CreativeDenmark

Sustainability by Design

Forward-thinking solutions for the future of fashion and textile

Inside this white paper

Design for circularity

Using design thinking and holistic business models as a driver for sustainability

Data-driven responsibility

Digitalisation as enabler for more transparency and innovative production processes

Togetherness across the industry

Creating systematic industry change through collaboration and valuable partnerships



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Sustainability by Design
Forward-thinking solutions for the future of fashion and textile

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Executive summary

The fashion industry accounts for roughly 10% of global carbon emissions and 20% of wastewater, making it one of the highest polluting industries in the world. However, complex supply chains, archaic business models and overconsumption make this a challenging problem to tackle. This is why innovative and creative thinking is needed to confront systemic issues to reduce the industry's impact and create a more sustainable business model – one that works for the planet, people and profit.

Holistic business models
The most sustainable item of clothing is the one already in a consumer's wardrobe, but for an industry driven by rapid growth and newness, this reality is at odds with many brands' strategies and consumers' desires. Holistic and circular business models can solve this problem on a consumer and brand level, keeping clothing in circulation for longer, maximising the resources used in production, reducing waste and creating recurring revenue streams. Chapters 1, 6 and 8 explore different ways to close the loop, through customer education and engagement, circular economies and strategic design thinking.

Togetherness across the industry
To push the needle and drive global, systemic change, the fashion industry must find ways to collaborate and work in partnership. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 look at the potential for impact, both in terms of major players coming together in a shared vision and in the creation of stronger links between every stage of the value chain.

Sourcing responsibly
The volume of resources required to meet the demand for raw material is staggering – a single pair of jeans needs up to 1,800 gallons [6,813 litres] of water to grow the cotton alone – and poses a real threat to the planet. Built into the mass consumption of finite resources is an exploitation of the people producing them and the destruction of habitats intended to sustain local populations. With respect for the planet and its people, we can find better ways to source and produce raw materials and cause less impact. Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7 showcase different approaches to sourcing, from the use of blockchains and certifications for transparent supply chains to honouring local farming methods.



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Building a regenerative organic cotton pilot project in Turkey

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Empowering local communities

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Fashion's first priority

Fashion design is an outlet for expression, creativity and style, but with it comes a responsibility – a responsibility to design for the benefit of people and the planet.



Federica Marchionni
CEO, Global Fashion Agenda

A beautifully designed product would traditionally be deemed as one that captivates with its aesthetic, fit, functionality and how it makes the user feel, but the product's life and impact are fundamental considerations that are often forgotten during the design stage.

Over 80% of all product-related environmental impacts are determined during the design phase . If prolonging the life and minimising the impact of a product were prioritised at the start of the value cycle, the harmful consequences of manufacturing and waste could be significantly reduced.

With enough textile waste to fill a garbage truck going to a landfill every second, and 73% of the world's clothing eventually ending up in landfills , the fashion industry is pushing the planet to its limit. According to current forecasts, one in five garments need to be traded through circular business models by 2030 if we are to meet the Paris Agreement. Consequently, the traditional, linear model of "take, make, dispose" cannot continue and the industry must evolve into a circular fashion system.

Designers have the power to lead this transformation.

> "Over 80% of all product-related environmental impacts are determined during the design phase. If prolonging the life and minimising the impact of a product were prioritised at the start of the value cycle, the harmful consequences of manufacturing and waste could be significantly reduced.

> By combining low-impact durable materials with timeless design, consumers will be able to use products for longer and eventually re-sell or pass on to others to enjoy.

One of the ways they can do this is by designing products with more sustainable materials that can be responsibly sourced, require less resources to manufacture, and can be broken down and reintegrated into the supply chain easily at end-of-life. It is also of high importance to design with longevity in mind. By combining low-impact durable materials with timeless design, consumers will be able to use products for longer and eventually re-sell or pass on to others to enjoy.

These are just a few examples of sustainable design. This whitepaper will provide further insight into the state of the industry and where action can be taken, while providing the inspiration and tools for collaboration; change will not come by working alone – we need to work together. Not only with others in the industry, but with policymakers, investors, NGOs and innovators that have the tools to scale sustainability efforts and create widespread change.

We hope you will join us on the journey to making sustainability fashion's first priority.

Strategic design thinking

Interview



Ulla Ræbild
Associate Professor,
Design School Kolding

Photography: Kathrine Worsø

Up to 80% of a product's overall environmental impact is decided in the design phase. The choices made at this point have the possibility to impact every other phase in the product's life cycle. Strategic design thinking offers an opportunity to make responsible choices at the start of a product's life and implement sustainable practices across the entire value chain.

Ulla Ræbild, associate professor and head of the international MA programme Design for Planet at Designskolen Kolding, discusses how strategic design thinking can create resource circularity, how it can be used as a tool for redesigning the industry and why Denmark is the best place to test new systems:

What is strategic design thinking?

Strategic design thinking is the process of developing new products, services or systems where you think about how the design works in synergy with the business you are driving. You place design within the strategy of the business.

There is more than one definition. As a design discipline, it originates from other topics than fashion and textiles – which have been a latecomer. Driving fashion and textiles from research is a new thing, but what it has brought to design is the consideration of the whole user aspect and looking beyond the product.

How can strategic design thinking be used in fashion?

There are discussions around designing for longevity, that you can design classics that will be fashionable forever, but we all know that is not the case. Ultimately our tastes change. But,we can slow the use of planetary resources. We need to use strategic design thinking to understand first how we can design and develop systems to activate new inner loop cycles For example, re-sale, re-design and repair. And secondly, how to design for mechanical or chemical recycling of fibres to ensure that regenerated fibres from discarded textiles actually can become new attractive and relevant products, and not just another form of waste.

Circular systems can accommodate many different types of paces. This is not about saying one way is better than another, but refining each garment for its type of use-loop and developing certain systems for certain garments instead. Through strategic design thinking, we can start thinking about resources in circular ways, as well as economies.

Why is strategic design thinking important for driving sustainability in the fashion industry?

When it comes to sustainability, we cannot separate it from design and business models. All three elements have to be thought of at the same time because they have to be developed together.

We cannot just keep adjusting minor things within the existing system. To develop new ways of driving fashion, it has to be redeveloped and redesigned all over. It cannot stay as one big highway, as it has been until now, where there is one system going at one pace. We have to use strategic design thinking to envision a landscape of different business models of various sizes and cycles, driven by clever, strategic design.

Having just one-size-fits-all is not sustainable – this is why we need strategic design thinking

How can Denmark be a leader in this approach?

There is a long tradition in the Nordic countries for participatory design that is involved in civic society and finding solutions, and Denmark has a history of thinking in alternative economic models. For example, we use a shareholder economy and we are used to working with systems like pant bottle collections. Lastly, Danes are firstmovers when it comes to adopting new technology, and we need new technology to drive this change.

For these reasons, Denmark could be the ultimate lab for finding solutions for global implementation. It is an incredible place to experiment because the educational level is there, the companies have a strong position in the market and are genuinely ready, and consumers are ready for change as well.

What are the challenges of implementing strategic design thinking?

It is very difficult to make change by yourself when you are a small company – it is something that has to be solved at a bigger structural level – and as a consumer, it can be difficult to make choices when you know nothing about materials or how things are made. If we do not educate people and create a kind of textile citizenship, then we will not achieve anything with strategic design thinking. We can make systems we want people to act in, but if they do not know why or how, they become too difficult to manoeuvre in.

In Denmark, there is a high level of sustainability education in design schools. The result is a workforce ready to go out and act on these principles. It is time to reach across the silos of academia, practice, production and use, and come together. Everyone sits on so much knowledge and there is no opportunity like now: Three years ago, we were told we have 10 years to create change – we do not have much time left.



Chapter 1

Sharing a future for fashion

Collaboration for impact

Photography: Organic Basics

Collaboration for impact

The need for change in the fashion industry is pressing but for companies, it can be difficult to know where to start. Increasingly, brands and organisations are acknowledging the need for collaboration to tackle these systemic issues.



Frederik Larsen (PhD)
Co-founder, In futurum

Sharing and collaboration has not always been the norm in the fashion industry. Collection launches have traditionally been veiled in secrecy, while restricting information about materials and suppliers has been seen as a key aspect of value creation. Companies have often viewed each other as potential threats, which has made collaboration difficult. When it comes to creating a more sustainable industry, however, collaboration is absolutely essential.

In recent years, consumers have started to challenge industry culture and increased the demand for sustainable, ethical practices. Despite a potential competitive advantage, companies have struggled to live up to sustainability requirements due to complex supply chains and entrenched business models built around unsustainable practices.

Learning from each other

For companies to develop creative solutions, build trust into their supply chains and ensure they have the resources needed, there needs to be collaboration. Through access to information, transparency between industry actors and a willingness to share new solutions and knowledge, there is a possibility to create real impact. We cannot push sustainability efforts forward if we are unwilling to learn from one another.

Increasingly, the need for outside knowledge and sharing best practices is becoming recognized more widely by industry players, and some fashion companies have already started to open up to collaborations – especially around sustainability initiatives. For example, Organic Basics' recently announced collaboration with WWF to convert conventional farms in Turkey into regenerative organic farmland.

