

**“In the ever-changing world of fashion, can
sexiness, luxury, corporate responsibility
and sustainability work in harmony?”**

By

Student: Wei-Hao, Peng

ID number: PEN07218112

Teacher: Kevin Henchman

Group: 18

Date: 04/09/2009

Main course: BA Fashion Design Menswear

Fashion changes at an ever-increasing speed. Customers will not accept designs of the past, fashion companies want to attract every customer's attention to their products, and therefore new products have to appear every day. Some issues we have previously ignored are now problems. In particular, morality and sustainability are becoming serious problems. In this essay I will describe businesses' responsibility to itself and also to its customers. Secondly I will discuss whether this new world situation and its problems will affect the future development of fashion. In conclusion I will explore how much harmony there can be between corporate responsibilities, sexiness, sustainability and luxury in the new world.

Making a profit is the main purpose of business, and its responsibilities are to the company itself, first of all so working in harmony is difficult. People cannot give up the idea of materialism, we always pursue luxury, at the same time we all forget luxury's original meaning. As Suzy Menkes (2002) says "Luxury used to be rare and special but now there is too much of it with the corporate roll-outs". Therefore luxury products are not only for rich people anymore, because luxury brands have successfully entered the mass market. However, they are still selling for unfriendly prices, which mean putting more burdens on ordinary consumers. In addition luxury

brands never give up using advertising to attract customers' attention to their products. Advertising is everywhere and you cannot get away from it. Unwittingly, customers are persuaded to buy the product advertised by luxury brands. It is unlikely that this situation will change.

Recent changes in the world make harmony become more difficult, when you add sexiness into fashion. Nowadays sexiness has been widely used by many designers, and it allowed people to dress up to be sexy. However, they have given customers the misconception about sexiness. Fashion designers are overdoing and over developing sexy fashion. Originally, sexiness is a kind of visual enjoyment, but it will be destroyed by fashion designers' creative ability. Therefore corporate responsibility is important in how far designers should use sexy styles and woman's or man's body in designs. When fashion companies use the size zero models on the runways, many young girls are envious of super skinny models. Young girls think if they want their body to look sexy, they have to keep body slimmer, and young girls always put losing-weight in the first place. According to Jowell in the Independent (2007) Young girls often forget their physical health and it may be life-threatening, if they try to be super skinny. As we know fashion is business and even though they are using size zero models less, fashion business will not worry too much about their morals

responsibility to young girl customers, if sexiness sells clothes.

Nowadays, because of worldwide worries about climate change, sustainability is most important issues in the fashion industry. However, recent change in the world's economy and the credit crunch mean that customers spend less, and this has had big impact on the consumption. For the majority of consumers, they only care about buying cheap and new products. As well as this, companies just want to get more profit from their products. Therefore companies are interested in making cheaper clothes to cater to consumers demand in the present economic climate. "Primark" is one of the cheapest high street brands in the UK. However, they have been criticized by many people, because they use cheap labour in third world countries and uneco-friendly materials. We cannot stop the customers' desire to buy clothes, when they are attracted by very low prices. In thy same way, "We all know that buying less stuff makes good green sense. But some of us think this might cramp our style, or at least our fun" (Steffen, 2006:35). It is not possible to develop "green" awareness in the fashion business overnight. It depends on how much profit fashion companies want, and how much their customers know about sustainable fashion.

In conclusion, I believe it is impossible for sexiness, luxury, corporate responsibility

and sustainability to work in harmony. Companies want to make money, and customers want cheap goods more than sustainability, especially in economic climate of today. If harmony can exist in the future between businesses and an ethical, greener business environment then fashion will need to put profit in second place.

Bibliography

Book

Steffen, A. (ed.) (2006) *WORLDCHANGING*. New York: Abrams

USB

Suzy, M. (2002) *Democratization is chipping away at the elitist peak of high fashion's pyramid. : Is luxury's triangle eternal?*

Website

Roberts, G. (2007), "London Fashion Week refuses to ban `size 0` models from catwalk". Available at:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/london-fashion-week-refuses-to-ban-size-0-models-from-catwalk-433714.html> (Accessed: 26/08/2009)