

Surtext: BIG ON TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AT THE AGENDA FOR THE 2014 EDITION OF SURTEXT, ONE COULD BE forgiven for suggesting that the name for this year's show be changed to Sur-tech.

Indeed, technology and how it works in the design industry will be front and center at the show, which will take place from May 18-20 at its traditional location, the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City. Among the nearly 300 exhibitors who will take part in the show will be vendors of hardware and software that are used by designers.

These exhibitors will be part of the ReSource Hub, which will focus on digital printing solutions for the first time at this year's event. Included in this group are some of the highest-profile names in the technology universe.

HP will be exhibiting some of its digital-printing equipment and will present some of the innovations the company is launching for work on textiles and substrates. AIS Inkjet Printers will also be at the show, spotlighting printers that specialize in different types of colors, particularly neon. Also on the exhibiting roster are several software companies, some of which have formed alliances with the hardware companies.

The show will also be a launching pad for a collaboration between Surtext; First 2 Print, which provides large-format digital fabric printing; and Design Works International, which supplies artwork and consults for companies creating home furnishings or developing new corporate identities and branding. Called Design-A-Seat, this collaboration will present a variety of technological concepts that can take designers and artists from the initial designs to their final execution. A great deal of the new feature will involve advances and new capabilities in digital textiles design.

Penny Sikalis, the show's manager and vice president of show owner GLM, said, "This year will see the biggest focus ever on technology at a Surtext show." Sikalis noted that putting a larger spotlight on technology is a necessity for Surtext, given the way design has evolved over the past two decades.

"The big change over this period of time has been the movement from handcrafted designs to computers," she said. "Computers have augmented design and taken it to a new level. Technology advances have given designers an expanded scope and the ability to more easily manipulate designs. And the creativity of the designer is still there."

Another highlight at this year's Surtext will be the expansion of its Atelier section, which is dedicated to global textile designers and studios. Some 90 studios will appear in the section, representing the United States, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Atelier debuted at last year's Surtext. Its focus is on the most trend-forward prints, patterns, repeats and documents, which can be used for product development across a variety of categories. "The response to Atelier has been terrific," Sikalis said, "and with the growing demand for cutting-edge surface designs, we anticipate a very dynamic marketplace in May."

As always, this year's Surtext has a full agenda of seminars designed to educate designers and studios about the operational aspects of marketing and selling their work. This year's program is titled "Distinct Business Strategies from a Creative Perspective: Intelligence for Manufacturers, Designers and Retailers."

The program will consist of 12 sessions, comprised in three distinct tracks. Track One, titled "Basics: Monetizing Your Creativity," will open on May 18, the first day of the show. Topics in this track will include the basics of art licensing, how selling outright works, the ins and outs of engaging an agent and an in-depth view of the licensing contract.

Scheduled for May 19, Track Two, titled "Deep Dive: Legal and Product Intel," will delve into the needs of specific product categories, including textiles and home fashion, paper and stationery, and tabletop, gift and home decor. There will be legal sessions in this track as well, focusing on copyrights and the protection of artwork, and enhancing licensing arrangements.

Track Three, which will occur on May 20 and which is titled "High Level: Strategies for Business Growth," will address topics such as keys to successful branding, using global trends most effectively and expansion through strategic initiatives.

Speaking of the seminar program, Sikalis said, "Market participants will have the opportunity to learn the fundamentals, enhance their skills and get the latest information on relevant business topics from seasoned industry gurus." ■



The intersecting worlds of design and digital will be the focus at this month's show

BY DAVID GILL



Above: Penny Sikalis, GLM: "Technology advances have given designers an expanded scope and the ability to more easily manipulate designs." **Top:** A scene from last year's Surtext. This year's show will offer spotlight the technology involved in design. **Inset:** Some 300 exhibitors will be showing at Surtext this month.