

## Overview: Frontiers of Fashion

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### Summary by Emma Armand

Despite the many negative changes happening in the current Covid-19 situation, some positive changes are working their way into the world. In particular, the fashion industry is foreseeing some upcoming future adaptations in the areas of sustainability, diversity, and technology. The fashion industry is one of the biggest offenders of producing waste and pollutants, as well as it is slow to adapt to shifts in representation. Finding ways to adjust this, such as improving upon technology and changing mindsets, will have a large impact on the future of fashion. In fact, many of these changes have been happening slowly in previous years, thus securing the idea that there is a desire to improve the way fashion operates in the world.

First, sustainability is predicted to become an important part of the fashion industry, not because it is trendy, but because it is a necessity. The current system of fast fashion companies producing a continuous output of new garments, and wearers using them just a few times before tossing them, is unsustainable. Luckily, many consumers have become interested in thrifting, buying second-hand or vintage, and even upcycling. This interest is leading to the idea of a circular economy, in which nothing is wasted and everything is continuously reused. For fashion, the term “slow fashion” has been used to oppose the “fast fashion” business models of many of today’s stores. This means that instead of regularly buying novelty and trendy garments, some consumers are instead buying classic, long-lasting pieces. Even some businesses, like Patagonia, are promoting the idea of buying less, buying better, mending older garments, and repurposing apparel that has completely worn through.

Another important practice the fashion industry is adopting is more diversity. Bodies of all shapes, sizes, skin colors, genders, ages, religions, and disabilities are being included in fashion ads. This promotes a healthy understanding that there is no singular “ideal” body type and allows people from all different backgrounds to feel represented. Not only is this important in the advertising of clothes, but also the fit of clothes for the wearer. This means more genderless garments, more variety for hijab wearers, and even designers from different backgrounds to bring their cultures and life experiences to the fashion world.

Last but not least, technology has played a role in everyday life and will continue to do so in the fashion industry. Not all technology adaptations in fashion have to be digital; technology in fashion can mean new materials, new methods of creating fabric, and even new ways of promoting fashion. In terms of working with more sustainable fibers, using plant-based materials that can eventually be composted, such as various types of algae, will help reduce the industry’s carbon footprint and growing microplastic issue. Utilizing high quality knit technology that produces nearly no waste instead of cutting fabric is another way in which technology is advancing in the fashion industry. Furthermore, since most of the world is working virtually from home offices, runways have also decided to do the same by creating virtual fashion shows. While some of these technological adaptations have come out of short-term necessity, they will likely be a part of the long-term future of fashion.

While there are many more changes the fashion industry is undergoing, improvements in sustainability, diversity, and technology are changing rapidly. These new differences will not only improve the lives of people today, but will help to create a better future for all.