IAC Unveils Couture Gown Crafted from Sustainable Automotive Materials for North American International Auto Show Event

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IAC Group →
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In a Nod to New York Fashion Week, Gown and Accessories to be Worn by IAC Executive at Charity Preview Event

SOUTHFIELD, Mich., Sept. 12, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- International Automotive Components Group (IAC Group), a leading global supplier of automotive components and systems, has contributed to some of the automotive industry's most modern luxury interiors. Today, the company celebrated the convergence of fashion, sustainability, and automotive design with the unveiling of a bespoke gown created by a global team of IAC Group's talented designers and award-winning seamstresses in honor of the return of the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS).

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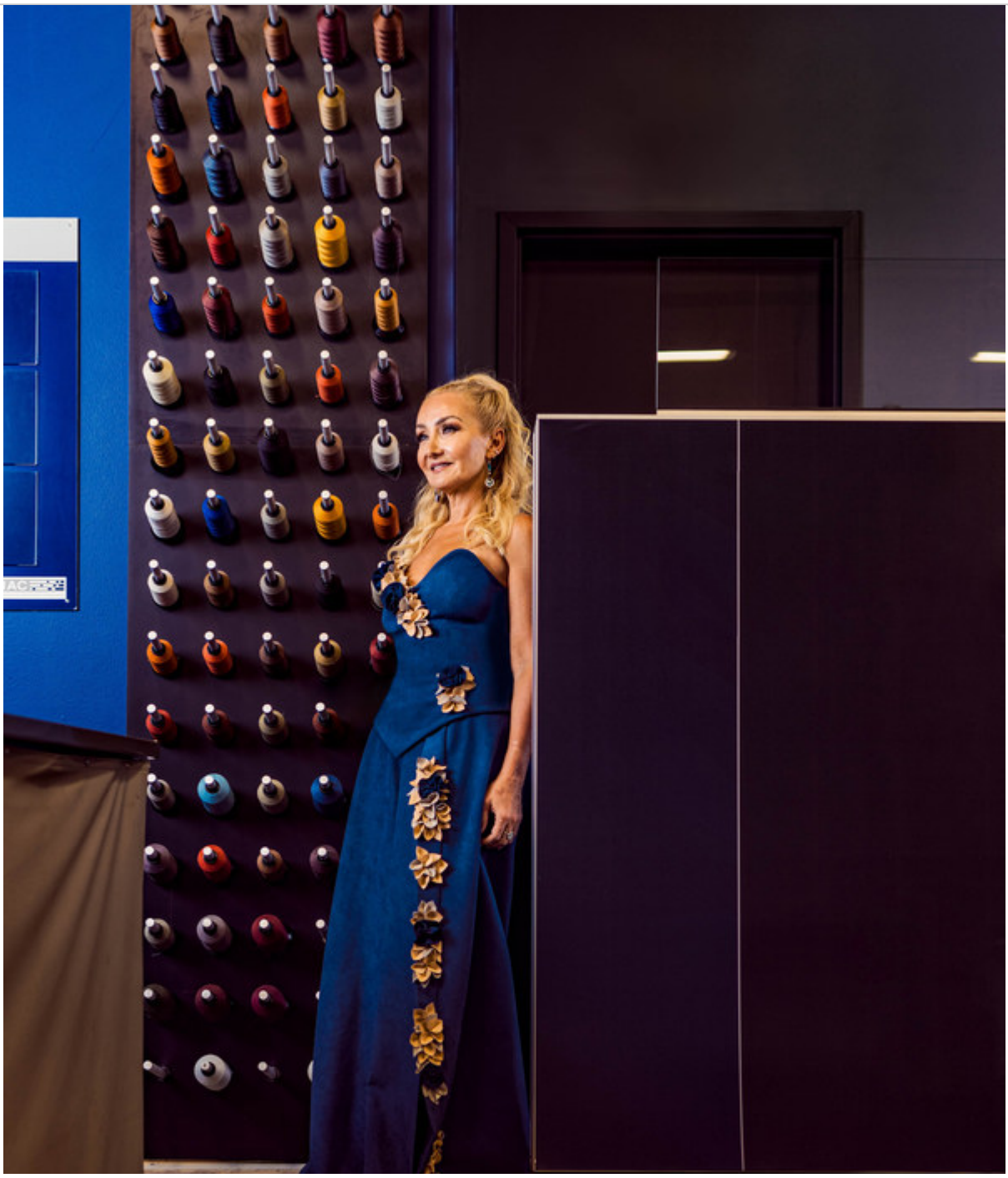

IAC Group chief administrative officer, Iwona Niec Villaire wears a bespoke gown featuring three sustainable materials designed by the company's award-winning seamstresses in honor of the return of the North American International Auto Show and to debut at the event's black tie charity preview. photo credit: Anthony Morrow

"IAC Group is dedicated to creating sustainable environments that we live, work, and move in," said IAC Group chief administrative officer, Iwona Niec Villaire. "This gown exemplifies how beautiful sustainable products can be, and I'm honored to have been chosen to showcase IAC's creativity in such an exciting way."

