



## PRESS RELEASE 2021

### **Fashion Revolution says living on a healthy planet should be a fundamental human right ... and urgent action is needed from the fashion industry**

Fashion Revolution Week, the annual global campaign calling for a fashion industry that values people and the planet over growth and profit, will run from Monday 19th – Sunday 25th April 2021.

This year, Fashion Revolution is calling on the fashion industry and governments to recognise the interconnection between human rights and the rights of nature. The campaign group believes we need a radical shift in our relationships—with each other, with our clothes, within fashion supply chains and with the natural world—so that the rights of people and the rights of nature hold more of the power wherever decisions are being made. Fashion Revolution argues that the human exploitation and ecosystem degradation we see all around us today are the product of centuries of colonialism and globalised exploitation, stemming from a western-focused worldview in which human and environmental prosperity are seen as isolated and disconnected from each other.

With garment production predicted to grow by 81% by 2030<sup>i</sup>, there is ever-growing demand for agricultural land to produce cotton, viscose, wool, rubber, leather hides and other natural fibres. 150 million trees are logged every year to be turned into cellulosic fabrics, such as viscose, and cattle ranching is the largest driver of deforestation in the Amazon. Cutting down forests leads to habitat loss and makes the risk of disease transmission from wildlife to humans more likely, increasing the risk of future pandemics.

Some of the most severe and exploitative working conditions and worst environmental damage happens deep within fashion supply chains where materials are grown and fabrics are made, as evidenced by recent revelations of forced labour of Uighurs in the Xinjiang region of China. The time has come to demand a deeper level of transparency, to ask not only #WhoMadeMyClothes but #WhoMadeMyFabric and who grows the cotton.

Fashion Revolution will be campaigning for a revolution in the way the industry works, for the health of the earth and the oceans and for our own prosperity and wellbeing. We cannot continue to extract dwindling resources from an already stressed natural world, pollute our land and our oceans, fall far short of climate change targets, dump our waste on the shoulders of countries we have culturally depleted and ignore inequality and human rights abuses in every part of the industry.

*“Last spring, I saw at firsthand the impact our clothing is having in the remotest corners of the planet,”* explains Fashion Revolution Co-founder Carry Somers. *“I sailed over 2000 miles into the South Pacific Gyre, and every water sample we took contained fibres from our clothes. Tap water across the world, including the US and Europe, is widely contaminated with microfibres, harbouring toxic chemicals that can affect our health.”*

Now the world’s biggest fashion activism movement, with teams in over 90 countries around the world, Fashion Revolution will use the week to bring people together from across their community, amplify unheard and marginalised voices, and work together to explore interconnected solutions.

Fashion Revolution will be sharing the stories of those affected by change, with those who are asking for change, to pressure those who need to change.

*“This Fashion Revolution Week will be packed with initiatives, from our Fashion Question Time event to a myriad of Fashion Open Studios, with a cohort of incredible international designers. Please do join us in hearing from unheard voices as well as expert opinions, celebrating fashion as fashion should be; inclusive, respectful, and just.”*

Orsola de Castro, Co-Founder, Fashion Revolution

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

Over the course of the week, we will be hosting live panel discussions, webinars, social conversations, commentary and more – stay tuned to @FashionRevolution so you don't miss a thing. We believe collaboration and mutual support are essential, because we are more powerful voices for change when we all work together.

## FASHION QUESTION TIME:

Fashion Revolution's annual event in partnership with the Victoria & Albert museum will again for 2021 be streamed live and the format will facilitate the opportunity for industry professionals and members of the public to pre-submit questions to our panellists on the theme of Rights, Relationships and Revolution.

## FASHION OPEN STUDIO:

The global fashion showcasing and mentoring initiative of Fashion Revolution is delighted to announce the 2021 cohort of designers who will be opening up their studios and their practices to the public during Fashion Revolution Week. This year 33 designers from 21 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia and South America will share a single platform which will highlight sustainable innovation, indigenous craftsmanship, local cultural heritage, regenerative and equitable business models and new technology in a unique, curated programme of events. For the full programme, please see [www.FashionOpenStudio.com](http://www.FashionOpenStudio.com)

To help us widen our reach and expand our knowledge sharing for Fashion Revolution Week, we will be working with key organisations to highlight the urgent, radical need to shift from extractive and exploitative actions, to become regenerative, equitable and accountable.

