**Press Release**

24th April 2019

**Fashion Question Time at the V&A**

***Tomorrowland: how innovation and sustainability will change the fashion panorama.***

Wednesday, 24th April 2019, *Fashion Question Time* expands as a powerful platform to debate the future of the fashion industry during Fashion Revolution Week by moving from the Houses of Parliament to the V&A and opening the event up to the public for the first time. The V&A is the world’s leading museum of art, design and performance with the largest and most comprehensive collection of fashion in the world.

Chairedby **Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey**,the panel will follow a BBC Question Time format with a diverse range of leading experts from across government, academia and the fashion and textile industry adding their own voice to the debate about how innovation and sustainability must be accelerated to change the fashion panorama. The panel will include **Mary Creagh, MP and Chair of the Environment Audit Committee; Laura Balmond, Project Manager, Ellen MacArthur Foundation**; **Mark Sumner, Lecturer in Sustainability, Fashion & Retail, University of Leeds**, and **Hendrik Alpen, Sustainability Engagement Manager, H&M Group**.

Building on the Fashion Question Time format which first started in 2014, leading experts will discuss projections, ideas and best practice as well as answer a diverse range of questions submitted by participants and members of the public. The aim of the annual panel discussion is to engage thought leaders further in the conversation about who makes our clothes and discuss what a ‘tomorrowland’ could look like for the fashion industry.

Edwina Ehrman, V&A Senior Curator said: “As the world’s leading museum of art, design and performance, encouraging debate and discussion around topical issues is at the heart of the V&A’s programming. Our major fashion exhibition Fashioned From Nature, won three awards for its critical and thought provoking examination of the relationship between the fashion industry and nature and the urgent need to build a sustainable future.

“We are delighted to host Fashion Revolution Question Time at the V&A. It will enable Fashion Revolution to reach a much wider audience, strengthen the V&A’s support of sustainable fashion, and inspire and educate the fashion designers, innovators and makers of tomorrow.”

Fashion Revolution will declare a climate emergency. The fashion and textiles industry is increasingly taking an untenable toll on the environment. Global textiles production emits 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases annually – more than that of international flights and maritime shipping combined. Added to that, our clothes are releasing half a million tonnes of microfibres into the oceans every year – the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles. Textiles are the largest source of both primary and secondary microplastics, accounting for 34.8% of global microplastic pollution [[1]](#endnote-1).

It is evident that the current model of overproduction and overconsumption is harmful not just for the environment, but for the people working for poverty-level wages. Innovation and transparency are, and will continue to be, key drivers to shape a thriving fashion industry that not only inspires creativity, but contributes to sustainable livelihoods and environmental protection within the supply chain. The panel will explore what role brands, citizens and governments will have in shaping not only the fashion industry of the future but the world we live in.

Carry Somers, Fashion Revolution co-founder and Global Operations Director says: “We’ve seen increasing disclosure from brands and numerous innovations in the way our clothes are made, but we are now in a climate emergency and we’re simply not getting ahead of the curve.”

“Transparency shouldn’t be limited to issues of modern slavery, working conditions or other social impacts but also to environmental policies, practices and impacts. We cannot afford to live in a world where our clothes destroy the environment, harm or exploit people and reinforce gender inequality. Urgent, revolutionary action is needed.”

Fashion Question Time will take place on the sixth anniversary of the Rana Plaza factory collapse and six years since Fashion Revolution was born. During that time, millions of people have joined Fashion Revolution in asking #WhoMadeMyClothes? but urgent, meaningful action is needed. Millions of Fashion Revolution people around the world have spoken and they are demanding change.

Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, chair of Fashion Question Time 2019, says: “From corporations, to government to individual consumers, everybody who wears clothes has to think very carefully about what they buy and how to use their purchasing power. We don’t have the luxury of time to work out what we are going to do to stem excessive production and consumption in the fashion, and other industries. We need to act now.”

Fashion Revolution Week, Fashion Revolution’s global campaign calling for a fairer, safer, more transparent fashion industry, runs from Monday 22nd – Sunday 28th April 2019. This year it will highlight how the future fashion industry must respect both people and planet with fair and decent work, environmental protection and gender equality. Research shows that garments are among the items most at risk of being produced through modern slavery. Sexual harassment, discrimination and gender-based violence against women is endemic in the global garment industry, where women comprise 80% of the global workforce.

Fashion Revolution Week 2019 will encourage industry leaders to clean up their supply chains in terms of both environmental and social impact, and for people to recognise their own personal impact and value quality over quantity. It will demand a change in culture where we require dignity in work because we cannot afford to live in a world where our clothes destroy the environment, harm or exploit the people who make them and continue to reinforce gender inequality.

You can download the full press pack for Fashion Revolution Week [here](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/z2s9mihy23mse7q/AAAvO0A2IGQ766gaRP2xcZ7Ta?dl=0).

-Ends-

**When:** Wednesday 24th April 2019 10.00 am to 12 pm

**Where:** Lydia and Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre, V&A, South Kensington, London, SW7 2RL - entrance via Exhibition Road

**Press call**: From 11.30am to midday there will be an opportunity for members of the press to meet the panellists and the Fashion Revolution team and take photographs. Any interview requests must be emailed in advance of the event.

**Event hashtag is #FQT**

**Event information and tickets:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fashion-question-time-at-the-va-tickets-59176317960>

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**About the V&A**

The V&A is the world’s leading museum of art, design and performance, with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. It was established to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, the V&A’s collections, which span over 5000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform.

1. Boucher and Friot, 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)