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LI Native Takes Denim to New Heights

STYLE MAKERS rachel belkin | MARCH 1, 2018







image: 3x1

Denim was always in the cards for Rachel Lamel. Long before becoming the executive vice president and partner of 3×1 (a cult denim line favored by fashion insiders and celebrities like Rihanna), she was cultivating a love for the fabric on Long Island. "Some of my fondest childhood memories are of going back-to-school and spring shopping with my mom," the Jericho native said. "We would always start at the jeans store. I just remember being so excited and literally mesmerized by the stacks and stacks of jeans and all the washes."

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After a stint in media, Lamel started working in sales for the denim line J Brand. She moved on to Rag & Bone where she launched its wildly successful denim department. In 2011, she partnered with Scott Morrison, a denim industry veteran, and 3×1 was born. The name is derived from denim's standard weaving construction (3×1 right hand twill) and a reference to Morrison's third denim venture. It started strictly as a bespoke and custom denim brand but soon expanded to include ready-to-wear collections. The store, located on 15 Mercer Street in SoHo, offers the unique experience of allowing customers to design their own jeans. They are measured and able to choose the denim (there's a wall with more than 1,000 styles), hardware and silhouette. (Prices for the bespoke service start at \$1,500 while custom service starts at \$625.) 3×1 also puts out four collections a year that are sold in stores including Barneys New York and Intermix.

Nonetheless, it wasn't until 2015 that the brand blew up. That fall, the WM3 Crop Fringe Jean dominated New York Fashion Week. The iconic jeans, which have since launched a thousand imitators, have a classic fit with a straight cropped leg and fantastically shredded hems. "You couldn't go to a fashion show that season without someone wearing our jean." The item then sold out of stores within a week. The concurrent rise of social media influencers also meant that the jean was all over Instagram, which Lamel calls a "lucky coincidence." Fast-forward to today, and the WM3 Crop Fringe is still a best-seller and a collection staple.





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The brand has since continued to make bold moves. Lamel, who admitted to wearing sneakers and jeans "99 percent of the time," said 3×1's spring 2018 line is all about taking the "distressed look in a whole new direction." The new Dosa jean features hand and laser distressing down the sides of the jeans creating a "totally new look." Americana was also an influence, as well as using techniques like bleaching and acid washing. "I am very inspired by pop culture and what was relevant in different decades." It is hard to ignore the 1980s Springsteen vibes from a color-blocked pair featuring bleached and dark denim. Denim skirts are also strong for the season and Lamel recommended styling them with "a vintage tee and sneakers or flat booties." 3×1's denim Dita skirt features a bold lace up detail that makes it both incredibly Insta-worthy and effortlessly appropriate for day or night.

Lamel and her team remain focused on their craft and setting the denim trends, not following them. 3×1's future looks very bright and of course very blue.



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Rachel Belkin is a native Long Islander who recently moved back to Woodbury with her husband and two young sons. Rachel has been working as a fashion copywriter for over 10 years and has collaborated with many brands including J.McLaughlin, Judith Leiber, Talbots and Armani. When she is not working, Rachel is watching sports with her boys, shopping online or spinning on her Peloton.

