Are You A Conscious Consumer?

Think about the last piece of clothing you bought

- [ ] Do you know where it was produced?
- [ ] Do you care?
- [ ] Where did you get it from?

Big Chain Store
- [ ] Was it an impulse buy?

Local Business/Secondhand

- [ ] Do you regret the purchase already?

No

What do you do with your old clothing?

- [ ] Trash it
- [ ] Donate

Quality

- [ ] Are you interested in the story behind a garment?

Quantity

- [ ] What is generally more important to you?

N° 1
- [ ] Yes
N° 2
- [ ] No

Are you currently interested in Conscious Consumerism?

N° 3
- [ ] Yes
N° 2
- [ ] No

Shopping more consciously is satisfying and rewarding when you know that even though all the hard work is done at the other end of the planet, the little money spent does not disappear into a black hole of some managers, somewhere on your own side of the planet. It is about supporting brands you personally believe in and where you know that the money spent on a product is reaching the right people and not causing harm to them or the planet. Studies have proven that consumer value products much more and for a longer time if they were more expensive, made with a clear conscience and they can connect a story to them (Jackson, 2011).

"Buy Less – Choose Well"

Vivienne Westwood

Shopping ethically, is an intriguing and empowering new concept. It works based on the assumption that ‘spending money is like voting’. As a matter of fact, simply every time we spend money, we endorse companies and their operations, whether we are aware of it or not and whether we like it or not. Extremely said, if you buy eggs from caged chickens, you vote for cruelty to animals. The same goes for buying certain brands of clothing. For instance, say you bought from this overwhelming cheap Irish store, you are actually voting for sweatshop labour. Lastly if you buy a gas-guzzling car, you are a fan of global warming.

The next time you go shopping – you decide! – to consciously consume, spread their stories and create awareness.

A Call to Action

Industrialization brought us fast fashion – let’s be honest, it was fun at first but got out of hand at such a fast pace that it is hardly controllable anymore. Humankind produces and consumes to an extent, to which it is no longer possible in the near future. The world’s resources quite honestly cannot stand up to ‘our increasing demand for throw-away fashion’ (Jackson, 2014). To make matters worse, the large conglomerates within the fashion industry continue to ignore the broader environmental issues and will probably continue to do so until the world’s resources are used up. However, the industry is not entirely to blame. We have all contributed, more or less to this increasing problem facing the fashion industry.

"There is something morally wrong about having a swimsuit or dress that costs the same as a cappuccino."

Suzy Menkes

Most of the time the issues seem beyond our control, as it is often inconceivable or intangible. Therefore, as a protective mechanism, we disregard the issue within our daily lives and choose not to deal with it. We assume that we do not have the power to make a change – but we sure did! Consumers like the thought of democratizing fashion but often it leads to overconsumption (Marati, 2013). Let’s resign from this rigorous and fruitless movement to gain pleasure in endless consumption! The need for greater appreciation and respect and realization of the limited resources from consumers is necessary to get back on the right track. Fashion should value the actual clothing, creative process, material and people who make them. Distanced said: We all want our great-great grandchildren to know what it feels like to have seasons. Don’t we?

"Fast Fashion – Empty calories that make us feel full"

Ethikl

Well, when there is a problem there might also be a solution. It is pretty simple, the new speed of fashion – is SLOW fashion, which was coined by K. Fletcher in 2007. And this is where independent brands come into play. Since then, the movement got adopted and tackled by courageous people – the ones who founded independent brands all over the world as a countermove. These slow fashion brands follow the spirit of being very creative, personal and unique.

Independent brands stand for conscious and mindful consumption. They are independently funded, innovative and have a story worth sharing. The founders of these brands saw what was going wrong felt the urge to step in and offer an alternative. Their products, made ethically and sustainably, are created with a long-lasting purpose and most importantly challenge the idea of standardization and mass production. It is about bringing personally into the wardrobe of the consumers. Various experts have identified the independent brand development as an upcoming growing urban movement. This social movement is more than just a concept or trend but it has become a successful business model, which reacts to the drawbacks of the fashion industry, as we know it.

"Independent Brands Movement – It’s an entry point to changing the entire industry."

J. Chung

Of course people love to buy and own new clothes in order to feel and look good but when they do, it is essential to focus on quantity rather than quantity. In order to develop a more conscious and balanced fashion industry (IF), the consumers need to step in and realize that we all possess power and start to make a change for the better – once a shirt at a time. The concept to do so is pretty easy. Basically, it incorporates the idea of buying less and better clothing. It urges consumers to not follow each and every seasonal trend but rather to go for a more timeless design that will last longer in the consumer’s wardrobes.

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Sources