Growing interest for collaboration

On a global level, initiatives like Copenhagen Fashion Summit, Fashion Pact and Sustainable Apparel Coalition encourage and present different opportunities for collaboration. Examples like Copenhagen Fashion Week's sustainability framework, presented in 2020, and the industry response to it have demonstrated a growing interest in collaborative efforts across industry actors.

These early adopters serve as an inspiration for new models and systems, but there is still a long way to go. If the industry is to change its social and environmental impact, collaboration between companies, organizations and public institutions must be prioritized significantly in the years to come.



Photography: Noemi Belotti, CPHFW

Copenhagen Fashion Week's 2023 Sustainability Requirements

Acknowledging CPHFW's potential to drive change beyond their own activities, they present the ambition to accelerate responsible business practices in the industry as part of their Action Plan.

Contributor

- Copenhagen Fashion Week
- In futurum
- DM&T

CPHFW has launched the 2023 Sustainability Requirements, due to come into effect in January 2023. The requirements stipulate that brands must achieve a certain score to be eligible for a show or presentation on the official schedule.

Brands can earn points based on six strongly interlinked focus areas covering the entire value chain, including: strategic direction, design practices, smart material choices, working conditions, consumer engagement and show production.

Furthermore, all shows and presentations on the official schedule must comply fully with a set of 18 Minimum Standards or they will not be considered for participation, regardless of how high their overall score is.

The requirements provide a brand-individual score based on the six focus areas and are weighted based on level of innovation, ambition and transformational potential. They also consider existing certifications, standards and/or agendas.

Photography: Organic Basics



Building a regenerative organic cotton pilot project in Turkey

In partnership with WWF, Organic Basics will convert cotton-farming land in Turkey from conventional into regenerative organic.

Contributor

- Organic Basics
- WWF

Since the industrial revolution, the production of clothing and food has caused damage to the ecosystem and contributed up to a third of global carbon emissions. Deep tillage and the use of harmful chemicals is turning the world's soil into useless dirt.

But it's possible to reintroduce a form of agriculture that supports healthy soil. By implementing regenerative agriculture practices, healthy soil can be rebuilt, drawing more carbon down from the atmosphere and helping to turn climate change around.

In 2020, Organic Basics announced its partnership with WWF. Over the next four years, both companies will convert approximately 70,000 sq metres of land from conventional cotton farming into regenerative organic cotton farming in the Büyük Menderes Basin in Turkey. Together, they can start supporting farmers wanting to make the switch to regenerative organic cotton farming, capture carbon from our atmosphere and move towards a better way of doing things.

Systematic industry change

Interview



Cecilie Thorsmark
CEO, Copenhagen Fashion Week

Partnership and collaboration across the fashion industry has the potential to drive the sustainability agenda forward. Through skill sharing, doubling-up resources and working towards a common goal, it is possible to create meaningful change on a global scale. Despite this, brands can find navigating these relationships time consuming and complex, often choosing to work on individual sustainability targets instead.

Copenhagen Fashion Week CEO Cecilie Thorsmark discusses the challenges of forming meaningful partnerships, how they can help create change and how CPHFW's 2023 Sustainability Requirements are acting as a guiding tool for brands:

What does partnership or collaboration mean to you?

When two or more parties come together in a shared vision with a common direction. It could mean they work on the same project, or that they share a vision while working parallel to one another. It is making sure that there's always a strategic alignment, a shared vision and a common framework to make sure that we pursue the same targets.

For CPHFW, it means developing a code of conduct for our commercial partners. It is important for us to have this in place to make sure that we have a shared set of values and goals, especially within the field of sustainability. We want to mirror ourselves in our partners and vice versa.

Why is partnership needed to create global and meaningful change in fashion?

What characterizes the fashion industry is that it is made up of SMEs – small and medium-sized enterprises – which means it is fragmented with many players. If they all pursue individual sustainability strategies then it might not create impact. The sheer complexity of sustainability makes it necessary to have a shared vision and one framework for the industry.

"Collaboration" is often used in the context of designers working with fast fashion brands. How does this fit into sustainability initiatives? Are these collaborations still useful?

It is important to have an inclusive approach to sustainability. If we exclude fast fashion brands on the basis of ideological reasons, then how are we going to drive change or have any impact on the environment? It is essential that these big players are a part of this. I would much rather have them working with us so we can push them into more sustainable practices.

> “ There is a tendency to prioritize areas that are more urgent. Strategic partnerships require a lot of manpower and money and sometimes day-to-day challenges overshadow a long-term goal.

What are some of the challenges of forming these collaborations? Why have they not been possible in the past?

There is a tendency to prioritize areas that are more urgent. Strategic partnerships require a lot of manpower and money and sometimes day-to-day challenges overshadow a long-term goal.

In terms of sustainability, you have to be in it for the vision and for the potential impact it might have, rather than for your own business purposes. If you are only seeing sustainability as a competitive advantage, then why would you share?

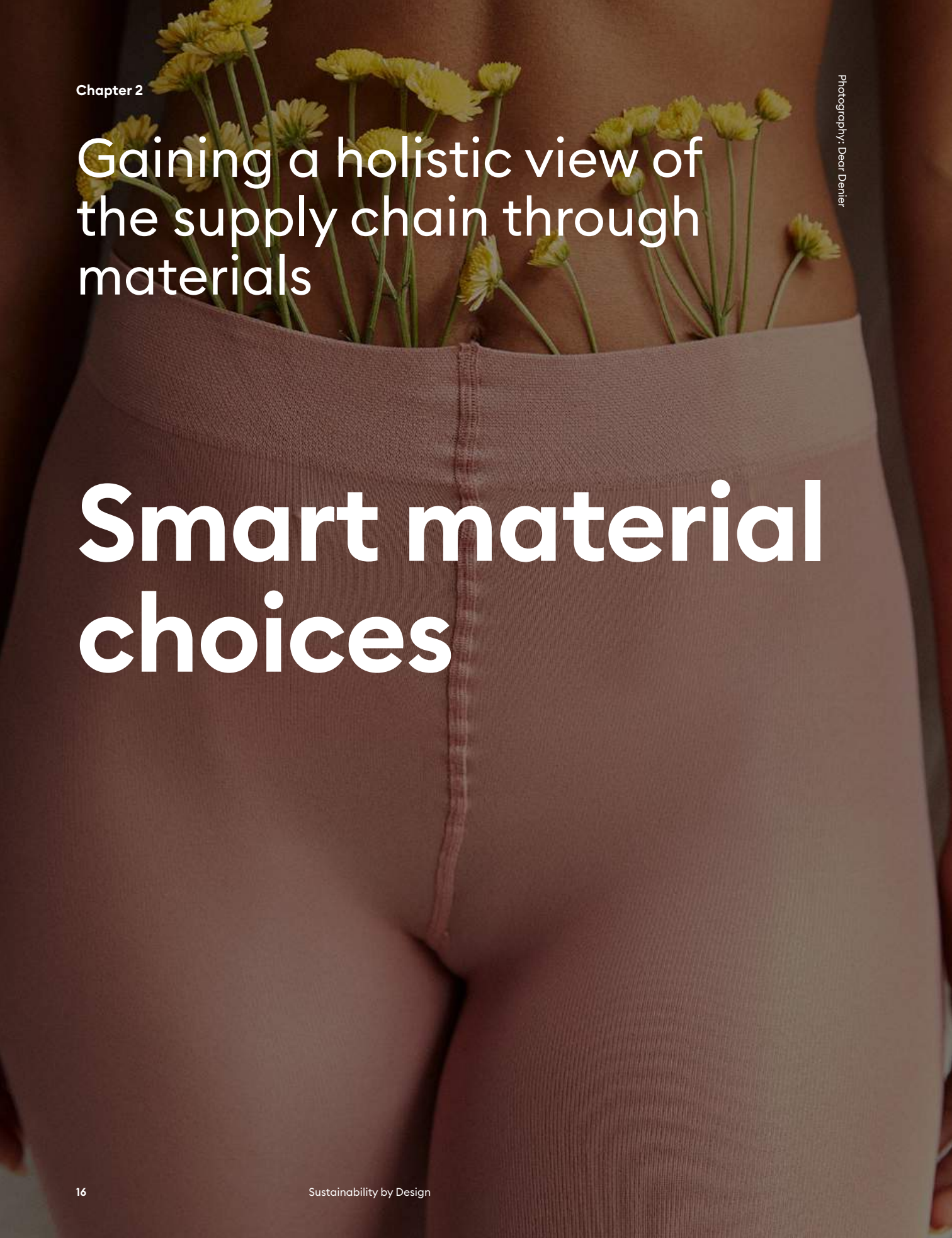
How does CPHFW’s 3-year sustainability plan encourage partnership?

Proposing minimum standards from 2023 sounds simple, but it is quite a big responsibility to demand these changes. We have to make a difference and reduce our environmental and climate footprint, but we are also working with brands whose business model is built around participating in a fashion week. If we suddenly deny access because they haven’t been working responsibly enough, we could ruin their business. It is really important to me that we are not crushing anyone’s dreams and we are providing support during these three years to help everyone reach this phase.

