

# BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL

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# FASHION FORUM

## THE BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL & THE NED BRING TOGETHER BUSINESS LEADERS TO TACKLE THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY AT THE FASHION FORUM

LONDON, TUESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE –

Yesterday, the Fashion Forum - organised by the British Fashion Council (BFC) and The Ned in collaboration with the open innovation advisory firm, TheCurrent - brought together a carefully curated group of 140 industry leaders from fashion, investment and technology to debate, share knowledge and insight on how individual businesses and the fashion industry collectively, can be 'Fit for the Future'.

The Fashion Forum is a think tank to debate the important issues of the sector; engage the designer, investment, finance and broader fashion communities; to showcase businesses with high potential for growth; and to generate investment opportunities. A key focus is enabling fashion businesses in the UK to fulfill their growth potential through maximising opportunities presented by international expansion and technology. The day comprised a series of panel discussions, brainstorming, workshops, in conversations and keynote presentations.

British and international brands, entrepreneurs, retailers, investors, lawyers and technology businesses were brought together to debate pressing topics, such as international expansion; content creation; changing business models; technology development; agile working and finding talent. The BFC collaborated with TheCurrent who curated 'The Tech Space' - a collection of ten innovative and disruptive technology companies with applications for fashion for guests to demo.

To be 'Fit for the Future', key learnings included:

- Put the customer first: through many sessions, from Cultural and Commercial Partnerships in China, Route to Asia, Speed to Market and Creating and Sharing Content, all talked about knowing your customer, understanding what, when and how they interact/buy as well how experience from retail to AI and VR, create stronger engagement and brand loyalty. Businesses were encouraged to listen to their customer and use information to inform business decisions for growth and work with local partners who understand the market.
- Use the right technology: with a focus on putting digital first and ensuring seamless integration both in supply chain and for customers. A strong message not to jump on every tech bandwagon, but to use data to inform decisions. It was agreed that tech won't solve all problems, but with investment in the right people, technology can be used to drive efficiencies and inform strategy.
- Invest in your talent: the fashion industry is made up of a number of different skillsets, from the creative directors and CEO's to the tech teams and back office staff - it is important to invest in talent. Cultural fit, a young workforce and giving employees and investors time to learn about the business and understand the culture, were highlighted

as key to success. Employee engagement is a business benefit and that internal communications should be approached in the same way as external communications, by segmenting audiences. A final out-take of the positive work force session was to protect the opportunity for talented and skilled EU workers to join British fashion businesses post Brexit.

Designer speakers included:

- Tom Ford advised graduates to get experience first, stay grounded and for all designers and entrepreneurs to trust their intuition
- Kim Jones, Louis Vuitton Men's Artistic Director who shared his insights on collaboration and creativity

The day started with a breakfast, hosted by Caroline Rush CBE (CEO, British Fashion Council), Sian Westerman (President of the BFC business and investment pillar) and investor (founder of YU CAPITAL), philanthropist and patron of the creative arts, Wendy Yu.

Caroline Rush, Sian Westerman and Desirée Bollier (Chair of Value Retail Management and Global Chief Merchant) hosted a networking lunch where guests discussed insights from the morning sessions, which focused discussion around how the industry can become fit for the future.

The BFC also announced at the Fashion Forum that they are working with long-term partner DHL on a new award for International Fashion Potential. The DHL Award for International Fashion Potential in partnership with British Fashion Council will reward one British fashion brand with £20,000 to help them to take products to new, international markets. Along with the cash prize, the winner will also gain support and advice from both DHL and the BFC. Applications open on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June at [DHLFashion.co.uk](http://DHLFashion.co.uk).

The British Fashion Council would like to thank Anya Hindmarch, DHL, Value Retail and YU CAPITAL for their support of the Fashion Forum 2017, and the speakers and moderators for sharing their insight and knowledge.

