

AAFA Unites the Fashion Industry for the 50th American Image Awards, Honoring the People Who Power Fashion

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) announces an inspirational slate of honorees for its 2026 American Image Awards, Tuesday, April 21, in NYC.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, January 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [American Apparel & Footwear Association](#) (AAFA) announces an inspirational slate of honorees for its 2026 American Image Awards this spring, Tuesday, April 21, in New York City. Marking fifty years of honoring excellence, the 2026 American Image Awards celebrates the partnerships and leadership that power fashion; uniting designers, manufacturers, retailers, and innovators who make it possible for the world to get dressed every day.



2026 American Image Awards Designer of the Year Honoree Zac Posen, Executive Vice President, Creative Director of Gap Inc. and Chief Creative Officer of Old Navy

This year's honorees are the visionaries behind the brands, ideas, and movements shaping fashion's future. The 2026 recipients include: Fabletics as Company of the Year; Zac Posen as Designer of the Year; Avery Dennison as Global Innovator; Timberland as Fashion Maverick; AFIRM Group as Eco-Steward of the Year; Seth Campbell and Josue Solano of BBC International as co-recipients of the Trailblazer Award; and Ruben Toledo for the Icon Award.

COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Fabletics, accepted by Adam Goldenberg, Co-Founder and CEO

Founded in 2013, Fabletics is the world's largest digitally native activewear brand, fusing style-centric design with cutting-edge technology to deliver fashionable, high-performance active

lifewear at an accessible price. Powered by its proprietary Fashion OS tech platform and an innovative VIP membership program, Fabletics offers a uniquely personalized shopping experience to its more than three million active customers. With a portfolio of stylish women's, men's and scrubs apparel, the brand has evolved activewear beyond the gym into every aspect of daily life — championing confidence, inclusivity, and self-expression for everyone and every body. Co-founded by visionaries and serial entrepreneurs Adam Goldenberg and Don and Ginger Ressler, Fabletics continues to push the boundaries of fashion, technology, and accessibility and has grown into a global, omnichannel brand with 120 stores worldwide.



2026 American Image Awards Global Innovator Honoree Avery Dennison's Bill Toney & Company of the Year Honoree Fabletics' Adam Goldenberg

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR



As we celebrate 50 years of the American Image Awards, and 250 years of America, we are excited to honor the legacy of our industry while recognizing the visionaries who are fashioning our future."

*Steve Lamar, President & CEO
of AAFA*

Zac Posen, Executive Vice President, Creative Director of Gap Inc. and Chief Creative Officer of Old Navy

As Creative Director of Gap Inc., Zac Posen serves as a cultural curator and creative partner to CEO Richard Dickson, and as Chief Creative Officer of Old Navy, he leads design, merchandising and marketing for the second largest apparel brand in the U.S., and Gap Inc.'s largest brand. Posen is an award-winning fashion designer and entrepreneur, celebrated for his technical excellence and body-positive designs. Over 25 years, his extensive career has included red-carpet couture, ready to wear, accessories and costume design. Posen was invited to be a

member of France's chambre syndicale de la haute couture and his work has received awards from the [Council of Fashion Designers of America](#) (CFDA) and many others. During his tenure at his namesake clothing line, Zac Posen, he also served as Creative Director for Brooks Brothers Womenswear, designed secondary lines at the House of Z LLC, and redesigned uniforms for Delta Airlines. His work has also been featured in the feature film, *The Outfit*, the *Sex and the City* franchise, and in Ryan Murphy's television series "Feud."

GLOBAL INNOVATOR

Avery Dennison, accepted by Bill Toney, Vice President, Advanced Technology, Solutions Group

For 90 years, Avery Dennison has been at the forefront of innovation, not just keeping up with the apparel industry, but actively shaping it. From developing and deploying RFID technology and pioneering digital identification label technologies to exploring the future of data to unlock value in new ways, Avery Dennison demonstrates its commitment to Making Possible™ with game-changing products and solutions that help advance the industry.

Bill Toney is the global lead for Advanced Technology, Solutions Group at Avery Dennison. He is responsible for driving transformation with the advanced technologies deep science team to ensure client-centric growth, operational readiness and technology capabilities. His main focus is on accelerating intelligent label adoption in the key segments of apparel, general retail, and food, while exploring where emerging technologies like sensor fusion and AI will add value for our clients in the future.

FASHION MAVERICK

Timberland, accepted by Nina Flood, Global Brand President

Timberland is a global lifestyle brand rooted in a rich heritage of life and work in the outdoors and inspired by a relentless spirit of adventure, craftsmanship, and innovation. Since its founding in 1973, Timberland has become synonymous with weather-ready, heritage style that's equally at home from city streets to music festivals, runway shows to mountain trails.



2026 American Image Awards Fashion Maverick Honoree Timberland's Nina Flood & Eco Steward of the Year Honoree AFIRM Group's Nathaniel Sponsler



2026 American Image Awards Trailblazer Co-Recipients Josue Solano & Seth Campbell, both of BBC International

At the helm is Nina Flood who joined as global brand president in 2023 and quickly became the driving force behind Timberland's vision, turning brand demand into a strong emotional connection with consumers while amplifying cultural relevance. Under her leadership, a talented senior team is energizing the global business landscape, bridging strategy and sales and driving a powerful combination of innovative product design and bold, disruptive marketing.

Key Timberland projects in 2025 included highly successful collaborations with Jacquemus and Telfar, as well as custom thigh high wheat boots crafted for actress My'hala to wear to Met Gala as part of a bespoke look designed by LUAR.



