

# BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL



## PRESS RELEASE

### *Industry Calls for Tax Breaks for Eco Fashion Businesses*

Harold Tillman, Chairman of the British Fashion Council is spearheading a campaign that will incentivise fashion businesses to work in a more sustainable way and to make eco fashion more affordable and accessible to consumers. This call for action follows this week's RE: Fashion Summit and the recent British Fashion Council's *estethica* debate on the promotion of ethical fashion and consumer engagement. The campaign, supported by Monsoon, Vivienne Westwood, Edun, George at ASDA, From Somewhere and London College of Fashion's Centre for Sustainable Fashion, calls on all parties to recognise that to effect change, sustainability and ethical fashion also needs to make commercial sense.

Harold Tillman comments:

*"Sustainability within the fashion industry, the second largest employer in the UK, needs to be more than just personal choice, it needs to make sense for businesses and consumers. We are calling on all parties to recognise the impact that tax breaks could make on one of the UK's most exciting and innovative industries by supporting those who are working in a sustainable way and making it attractive to all businesses to be more ethical. If UK citizens can get tax breaks on more energy efficient cars and other sustainable products, why can't they wear their values with pride and get tax breaks on ethical fashion?"*

*'We need ethical fashion to become part of the mainstream if the industry is to play its part in a more sustainable future'* added Peter Simon, Chairman, Monsoon Accessorize

The UK's ethical fashion industry is currently worth approximately **£175 million** (Intel, 2009) and is growing faster than almost any other ethical sector, at 71% per year (Coop 2008). Intel's 2009 report also stated, 'The widening availability of ethical fashion is central to this growth. Real choice in styling and quality and truly fashionable design has been vital in the market's development' and '61% of women feel it is important that a company acts ethically'. One third of consumers say they are willing to pay more for ethically produced clothing and footwear (TNS Global, 2008).

The RE:Fashion Summit was held in London on Monday 26th April. RE:Fashion is an industry group, brought together the Ethical Fashion Forum, Anti-Apathy and Futerra (founders of Swishing). RE:Fashion is asking the three main parties running for Government to offer tax

breaks on sustainable clothing to improve the social and environmental impacts of the fashion industry.

The summit brought together stakeholders to discuss the future of the UK's ethical fashion industry including:

Harold Tillman (Jaeger, Aquascutum and the British Fashion Council); Christian Kemp-Griffin (Chief Mission Officer, Edun); Dilys Williams (Director of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, London College of Fashion); Orsola De Castro (estethica, From Somewhere); Gillian Lipton (Monsoon); Jessie Brinton (Sunday Times Style); Cyndi Rhoades (CEO, Worn Again); Lucy Shea (CEO, Futerra Sustainability Communications); Clare Lissaman (Supply Chain Consultant); Vicky Murray (Senior Sustainability Advisor, Forum for the Future); Amisha Ghadiali (Ethical Fashion Forum).

Topics discussed included proposals for support from government, partnerships and collaboration, sustainable products, and other tactics to promote the desirability of sustainable fashion.

The estethica press day looked at how ethical businesses and the ethical fashion industry could better engage consumers. It identified that ethical fashion products are now much more sophisticated, more design led with more to offer than a standard hemp or organic cotton t-shirt. A panel of ethical devotees including ecological activist and writer Charty Durrant, Baroness Lola Young, model and author Laura Bailey, Baroness Lola Young, Grazia's Fashion Editor at Large Melanie Rickey, co-founder of estethica and From Somewhere Orsola de Castro, Brigitte Stepputtis (representing Vivienne Westwood, Designer) and fashion retail expert Yasmin Sewell concluded that products must be able to stand up against the broader industry, but in order to do so the businesses must become more competitive and marketed in a way that ethical fashion is a lifestyle choice, a conscious purchase, not just a consumer trend that could go out of fashion. Government support will keep ethical fashion on the consumer's agenda, will assist in competitive pricing and will help the growth of more ethical fashion businesses.

-Ends-

#### Notes to editors:

1. RE:Fashion Summit followed the success of the RE:Fashion Awards. The RE:Fashion Awards took place on the 13th November 2008, celebrating people and organisations who have taken great strides in tackling poverty, healing the environment and changing consumer attitudes towards ethical fashion. Amongst the contributors were **Daisy Lowe, Sam Roddick, Vivienne Westwood, Zandra Rhodes, Katharine Hamnett, Pixie Geldof, Leah Weller** and a stellar line up of stars.
2. RE:Fashion was established by Anti-Apathy, Ethical Fashion Forum and Futerra to celebrate and promote sustainable fashion through high profile interventions such as the RE:Fashion Awards.
3. The **British Fashion Council** was set up in 1983 to promote British Fashion and co-ordinate this promotion through fashion weeks, exhibitions and showcasing events.

4. For more information visit [www.britishfashioncouncil.com](http://www.britishfashioncouncil.com)

**For more information about the British Fashion Council please contact:**

Gemma Ebelis or Kitty McGee at the British Fashion Council Tel: +44 (0) 20 7759 1986

[gemma.ebelis@britishfashioncouncil.com](mailto:gemma.ebelis@britishfashioncouncil.com) / [kitty.mcgee@britishfashioncouncil.com](mailto:kitty.mcgee@britishfashioncouncil.com)

**For more information about RE:Fashion please contact:**

Lucy Shea at Futerra Tel: +44 (0) 207 459 4700 / [lucy@futerra.co.uk](mailto:lucy@futerra.co.uk)