.

Painter Russel Cobane, whose work includes landscapes, wildlife and bird paintings, is joining the agency, which is planning to expand his existing licensing program across many product categories.

Artist Neeti Goswami, who is known for her meticulously designed line drawings inspired by the Indian art of the Mandala, is also joining MGL. Her designs are already attracting interest in the publishing and stationery categories, says MGL.

MGL is also now representing wall décor specialist Bon Art's extensive collection of art for licensing in all categories. Bon Art's collection comprises more than 16,000 images across more than 100 artists and includes a wide variety of styles, techniques and subject matter wellsuited for products such as gift, homewares or stationery.

