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## What Happened To The Fashion Industry's Stated Desire To Slow Down?



BY LIBERTY IMHOFF · SEPTEMBER 9, 2021



Ulla Johnson Spring/Summer 2022; photo c/o CNN

New York Fashion Week – and with it, Fashion Month for the so-called “Big 4” – began in earnest yesterday (although some designers such as Collina Strada have still opted to show outside of the stated NYFW calendar dates of September 8th-12th). And with so many entrants showing – most of those shows being in live form for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic – it begs the question: what happened to the fashion industry’s previously stated desire to slow down?

Back when the Covid-19 pandemic took hold and the world was forced to stop in its tracks before eventually starting again at a more measured pace, there was a wider call within the industry to move at a rate that was more manageable for all. This came about for various reasons – some of which are detailed in the [Forum Letter](#), which has garnered over 600 signatures. What many can agree on, however, are these points:



Front row at a fashion show; photo c/o StyleCaster

## There are simply too many shows to cover as journalists, editors, and buyers

If there are hundreds of shows every fashion season, how is it, exactly, that we are to cover each show? The obvious answer is that we cannot. What this does, then, is shortchange newer designers that need attention brought to their work because everyone is busy covering Michael Kors, Gucci, and Balenciaga.

What this also does is lead to a bloated fashion calendar that is in desperate need of being trimmed somehow. Is the answer to do more fashion films or to display one's collection in other alternate manners? That is what the fashion industry was forced into doing for the past few seasons. It gets tiring being glued to one's screen, so one could be forgiven if seeing fashion shows in person is more of a desire these days. Perhaps the answer is a more prominent form of "phygital" showings; some designers show in person, while others show in a digital manner.




Christian Siriano Spring/Summer 2022 front row; photo c/o USA Today

# There are too many people that attend for whom it is not necessary to be there

Why has the idea of a fashion show been turned into a zoo? As we have pointed out in a [previous article](#), “New York Fashion Week isn’t meant to be the celebrity- and influencer- filled circus that it inevitably becomes season after season. NYFW, at its core, is a trade show that is meant to allow designers to show their work to both buyers and the media.” This obviously applies to the other fashion weeks as well.

The attendance of Hollywood celebrities and influencers at these shows very often overshadows the presence of the garments themselves. If fashion shows are about fashion, then why are we not spotlighting fashion? Celebrity culture has infiltrated most everything else about this industry (to Manic Metallic’s chagrin); fashion should preserve the right to have its fashion weeks still have an industry-centered reason for existence.

 Cusco Barcelona runway, NYFW; photo c/o Vox

Cusco Barcelona runway, NYFW; photo c/o Vox

# There is too much clothing being churned out; in some cases, designers are showing over 60 looks in their collections

Then, there are the environmental impacts of continuing to produce fashion at such a rapid pace. Fast fashion brands such as Zara, Shein, and PrettyLittleThing (which, curiously, attempts stabs at legitimacy with its showings at various fashion weeks) bear a large part of the brunt of fashion’s assault on the planet’s climate.

However, luxury fashion brands cannot escape fault. We’ve all heard the story about Burberry [burning clothes](#) that it doesn’t use. To their – and other brands’ – credit, they have been finding other ways to reuse unused fabrics and finished items. Upcycled clothing is becoming more common, for example, with brands such as [Conner Ives](#) and [RVDK](#) leading the way. And companies such as FABSCRAP, based in Brooklyn, collect fabric scraps from brands to recycle and reuse instead of allowing them to find their way into landfills.

Still, a primary answer to this quandary needs to be to create fewer looks with each collection. Another primary answer needs to be to produce less of each look – perhaps through taking orders of clothing via a pre-ordering system like brands such as [KHAITE](#) are already doing. If pre-ordering as a system were more widespread, then brands would only create that for which there was a demand. It would also force consumers to be more thoughtful about what they purchase. That combination, while not the complete answer to fashion’s sustainability issues, could do wonders for the environment – and would help to slow down an industry that claims that it wants to do so.

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Allow us to revisit the question: what happened to the fashion industry’s previously stated desire to slow down? If the past is any indication, fashion is slow to adapt to change. The industry says that it wants more diversity, yet it took the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing calls for justice and equality from a justifiably angry public to force their hand. The jury is still out as to whether fashion’s efforts to genuinely address diversity issues are genuine.


The industry says that it wants to be more sustainable, yet it took blindingly obvious climate change occurrences to begin to wake them up. Even with that, fashion continues to use unsustainable materials and perpetuate unsustainable practices. As we have previously stated, there are plenty in the industry working towards doing the right thing (which is wonderful), but they are outnumbered by those who are not.

A great start towards the move for more widespread sustainability in fashion should be to philosophically – and materially – invest in the concept of “slow”. Slowing down would help our planet, and it would show that we are serious about doing our part to address climate change. For our part, we are exploring the concept of “slow journalism”; we’ll discuss that in a later article. As for our coverage of the various fashion weeks? We will cover what we can at a pace that makes sense for our company while making sure that our coverage is still done within a reasonable timeframe.

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