

The Fashion Industry's Reset: An Important Message from the BFC & CFDA

The COVID-19 pandemic is hitting the fashion industry from every angle and severely impacting all of the global fashion capitals, and while there is no immediate end in sight, there is an opportunity to rethink and reset the way in which we all work and show our collections.

From the onset of this crisis, the Council of Fashion Designers of America and British Fashion Council have been in close communication, sharing feedback from their members and stakeholders.

The BFC and CFDA can share the common perspectives of their members and the organisations.

- We are united in our steadfast belief that the fashion system must change, and it must happen at every level. We are listening to many conversations taking place. These changes have been overdue for a while, and the fallout from coronavirus has forced us all to prioritise the process of rethinking how our industry should function.
- We encourage our brands, designers and retailers, who are used to fashion's fast, unforgiving pace, to slow down. For a long time, there have been too many deliveries and too much merchandise generated. With existing inventory stacking up, designers and retailers must also look at the collections cycle and be very strategic about their products and how and when they intend to sell them.
- There is a clear disconnect from when things arrive in-store to when the customer actually needs them. The delivery cadence should shift closer to the season for which it is intended.
- Together, we strongly recommend designers focus on no more than two main collections a year. We firmly believe this can provide our talents with the time they need to reconnect to the creativity and craft that makes our field so unique in the first place. A slower pace also offers an opportunity to reduce the stress levels of designers and their teams, which in turn will have a positive effect on the overall wellbeing of the industry.
- We understand the commercial need for pre-collections and the need to fulfil the delivery windows of the current pre-collections. However, we recommend that these return to their original intended purpose, which was to offer the consumer beautiful clothes that carry the ethos of the individual brands but are not necessarily sufficiently fashion forward to warrant a show. When we are able to hold in-person

events and showings, we would recommend that these presentations return to the showrooms.

- Once this crisis is over and non-virtual events can resume, we also recommend that brands attempt to show during the regular fashion calendar and in one of the global fashion capitals in order to avoid the strain on buyers and journalists travelling constantly. This too has placed tremendous stress on the industry and significantly increased each individual's carbon footprint.
- Sustainability is an important conversation in every industry. Through the creation of less product, with higher levels of creativity and quality, products will be valued and their shelf life will increase. The focus on creativity and quality of products, reduction in travel and focus on sustainability (something we encourage of the entire industry) will increase the consumer's respect and ultimately their greater enjoyment in the products that we create.
- While physical in-person presentations are likely impossible, the fashion councils will nevertheless focus on creating fashion calendars and other formats that will highlight and help to organise the virtual presentations for the Spring Summer collections.

The need to align as a global industry during these times has become more apparent. We will continue to work side-by-side, while each city will develop its own local initiatives. Fashion is a business of creativity and new ideas and difficult times are also ones for innovation. We will work to our industry's benefit as we reimagine and create, with our members and partners, a successful future.

We all understand the difficulties that all of you are going through in this devastating time and are here to help you and provide information in any way that we can.