IAC Group's reveal of this gown at the Charity Preview Event at NAIAS coincides with New York Fashion Week, where designers from around the world unite in New York for the fashion industry's biggest showcase.

Sustainably Designed

The gown uses three types of sustainable materials traditionally found in several of IAC Group's automotive applications today:

- The dress is composed of Dinamica®, a microfiber fabric material partially derived from recycled polyester. IAC Group uses the same material in the production of its headliners in the US, and in headliners and door bolster coverstock in Europe.
- The gown's flower appliques are made of a combination of cork coverstock and laser wood coverstock. Both are plant-based renewable resources with lower carbon footprints compared to other synthetic coverstocks such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC), thermoplastic polyolefins (TPO), thermoplastic polyurethanes (TPU), polyurethane (PU) or leather.
- The jewelry accompanying the gown is made from two sustainable materials, ocean plastics and mold in color plastic. The former is made from discarded polypropylene fishing nets that make their way to the shore and was used in the foil pieces of the jewelry. IAC's award-winning mold in color plastic has a decorated look without any paints or films, thereby eliminating negative paint by-products such as fumes, gasses, and solvents and making the material more easily recyclable. The Society of Plastics Engineers recognized IAC Group and Ford Motor Company with an Automotive Innovation Award for this technology in 2021

Materials selected for the dress were done so in collaboration with IAC Group's advanced engineering team, Susan Kozora, director of advanced engineering and Michael Behnke, director, innovation & advanced technology in Europe. This team is responsible for designing and leading technology development for the automotive market with a focus on reducing the company's carbon footprint.

"IAC Group is dedicated to identifying, sourcing and utilizing the most responsible materials when creating our inspired, sustainable mobile environments," said Kozora. "Our team was thrilled to be part of this exciting challenge."

As a testament to IAC Group's commitment to sustainability, the company was recently awarded the EcoVadis Gold Medal for its sustainability program in 2022. This award places IAC Group in the top three percent of companies rated by EcoVadis within its peer group.

International Effort

The initial design for the gown was hand sketched by Villaire herself. As IAC group's Chief Administrative Officer, Villaire is responsible for leading the company's legal, human resource and sustainability functions. This project was an opportunity for her to exhibit her personal creativity and passion for design.

Using that sketch, Urszula Olkiewicz, junior trim engineer at IAC Group's Opole, Poland facility worked with Kozora and Behnke to select materials. Using her experience in the creation of new products such as jacket designs for the sewing department at IAC Group, Olkiewicz designed and developed the gown from the selected materials to bring Villaire's vision to life. Olena Korolova, sewing production operator who is responsible for sewing for serial production and new products at IAC Group's Opole facility, assisted Olkiewicz. Korolova and Olkiewicz also created a tie that will be worn by IAC Group Chief Commercial Officer Sebastian de Coster.

"This gown exhibits the collective skills, expertise and attention to detail our teams at IAC Group have for each and every product we touch. Our seamstresses are on par with those whose work is dawning the runways of New York this week for fashion week," said Villaire.

Despite international distances and conflicting timezones, the gown progressed from concept to debut in a remarkable timeframe of just 16 short weeks.

Boldly Executed

Having been recognized with multiple awards such as the 2021 Ford World Excellence Award for the Mach-E Frunk, this sustainability effort is just another example of IAC Group's dedication to bold execution in each of its programs.

"Watching my idea come to life has been an amazing experience," said Villaire. "Kicking off this year's show with such a creative way to demonstrate our passion for elegant engineering and bold execution showcases the creative talent and opportunities at IAC Group and the industry

as a whole."

About IAC

Headquartered in Luxembourg, International Automotive Components (IAC) Group is a leading global supplier of automotive components and systems, including instrument panels, console systems, door panels, headliners and overhead systems to automakers around the world. Employing nearly 18,000 people, IAC Group is a multi-billion dollar global manufacturing company that operates in 55 locations, including more than 40 manufacturing facilities in 17 countries. For more information, visit *www.iacgroup.com*.

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