Because of this, the Sustainability Requirements act almost like an educator tool. They cover the entire value chain to give brands a good overview on how to get started in their sustainability efforts. They can tick off what they are already doing, then access what is low hanging fruit and what is more complex and will require more resources.

We have also developed a guide to make sure everyone feels informed and inspired by the framework, and we are planning webinars and developing a toolbox to make sure that brands have the knowledge, tools and inspiration that they need to make change.

Giving brands three years to make changes and the tools they need to do so was our way of emphasizing that we’re doing this for them and not against them – we’re with them in this.



Chapter 2

Gaining a holistic view of the supply chain through materials

Smart material choices

Photography: Dear Denier

Smart material choices

When dealing with sustainability in fashion, there are many areas to consider at once. Materials are a way for companies to start breaking sustainability into little bits and often highlights other aspects they need to change.



Suzi Christoffersen
Founder, Closed Loop

Smart material choices are not just about a material – we are not going to save the world with one organic cotton. Instead, it is a holistic view of the entire supply chain.

Materials comprise a large part of a product so it is right to have a high focus on them, but this also carries a risk that companies will only focus on fabrication and no longer consider the impact. What about human rights? A living wage? The longevity of the product? Can it be recycled and how much land did it use for production? By looking at each specific material and the data around it, it is possible to make a smarter choice for people and for the planet. This is what needs to be taken into consideration when making smart material choices.

A full lifecycle assessment
For example, the fashion and textile industry uses two major materials: cotton and polyester. It would be simple enough to just use recycled polyester and organic cotton, but this would still have an impact. With recycled polyester, there is still a problem with microplastics, while organic cotton still has a problem with the amount of land that is used to farm it.

Instead, every time a decision is made, there needs to be a consideration for how it is going to affect something else.

Finding the right balance
Consider it as a bank account that contains 100 coins. The resources to make a cotton t-shirt will take 75 coins, leaving 25 for future purchases. At the end of its life, the cotton t-shirt can be recycled without costing many coins; it is biodegradable so the resources used to turn it into soil or into new fibers are low.

A polyester t-shirt will only cost 25 coins, leaving 75 for future purchases. At the end of its life, however, the polyester will become more costly than cotton, as it can last for a long time and uses more resources than there are left to recycle. An account must always be in balance, and the planet's resources are no different. Smart material choices are a way to ensure that the impact of a decision never leaves the planet with less than what was taken from it.

Smart material choices do not give an easy or fast answer. Instead, they are a way to work towards having a full lifecycle assessment on each fiber and on each product. It is a long and hand workflow, but it is the only way to see the correct footprint of each product made.



Photography: National Federation of Pasture User Groups of Mongolia

Sustaining Mongolia's grasslands and nomadic herders

Aiayu searches the world for exquisite natural fibers, choosing unique materials that are made by the communities which know them best.

Contributor

– Aiayu

Aiayu is a sustainable luxury brand creating timeless, high-quality essentials for a conscious home and wardrobe. Central to Aiayu's mission is to prioritize using unique natural materials which are less utilized by the fashion industry. This ethos is clear in Aiayu's sourcing partnership with the Green Gold Animal Health Project, a development programme working to protect Mongolia's grasslands and the livelihoods of its nomadic herders. Eager to support the programme and showcase the unique fibers of Mongolia, Aiayu has added yak and Sartuul sheep wool to their product universe.

The programme works with herders to track the health of grasslands all over Mongolia. Using this data and the herders' in-depth knowledge of these ecosystems, they restore degraded areas and develop sustainable grazing strategies to avoid future harm.

Naturally soft and luxurious, yak and Sartuul wool are perfectly suited for premium knitwear. Thanks to the environmental stewardship of the herders and the Green Gold programme, each knit is as sustainable as it is beautiful.

Photography: Dear Denier



Addressing post-consumer waste

More than 2bn pairs of tights, made using crude oils, are discarded every year, with each pair possessing a climate footprint of 1 kilogram of CO_2e

Contributor

- Dear Denier
- Danish Technological Institute

The Dear Denier Recycling Initiative addresses the issue of post-consumer waste from hosiery consumption. We collect worn-out tights from retailers and consumers worldwide, which are then used in lab-tests of a promising new technology that aims to recycle tights' specific nylon and elastane-blend.

The goal is to make new tights from discarded ones and close the product loop.

Currently, Dear Denier tights are made using recycled nylon and elastane yarns from pre-consumer waste. This combined with our zero-waste production, powered by renewable energy, enables us to save significant amounts of CO_2e, energy and water.

The launch of this disruptive technology – the ability to make high quality post-consumer recycled nylon – will revolutionize the nylon industry by removing the need for virgin nylon and allow us to save more than 5 litres of water, 6 kilowatt-hours and 2 kilos of CO_2e per pair of tights produced.

Working with the same fibers throughout our product portfolio allows all our products, such as activewear and underwear, to be collected at end-of-life via our take-back system and turned into new products instead of waste.



Photography: WODEN

Nordic Fish Leather - From waste product to sneakers

Woden strives to constantly push the boundaries of footwear construction, focusing on giving shoes a greener footprint.

Contributor

- WODEN A/S
- Hlynur Arsælsson

The fish leather that WODEN uses in all their sneakers is a waste product from the Icelandic fishing and food industry: an industry in which only 1% of the skin is used and the rest is destroyed. The fish leather, which comes primarily from salmon skins, is both hard-wearing and sustainable. This is due to the fish leather's unique cross-fibre structure, which makes it up to 10 times stronger than calf leather. The fish leather is treated and tanned in Iceland using gentle and eco-friendly methods aided by Iceland's natural hot springs. This tanning process produces 0% carbon emissions.

WODEN's fish leather is sourced by Nordic Fish Leather Iceland, which holds an MSC certification to ensure that the fish leather derives from responsible fishing.

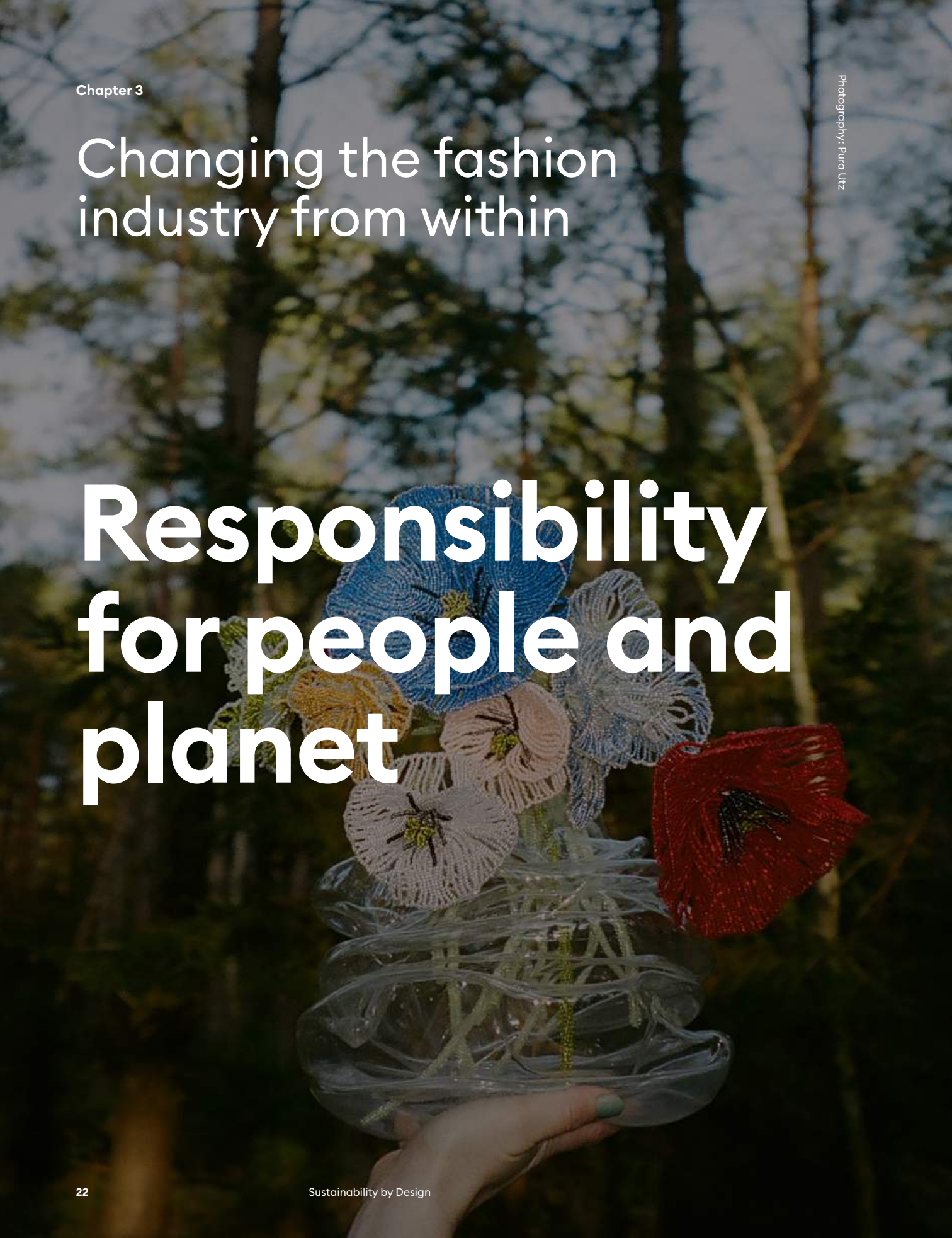
The MSC certification is used to assess whether a fishery is well run and sustainable. It is decided by an independent third party to guarantee transparency. This way, the fishing activity is managed with care to keep other species and habitats in the ecosystem healthy.