2026 American Image Awards Icon Honoree Ruben Toledo (by Randal Bachner) & Event Emcee Alina Cho

ECO-STEWARD OF THE YEAR

AFIRM Group, accepted by Nathaniel Sponsler, Director

The Apparel and Footwear International RSL Management Group (AFIRM) is a global association of the world's leading apparel and footwear companies established in 2004 with a mission to reduce the use and impact of harmful substances in the apparel and footwear supply chain.

Accepting the award for AFIRM, Director Nathaniel Sponsler is a consultant, attorney, and facilitator of apparel and footwear industry collaborative initiatives to advance chemicals management and product quality testing. He is now in his tenth year facilitating AFIRM after serving as Gap Inc.'s AFIRM representative for nine years while overseeing chemicals management for the iconic U.S. brand.

TRAILBLAZER

Co-recipients Josue Solano, CEO of BBC International and Seth Campbell, Corporate President of BBC International

BBC International is a global footwear powerhouse built on five decades of innovation, strategic partnerships, and brand-building excellence. Founded in 1975 by industry visionary Bob Campbell, BBC quickly established itself as a leader in licensed and character footwear, becoming known for its entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, and trend-setting approach. Today, under the leadership of corporate president Seth Campbell and CEO Josue Solano, the company

has evolved into a diversified portfolio, multi-category business spanning entertainment, lifestyle, athletic, and luxury brands. BBC's world-class operating model—supported by dedicated design, full-service sourcing, and a global distribution network reaching more than 85 countries—continues to power successful partnerships with iconic names including Off-White™, Polo Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors, DC Shoes, and more.

With an expansive owned-brand platform featuring Heelys, Simple, DVS, and Feiyue, BBC remains committed to delivering compelling products, emotional storytelling, and best-in-class execution across all channels. The company's culture—deeply rooted in communication, respect, integrity, passion, and community—has shaped its reputation as a trusted partner to global retailers and licensors alike. BBC's next chapter is defined by strategic expansion, category diversification, and a forward-looking vision guided by innovation and agility. With scalable infrastructure, a strong leadership team, and an unwavering dedication to quality, BBC International continues to redefine what's possible in the global footwear market—staying true to the legacy that has shaped its first 50 years while boldly paving the way for the next.

ICON AWARD

Ruben Toledo

World-renowned artist Ruben Toledo is being honored with the special Icon Award, recognizing a creative legacy forged alongside his late wife and collaborator, Isabel Toledo. Together, the Toledos conceived the American Image Awards statuette — an exquisite, seven-metal sculptural work symbolizing global unity — that has become one of the most coveted honors in the fashion and apparel industries. This tribute honors Ruben's enduring influence across art, fashion, and culture, with a heartfelt nod to Isabel's indelible spirit and vision, which continue to inspire Ruben and define the Awards' artistic soul.

Emceeding the night will be Emmy Award-winning journalist and contributor to CBS Sunday Morning, Alina Cho. She is a producer of the Emmy-nominated Netflix documentary, *Martha*, and hosts *The Atelier with Alina Cho*, a highly respected conversation series with fashion luminaries at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Previously, she was a National Correspondent at CNN. Prior to her work at CNN, she held various posts at ABC and CNBC. Cho is a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the 2023 recipient of the CFDA Media Award, in honor of Eugenia Sheppard, for her contributions to journalism and the fashion industry, the first Asian American to receive this prestigious honor.

The 2026 American Image Awards gala will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at Gotham Hall in New York City, with the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) Foundation serving once again as the event's charitable beneficiary.

"As we celebrate 50 years of the American Image Awards, and 250 years of America, we are excited to honor the legacy of our industry while recognizing the visionaries who are fashioning

our future,” said Steve Lamar, President and CEO of AAFA. “We’re proud to recognize this year’s honorees for their dedication and positive contributions across the many different roles that help Americans get dressed every day.”

“The American Image Awards is a moment for our industry to pause, reflect, and celebrate the stories that have shaped fashion over the past year,” said Steven Kolb, CEO and President of CFDA. “It’s also a time to recognize how those stories weave together, lining the threads for continued innovation and advancement across every corner of our industry.”

Full details about the honorees and gala, including how to participate, can be found at www.americanimageawards.org. #AmericanImageAwards

ABOUT THE AMERICAN APPAREL & FOOTWEAR ASSOCIATION

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. Representing more than 1,100 world famous name brands, AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its more than 3.6 million U.S. workers, and its contribution of more than \$523 billion in annual U.S. retail sales. AAFA drives progress on three key priorities: Brand Protection; Supply Chain & Sourcing; and Trade, Logistics, & Manufacturing. AAFA approaches this work through the lens of purpose-driven leadership in a manner that supports each member’s ability to build and sustain inclusive and diverse cultures, meet and advance ESG goals, and draw upon the latest technology.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN IMAGE AWARDS

Owned and operated by AAFA for 50 years, AAFA’s American Image Awards has been honoring those who have exemplified leadership, excellence, and outstanding achievement in all sectors of the apparel and footwear industry.

ABOUT THE CFDA FOUNDATION

The Council of Fashion Designers of America, Inc. (CFDA) is a not-for-profit trade association, whose membership consists of America’s foremost apparel, jewelry, and accessory designers. The CFDA Foundation is a separate not-for-profit organization, which was created to raise funds for charity and industry activities. Through innovative partnerships with brands, retailers, and CFDA designers, the Foundation is able to leverage fashion and effectively generate awareness and funds for these charitable causes.

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