French executives launch Fédération de la Mode Circulaire

By Godfrey Deeny - April 15, 2022

A group of experienced and youthful French executives have launched the Fédération de la Mode Circulaire, a novel project designed to inject dynamism into the fight to stop global climate change caused by the fashion and luxury industries.

The project, whose name means circular fashion federation, was unveiled Thursday evening in Paris at La Caserne, a former fire station in north Paris which has been redeveloped as a center for young designers and start-up fashion technology companies.

“We need to diminish our carbon contribution from 20 tons a year to two tons a year. Luckily, we never had so much tech, money and entrepreneurial talent as today. So, I really believe in the circular economy,” said Stanislas de Quercize, the key man behind the initiative. A board member of SAVIH, a family office investment vehicle, de Quercize is also a former president of Richemont France and Cartier North America.

At the opening meeting, major players like Kering, Printemps, Galeries Lafayette, Vestiaire Collective and young designers Marine Serre, Diane de Malherbe signed up as founding members of the new federation.
This spring, de Quercize launched a Circular Economy chair at Essec, a top French business school, sponsored by Essilor, L’Oreal and Bouygues. The first professor is Pierre Emilie de Saint Esprit, the founder of a start-up called Hello Zack, which recycles, repairs and resells mobile phones and computers.

“We need to decarbon our environment. The what we know. The how we don’t. That’s why we created this chair. L’Oreal, which turns over more than €30 billion, sent a team that was very humble, asking, ‘what we can do better than yesterday? And yesterday, we had the first feedback from students,” added de Quercize.

At its heart the Fédération de la Mode Circulaire represents a new generation of fashion and luxury entrepreneurs, part of what France calls its Start-Up Nation. Notably, Maxime Delavallée, one of three founders of CrushON, a site that links vintage professional e-commerce sites, to allow consumers to find fashion “nuggets” without having to leave their own sofas.
“About 150 companies have said they will join us in this great movement. It’s about uniting all forms of the circular economy - production, retail and creation. We see it as a collaborative platform dedicated to making recycling more understandable and thinking of new projects,” says Delavallée, the new federation’s president. Already, 75 businesses have paid their initial 100 euros for founding member subscriptions.

A second goal, he added, is uniting small and large fashion businesses, "who see the necessity of a common house to support the industry. To represent the strategic priorities of the industry; and consider the best solutions at a regulatory level, making fashion and circularity more transparent."

At CrushON, Delavallée and his colleagues have developed an omni-channel marketplace for circular fashion. Connecting vintage, thrift shops and even consignment stores to each other and then to consumers. They already have some 1,500 professional sellers, mainly in France, with over 10% abroad. CrushON has even opened in Galeries Lafayette and Westfield in Paris – with physical points of sales where vintage can be exposed and sold.
The new federation’s goal is to have all the industry’s major players – brands, groups, suppliers, distributors – to find solutions.

“We live in a time when David and Goliath aren’t killing each other. Look at Covid; ‘Goliath’ Sanofi said they did not find a vaccine, and ‘David’ Moderna said, ‘We have got it,’ and they worked together. That’s already happening in secondhand and vintage, or pre-owned and pre-loved. Kering invested in Vestiaire Collective. And Richemont invested in Watchfinder. So, we have an amazing opportunity to move from an ego-system to an eco-system. And for society to move from a world of consumption to a world of transmission,” enthused de Quercize.

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