- **TAMIL NADU ALLIANCE:** : <https://www.tamilnadualliance.com>

Some of the most severe and exploitative working conditions and worst environmental damage happens deep within fashion supply chains where materials are grown and fabrics are made. This problem has been exemplified by recent revelations of forced labour in Xinjiang and reports of sexual abuse in textile factories across India. Fashion brands haven't done enough to root out these problems in their supply chains. The time has come to demand a deeper level of transparency, which is why we are partnering with the Tamil Nadu Alliance to mobilise consumers to ask not only, #WhoMadeMyClothes but specifically, #WhoMadeMyFabric and demand that brands publicly disclose the suppliers that make the fabrics as well as stitch the garments they sell. This deeper level of supply chain transparency will shed a light on poor conditions and can enable the better protection of workers and the environment.

Fashion Revolution's Global Policy Director, Sarah Ditty confirms the need for collaborative industry action, "*In our 'Out of Sight' report published last October, we reviewed the supply chain transparency efforts of 62 fashion brands and retailers and found that only one mapped and disclosed a full list of the facilities where their fabrics and fibres are produced. We have seen time and time again that deplorable working conditions thrive in hidden places. Now, we're calling upon major brands to do more to improve transparency and help eradicate the severe labour exploitation that persists for millions of people working to make the clothes we wear.*"

- **CANOPY:** <https://canopyplanet.org>

We depend on forests for our survival: they are the air that we breathe, mitigate climate change and contain most of our terrestrial biodiversity. Cutting down forests leads to habitat loss and makes the risk of disease transmission from wildlife to humans more likely, increasing the risk of future pandemics. A large proportion of fashion's biodiversity impact is due to demand for agricultural land to produce cotton, viscose, wool, rubber, leather hides or other natural fibres. 150 million trees are logged every year to be turned into cellulosic fabrics, such as viscose and in the Amazon, cattle ranching is the largest driver of deforestation. Facing a climate emergency and with one million species threatened with extinction, fashion brands must focus their recovery on more responsible sourcing to ensure our forests are protected and restored. We are partnering with Canopy to co-host a series of conversations entitled: 'Forest Rights are Human Rights' and 'The Next Generation Revolution' to gain an understanding of the extent of the damage being done and to help us all understand more about #whatsinmyclothes and the potential next generational solutions being developed.

- **PLASTIC POLLUTION COALITION:** <https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org>

Around two thirds of our clothes are made from synthetic fibres, such as polyester, acrylic and nylon, which are all plastics. Every time we load up the washing machine, hundreds of thousands, even millions, of tiny microfibrils are released, eventually ending up in our oceans where they are eaten by all sorts of marine creatures. Microplastic pollution

has been found in some of the remotest places on earth and around 35% of global microplastic pollution comes from clothing and textiles. Some of this plastic inevitably finds its way back to us in the food we eat and every glass of water we drink. As well as disrupting marine ecosystems and increasing greenhouse gas emissions, these invisible microplastics contain toxic chemicals which could affect our health and fertility. Together with the Plastic Pollution Coalition, we will be looking for new and transformational ways to produce, care and dispose of our clothes and exploring how we can all use our voice and our power to find out #whatsinmyclothes. Plastic Pollution Coalition will be hosting a curated webinar panel 'Unwoven: Phasing plastic out of fashion' with key contributors to discuss and raise awareness of all affected areas and the extent of the impact on these communities and ecosystems.

- **CULTURAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS INITIATIVE:** <https://www.culturalintellectualproperty.com>

The cultural appropriation of traditional garments and designs has been part of the fashion cycle for decades, ongoing evidence of an industry that continues to reinforce inequality and devalues non-western perspectives. It is a complex issue as whilst the intellectual property of a designer is protected through copyright, the cultural knowledge of indigenous peoples and minorities is held by the community, not the individual and only in rare instances can these rights be upheld in law. But cultural appropriation goes much further than design rights. Around the world, resources have been institutionally looted for corporate benefit, new ventures developed through biopiracy and natural materials appropriated without fair compensation to those who held the traditional knowledge of their use and benefits. Fashion is failing our global communities, their heritage and identity. We are working with CIPRI to support and recognise the cultural intellectual property rights of artisans and explore how the custodians of traditional designs, skills and knowledge can be consulted, credited and fairly compensated in the future.

