FREEDOM WOVEN INTO EVERY LAYER

KARL MAYER's new spacer fabric machines at ITMA ASIA 2026

At ITMA ASIA 2026, Kay Hilbert, Global Head of Design Fabrics & Specials at KARL MAYER, is showing how two new Jacquard double-needle bar raschel machines are changing what is possible in spacer fabrics for footwear and sportswear.



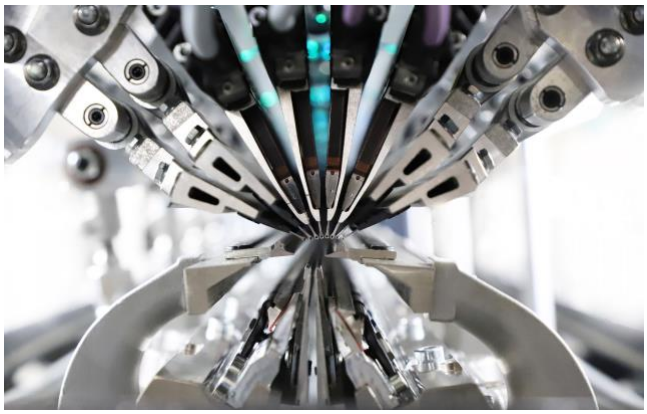
Kay Hilbert — the man behind the next chapter in spacer fabric technology.

The RDJ 7/3 and RDJ 6/2 are up to 70% more productive than comparable machines. Shorter cycle times mean smaller runs become profitable and response to new trends is faster. Wireless Jacquard control replaces heavy cable systems: piezo elements simply plug in, maintenance is easier, and operators have better access to the knitting zone.



RDJ 7/3 knitting zone — wireless control opens space for more bars and new pattern possibilities.

On the seven-bar RDJ 7/3, functional zones, intricate contours, larger openings, multidimensional surfaces and embossed effects become practical. The RDJ 6/2 in E32 gauge delivers a fine fabric look that works for outerwear as well as shoes — a cost-effective alternative to circular knits.



Precision of the RDJ 6/2 — fine gauge for fabrics that move from footwear into apparel.

The wireless system is more than convenience. It allows more than two Jacquard bars and counter-lapped split Jacquard, creating looks and functions that were previously impossible. At the TEXTILE INNOVATION CENTER in Changzhou, new shoe fabrics already show the result: stability, breathability and design that can still surprise.



New spacer fabric from the RDJ 6/2 — function and form woven together.

For footwear and athleisure makers, the importance is practical: faster market response, viable small runs, and fabrics that integrate performance and design without the old machine limits. These innovations turn technical possibility into commercial freedom.