Chapter 3

Changing the fashion industry from within

Responsibility for people and planet



Photography: Pura Utz

Responsibility for people and planet

The meaning of responsibility has changed; compliance and basic CSR is not enough. Sustainability must now be actively strived for, however big an elephant it may seem, and the necessary resources must be allocated for a continuous positive change.



Anne Katrine Blirup
Sustainability Consultant and owner of Sustainawear

There was a time when CSR – corporate social responsibility – dominated. In most cases, CSR meant doing what was required and making sure not to break any laws along the way. A code of conduct was the cornerstone – and often the only stone – of most companies' CSR policies. If it was signed by the suppliers, that was considered enough to keep on the straight and narrow. Now, times have changed.

How to eat an elephant

CSR has evolved a lot during the last couple of years and is now seen as a part of a large elephant called sustainability. Unfortunately, the overwhelming scale of this issue keeps many from getting started. But elephants are eaten one bite at a time. Any strive for sustainability is nothing more than a process that needs to be systemized and continued.

My motto is: "We can only fix what we know." This is not an invitation to turn a blind eye to issues, but to close the wide gaps in our knowledge. Only then can an accurate picture of the industry be painted, including the issues of supply chains. These are the findings that must be acted upon.

The truth is hidden in numbers. Without the necessary data and insights, companies end up barking up the wrong tree, using money and resources on the wrong areas and neglecting the areas in need of both.

Sustainability is not a project. It is a process; a due diligence. Simply put, the work never stops. Companies must continue to risk-assess themselves and their supply chains, develop new and improved policies which suppliers must live up to, and adjust their purchasing practices accordingly.

A call for collaboration and internal engagement

There are no quick fixes. The industry must be changed from within by passionate, business-minded people. This means building up capacity within organizations and allocating the resources needed to manage this area of work. It also requires internal alignment to eradicate silo mentality and foster engagement and ownership from everyone in the company.

We must work together as an industry by joining forces with our competitors and other stakeholders. Only then can the status of this industry change from "one of the biggest polluters" to one with a more responsible and future-friendly ring to it.



Photography: Claire Group

Inspiring better standards through action

CSR is an ongoing process in our company and a part of who we are. In 2008, we took membership in BSCI to secure responsible supplier management, but we were still aiming for more.

Contributor
– Claire Group

How can a company have high expectations of its suppliers without expecting the same from itself? How can it inspire and help them to become even better?

In answering these questions, Claire Group chose to obtain the leading certification programme within social responsibility, SA8000, in 2012. It is based on internationally recognized standards of decent work, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ILO conventions and local laws. SA8000 applies a management-systems approach to social performance and emphasizes continual improvement.

There is no doubt that achieving the SA8000 certification has madea positive impact on the company's partners and suppliers. When it achieved the certification in 2012, 28% of its buying volume came from BSCI audited factories, with a rating A, B or C, which means outstanding, good or acceptable. This year, Claire Group expect more than 80% from BSCI or SA8000 factories.

Photography: Pura Utz



Empowering local communities

Pura Utz specializes in high-quality beadwork products handmade in Guatemala by a team of Mayan artisans. Pura Utz was founded to honor and reward their know-how, skills and cultivated talent.

Contributor

– Pura Utz

Pura Utz is founded by Anna Andrés and her partner Bernabela. Andrés has travelled through Guatemala as a child and later as a voluntary teacher and nurse. Throughout her time in Guatemala, Andrés grew a desire to partner up with the local women to acknowledge their skills and allow them to lift themselves out of poverty through paid work. The result was Pura Utz, a business which celebrates Mayan weaving traditions and empowers the women practicing them.

Today, Pura Utz specialises in handmade, premium beadwork and is run from Copenhagen and Santiago Atítlan, where all designs are developed to connect people across the globe. Pura Utz aims to continue growing purposefully and provide full-time employment for more than fifty artisans in Guatemala.

Pura Utz believes in transparency and is committed to explaining to customers the full story behind the products. Its global community can see what is behind the shiny surface of the glass beads by following their Instagram stories on a daily basis.

Chapter 4

Building value through documentation



Photography: Tomorrow Denim

The power of certifications

The power of certifications

People want to work for, buy from and invest in businesses they believe in. Certification is a powerful way to build credibility, trust and value.



Nille Skalts
CEO & Founder, Nordic B Corp

The value chain of the fashion and textile industry is tainted with unintended, negative consequences. The way clothes are designed, produced and consumed is damaging to the entire ecosystem. It has devastating implications to the biosphere, inequality, social abuse, immense overproduction and waste generation – all signs of an industry built on the two conventional gods of volume and price.

Public awareness of this pursuit of profitable growth above all else, plus its negative consequences, is growing. Criticisms of it can often be met with weak promises to change, inadequate or contradictory regulations and a willingness to simply ignore the problem if it is too complicated or inconvenient. This inaction is further fed by misinformation and greenwashing.

In this reality, certifications are needed.

Transparency is your ticket to trust.
There is a tremendous difference between thinking you do good, and actually doing it. There is a need for the means to assess and compare efforts in a holistic perspective; there is a need for indications and paths to guide and improve; there is a need for proof and validation of claims. The support from external experts that certification offers is crucial to ensure that positive impact is supported by transparency and accountability requirements.

The commitment to continuous improvement is your license to operate.
Certification framework proposes a systematic approach to measuring social and environmental impact. It is a powerful mechanism to help set goals for improvement and track performance over time. Certification is a starting point for something new – a commitment to progress.

A new social contract is your future resilience.
Looking ahead, certification of materials, products or production processes is not enough. In a future-fit business, responsibility is the essence of a company.

Today, the most inspiring and ambitious companies are pioneering a new form of business, one that is built on a binding legal promise to deliver material positive impact for people and the planet. Based on a redefined social contract, with a firm commitment to stakeholder focus and the acknowledgement of interdependence, these companies are competing to be best FOR the world.

Responsible business is a conscious decision, with firm commitments, proven track records and collective action. Together, we can build an inclusive, equitable and regenerative system for all people and the planet.



Photography: Tomorrow Denim

Great style and sustainable mindset go hand in hand

For Tomorrow Denim, the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and the EU Ecolabel are the most effective tools in a quest to change from conventional to sustainable textile manufacturing.

Contributor

- Tomorrow Denim
- Bureau Veritas

The Nordic Swan and the EU Ecolabel are two of the world's toughest and most recognized environmental certifications, and Tomorrow Denim must live up to extensive requirements to meet the criteria set by them when producing new collections.

Every element of the supply chain and the product's lifecycle is included in the assessment. In practical terms, this means Tomorrow Denim works with huge water and energy savings, organic and recycled raw materials, avoids harmful chemicals used in conventional production and has a strict waste programme ensuring that resources are utilized to the fullest. To obtain the certifications, the process and all components must be 100% traceable, which is a task made easier by working with only a few suppliers.

Throughout the entire process, Tomorrow Denim must also adhere to social standards according to the International Labour Organization. A large part of Tomorrow Denim's success with the certifications is through its establishment of a production office that sits with their denim supplier, where the complex process of working with innovative manufacturing is managed.

Photography: Mini a Ture



First Danish B Corp certified children's wear brand

MINI A TURE became one of the first B Corp certified children's wear companies in the world in 2021. We try to inspire others in the fashion industry to join this significant world-changing movement and community.

Contributor

- Mini a Ture
- B Lab Europe

Two years ago, Mini A Ture were inspired to join the B Corp movement. Now, it hopes to further inspire companies and their changemakers to partake in this important journey and be better for the world.

Mini A Ture believes the B Corp certification embodies a sincere, holistic and systemic value chain-centered impact review, rewarding what the company has already done while highlighting what it can further improve. The certification process was an insightful deep-dive and learning experience that showed the company and world alike that its vision, mission and core beliefs are aligned with its strategy.

MINI A TURE has acted responsibly in everything it does since it was founded 20 years ago. It continues to strive to build on its vision: our children today and the world they inherit tomorrow. Children must be inspired to care for and nurture a responsible connectivity with nature. We invest in our mutual future through this certification where we can actively help consumers make a conscious and trustworthy choice within the fashion business.

B the Change – B the Future



Photography: Neutral

Mixing certifications for higher standards

At Neutral, we believe in being okay. With 100% commitment to certified clothing, we can improve our planet, make people healthier and give farmers hope. That's okay.

Contributor

– Neutral.com A/S

Neutral considers themselves as a sustainable business selling textiles, not a textile business selling sustainability. This holistic view has given Neutral and its stakeholders a different approach to sustainable garments. When examining the 'how', it found that the best way of creating truly sustainable garments was through a mix of several international standards covering all parts of the business.

