Theory CEO Andrew Rosen Steps Aside After 22 Years

He is succeeded by Dinesh Tandon, current chief operating officer.

BY LISA LOGWOOD

Get ready for Theory 3.0.

In a changing of the guard at one of fashion's leading contemporary firms, Andrew Rosen will step down as chief executive officer of Theory and will be succeeded by Dinesh Tandon, currently chief operating officer, effective April 1. Rosen, a founder of Theory, will become an advisor.

Rosen founded the business he relaunched 22 years ago. He believes that change and a new perspective will be good for Theory, a brand that exceeds $1 billion in global sales and is profitable.

In an interview Tuesday that ranged from his successor to the digital business to domestic production and horse racing, Rosen clearly took pride in what he has accomplished at Theory. He sees Tandon's main strategic threat as enhancing the company's direct-to-consumer business and becoming better marketers, digital operators and retailers, which will help the wholesale business at department stores as well.

"I founded the company and I think there's a lot of strength with having a CEO who's founded the company and has been around 22 years, and I also think a change in perspective for the company is not a bad thing. I think that for our company to move forward into the future, it's obviously at some point in time going to have to change, and I think this is a good time for it to be happening.

"I feel very comfortable about where our company is, and I feel very comfortable about Dinesh coming in, and I believe that Dinesh is going to do some amazing things. He's different than me. This is going to be a real change for the company," said Rosen, 62.

Tandon, 45, joined Theory in 2003 as one of the Greater China and Southeast Asia market, based in Hong Kong, where he oversaw aggressive business growth. He was named chief operating officer and relocated to the company's global headquarters in New York in 2011. He will work closely with both Rosen and Kazumi Yanai, Theory chairman, to ensure a successful transition.

Tandon's succession as chief operating officer has yet to be named.

Tadashi Yanai, chairman, president and CEO of Fast Retailing, parent company of Theory, said, "I wish to thank Andrew for his significant contributions to Theory and the Fast Retailing Group over the past 22 years. I am pleased to see this succession.

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Janet Echelman Casts a Colorful Net

The artist recently installed a large-scale public sculpture for the Peninsula Hotel's Art in Resonance initiative in Hong Kong, and has other projects landing soon in Jakarta, Austin and Los Angeles.

BY KRISTEN TAUER

“They say the only things you can’t escape are death, taxes and the progression of time,” says Janet Echelman. “This is about the discovery that things are more relative than they might appear. Even the circle of the Earth in a day is not the same from one day to another.”

The Boston-based artist has been in Hong Kong where she recently installed her latest site-specific public net sculpture. She aimed to surprise and engage the public, who would observe the挂号 at nighttime. Despite its size, the piece — a net of 24 colored fibers woven into twine — is intended as an exploration of interconnection, and acts as a prompt for viewers to pause and consider their role within the larger system.

In terms of scale, the sculpture represents ideas both unthinkably large and as specific as a single point. It’s completely abstract and entirely concrete.

“The physical sculpture is a manifestation of interconnectedness,” says Echelman. “It’s this knotted network, and when any single knot or node moves, every other node is affected.”

Echelman based the structure on mapping data of the surface of the Pacific Ocean relative to time of day. Using customized computer software, her studio is able to model how even a slight change at a specific point affects the rest of the structure.

“All of these works are very much about change — there is no static sculpture. It is always adapting and changing. Your perception of it is changing too, but very literally with different sunlight, different patterns and projections, different color, and the wind. So it’s not even the same shape at any given moment. It’s about this continual fluidity,” she says. “I want it to be the speed of the sunset, where it’s very, very gradual, so you can’t really note any specific moment of change but yet you realize that it has changed.”

It also speaks to the shifting time in a specific way. The title of the piece refers to the amount of time the Earth’s day was shortened on the day this form was mapped: 1.26 microseconds.

“For me, the piece seems as if it has come from space and landed in the midst of Hong Kong,” says Echelman, who is particularly interested in the idea of weaving something new with something old. “This piece of contrasts, of valiantly warring with humanity and this old building — reminds the waterfront and all the newness, in lands this sculpture.”

Lounge chairs have been set up underneath the colorful structure, an invitation for the public to observe the piece and engage in a moment of contemplation amidst the dynamic chaos of the city. “It’s an invitation to be present,” says Echelman. “It’s a sculpture, which morphs shapes as wind passes through, and glows at nighttime. Despite its grand nature, the piece — a few of colored fibers woven into twine and knotted — is rooted in an exploration of interconnection, and acts as a prompt for viewers to pause and consider their role.”

Echelman, who is particularly interested in the idea of weaving something new with something old, says: “It’s a very broad cross-section of the world, and her studio has new pieces coming in Los Angeles and Austin, Tex., Gwanggyo Lake, South Korea; Mumbai, Jakarta, Indonesia; and Bonn, Germany, for Beethoven’s 250th birthday. She is finishing the design for a permanent work near her Tampa Bay hometown in St. Petersburg, which will be installed later this year or in early 2020. She recently unveiled a permanent piece using water as the primary material in front of Philadelphia’s city hall, the original site of the city’s water works. Titled “Pulse,” the piece traces the path of underground subway trains in real time using colored mist.

Her own artistic journey are also tied up in her environmental process for creating a site-specific work is called by an open goal, whether it’s to express the spirit or mission of an organization — such as for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in downtown Seattle — or to create a piece that will become a “signature work” for a city. For Greensboro, N.C., she was commissioned to celebrate the state’s textile history. “It’s like a custom garment for the city’s couture for the sky.”

The fibers of Echelman’s artistic journeys are also tied in fabrication. Her mother owned five designer dress boutiques, and as a child she would see together discarded scraps of fabric from the backrooms. After graduating from Harvard and living in Bol, Echelman headed to India on a Fulbright grant to teach painting. It was there, after her paints failed to show up, that she pivoted to sculpture. While watching fishermen on the beach reeling in their nets at the end of the day, something clicked.

“The best way to create volumetric form without heavy solid material that I couldn’t afford anyway,” she says. “So sometimes the constraint becomes right. The hardship pushes me out of my comfort zone, and for the better.”

Just like her work, all is inter-connected.

“My whole life is about a series of mishaps and misfortunes that I grasp with how to turn them around. I applied to art school to be an artist — I applied to seven art schools, and I was rejected by all of them. Had that option been open to me, perhaps I would have taken it. Because it was not open to me, it forced me to find my own way and that’s how I decided to go to Bol,” she says. “It was not a premeditated plan. I was just very lucky to respond to what was possible.”