

Trend Watch: Spring/Summer 2021



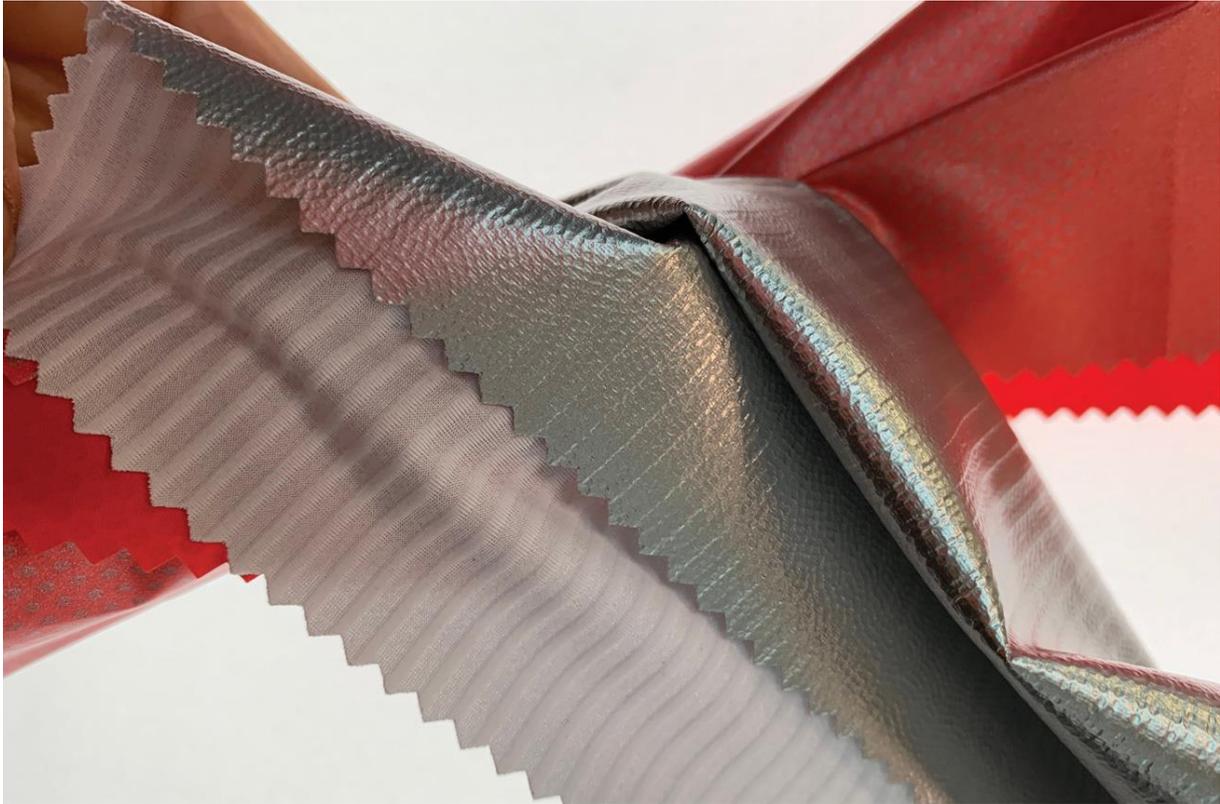
Attendees get a close look, and feel, for what's trending for S/S 2021.

July 26, 2019 • By Emily Walzer

The Trend Forum, a neutral platform showcasing the latest, most inspired, and directional fabrications for the season ahead, greets attendees at the Functional Fabric Fair NY. An ideal way to step into the world of performance textiles — the Forum provides a fast, but profound overview of what is featured on the exhibition floor. Fabrications are juried; whittled down from about 1000 vendor submissions to a few dozen of the best of the best per category ranging from baselayer through to outerwear and accessories. With an astonishing array of materials — and hugely popular at the Show — the Forum attracts a steady stream of designers, developers, sourcing execs with phones in hand snapping photos of the new fabrics and noting descriptive details.



Icons tell the story of fabrications on display.



Examples of eye-catching waterproof breathable products by TDI Textile (red) and United Berry.

The Trend Forum brings universal themes into focus. For S/S '21 there are three key elements: technology, sustainability and a fun factor. While the underlying science of performance technology remains a serious driver in textile development, there is a fresh aesthetic for next season that is fun — fabrications are alive with color, shine, and texture. And planet-saving eco textile solutions are the future for the industry.

Here's a rundown of top takeaways by category:

In Baselayer: Cooling through yarn construction that takes humidity away from the body to enhance comfort is a priority. Recycled content — polyester and nylon, and even recycled nylon with recycled elastane fiber — is directional. Consumer interest in wellness brings to market yarns infused with healthy benefits such as collagen and Cupro. Fashion-wise, there are plenty of pretty pastel shades, a greater variety of structure to boost hand feel and eye appeal, and an overall spirit of creativity.

In Midlayer: Smart engineering and elevated knitting techniques offer new ways to create volume in terry or rib structures along with a modern take on spacer fabrics. The category ushers in eco elements like Seaqual and dope dyed methods for water savings. Blends with Tencel and cashmere represent the trend of softer hand feel going forward.

In Waterproof/Breathable: On the eco front, innovation takes shape in bio-based membranes on recycled synthetics as well as notable advances using bio-based membrane on cotton for high-level of water resistance. The Scafe Airmen membrane is described as the first bio-based coffee membrane using spent coffee grounds; the product is also said to reduce energy usage in production. While eco options are important, fashion is key. Eye-catching looks are a welcome surprise with lots of iridescent surface looks and sheer and glossy visual effects. Increased stretch and membranes on the outside feed the need for functionality.

In Downproof/Windproof: Eco emerges in use of recycled materials and new cotton wovens that feature a PFC-free finish. Big strides are made in aesthetics with a strong metallic story for Spring/Summer 2021. The main takeaway is a category finding a new identity that is more expressive without sacrificing performance.

In Shirts & Pants: Cooling tech is tops in tops! Conventional looks such as seersucker, stripes and tartans are updated with stretch blends and contemporary color combinations. Recycled polyester and yarn blends with Tencel add functional and eco elements. For pants, lightweight durability is important for trekking as well as travel, and now come with performance finishes as well as stretch benefits.

In Accessories: Not to miss are extraordinary reflectives that show off color and/or prints. Notable, too, are a new breed of insulations made with recycled poly. In trims, sustainability matters. New concepts include trims made with recycled ocean plastic, liquid wood, as well as recycled paper buttons.



Next to Skin /Baselayer is one of seven categories featured at The Trend Forum.

The Functional Fabric Fair NY is “powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS,” a Munich-based trade event responsible for the Trend Forum concept. Alexa Dehmel, a specialist in active sportswear design, oversees the creation of the Forum, with help from PERFORMANCE DAYS colleagues Lena Weimer and Lisa Lechner. The success of the Trend Forum is dependent on the expertise of the PERFORMANCE DAYS team, with input from textile industry jury members.