Through a mix-and-match of the highest environmental, social and ethical standards, Neutral follows the latest knowledge and criteria set by experts. These are controlled by independent parties to ensure that Neutral and its value chain fulfill the strict regulations.

All Neutral garments are certified by GOTS, Fairtrade, SA8000 and EU Ecolabel.

For Neutral, compliance functions as a baseline and Neutral continuously seeks to innovate and make even more positive changes. For example, all Neutral products are produced using renewable energy and the company works in partnerships to protect biodiversity, wildlife and small cotton-farmers while converting conventional cotton farming to organic.

Photography: Masai



Thoughtful design through thoughtful documentation

Thoughtful certification is a natural extension of a business model rooted in long-lasting, mindful design. Masai communicates these commitments through their documentation implemented at scale.

Contributor

– Masai

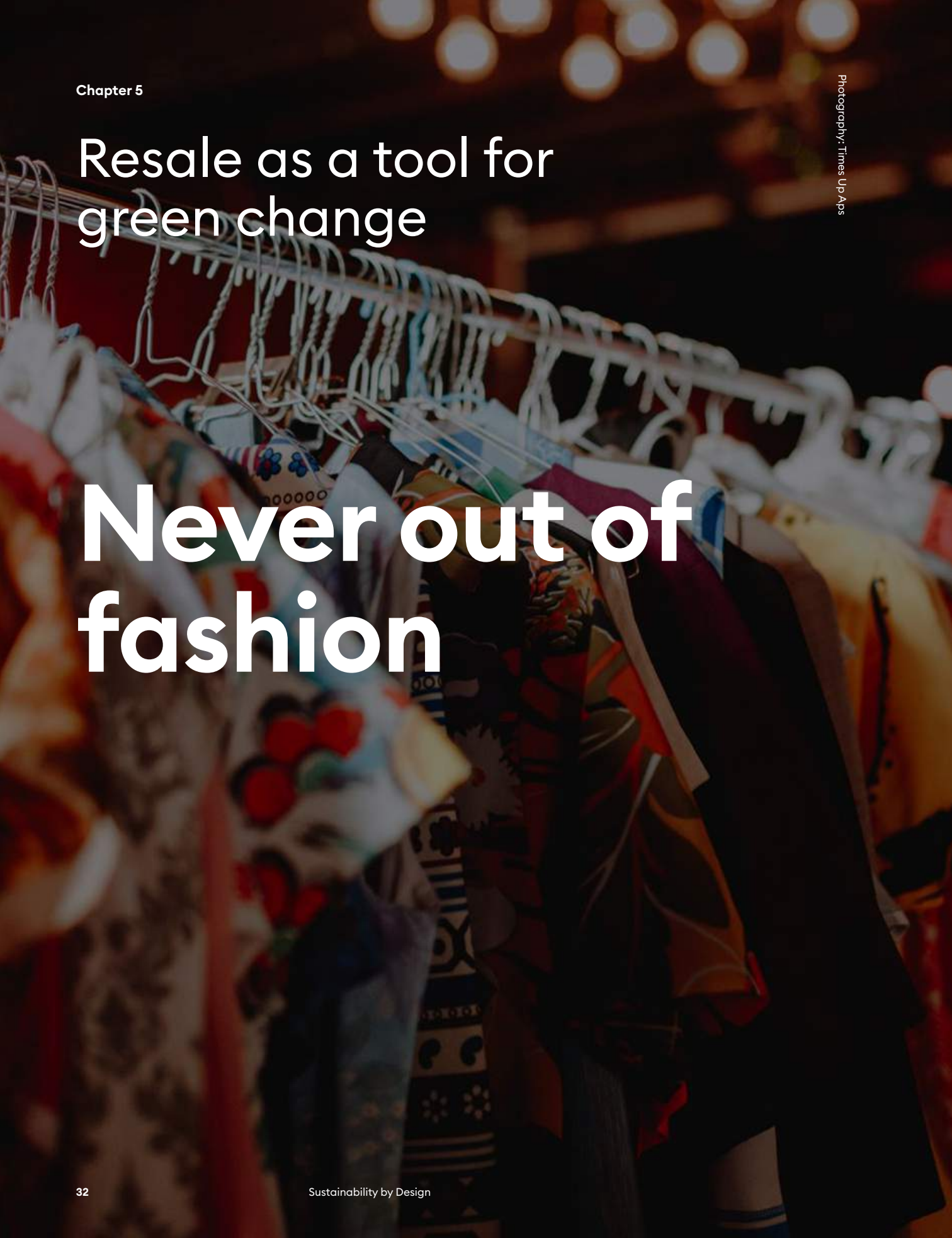
During the last two years, Masai has put substantial efforts into establishing and developing a sustainability and CSR strategy. In 2019, Masai became members of FSC®. Shortly after, Masai became the first clothing company in Denmark, and one of the first in the world, to be FSC® C152037 certified. With the FSC certification, Masai can trace their wooden fibres back to controlled sources and sustainable forests with respect for the surrounding nature, animals and people. Masai wants their CSR measures to be a natural extension of the business and has taken actions where they believe it can make the biggest difference. Since up to 70% of Masai collections are created using wood-based fibres such as viscose, this was a natural focus area for the brand. Therefore, they chose to work towards an FSC certification in close cooperation with FSC® Denmark.

Masai suppliers are an important part of this initiative and close and long-term partnerships with them have been a crucial element in the implementation. The journey continues and together with FSC, Canopy and a number of specialized partners, Masai continues to pursue best practices and innovative solutions.

Chapter 5

Resale as a tool for green change

Never out of fashion



Photography: Times Up Aps

Never out of fashion

A circular economy is an economy driven by products that are worth circulating, for consumers and for brands.



Else Skjold
Associate Professor,
Royal Danish Academy

Photography: Lisbet Holten

Resale has been used for cultural and monetary exchange by trade empires for thousands of years across the world. It is only in the last 4-5 decades that a linear, throw-away mindset has been business-as-usual. Now is the time to reconfigure our industry by learning from the past and adapting for the future.

Resale as a feedback loop for product development
With increasing haste and volume, fashion products have flooded the market and the waste sector. Most of them have very little value both technically, as materials are of poor quality, and emotionally, as consumers do not find them relevant to wear outside of trend cycles.

Changing this requires two primary objectives: one is to dramatically decrease the volume of new products being made, the other is to gain revenue many times on the same product through resale. For this to happen, it is necessary to start investigating how garments actually create value for consumers in the use phase, both what they like and value, and what they need, dream of and aspire to when they dress.

Here, the resale market is of value in studying how much consumers are willing to pay for products removed from trends or seasons and how individual products are performing years after they have been introduced to the market. The resale market serves as a feedback loop for increasing the brand value and product quality of fashion brands.

Resale is the only possible pathway for green change
The rapidly growing resale market, estimated to reach $64b in 2024 and replace fast fashion by 2030, is worth investigating as the possible engine of a new type of economy. One that is still a lucrative business, an inspiration for consumers and an enhancer of product longevity – which is the most important parameter driving green transition.

Currently, 9% of all garment purchases in Denmark are from resale and the market is becoming increasingly more versatile, consisting of a variety of online and physical curated platforms – from traditional NGOs to luxury vintage shops. Technological solutions for tracking and re-allocating pre-loved garments to new owners will be important in scaling the resale market, as it consists mainly of one-offs that are difficult to manage.

Regardless, this market will not fully work unless we redefine the value proposition of fashion entirely from the current focus on newness and seasonal trends, towards a focus on a diverse range of niche markets that are adapted towards actual consumer needs.



Photography: DFD

Tons of textiles given a new life

DFD gives discarded textiles a new purpose through upcycling, turning old tablecloths into chef's whites.

Contributor

– De Forenede Dampvaskerier (DFD)

DFD's upcy initiative is based on a circular business model. Its objective is to establish sustainable textile consumption through close partnerships with its customers.

On average, 1 ton of textiles is discarded every day by the commercial linen industry, as when textiles no longer meet quality requirements, they are taken out of service. However, these textiles have not yet reached the end of their lifecycle. DFD gives textiles a new lease of life and completes the circle by upcycling its customers' discarded textiles into new products. For example, hospital duvets and tablecloths are transformed into shirts and jackets. Using the resources DFD has at its disposal, it minimises the production of new resources. DFD aims to upcycle 100% of its customers' textiles by 2025.

Customers have responded positively to the DFD upcy initiative and its specific action towards a more sustainable society.

DFD upcy aims to inspire others to take a fresh look at their resources. and consider how they can prolong the life cycle of their textiles.

Photography: Reshopper



Shifting consumer behaviour through resale

Reshopper is a digital marketplace that helps parents buy and sell used kids' items and connect with other families living in their community.

Contributor

– Reshopper

Reshopper was founded in 2012 by three Danish fathers who were frustrated by how difficult it was to sell used childrenswear and toys through existing marketplaces.

Today, Reshopper's community of parents use the app to sell and find new bargains. Children wear eight sizes in the first two years of their life, often wearing each item of clothing only a few times. Reshopper supports a shift in consumer behaviour towards recycling by making selling and buying children's clothing easier.

During the COVID-19 crisis, Reshopper invited Save the Children, an international NGO, to sell through Reshopper in Denmark. This initiative ensured the NGO's continued ability to focus on their own social aid.

