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# Twist

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## Stylish performance

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# Diverse appeal

The softness and eco credentials of UMORFIL Beauty Fiber are helping it attract interest from a growing range of product sectors. **Jonathan Dyson** reports.

At the 2017 edition of Performance Days, held in Munich on April 26–27, UMORFIL Beauty Fiber, a functional fibre created using collagen peptides from fish scales, was highlighted in the trade fair's Focus Topic, a dedicated theme featured across the show which this year was titled 'Biodegradable – back to nature.'

UMORFIL was first launched in 2012 by Camangi Corporation, a technology and textile company based in Taipei, as part of its viscose fibre range. Collagen peptides from fish scales are bonded together with viscose fibre using biotechnology. Since 2016, UMORFIL has also been available as a filament fibre, with a polyester / polyamide base.

Speaking to *Twist*, Janis Lee, sales and marketing director at Camangi, explains that the fish scales used to extract the collagen peptides in UMORFIL are recycled from the waste on Taiwan's coastline. "Fish scales are produced every day in the world through our eating habits," she says. "If fish scales are abandoned in

the soil, they cause soil acidification. So to recycle the fish scales each day, and turn them into textile materials is a good combination, providing benefits for both aquaculture [the farming of fish] and the textile industry."

In addition, according to Lee, at the end of its life a garment made from UMORFIL will decompose naturally in the earth due to the properties of the material.

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## 'More denim brands are now considering adopting UMORFIL'

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Lee says that the focus at Performance Days highlighted the extent to which biodegradable textiles are being sought after across all apparel sectors. "100% biodegradable materials may not be synonymous with the best active wear applications, but attention to sustainability in general, including biodegradability, is

now required across the textile industry," she says. "With UMORFIL being 100% biodegradable provides a distinct advantage compared with other fibres such as Tencel, modal and polyamide."

She adds: "Consumers are well-educated today. They know much more about the materials they wear and are more expert about the ingredients. Awareness of eco-friendly issues has grown, and the 'only one Earth' crisis is now planted in almost every consumers' mind. They tend to choose eco-friendly materials more often so they can feel a kind of support for the Earth when wearing them. This is why UMORFIL can gain such a big reputation today."

As well as its sustainability credentials, UMORFIL is attracting growing attention for its tactile benefits, in particular its softness.

UMORFIL is said to offer exceptional softness thanks to its use of collagen peptide, a fibre-shaped protein that plays a vital role in the elasticity and regeneration of skin, bones, muscles and joints. Supplementing the body with collagen protein is believed to provide it with the amino acids necessary to manufacture and support collagen. Materials which contain an appropriate amount of collagen peptide amino acid can provide skin-friendly and health care properties, making skin smooth and elastic and advancing blood circulation.

"There are many ways to achieve softness in a fabric during the dyeing and finishing process, such as the use of auxiliary chemicals, but nothing can compare with the natural soft touch provided by the original material," explains Lee.

"Because UMORFIL is made from protein amino acid it can perform better than regular viscose and cellulose fibres in terms of moisture regain. UMORFIL can provide 16–18% moisture regain, and



Denim from Bobson Jeans' spring/summer 2017 collection featuring UMORFIL.

only natural wool can provide a similar level. This is one important reason for the softness of UMORFIL.”

She adds: “The pursuit of softness in textile products has become more and more important. Today most people like to wear clothes in a more comfortable way due to many reasons, ranging from sensitive skin to the pressures of daily life.”

Lee says that UMORFIL is especially well-suited to next-to-skin products such as loungewear, innerwear and bedding, with brands featuring UMORFIL recently including Weavism, from Taiwan, and Diana, from Japan.

UMORFIL is now also attracting increasing interest in the denim sector thanks to the growing demand for extra comfort in denim wear.

“Denim fabric used to have the perception of being hard and rough, due to its origins in workwear,” explains Lee. “However, denim fashion has evolved so much in terms of colour variety and design capability that today it has become an item to be worn every day, leading to the greater desire for more comfort and functional ingredients.”

