

# FASHION ACTS

London Fashion Week holds a unique space in the international calendar and while it goes without saying that UK design aesthetics and art-school teaching continues to draw praise the world over, other narratives are now at play.

With the fashion landscape rapidly changing, the power of fashion to hold a taste-leadership position in the lives of anyone who consumes our message and associated products, has never been more apparent. In 2018 it is simply not enough to 'create' without accountability or ethics. Sustainability, an imperative defined in both emotional and material terms is what all leading creatives must surely now address as part of their practice.

Issues such as model health and safety, diversity in front of and behind the lens as well as in the boardroom, self-esteem for the wearer AND the worker (however far away they may be in the developing world) together with multiple reforms towards ecological integrity has propelled us to prioritise good practice and reject substandard systems. Organisations such as Equity, All Walks Beyond the Catwalk, Responsible Trust for Models and numerous others have helped shaped this debate and now recognised support networks are in place for early adopters and with encouragement from us all, this community of 'conscious,' creatives can, and must expand.

And inspiration comes in many ways. This February sees the design and messaging of visionaries Teatum Jones now in their 4th catwalk season whose runway presentation featuring a range of physiques, has come to glorify and

normalise a much needed spectrum of diverse human beauty. Meanwhile stars in the field of sustainability such as Christopher Raeburn and Amy Powney, from Mother of Pearl prioritise both green process and stand out design with ease. In addition, The Sustainable Angle brings a collaboration between Future Fabrics Expo and a host of exciting names including Roland Mouret and Temperley London, to make London a destination well equipped to mentor international visitors in intelligent design and product integrity.

The young men and women who bring these creations to life (for where would clothes be without bodies?) deserve our backing too. The Model First initiative will work alongside the newly formed British Fashion Model Agency Association to ensure enhanced standards of safety and good conduct. The BFC Model Zone originally founded by Erin O'Connor MBE will continue to be on hand all week, to provide sanctuary, nutrition and most importantly a crucial opportunity for models to speak in confidence about problematic workplace experiences.

Support and mentoring also comes via The BFC's free British High-End Manufacturers' Database launched in March 2017 to assist supply chain relationships. Future proposals of an audit of manufacturers and organic growth as membership expands, to facilitate transparency, are also welcomed. This alongside a call from Dame Vivienne Westwood, London's Mayor Sadiq Khan and the BFC, for fashion businesses to SWITCH to a green energy supplier by 2020, an action that will align UK industry with the Paris Agreement within

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The above projects are central to the tenets of the BFC's Positive Fashion initiative, a platform designed to celebrate and encourage industry best practice with three key focuses: Sustainability, Diversity & Industry Education (including model health) and Local Manufacturing and Craftsmanship. And pro-active take up of this launch can be evidenced onsite this London Fashion Week in the Designer Showrooms with the presence of Positive Fashion signs awarded to design brands that embrace the criteria of the future. In short, London Fashion Week looks set to stand up and be counted.

Leadership indeed from a fashion capital that has always been ahead of the pack.

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