Reshopper's award-winning app has been selected by Apple as the Editor's Choice in the App Store and featured on Apple's Top 10 list of Best Apps of the Year. It has been profiled by The Sun, BBC and TechCrunch. Reshopper has also won Best Social Tech Startup at Nordic Startup Awards (DK) and Best Innovation/Startup at Danish Digital Award and more.



Photography: Lærke Bagger

Creating value through slow fashion and upcycling

Allowing a consumer to become an active part of the design and production process through upcycling and publishing patterns can create value and promote sustainability.

Contributor

– Lærke Bagger

Lærke Bagger is a fashion knitwear brand that focuses on upcycling, slow fashion and co-design.

Lærke Bagger works within the craft community as well as the fashion industry, with partners such as Soulland, Holly Golightly, Eurowoman, the Red Cross and Gyldendal. The work has included knitting patterns and DIYs, books, workshops, lectures, collaborations with larger companies and finished products.

The essence of the brand is to produce clothing items that are unique, personal and resistant to trends through upcycling. In other words, fashion you keep and pass on. Everything is created using excess material, deadstock, roll ends, discarded items and "found objects". The brand creates knitwear design, which is either sold as a finished product – handmade to order – or published as a knitting pattern or DIY instructions for upcycling.The brand seeks to inspire people around the world to produce their own knitwear instead of buying fast fashion, or to buy better clothing that will last longer and has been produced in a more sustainable way. This lets the consumer be an active part of producing and designing as a means to achieving and maintaining sustainability.

Photography: Les Deux



Conscious consumption

Les Deux Rewear is one element of Les Deux's comprehensive strategy that seeks to create a more sustainable and responsible organization.

Contributor

- Les Deux
- Continued Fashion

The way we consume clothes is a cornerstone of the sustainable development of the clothing industry. Studies show that 30% of the clothes in our wardrobes have not been used for a year. We try to address this issue through our new concept, Les Deux Rewear, which will form the framework for a more conscious clothing consumption so that we can collectively contribute to a more sustainable industry.

The platform enables the recycling of used Les Deux clothes that we receive, clean, repair and send on to a new consumer, giving the clothes new life. This means the lifespan of the item is extended and the resources used for its production are maximized. In addition, the risk of textile waste is significantly reduced.

Les Deux Rewear encompasses the concept of circularity, which is fundamentally about products being used for as long as possible and recycled to the greatest possible extent at end-of-life. This is an essential concept if we are to transform the clothing industry into a more sustainable business model.

Chapter 6

Empowering sustainability through digitalisation



Photography: SPOOR/Roccamore

Data-driven decisions

Data-driven decisions

When it comes to the digitalisation of the fashion industry as a means to support sustainability, there are still plenty of unknowns.



Heidi Svane Pedersen
Head of Digital,
Lifestyle & Design Cluster

What is known is that virtual technologies and visualization tools in the design process can lower sample creation; if data is used for predicting what will sell, it can reduce storage by 50%; robot technology, automations and other IoT devices can support made-to-order models and bring production to several other parts of the world.

These examples are promising, but there's still more potential for technology when used alongside a sustainable business model.

The use of 3D and visualization of garments is one example of a tool that could make fashion more sustainable. In January, Bestseller opted for a virtual show instead of a traditional trade show booth. Everything from production to sales was told through 3D, meaning no sales samples were made. Alongside keeping their existing customers, they increased their customer base and only used 25% of the resources and manpower compared to previous collections.

Building resale value through blockchain technology

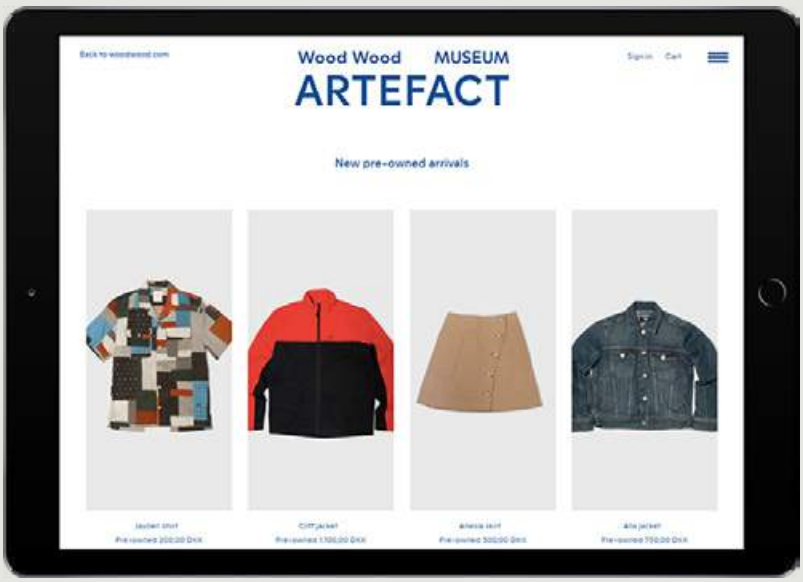
With blockchain technology, there's great potential for transparency, as data is locked onto a blockchain and can't be tampered with. For smaller brands that do not have the resources for certification but wish to demonstrate their responsible business model, this ability to optimize every step in their supply chain and ensure transparency between actors in it is very appealing. Block-chains have also been shown to be a competitive advantage in cases of brands using them to showcase their value chain on their website, as the education of the end user is reflected in their shopping behaviour.

By building these blockchains now, future users will be able to tap into original data and understand how best to reuse a textile. This will be especially of value for resale platforms, where luxury brands can be truly documented.

A testbed for digital innovation

In terms of lean strategy and removing waste from production, it has been shown that artificial intelligence can tap into some decision-making processes and make better choices. Son of a Tailor, for example, has scaled their mass customization platform using this technology and can now produce without any waste.

Danish companies are extremely eager for innovation and there are powerful systems in place to support them. A culture of startups and companies that have already begun scaling this technology makes Denmark a great testbed for this model, plus with Danish universities already teaching many digital courses and programmes, the skillbase is already here. There is great potential within data driven decisions – how it can evolve is something to stay curious about.



Photography: Continued Fashion

Circular retail platform for systemic change

Continued is a digital retail platform that offers a full-service resale solution that allows fashion brands to facilitate take-backs, renting, and reselling products.

Contributor

– Continued Fashion

Continued offers an all-in-one resale solution that enables fashion brands to integrate circular retail models like rental or peer-to-peer resale. Their full-service solution is a white-label digital platform that is easily integrated into a brand's existing sales channel and skinned according to its visual guidelines. The platform is a turn-key ecosystem that monitors the afterlife of customer and product behaviour and helps the brand to understand how to stay relevant on the journey – and monetize on all activities.

Continued's mission is to create a new consumption model in the fashion industry that:

- reduces resource consumption
- matches consumer behaviour
- demonstrates that sustainability is good business
- extends product life and thus minimizes vulnerability to global events like COVID-19

Recirculating clothes is the most efficient way of reducing the fashion industry's footprint. Continued has helped many international brands implement circular retail in their core business.

Photography: By Green Cotton



Transparency with blockchain technology

Blockchain technology can transform traditional track and trace into sustainability transparency, promoting trust in brands and creating loyal customers.

Contributor

- By Green Cotton
- CBS
- Lifestyle & Design Cluster
- Sunland

Today's consumer increasingly considers transparency in every purchasing decision. Textile companies with a sustainable approach and good control over the value chain can gain competitive advantages by giving customers deeper access to a product's value chain. However, trust in the industry is not great and fashion companies are all trying to convey a sustainable image.

Blockchain technology is based on peer-to-peer communication through shared data records. This way, the entire value chain of a product can be documented by all those participating and any information used is not created by brands for marketing. This promotes trust, which creates more loyal and engaged customers.

Together with CBS, By Green Cotton has built a blockchain where actors in the supply chain can upload information. This lets customers at www.bygreencotton.dk follow the value chain for a specific product. More information can be built into the blockchain as the suppliers get more confident with the use.



Photography: SPOOR/Roccamore

A shoe with a passport

SPOOR and Roccamore joined forces to be among the first in the world to launch a fully traceable shoe collection, creating greater transparency for end-consumers.

Contributor

- Roccamore
- Scan-Hide

In January 2021, SPOOR launched a collaboration with the Danish premium shoe brand Roccamore, enabling Roccamore to be among the first in the world to launch a shoe collection made using 100% traceable leather.

Although Roccamore has a strong tradition of working with premium quality leather, its suppliers have so far been unable to guarantee the origin of its leather and the welfare conditions of the animal supplying the hide.