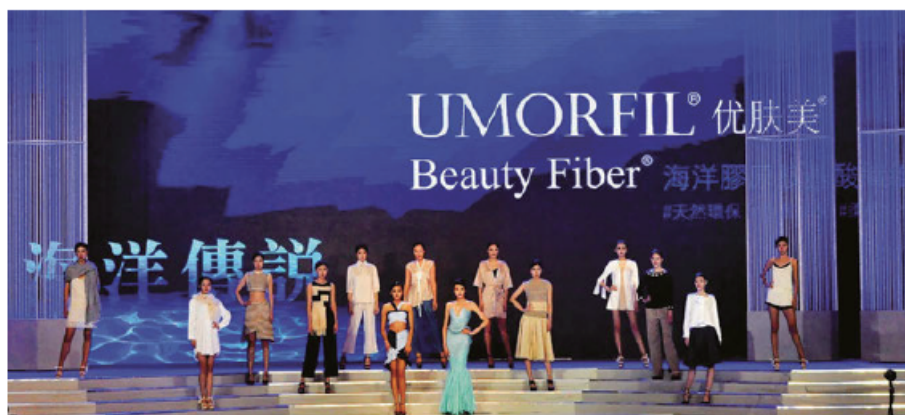
She adds: “Denim can apply many finishes to achieve different looks. However, when used in the weft in denim, UMORFIL’s softness can bring a superior feeling to the fabric compared with any other material.”

Additional functional effects offered by UMORFIL, such as odour control and thermoregulation, are also attractive for denim wearers.

Lee adds that a key advantage of a textile product made from UMORFIL is that the amino acids remain active even after the garment has been washed several times. This means UMORFIL’s functional properties last longer than many performance fibres and fabrics, whose properties are often created through applying a coating technology or powder base, rather than natural ingredients within the fibre itself.

“We all know, to keep the condition of denim, the best way is not to wash it,” she says. “That’s why UMORFIL is so suitable for denim applications. In addition, odour is avoided thanks to its deodorising properties, and there is less water waste.”

Bobson Jeans, a well-known denim label in Japan and Taiwan, has been using UMORFIL since the launch of its spring/summer 2013 collection. UMORFIL is used in Bobson’s Zero-Friction range, designed to meet the growing demand



A catwalk show highlighting UMORFIL at SIUF 2017, an underwear fair held in Shenzhen, China.



UMORFIL Beauty Fiber.

for comfortable denim that can be worn every day as part of an active lifestyle. The collection, initially for womenswear, was expanded to include menswear from 2014.

“Bobson Jeans has had very good feedback and an almost 100% repeat purchase rate,” says Lee. “Customers said that they have never worn denim with this kind of soft touch and functionality. Interestingly, jeans from Bobson made using UMORFIL have become a traveller’s favourite, because there is no need to wash the garment frequently and it remains very comfortable during all kinds of activities. Through using UMORFIL, denim becomes a daily wear application in every aspect.”

Lee says that more denim brands are now considering adopting UMORFIL, and also reveals that in order to build on the success of UMORFIL in the denim jeans market, it is targeting greater use in denim tops. She says that the fibre can “provide a total comfort solution for denim wear.”

In addition to denim, UMORFIL is also looking to expand its application in other areas, including baby clothes and bedding

sheets. “More and more new born babies are suffering from skin irritation and sensitive skin problems,” explains Lee. “UMORFIL can provide a more premium choice than 100% cotton for these products because of its high moisture regain and natural odour control. Therefore it is suggested that UMORFIL is blended with cotton or other fibres to make these types of products.”

Another target is yoga wear. “UMORFIL can help people feel more comfortable and easy during yoga,” says Lee, adding that the suits segment also represents potential for UMORFIL, with a growing number of European fabric companies planning to blend UMORFIL with wool in suiting fabrics.

Lee also reveals that the production of UMORFIL is expanding beyond Asia, with a supply chain in Europe now set up involving a spinner and weaver/knitter in Turkey.

• *UMORFIL will exhibit at Première Vision Paris on September 19-21, at booth 6F52.*