

Kimono Obi Fabric Once Reserved Only for 'Special Occasions'— Now Reborn as Bags for Everyday Use

— *keniamarilia Enters the U.S. Fashion Market, Drawing Buyer Interest at NY NOW* —

CHUO-KU, OSAKA, JAPAN, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Event Overview

Fashion brand *keniamarilia* (operated by Ajuda Co., Ltd., headquartered in Shibuya, Tokyo; Representative Director: Kenia Zaha) exhibited at “NY NOW Summer 2026,” one of the world’s largest gift and lifestyle trade shows, held August 2–4, 2026, at the Javits Center in New York, USA. The brand held business meetings with local buyers regarding its handbags “Kenigama (Small)” and “Mini Keni,” each individually crafted from Kyoto Nishijin-ori obi fabric — 15 meetings in total.

Event

NY NOW Summer 2026

Date

August 2 (Sun) – 4 (Tue), 2026

Venue

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York, U.S.A.

Brand Concept

Kimono are strongly associated with “special occasions” such as coming-of-age ceremonies and weddings, and even within Japan, opportunities to wear them have grown fewer year by year.



Product



Exhibition

According to “Toward the Promotion of Japanese Traditional Clothing (Wasō),” published by Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in March 2025, the retail market for kimono has shrunk from a peak of roughly ¥1.8 trillion to ¥224 billion in 2023. The report cites the entrenched perception that “kimono are something special” as one factor behind this decline.

keniamarilia transforms beautiful obi fabrics once reserved for special occasions into bags, with the aim of bringing the beauty of kimono—now confined to rare, formal moments—back into everyday life. The brand is committed to creating opportunities to encounter traditional Japanese beauty in daily life, and to passing on and developing kimono culture in new ways.

Representative Director Kenia Zaha, who designs costumes for the edutainment troupe HEAVENESE, witnessed firsthand how enthusiastically Japanese culture is received overseas while accompanying the troupe on an international tour. That experience convinced her of the need to create new demand that carries Japanese culture into the future, and became the founding inspiration for the brand. By exhibiting at NY NOW, which brings together buyers from around the world, keniamarilia aims to gauge how kimono culture is received in the U.S. market and to generate new demand in the process.



Product



Product



Kenia Zaha

Product Details

“Kenigama (Small)” and “Mini Keni” are bags crafted from obi fabric custom-ordered from Maizuru, a Nishijin-ori weaving house in Kyoto. Each bag makes full use of the obi’s original, vibrant design and features a luxurious construction using the fabric on both sides. By changing how the handle or chain strap is threaded, the bags can be worn in a variety of styles—over the shoulder, as a handbag, or crossbody—to suit any outfit.

Business Results at the Show and Buyer Feedback

At NY NOW, keniamarilia held business meetings with buyers and select-shop representatives from the gift and lifestyle, and jewelry and accessories sectors — 15 meetings in total. Buyer feedback included the following comments.

[Buyer Feedback]

“Kimono and obi fabrics are materials I’ve long wanted to carry in the U.S. keniamarilia has turned the appeal of this fabric directly into bags you can use every day. I would love to carry this line.”

“I manufacture products in a similar category myself, so I understand just how much work goes into making these. The bags are extremely appealing, and I’d love to partner in some form.”

Future Plans for the U.S. Market

Following the show, keniamarilia will continue discussions with U.S. select shops, lifestyle-related wholesalers, and department store buyers regarding terms of sale, delivery schedules, and a product lineup tailored to the U.S. market. The company is currently seeking sales agents and retail partners within the United States.

About Kenia Zaha

Born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1986, Kenia Zaha moved to Japan with her family at the age of four. After graduating from design school, she worked in production management, planning, and sales at an apparel OEM company while also designing costumes for the edutainment troupe HEAVENESE from 2015 onward. In 2017, while accompanying HEAVENESE as costume staff on a tour to Ethiopia supported by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she experienced firsthand how highly Japanese culture is regarded overseas. After returning to Japan, she launched keniamarilia in October 2019, a brand dedicated to bringing kimono culture into everyday life. She incorporated the company as Ajuda Co., Ltd. in 2020. In 2022, she was nominated for the Rookie of the Year Award and the Shiseido Encouragement Award at the Mainichi Fashion Grand Prix.

“Even as a Brazilian national, I have been welcomed into the kimono culture that Japan has nurtured over its long history. That is precisely why I believe that passing this beautiful culture on to the next generation is the best way I can give back. Through keniamarilia, I intend to create new demand not only in Japan but in overseas markets, starting with the United States, and to expand into new markets.”

Company Overview

Company Name: Ajuda Co., Ltd.

Brand Name: keniamarilia

Representative: Kenia Zaha

Address: Baum Sendagaya 201, 4-9-5 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo □ Please confirm and enter the current address before publishing

Founded: 2020

Business: Planning, manufacturing, and sale of an apparel brand that transforms kimono and obi fabrics into everyday items

Official Website: <https://keniamarilia.jp/>

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