

Gap Names Rosella Giuliani Creative Director for 1969 Line

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Inside Gap's 1969 New York Store.

Photo By Steve Eichner

The Gap brand of Gap Inc., which is looking to broaden its 1969 denim program and build up related categories, has bolstered the team. The San Francisco-based retailer named Rosella Giuliani creative director for 1969 Jeans. She was vice president of design and merchandising at Seven For All Mankind.

Gap is also looking to create a denim development team based in Los Angeles, where Giuliani will oversee development of the 1969 denim products. She will report to Marka Hansen, president of Gap North America, and Patrick Robinson, executive vice president of design at Gap Inc., and also work closely with Pam Wallack, president of Gap Adult and Body.

"I am thrilled to join Marka, Patrick and the Gap team," Giuliani said. "By being based in the world's hub for premium denim, and by approaching design with a customer lens, we can continue building on the already successful 1969 product, which has a new and fresh appeal to consumers."

Gap cited recent improvement in sales in the first quarter and success in the launch of 1969 denim in the fall as reasons to take the 1969 product to "the next level" and recruit Giuliani.

At Seven For All Mankind, Giuliani oversaw all areas of global merchandising and design, including denim, sportswear and handbags. Earlier in her career, she spent eight years working at Gap Inc. in merchandising roles, including Banana Republic in Japan.

This year, Gap Inc. chairman and chief executive officer Glenn Murphy has been spending a lot of time at the Gap division, which is considered the most troubled of the Gap Inc. divisions, but is making progress in its turnaround. "I am spending a lot of my time with the team," Murphy said during a conference call in March. He also said Hansen was spending 50 percent of her time on product, following a top-level management reorganization.

The 1969 denim collection is now the core of the store and the key to Gap's revival. "We are really trying to get the brand going through the work we are doing on denim," Murphy said. "Every single month we feed our denim reputation and feed the denim buzz; 1969 has lifted the business, but cannot do it on its own. We've got a whole list of categories [denim jackets and woven shirts included], and we are going to knock them off every single quarter." Murphy characterized 1969 as "the beginning of a subapparel brand inside a retail brand."

There are different directions Gap is considering taking the label, including possibly putting it on products other than denim. "Right now it's just denim, but there is a ton of opportunity there," said a Gap spokesman. "It's too early to say how the product offerings will be fully expressed, but there's definitely opportunity to take it forward."

This week, a 1969 shop opened in Chicago, following the recent opening of a 1969 unit in Los Angeles.