

The Value Cycle to Sustainable Fashion

Fashion Footprints

It is no secret that the fashion industry produces high amounts of carbon dioxide emissions. The luxury industry is no stranger to sustainability. According to sciencedirect.com larger luxury companies are more environmentally friendly than fast fashion companies because they pollute less per product sold. It is essential that the luxury fashion houses are cognizant of the carbon footprint they have. Not only will it help mitigate climate change, but it will also lead to new ways for corporations to manage climate change. Wadera and Kaur from the Journal of Business Research note that it is not only production that contributes to CO2 emissions and Greenhouse Gas emissions but the burning of fossil fuels during transportation. The fashion industry alone is responsible for 4% of global emissions. Fashion houses can lead sustainable practices by committing to using alternative methods of transportation like via the ocean. Emissions don't end after they leave the distribution center.

LifeSpan of Clothing

Consumerism has been rampant since COVID and it has been consistent due to the accessibility of online shopping. According to State of Matter Apparel, the lifespan of clothes has decreased by 36% over the past 15 years. Articles of clothing are worn about seven to ten times before it is discarded by the wearer. The short lifespan of clothing contributes to the carbon emissions due to textile waste. Items that are returned are not immune to being tossed. State of the Matter has mentioned that 9.5 billion pounds of clothing ends up in landfills, as of 2022. Consumers find it easier to get rid of their unwanted articles of clothing instead of finding a way to repurpose them.

Closing the Loop

The value circle is an approach that hopes to create a closed-loop system in the clothing industry. From the moment an article of clothing is sourced to it's time to be recycled, the value circle aims to aid in the fight against climate change. Sustainably sourcing materials is the right way to ensure the loop gets too close. For many companies, polyester is the fabric of choice when creating clothes. Polyester is made of petroleum and it accounts for 52% of fibre usage, according to Reconomy.com. It is imperative that companies help consumers shift behavior to more sustainable practices and they can start by stopping the use of polyester.

Opportunities in the New Era of Fashion

While brands currently have the option of using organic cotton or recycled polyester, they have the option to do more. Brands have the opportunity to influence consumer behavior. They can implement resale platforms if authenticity is a concern. Many brands that lead with sustainability in mind have repair services to give clothing items a second chance. Brands can help guide consumers to be self aware when purchasing articles of clothing by thoroughly educating them on the use and care practices for longevity. Companies can also incentivize consumers to give their clothes a second chance or even a third and fourth by doubling down on sustainable practices and messaging.