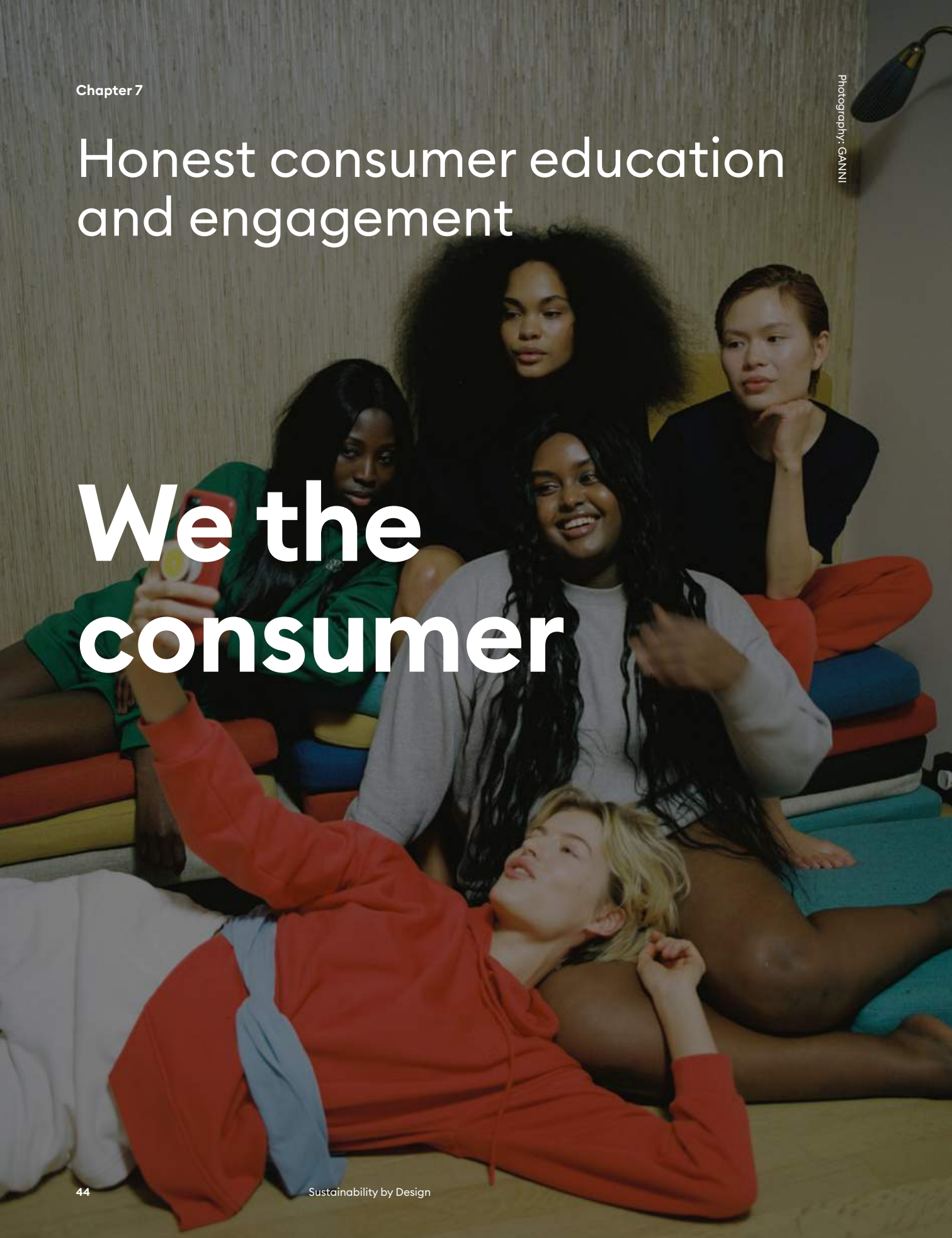
With SPOOR's innovative technology and all data available, Roccamore can now guarantee that all shoes in the collection are made using high-quality Scandinavian leather from animals that have experienced some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world. Using blockchain technology and QR codes, the end customer can track the full journey of their Roccamore shoe all the way back to the farm, creating full transparency for customers.



Photography: Roccamore

Chapter 7

Honest consumer education and engagement



Photography: GANNI

We the consumer

We the consumer

In terms of European consumption, clothing and textiles constitute the product group with the fourth largest environmental impact following food, transport and housing. This is a field crying out for a green transition!



Anja Philip
President, The Danish Consumer Council

On a global basis, the consumption of clothes and footwear is expected to rise by 63% by 2030 . Within European households, textiles are the consumer goods representing the second largest use of land for production, as well as the fourth largest use of raw materials. Our research has shown that 95% of Danish consumers find it important that products have been manufactured in a responsible way.

But the green transition cannot be driven by consumer demand alone. When consumers buy clothes, their purpose is not to save the world, but to cope with everyday life.

Tackling the issue of overproduction
During the last couple of years, more responsibly manufactured clothes have become accessible and manufacturers have focused on choice of material and social conditions, which is good. However, there is still a serious challenge with overproduction. Responsibility covers the full circle from production and design to usage and disposal – or in the best case, recycling.

The clothes already in wardrobes need to be worn and clothes need to be recirculated. Clothing companies can assist with this by considering new business models. Clothes also need to be kept in repair, which requires that they represent a high value to prioritize spending money and time on them.

When the consumer shops for new clothes, they need to remove themselves, from an environmental perspective, away from large quantities of poor quality. Instead, the focus must be buying better quality and handling with care.

Certification and honest communication
When consumers wish to support a more responsible production, certification schemes are the best remedy available. The important point is to look for approved certification schemes subject to impartial control and with high criteria to standards of production. Ecolabel, or GOTS, to mention some. Many manufacturers have introduced their own branding lines within their own criteria – often of very poor quality and outside official, neutral controle.

Consumers walk in a dense forest of green claims when shopping, known as greenwashing. This undermines consumer confidence and creates an uneven competition for those manufacturers who do produce responsibly. Manufacturers should not refrain from developing green initiatives, but they need to be communicated honestly without exaggeration.



Photography: GANNI

Driving accountability through impactful storytelling

Copenhagen-based GANNI doesn't identify as a sustainable brand and is instead taking an honest, results-driven and holistic approach to behaving more responsibly.

Contributor
– GANNI

GANNI recognises the inherent contradiction between the current fashion industry that thrives off newness and consumption, and the concept of sustainability.

Seeing it as their moral obligation to do better, the brand is currently working on becoming more responsible across four key areas – people, planet, product and prosperity – through 44+ GamePlan goals to reach by 2023.

GANNI wants to be honest, not perfect. They believe that being transparent on your sustainability progress and set-backs is key in driving accountability. The company publishes an annual Responsibility Report and shares weekly progress on their sustainability focused instagram account @gannilab.

The @ganni.lab Instagram account launched in 2020 with the mission to take the GANNI community along with them on their journey to become more responsible – throughout the highs and lows.

The brand argues that publishing information on sustainability is crucial to driving change as it ensures you're held accountable by your community. By taking an active role in educating and informing their audience, GANNI encourages their community to participate in the ever-evolving sustainability conversation.

The brand succeeds in facilitating dialogue through storytelling that is impactful, sharp and sometimes a little nerdy.

Photography: Son of a Tailor



The future of fashion waste? Nonexistent.

Son of a Tailor is on a mission to fundamentally reduce waste in the fashion industry. And they're doing it by applying lean manufacturing principles to clothing.

Contributor

– Son of a Tailor

Son of a Tailor is solving fashion's waste problem with two key ingredients. One looks to the digital future, with a machine-learning algorithm that sizes customers online using height, weight, age and shoe size. The other looks to the past and made-to-order clothing. Combined, these have the potential to solve fashion waste.

The Perfect Fit algorithm tailors each item to exact customer measurements, resulting in a perfect fit – great for customers. It also means not a single garment is produced until someone orders it. This removes 100% of inventory waste – great for the planet.

Shifting to a made-to-order model has not been easy. Jess Fleischer, CEO of Son of a Tailor, recalls: "Finding a partner to work with our minimum order quantity of one was challenging. We eventually found a factory that restructured their processes around single-garment production. That changed everything."

The company applies lean manufacturing to get their made-to-order process to be as efficient as possible, with continuous improvement. As an example, lead times have decreased from 18 days in 2018 to 7 days in 2021.



Photography: Create2STAY

Making circular shopping easy

More consumers are shopping resale than ever before. Now, fashion needs more than ever to invest in this engaging, sustainable and profitable business model.

