

How did WindowsWear come to be? Let's learn a little bit about the masterminds behind WindowsWear.

Meet the three co-founders:

Mike Niemtow, Co-Founder, Chairman and President

Raul Tovar, Co-Founder and Creative Director

Jon Harari, CEO & Co-Founder

Michael Niemtow (MN): Born to a Parisian mother and having spent much of his childhood between France and the U.S., Mike gained an early appreciation for fashion and beauty. As an adult, he learned the importance of compelling content and believes that 'content is king' when it comes to monetizing the internet. Originally from the Washington D.C. area, Mike attended Tulane University. After four years serving as an officer in the U.S. Navy with two deployments to the Middle East, he attended NYU's Stern School of Business and earned an MBA. He is a frequent speaker at Family and Consumer Science (FCS) conferences nationwide and serves as an advisor on various academic fashion advisory boards including University of Nebraska, Berkeley College, Jefferson University, High Point University, North Carolina State University, and more. He lives in New York City with his wife and two sons.

Raul Tovar (RT): Raul was born and raised in Monterrey, Mexico and studied Communications and Advertising before moving to New York City to pursue his dream of being a fashion photographer.

Jon Harari (JH): Prior to co-founding WindowsWear, Jon co-founded a NYC-based fashion retail business to establish U.S. market opportunities for top internationally based designers. Prior to working in fashion, Jon was an investment analyst and an investment banker. Jon also serves on the boards of several non-profit young professional organizations in New York City. Jon graduated from the Business Honors Program at Indiana University.

How did you come up with the idea for WindowsWear?

MN: Admiring the window displays of Anthropologie in NYC on an early morning walk to work, I realized that there is power and value in bringing fashion and art together to create amazing displays and retail environments.

RT: I was approached by Jon and Mike to discuss the idea of WindowsWear. In 2012, Mike, Jon and I met for dinner in Rockefeller Center and the chemistry between us was instantaneous. The next day, the three of us signed a lease for an office and began sketching the first version of the website, putting a team together of photographers, etc.

JH: Mike had the idea of digitizing windows displays and creating a community around the content. His background is in digital content and media, and he approached me with the idea as I co-founded a women's clothing store in NYC. (After working in finance for six years, I co-founded a women's clothing store carrying exclusive, fashion-forward Indian-based designers. I knew firsthand the challenges retailers face in today's shifting digital environment.) We were excited about building a global database and community that had never been created before, with lots of room for exciting growth. We knew in order to actually create a world renown company that would be working with the world's leading brands, we

needed the right creative lead. Soon after, we reached out to Raul Tovar, who I worked with at my clothing store. As a world-renowned fashion photographer, Raul became the Creative Director. He has worked with *Vogue*, *ELLE*, *Harper's Bazaar*, as well as many other publications and celebrities.

Visual merchandising is a billion dollar industry, employing tens of thousands of people worldwide. We are the only company elevating and celebrating the work of all the visual creatives globally in today's digital age, as well as having a global community of these creators where they can share ideas and work with each other.

How do you get photos from all over the world?

MN: There is a solid team of amazing photographers around the world, most of them with fashion and architectural backgrounds. Every month they capture all these environments and the WindowsWear team makes sure everything looks beautiful and cohesive. WindowsWear deals with the best brands in the world whose aesthetic and attention to detail is extremely high so the photographs need to elevate them as well.

JH: Like Google Earth, WindowsWear has a team of photographers and content creators from around the world who are constantly capturing brands. Like Instagram, anyone can create an account on WindowsWear and upload images of their projects. We also have a huge digital archive dating back to the 1930s, and we obtain these images from the brands.

Do you have a favorite window that has been featured on WindowsWear?

MN: I have a lot of 'favorite' windows, but the Fendi Summer of 2014 window featuring the vending machines full of bags is so fun and stylish! It's very cleverly done and I always tell my wife that one day I will get one of these machines for her!

RT: Every few months or so there's a window that blows my mind and make me stop and admire the amazing work that all the visual teams at the brands do. That happened not long ago when Coach replicated a NYC Subway car in their windows, along with a small leather rat that lives now in my desk at the WindowsWear offices.

JH: I have many, many favorites. Too many to decide.

When did you come up with the ideas for the workshop, tours and museum?

RT: In NYC there's a tour for the most random things you can image but there was no tour for those interested in fashion; we have the most amazing guests and families from all over the world that come to NYC to experience that. As for the WindowsWear Museum, we strongly believe that the windows displays that are created by the brands every season deserved to be preserved and admired. There's so much history, creativity and heritage that goes into creating them and deserve to be in a museum just like a piece of art. I think they're art.

JH: Over time we realized there were many more opportunities to elevate this industry including awards, tours, a museum, workshop and most importantly for our readers, our annual student awards.