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Texprocess Americas 2023: A Showcase of Innovation, Collaborative Insights, and Unforgettable Experiences

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It's hard to believe it's already been over a month since Texprocess Americas! I am delighted to reflect on my experience at this year's show, which undoubtedly stands as my favorite trade show. As a textile and manufacturing enthusiast, the atmosphere of the buzzing machines and the showcase of cutting-edge technology and innovation was pure bliss.

Not my first rodeo, but my seventh – and my second time collaborating with show producers Messe Frankfurt and SPESA. The Tech Talks series, which I was intimately involved in, brought together brilliant minds from the textile and manufacturing industry, creating a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration. I moderated and participated in seven talks over the three-day event. I also enjoyed weaving in many SEAMS members for these sessions, amplifying their voices and expertise.

The Tech Talks area, strategically positioned between TPA and Techtexil and adjacent to the SEAMS Pavilion, drew large and enthusiastic audiences. One notable session titled "Empowering Your Workforce Using Technology" featured a case study with Carrie Bovender of Grand Forest and Justin Hershoran of Aptean – both SEAMS' members – highlighting how shop floor software and ERP integration can support companies while enabling smarter, more effective training methods. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit Carrie's factory, and it was exciting to recall my learnings from that experience.

The discussion on "Closing the Loop: Circularity & Cutting-Edge Collaboration" with Cheryl Symre of Parkdale Mills, Meredith Boyd of SEAMS' member Unifi, Inc., and Alex Whitley of SEAMS' member Contempora Fabrics was exceptionally engaging and offered profound insights into sustainability efforts and collaborative initiatives. This talk sparked considerable buzz on the show floor, attracting a full seated audience and numerous individuals standing on the sidelines. It seamlessly paved the way for subsequent discussions covering topics such as a brand's sustainability story, on-demand fabric printing and manufacturing, and nearshoring efforts.

Additionally, I had the privilege of representing the Columbia College Chicago Fashion Studies department on a panel titled "Next Gen: Designers of the Future." Alongside Doris Treptow-Kovacs from SCAD Atlanta, we explored how we prepare students by integrating the latest technologies, fostering industry collaborations, and prioritizing sustainability and DEI programs. Moderated by Mindy Martell, owner of SEAMS' member Clothier Design Source and The Apparel Mentor, the panel was an honor to be a part of.

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Although my time to explore the exhibition floor was limited (shocking, given my schedule), I was captivated by the "Training Takes Time" interactive demo, and hands-on experience presented by SEAMS' member Merrow/Superior and ISAIC. Volunteers including myself were led through two common machine repairs, and were shown the innovative use of augmented reality glasses for machine troubleshooting.

Overall, I am very proud of this show, and the Tech Talks in particular. The discussions were enlightening and thought-provoking. All of the planning and preparation really paid off when I looked out into full, captivated audiences, and more importantly – seeing that interest level flowed naturally into continued conversations in the exhibitors' booths afterwards. As a first-time exhibitor myself, I had the pleasure of meeting incredible individuals, generating promising business leads. I've had great follow up meetings over the past few weeks as a result.

Conversations are actually what's most important about attending a show like Texprocess – and you're majorly missing out if you skip over the after-show networking opportunities. This year's events are going to be hard to top. The Messe/SPESA combined effort at the Mercedes-Benz stadium was pretty incredible. Attendees experienced a behind-the-scenes locker room tour, went out on the field, met the Falcons mascot and cheer squad, and of course had ample opportunity to mingle. There was even some singing involved ... How many people can say they've performed at the Mercedes-Benz stadium? Well, you can count among that group SEAMS' Social Media Manager Devin Steele, SPESA Vice President of Communications Maggie McDonald, and myself.

SEAMS gathered at TopGolf, which was extremely popular last year, and I love this choice of venue because you can really relax, float between the bays, and connect with people in a more intimate and casual atmosphere.

Looking ahead, I am filled with excitement for Texprocess Americas 2025, knowing that it will be a tough act to follow this year's outstanding events. I am also eager to reconnect with my colleagues once again this September 12-15, at the SEAMS Annual Networking Conference in Raleigh.