As part of their webinar for Fashion Revolution Week they will be discussing how indigenous and local communities protect their textile cultural expressions and conserve biodiversity - hearing from various actors and representatives of local communities who are implementing practical solutions in response to appropriation of cultural expressions and develop models that enable cultural and environmental sustainability.

- **WORLD FAIR TRADE ORGANISATION:** <https://wfto.com>

When we hear the stories and see the faces of the people who make our clothes, we are better equipped to value the clothing we already own, demand justice for every person in the fashion supply chain, and consider the impact of our clothing on the planet from farm to factory to finished garment. Fashion Revolution exists to amplify the experiences of producers across the value chain and we have been celebrating producers through our [#IMadeYourClothes](#) hashtag since the early days of our campaign. Partnering with World Fair Trade Organisation allows us to share stories from a global network of producers who follow fair trade practices and showcase how the fashion industry can empower people and sustain natural resources through its small scale and artisan production models. In the run up to and during Fashion Revolution Week, we will be partnering with WFTO to share worker stories, interviews and images from producers around the world. We'll also be encouraging them to embrace our 'I Made Your Clothes' campaign in local languages and dialects to showcase the diversity of the people involved in creating the garments we buy.

Our conversations, webinars, stories and worker profiles will come together to introduce a new dominant cultural narrative based on a just transition, where transparency, respecting human rights and dignity and conserving the environment becomes a driving force for the public and for the fashion industry.

#### **In summary Fashion Revolution 2021 will:**

- Amplify unheard voices: Those of supply chain producers, workers and communities affected by the fashion industry, giving them more visibility and providing a platform for their stories.
- Widen community participation: Mobilising people and their communities around the world to speak up, come together and take action to create the systemic change that is urgently needed across the fashion industry.

If we work together, we believe we will see a future global fashion industry that conserves and restores the environment and values people over growth and profit.

**Now is the time for a fashion revolution.**

– ENDS –  
**NOTES TO EDITORS**

The full schedule of global events will be announced shortly at [www.FashionRevolution.org](http://www.FashionRevolution.org)

### **About Fashion Revolution**

Fashion Revolution is the world's largest fashion activism movement, formed after the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 which killed over 1,100 people. Fashion Revolution campaigns for a clean, safe, fair, transparent and accountable fashion industry through research, education, collaboration, mobilisation and advocating for policy change. Fashion Revolution is a global movement with country offices and voluntary teams in 90 countries.

Fashion Revolution believes in a global fashion industry that conserves and restores the environment and values people over growth and profit. In order to achieve this goal, the organisation conducts research that shines a light on the fashion industry's practices and impacts, highlights where brands and retailers are moving too slowly and incentivises and promotes transparency and accountability across the supply chain.

### **About Fashion Open Studio**

Now in its fifth year, Fashion Open Studio is a Fashion Revolution initiative. As a showcasing platform, the purpose is to shine a spotlight on best practice and innovation being led by fashion and textile designers, biotech start-ups and retail disruptors. As well as radical new start-ups, FOS has attracted some of the industry's biggest names to collaborate, including Vivienne Westwood, Bethany Williams and Christopher Raeburn. The designers are selected for their commitment to a clearly defined criteria of responsible design and systemic innovation. During Fashion Revolution Week, 19-25 April 2021, designers share best practice in a transparent and open manner, in a way that offers access and stimulates discussion and questions.

**Contact Details:** For further information and interview requests, please contact: Jenny Houghton, Global Communications Director, Fashion Revolution: [Jenny@fashionrevolution.org](mailto:Jenny@fashionrevolution.org) +447766336216

**Images:** Download images and campaign materials for press [here](#) and credit where appropriate.

**Social Media:** @fash\_rev #WhoMadeMyClothes #WhoMadeMyFabric #WhatsInMyClothes #IMadeYourClothes  
#FashionRevolution #LovedClothesLast

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### **Reference:**

<sup>i</sup> OECD Garment Forum 1 February 2021