

REBELLIOUS AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION – CRAFTSMANSHIP, EXPERIMENTATION AND PROGRESSIVISM – NANUSHKA



Concerned SDGs: 9, 12, 13
Company name: Nanushka
Industry: Fashion



CHALLENGE



Fashion industry belongs to one of the most underestimated industries having an influential and harmful impact on the environment and its sustainability. Being the second-largest polluter nowadays²⁰, the fashion industry

- is responsible for approximately 10% of global annual carbon emissions that is more than the total combined amount of sea and air traffic. By 2050, the emission is foreseen to raise with 40%²¹,
- energy consumption is also not negligible, using an estimated 1 trillion kilowatt-hours each year globally,
- resulting 190 000 tons of textile micro-plastic fibres end up in the oceans every year,
- uses 400 billion litres of water that is almost equal with the consumption demand of 5 million people. Furthermore, dyeing clothes requires more water resource, between 70 and 150 litres per kilogram of textiles,
- turns raw materials into textile commodities, using more than 8 000 toxic chemicals,
- fast fashion put the emphasises on quantity instead of quality nearly making clothes-recycling meaningless, creating poor working conditions and low wages.

²⁰<https://fashionunited.com/global-fashion-industry-statistics/>

²¹<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/09/23/costo-moda-medio-ambiente>

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GOALS AND AMBITIONS

These facts mentioned above are the proof that environmental protection, sustainability consciousness and ethical responsibility would require more entrenched practices, leading examples and well-considered measures, actions.

As an individual, we often ask ourselves does my little step matter? Would it be remarkable? The answer in all cases is: YES. Even fashion began adapting to a fast-moving world thanks to brands and businesses such as Nanushka. The newest trends are not seasonal colours and materials, but being eco-friendly. How Nanushka pictures the future of the industry?

Ethical fashion might be interpreted as an “umbrella” definition. Nanushka invests in human resources by creating equal working conditions, fair wages, uniting each employee on the board to fight for the established sustainability goal. To further emphasize its sustainable actions, Nanushka signed a statement²² aiming to select supplier having the same attitude.

Conscious choice highlights the environmental awareness at both industrial and individual levels, gradually working on supply chain developments, including the choice of fabrics, designing, garments’ manufacture and distribution as well. From the consumers’ aspect, their engagement enables them to use, reuse, or recycle smartly and consciously their products.

Cruelty-free production promotes animal welfare and attempts to prevent them from any harm or hurt during garment production. In fashion, it means that the product is animal byproduct-free, do not contain PVC or PU based materials. Newborn-fashion brands constantly seek cruelty-free leather options, such as faux or vegan leather although these solutions are not widely available.

The utility of organic and vegan materials means that there is no chemical pesticides and toxic materials added in the growing period of fibres production. to achieve the desired result. Cotton is considered as the most well-known and accessible organic fibre, but some fashion brands also try to address the chemical problem with organic hemp, silk and jute. Nanushka, opening a new chapter in fashion industry, increased its international reputation with the REACH certified vegan leather products²³.

²²<https://www.nanushka.com/affof.pdf>

²³<https://www.forbes.com/sites/barrysamaha/2019/11/12/nanushkas-ceo-serves-up-his-recipe-for-how-to-create-a-global-fashion-brand/>

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PRACTICE

Nanushka diligently works to promote best practices:

- carefully planned business strategy focusing on environmental protection with annually launched sustainability report to identify areas where changes might lead to eco-friendly efficiency saving money or resources, adopting circular economy innovations
- applying re-usable shipping boxes and strives toward minimized wrapping system
- sustainably designed and implemented e-commerce strategies
- preference of digital communication, e-marketing tools and accounting systems
- animal rights are on focus, in terms of durability for everyday used products, such as shoes or handbags only certain types of vegetable-tanned leather are used
- switching all cotton to organic cotton, supporting healthy soil and biodiversity, using GRS-certified, repeatedly used recycled polyesters instead of artificial polyester
- constant analyzation of fabrics and optimizing as much change as possible
- seeking human resources, especially designers who are inspired by interesting ideas and can turn waste into upcycled products



Picture 1: Lifecycle of sustainably manufactured fashion products

REQUIRED RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION (HR, TIME, INFRASTRUCTURE, ETC.)

Nanushka as a brand was launched in 2006. From being a family business, following the company's foundation in 2012, and opening the first store in Budapest, it rapidly gained an international reputation. Nowadays, the products are stocked in 30 countries, and shipping is available over 100 countries as well.

OBSTACLES

In fashion industry, sustainability and affordability may not complete each other all the time. It might mean a challenge on how to grab consumers' attention – especially with minimal real wage- favouring cheaper wearing apparels then the information such as where the products come from and how were they were produced.



BENEFITS

Nanushka gives preferences to those suppliers who respect and pay close attention to the following criteria:

Protecting forests, water and other natural resources

Not only the production requires a vast amount of water, oil, wood and land, but delivering and packaging do so. Several suppliers prefer responsibly managed forests serving the society's demand, at the same time ensuring the maintenance of biodiversity, regeneration and productivity. By applying efficient water strategies, the purity and flow regulation of natural water supplies are also maintainable at a micro and macro level.

Craftsmanship

It defines a smart and environmentally-friendly utility of materials seeking and incorporating new technologies, therefore saving them becoming waste. It has significant social and economic aspects as well, thinking about creating job opportunities, raising their living conditions, enhancing an emotional connection between products and consumers that might contribute to longer practicability of clothes and believing in the positive power of fashion.

Emphasizing the respect for human rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights embraces the fundamental rights of workers and consumers as well. In a wider sense, acknowledging indigenous and rural communities legal, customary, producers and users' rights over a given territory or other natural resources that are largely exploited by the industry. Requesting the suppliers to respect UDHR contributes to create favorable working conditions, support problem-solving abilities through accountable, transparent, beneficial and peaceful processes.

Reducing greenhouse gas emission

All the initiatives are encouraged by Nanushka that recognize the vital importance of forests and its crucial role in maintaining climate stability, aiming forest conversation, targeting the loss the high carbon stock forests, supporting suppliers to prevent harvest in these areas and giving preference those who have efficient strategies regarding greenhouse gas footprint²⁴.



Picture 2 :Nanushka's vegan leather and organic cotton collection – brining fashion and sustainability together

²⁴<https://www.nanushka.com/affof.pdf>