Contributor

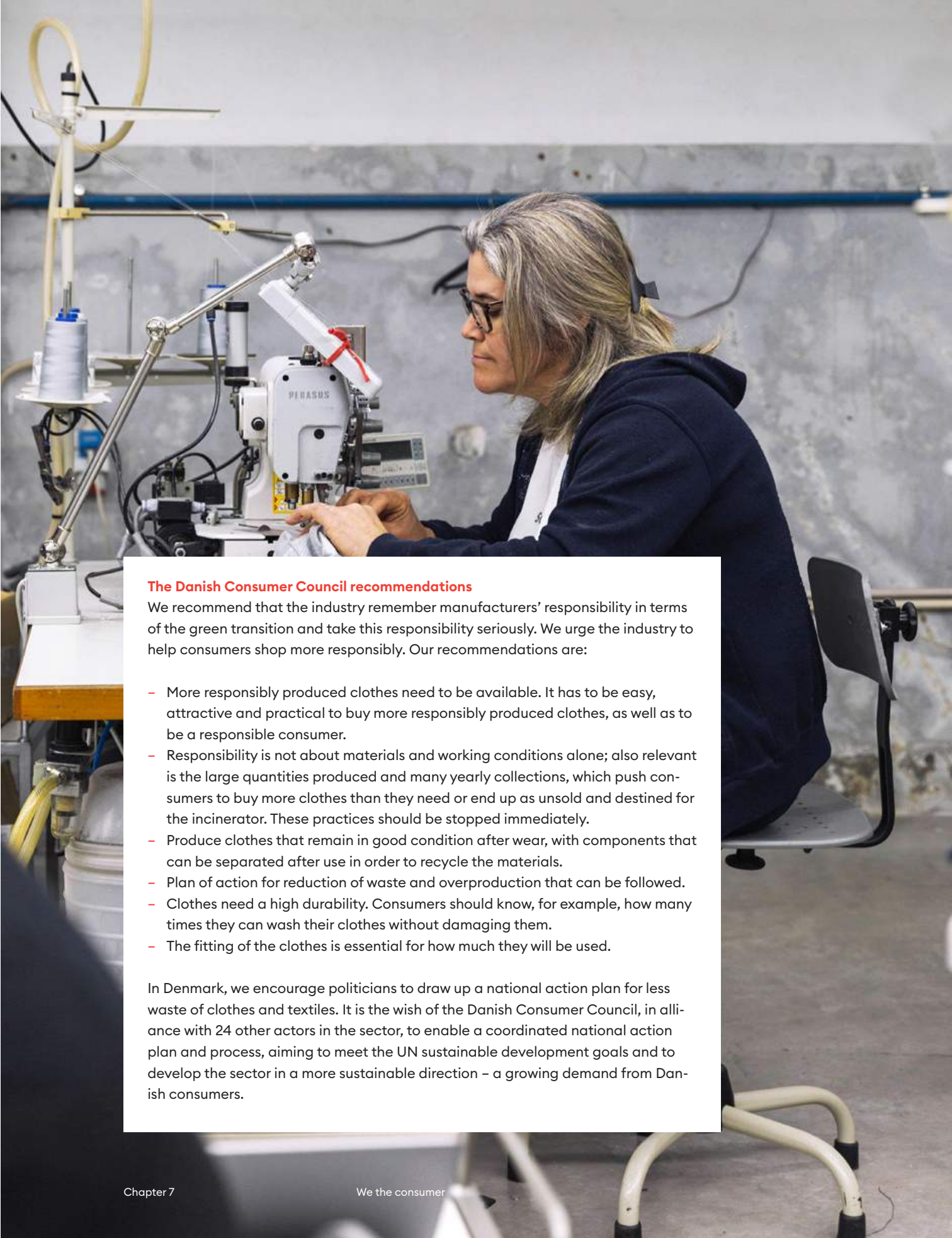
– Create2STAY

Consumers are more open to circular shopping than ever before and are already pulling brands towards a total paradigm shift as a result, with Gen Z consumers leading the charge. Circular shopping is growing at a rate that's 21 times faster than the overall fashion industry, steals more share of wallet than any other sector and is expected to exceed fast fashion in 2029. On top of this, circular shopping increases a product's life cycle and is therefore a crucial part of reducing the fashion industry's carbon emissions. Now, we need to include as many brands as possible.

In May 2020, Create2STAY was founded by five senior fashion and IT executives with the simple purpose of democratizing circular shopping. Create2STAY is a plugin, white-label platform solution that's making the circular shopping experience easy, convenient and profitable for both brands and consumers. Create2STAY has developed the technological and logistical set-up that takes care of the trade process from consumer to warehouse and out again.

This means brands can grow their sustainable agenda and brand equity while significantly increasing consumer acquisition and their margins on the booming circular shopping market.

Create2STAY makes circular shopping easy, allowing brands to grow their sustainable agenda, brand equity and consumer acquisition, while pushing a sustainable business model forward.



The Danish Consumer Council recommendations

We recommend that the industry remember manufacturers' responsibility in terms of the green transition and take this responsibility seriously. We urge the industry to help consumers shop more responsibly. Our recommendations are:

- More responsibly produced clothes need to be available. It has to be easy, attractive and practical to buy more responsibly produced clothes, as well as to be a responsible consumer.
- Responsibility is not about materials and working conditions alone; also relevant is the large quantities produced and many yearly collections, which push consumers to buy more clothes than they need or end up as unsold and destined for the incinerator. These practices should be stopped immediately.
- Produce clothes that remain in good condition after wear, with components that can be separated after use in order to recycle the materials.
- Plan of action for reduction of waste and overproduction that can be followed.
- Clothes need a high durability. Consumers should know, for example, how many times they can wash their clothes without damaging them.
- The fitting of the clothes is essential for how much they will be used.

In Denmark, we encourage politicians to draw up a national action plan for less waste of clothes and textiles. It is the wish of the Danish Consumer Council, in alliance with 24 other actors in the sector, to enable a coordinated national action plan and process, aiming to meet the UN sustainable development goals and to develop the sector in a more sustainable direction – a growing demand from Danish consumers.

Consumer engagement

Interview



Katrine Lee
Founder, Copenhagen Cartel

To effect real change in the fashion industry, consumer engagement and education is essential. After all, only an informed consumer can make more sustainable and responsible choices. It is up to brands to connect to and involve their consumers in their sustainability efforts, but after years of greenwashing, it can be hard to know how to communicate effectively.

Katrine Lee, founder of Copenhagen Cartel, discusses the importance of consumer enlightenment, how Copenhagen Cartel educates its customers and what brands are getting wrong about sustainability messaging:

Why do we need to educate consumers about sustainability?

We need to educate them as it is a necessary part of a holistic approach. Brands can learn about circularity or green innovations but it is not enough – we also need to educate consumers so it is a full circle.

How does Copenhagen Cartel educate and engage its customers?

We tell them about the different materials that we use and why they are actually better for the environment and we inform them about their own impact when they shop. Buying a bikini might seem like a small act but there is more to it – it is not just the fabric but the way it has been produced. We talk about this a lot on our website and on our social media.

We also do a roadshow every summer where we go around the coastline of Denmark doing public cleanups. Every time, we dive off the coast and collect 100-300 kilograms of garbage. We invite our whole community and customers to join us and a lot of people actually do. Besides having a good time and cleaning the water, we talk a lot about the garbage that we find and how it is sorted afterwards. Every time we do these cleanups everyone is so shocked, but I think that shock is a good thing because it actually makes people realize that there is a big problem. When people actually get their hands dirty, literally with their hands in garbage, they think twice the next time they see it.

How do you reach beyond your community with this messaging?

We team up with some non-traditional partnerships, like the Danish Surf and Rafting Association, and we've done some events with Red Bull. The community that they have is very strong and loyal but not necessarily focused on sustainability. We have a whole beach display with a big installation made using fishing nets that we cleaned from Danish beaches ourselves and our material that is made from recycled ocean plastic. Once we're there, many people

come up to us just to have a chat. They are very willing to talk with us and they learn a little bit. Our normal target group is women, primarily 25-45, but here we meet a lot of men and an older audience.

That is why it is super important that we actually acknowledge this problem and do something about it. As a consumer, we actually have power. The money we have and the money we put in a brand is a vote in a certain direction. We are trying to reach not just our normal target group but all people, because the legacy of the subject concerns everyone.

How can we educate without overwhelming consumers?

It is about authenticity and transparency. I am always telling the community that I did not have a focus on sustainability when I moved to Bali, but the beaches were full of garbage and it made something click inside me. I knew that I had a responsibility as a human being to do something. By sharing my own story, it makes it a bit more accessible.

We often communicate that you do not have to change your whole lifestyle, but there are a few things that you can have in mind or do in your everyday life, and we give advice on what these small acts are and what we do at Copenhagen Cartel ourselves. We try to inspire more than we try to educate, but in this inspiration there are learnings and education.

We try to be very open minded and honest about these issues. They know I am not a saint or an expert and I'm not saying that we are doing all the right things, but I just really want to contribute and at least we are trying. That is kind of my message to our community: just try.

What has the response to the work you do around education been like?

From a customer point of view, we have had so much support and so much positive feedback. From an industry perspective, I think some brands see what we do as a provocation, but they should probably look themselves in the mirror and ask why they get so provoked. I am just so sick of greenwashing.

What are brands currently getting wrong about communicating sustainability efforts to consumers?

I think some brands think that customers are more stupid than they are, but most of our customers really want to learn and know more. We should see the consumer as an equal and communicate to them as intelligent, educated people.

Consumers have been in the dark for a long time because there has been a lot of greenwashing, so as a brand it is important to be transparent, educational and understanding of the consumer's point of view. Everyone is actually willing to do their part and to be more responsible when consuming. We need to level up our communication as brands when it comes to sustainability, because we actually have really intelligent consumers who care about their impact.

This white paper features lessons learned from the fashion and textile industry with regard to increasing responisbility and quality through design thinking, impactful partnerships and innovative processes.

State-of-the-art cases on circular economy, certifications, community engagement and digitalisation illustrate methods that can become highly valuable components for the benefit of both our planet and our societies globally.

'Sustainability by design' is intended to enrich and inspire your next project with creative solutions from the fashion and textile industry. We hope to leave you inspired!

About Creative Denmark

Creative Denmark is a not-for-profit, public-private partnership that creates awareness about Danish creative strongholds internationally. We foster relations between international stakeholders and Danish solutions, products, and competencies across the creative industries.

For more information visit
www.creativedenmark.com

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