

Orsola de Castro Interview

With being very prominent in the fashion industry, what first inspired you to venture into fashion and take steps to making a more conscious and considered industry ?

I had absolutely zero intention of make a more conscious and considered industry when i started, i was just interested in fashion. My background is a designer, illustrator and I've always enjoyed transforming my own clothes and that was the basis of which i started my label, it wasn't until later on i realised we did have a real issue with waste and so thats when i started becoming a bit more environmental and campaigner in my approach.

Your work includes being the co-founder and creative director of Fashion Revolution, the world leading fashion activist movement. Have you been able to see the impact this amazing work has had on the industry and the people involved?

To be honest with you, i have just checked the numbers and last April there was 3.2 million people taking part for a reach of 275 million so we are very aware of our impact. Where we've got a growing audience, we are now officially the biggest fashion advocacy movement in the world so would've been impossible not to realise that we've been very impactful.

So, what do you feel like the next steps are for Fashion Revolution?

We started with a much stronger environmental remit as well as our social one from last talking about clothing longevity, second hand, buying to keep and all of that, so i'd say to continue that 360 degree conversation around all impact of the fashion industry both social and environmental.

One of the quotes that features throughout Fashion Revolutions campaigning is "Loved Clothes Last". The industry is responsible for 300,000 tonnes of clothing sent to landfill every year in the UK, where/how do you feel the relationship between the consumer and their clothes has been lost?

Yes completely, i do feel like it has been lost and in fact i feel you know if we start talking about human psychology particularly when it comes to loved clothes last, why aren't we experiencing pain when we separate from our clothing if we love them we should try and keep them for as long as possible. We shouldn't want to throw our clothes away so the fact that we accelerated disposal is an indication of the fact we aren't implicitly emotionally involved with the things we buy any more.

We are living in a society controlled by newness, making the throwaway culture more prevalent. What advice would you give to consumers looking to make that bond back with their belongings?

I think its just a change in attitude really, it's about understanding, for me, it's important to respect the people that make our clothes if we know who makes them we'll love that piece of clothing longer and make them last longer but it really is about changing our mind set and that of brands completely.

What would you say is your most treasured object in your house?

Nope that's an impossible question to answer every single thing i own the fact that i own it is pretty much treasured. if i were to give you a list of my favourite objects in my house we will be talking for about 4 and half months.

What do you think it is that connects us to particular objects which see us keeping them longer than others?

Well often its memory isn't it, memory or aesthetic value but you know i don't think we can generalise, fashion is such a individual thing that everybody will keep things for

different reasons, the whole point is celebrate that reason and keep finding reasons to keep

Name your top 3 most inspiring figures.

In terms of design i adore Bethany Williams, what she's doing is beyond visionary really really exciting and i can't respect her more. In terms of culture, it would be Celine Semaan from study hall and the library eco. and in terms of activism it would be Nasma Akter; she's an unionist, she advocates unionisation and works closely with industrial work in Bangladesh