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CONSCIOUSCLOSET

A GUIDE TO A MORE
CONSCIOUS LIVING
AND MINIMALISM
JUNE 2020

ELIZABETH CLINE

An interview with
the author of
Overdressed: The
Shockingly High Cost
of Fast Fashion **P. 2**

THE DARKNESS OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Be a citizen investor
rather than just a
mere consumer.
Know more on **P. 6**

#WhoMadeYourClothes

Photo by Steve Mccurry



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The Game Changers

ELIZABETH CLINE

We went to Lisbon to meet Elizabeth Cline at an event to celebrate the new edition of her award-winning book “Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Fast Fashion”. Lover of Lisbon, adept of zero waste and one of the biggest environmental influencers in the fashion world.

CC: Hi Elizabeth, you’re a sustainable fashion advocate. Where does your interest in the issue of sustainability in the fashion industry come from?

- Conscious Closet (CC)

EC: The turning point for me was when I traveled to China in 2011. The air and water pollution due to factory production was horrific. The environmental price that China was paying to be the factory of the world was clear. And, after that, I started thinking more about fashion’s role in environmental degradation but also as a tool for change.

CC: The Ellen MacArthur Foundation states that approximately 75% of textiles produced globally are sent to landfill each year – that’s 3 out of every 4 garments. With over 100lb garments produced annually, that is a lot of clothes! Why is clothing/ textile waste going to landfill such a problem?

EC: First, landfilled clothing is a waste of resources, resources that we don’t have to spare. We know that fashion production is responsible for about 8% of carbon emissions per year, more than those of all international flights and maritime shipping combined. It’s also responsible for consuming 93 billion cubic meters of water annually. All of this is unsustainable.

INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Catarina Reis

Styling: Maria Piedade

Editing: Diana Cunha

Revision: Simão Sil



Photo by Keri Wiginton



“Fashion production is responsible for about 8% of carbon emissions per year, more than those of all international flights and maritime shipping combined.”

Elizabeth Cline

CC: As consumers, what is the best thing we can do to lower our environmental footprint when it comes to our clothing consumption?

EC: I estimate that at least half of our clothing purchases are items that we either will never or rarely wear, many of which are purchased because they’re heavily discounted. The strategy would be to buy more of your wardrobe second hand, swap and borrow clothes from friends and people in your community, and consider giving clothing rental and subscription schemes a try.



Photo by Unknown

The last strategy that consumers can use to tackle fashion waste is to maintain and repair their clothes so that clothes last as long as possible and can be passed on to others.

CC: Thank you Elizabeth for this interview and enlighting us about the fast fashion problematic. We wish you the best success with your book.

Darkness in the Fashion Industry

MICHAEL OFEI

Ever since embarking on his journey as a minimalist vegan, Michael Ofei has been afraid of learning the truth. He has been fearful because his brain is conditioned in a way where he needs to take action if he gets exposed to what's happening behind the scenes of mass-industries. It has been tough learning about the effects of brainless consumerism, the terror of animal agriculture, and the toxic chemicals used in the personal care industry.

CC: How are big fashion companies able to charge so little for their garments?

MO: When you begin tracing the value chain to its source, a major priority for fast fashion brands is cutting costs at every link in the chain, so you begin to see things like cheap overseas labor, child labor, toxic materials produced in places with few environmental and workers' rights regulations, and sub-sub-sub-contractors who are impossible to monitor, never mind regulate. Newness is elusive, but it is something that is desired at an increasing velocity due to the immediacy through social

media with which new fashion products can be seen, purchased and then considered old-news.

CC: Are the working conditions/salary for garment makers in developing countries relative to that of the developed world?

MO: Not at all. Human Rights Watch released a damning investigation and report of the leather industry in Bangladesh called Toxic Tanneries – revealing conditions for tannery workers, who are sometimes children with no protective gear, that would land managers and owners in jail in most



Photo by Unknown

developed countries.

In Uzbekistan, the world's second leading cotton producer, there is an industry relying on child-slave-labor in the cotton fields, as revealed in the Environmental Justice Foundation's report and short-film *White Gold*. These materials end up on the Shelves in America, Canada, Europe, and other developed areas even though the making of them would violate the laws of those countries. These lack of conditions result in mass deaths, like the Dhaka fire of 2012 in Bangladesh. There, workers were locked into their factory to maximize product output.

It is all too easily forgotten and glossed over by the developed world because it's out of sight, out of mind, and the fashion industrial media complex is so seductive with its propaganda.

CC: You have recommended on your blog for people to check out a documentary called *The True Cost*. Why do you believe it is so important and what advice would you give to our readers?

MO: I believe it is an eye-opening film about fast fashion, working conditions and environmental impact.



Photo by Isabella Salini

“My advice is to consider yourself a citizen investor, not just a ‘consumer’.”

Michael Ofei

My advice is to consider yourself a citizen investor, not just a “*consumer*”. You put your money into the production processes you want to see flourish because when you buy fashion you aren’t just lining the pockets of the designers, you are supporting an entire value chain.

Ethical fashion is expensive, that is why I recommend finding a brand or two you believe in, saving up for one or two things, and buying the remainder of your clothes vintage or second-hand.

CC: Thank you Michael for this interview. We hope to see you very soon and wish you the best success with your bl



Photo by Unknown

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“You have to kill
yourself in front of
a sewing machine
to provide for
your family.”

Maria da Silva, 46

Role: Self-employed
seamstress

Where: Caruaru, Brazil

We produce 400% more clothes than 20 years ago and most women wear only 20% to 30% of the clothes in their wardrobes. Let's refashion with compassion!

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