## **FASHION FORUM 2017 TOPICS & SPEAKERS**

### **Cultural & Commercial Partnerships in China**

Wendy Yu, Founder of YU CAPITAL

Desirée Bollier, Chair of Value Retail Management and Global Chief Merchant

Rupert Sanderson, Founder and CEO at Rupert Sanderson

Tim Marlow, Artistic Director at Royal Academy of Arts

Moderator: Yana Peel, CEO at Serpentine

### **Creating and Sharing Content**

Matt Elek, CEO EMEA at VICE MEDIA GROUP

PEDRO PINA, Global Client Partner at Google

Alireza Saifi, Vice President of Global Business Development at Digital Domain

Moderator: Pia Stanchina

### **Finding Talent**

Gena Smith, SVP, HR & Executive/Creative Recruitment at LVMH  
Maira Benigson, Managing Partner at The MBS Group

**Kim Jones**, Louis Vuitton Men's Artistic Director in Conversation with Tim Blanks, Editor-At-Large, The Business of Fashion

### **Speed to Market**

Neil Kuschel, VP Sales at DHL  
William Kim, CEO at AllSaints  
John Lohnas, General Manager, Amazon Footwear Europe at Amazon  
Moderator: Liz Bacelar, Founder of TheCurrent

### **Routes to Asia**

Andrew Keith, President at Lane Crawford and Joyce

### **Disruptive Fashion Retail - Different ways of selling**

Alisa Stromberg, Vice President, Retail development and Franchise at CAA-GBG Global Brand Management Group  
Hal Watts, CEO at Unmade  
Ulric Jerome, CEO at MATCHESFASHION.COM  
Winston Cheng, President of International Business at JD.COM  
Moderator: Jo Ellison, Fashion Editor at Financial Times

### **Artificial Intelligence & Chatbots**

Jeremy Waite, Evangelist at IBM Watson  
Jonathan Chippindale, CEO at Holition  
William Tunstall-Pedoe, Founder of Alexa  
Moderator: Liz Bacelar, Founder of TheCurrent

### **Facebook, How To**

Liza Bate, Client Partner, Luxury & Apparel at Facebook  
Jane Han, Creative Strategist, Luxury at Facebook

### **Positive Fashion: Workforce Well-Being & Agile Working**

Fiona Cannon, Group Director, Responsible Business & Inclusion at Lloyds Banking Group and Director of the Agile Future Forum  
Chantal Khoueiry, Chief Culture Officer at Value Retail  
Rebeca Tristan, Head of Customer Success, EMEA at Workplace by Facebook  
Moderator: Matthew Gwyther, Editor of Management Today

### **Future Fit by Future Lab**

Keynote by Christopher Sanderson, Co-founder at The Future Laboratory

### **Funding for Innovation and Fashion Tech Roundtable**

**Tom Ford**, in Conversation with Paula Reed

**The Tech Room curated by TheCurrent:** The companies are Arylla, Blippar, Bookalook, Crealytics, Hero, Six Agency, Smartpixels, Smarterz, Tigertrade, Trendalytics and Qudini.

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**The British Fashion Council** (BFC) was set up in 1983 to promote British fashion internationally and co-ordinate this promotion through fashion weeks, exhibitions and showcasing events. The BFC now supports designers beginning at college level and extending to talent identification, business support and showcasing schemes to help British designer businesses develop their profiles and business globally and promote British fashion and its influential role in Britain and London. The BFC Colleges Council offers support to students through its Foundation, BA and MA scholarships, links with industry through design competitions and Graduate Preview Day. Talent identification and business support schemes include BFC Fashion Film sponsored by River Island; BFC Rock Vault; BFC Headonism; BFC/GQ Designer Menswear Fund; BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund and NEWGEN. The BFC supports Boden's Future British initiative. The BFC also runs and owns charities including the BFC Fashion Arts Foundation, the BFC Fashion Trust and the BFC Education Foundation. Showcasing initiatives and events include London Fashion Week, London Fashion Week Men's, LONDON show ROOMS, International Fashion Showcase, London Fashion Week Festival and the annual celebration of excellence in the fashion industry: The Fashion Awards.

**The Ned:** Set in the former Midland Bank building, The Ned was designed by Sir Edwin 'Ned' Lutyens in 1924. A collaboration between Sydell Group and Soho House & Co, the space includes nine restaurants, 252 bedrooms channeling 1920s and 1930s design, a range of men's and women's grooming services and 'Ned's Club', a social and fitness club, where members have access to a rooftop pool, gym, spa, hammam and The Vault bar & lounge.

**TheCurrent:** An open innovation firm curating global technologies and talent for fashion & retail. TheCurrent is backed by H-Farm, one of Europe's top innovation hubs based in Venice, Italy. Its services include an innovation advisory, executive headhunting for digital positions, bespoke events and a global accelerator program launching in the Fall 2017.