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How White Milano Spotlights Apparel Sustainability Amid A Multi-Billion Dollar Market



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ForbesLife



White WHITE

It's my contention that if you attempt to carry on a relationship with an irrational business model long enough, it's only a matter of time until you begin wondering if day really isn't night. You see, given enough time, an irrational business model can make you think that you're the only one who is neurotic. Don't let that happen.

When you eliminate an aggravating pattern from your business sector, you're affecting a long-term solution; it's a cure. Handled effectively, an

advanced business strategy will win in both the short and long run.

Menswear fashion shows and trade fairs are currently undergoing tremendous changes. The changes have rocked the menswear world into a state of confusion. Some collections are being presented during women's fashion week and vice-versa. Quite frankly, many luxury menswear brands have designed clothing so effeminate in appearance, they are much better served alongside the women's collections. Perhaps when brands start making clothing for men, then men in return, will purchase apparel for a change. Sadly, at this day and time, most fashion companies have a keen eye on social media. Luxury menswear fashion houses look more to creating brand awareness rather than making apparel for men to purchase. Because of the jumbled mental state of the modern day menswear reform, one has to look carefully beyond the slogans and rituals that seemingly showcase a form of global indoctrination in my humble opinion.



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Change is good. We evolve and march forward. When I think about how out of touch so many shows, presentations and trade fairs have been over the last decade, it is no wonder that the winds of change have come upon us like a cat in the dark. In short, you have to have the courage to confront change, in a civil but straightforward manner, and make your focus crystal clear. If the market is slow to respond, don't stop thinking of new and improved

ways that will entice them. State your business strategy in a calm civilized, candid and firm manner, being as pleasant as circumstances will allow.



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So which fashion trade fair has started all this change that has vendors from all around the globe gleaming with excitement? The promoter of the new crusade is a special type of character. Although she may not seem very different from others, Brenda Bellei Bizzi CEO and Co-founder of White Milano is the leader of a movement. In my experience, the leaders of the

past, have always revealed a distinct pattern: rejection of the old ways of business usually resulting in frustration, which in turn manifests into an attraction to a new set of ideas and an extreme makeover. White Milano will focus on sustainability and international scouting thanks to a mix of brands able to establish a dialogue with the new generations of consumers. This trade fair caters to the needs of an audience of insiders and trend searchers on the hunt for novelties. From exhibiting formats featuring targeted product showcases, to digitally focused projects, the new edition is conceived to work and grow with both brands and retailers alike. The core of WHITE and of the Tortona Fashion District, Tortona 27|Superstudio Più, is an exhibiting lab representing the crossroads between creativity, research and avant - guard style. The new format embraces cutting-edge brands, small and medium-sized artisan businesses, and well-established and eminent fashion houses. They all represent the strength of the project by bringing together brands and top international buyers. The goal of the project is to enhance Milan's role in the international fashion week scene, and to respond competitively to the other fashion capitals. Milan is center stage and White Milano is leading the way!

I recently had the privilege to speak with Brenda Bellei Bizzi about sustainable fashion brands, what makes brands sustainable and why she thinks it is of great interest for brands to showcase their lines at the White Milano?



Brenda Bellei Bizzi CEO and Co-founder of White Milano WHITE MILANO

Joseph DeAcetis: Talk to Forbes about the development of sustainable fashion brands of the White trade fair for 2019?

Brenda Bellei Bizzi: Sustainability is in WHITE's DNA. Since 2006, we have been focusing on this topic concretely. WHITE has been one of the first actors to promote a green policy, across the board. Most recently, the last step we've taken is the lab GIVE A FOK-us, which in the February 2019 edition explored the relation between Fashion and Nature, and Fashion and Society, through an emotional and interactive dimension. This initiative obtained the approval of several institutional offices, that attended the inauguration. This is of course one of the steps that WHITE has taken towards sustainability, together with the ongoing scouting process that involves international high-profile representatives. These are all actions that the fair has taken to highlight the fundamental importance of bio-compatible ethics in the fashion system. Such theme is looked for and appreciated by our international buyers who attend the trade show.

JD: What makes the White trade fair unique?

BBB: The vocation to experimentation; the ability to anticipate and capture the changes taking place in the fashion world, but also the ability to provide our brands with a high added value through special business and visibility projects. By using the most innovative digital channels, we were able to involve the city of Milan and the international audience during the days of the event. The “dual soul format” of WHITE STREET MARKET, has both B2B and B2C components to it. This content interaction will open up new scenarios in the streetwear and sportswear trade fair scene, plus we are also going to focus our attention on street culture through talk shows and workshops.

JD: In your words, why is sustainability of such importance to fashion brands today?

BBB: Because the fashion industry has always attracted the attention of the public, it is only right that it sets a good example. For too long, highly polluting processes such as chemical dyes, water pollution, and the use of toxic substances have been adopted. Today, we are experiencing an important turnaround in which WHITE participates, by selecting brands that respect the criteria of circular economy and sustainability. Today fashion can and must be moral and sustainable.



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JD: What makes a brand sustainable?

BBB: There are several aspects to consider when identifying a sustainable brand, from low energy and water consumption processes to the company's work ethics; from the use of fibers and materials coming from cruelty free farms to low environmental impact processing techniques. It is also important to use raw materials derived from organic farming, as well as recycled materials and bio-based chemical fibers.

JD: Talk to Forbes about your day-to day job responsibilities in detail

BBB:As CEO of WHITE, I work to implement the development strategies of the show on several fronts by investing on an ongoing basis; by expanding our exhibition spaces, such as the tortona hub 31; by building international collaborations; but also by establishing institutional partnerships with Ice Agenzia and Confartigianato, in order to facilitate the introduction of the most prestigious buyers. I also continuously promote our brands abroad, through trunk shows around the world.

JD: How has the White trade fair getting the message out about sustainability?

BBB:By highlighting important projects such as GIVE A FOK-us, and the partnership with the Pistoletto Foundation and its sustainable creative workshop Fashion B.E.S.T. We also emphasize sustainability by selecting brands 'with a green soul', and spreading the message through main on and off line communication channels.

JD: What are the highlights of the fair this 2019 season?

BBB:This year we focused on numerous fronts. With WHITE Milano and WHITE STREET MARKET we cover the widest possible spectrum of the different languages of fashion, from sustainability, culture, and lifestyle, to accessories, beachwear, sportswear and streetwear. We are also focusing on communications projects with large publishing groups, workshops and round tables.

JD: Why do you think Milan has become an epic center for the global fashion world?

BBB:Because we were able to create a system that aligns the dates of the various trade shows with Milan fashion week. This strategic positioning takes into account the needs of the buyers and allows them to fully take advantage of the opportunities offered by the various shows in Milan. This way, insiders have access to all fashion events, from larger brands to up-

and-coming designers, and also to the most artisanal and niche expressions. The city of Milan and national institutions have validated and supported this systemic direction.

JD: In your words, explain to Forbes viewers why it would be of interest and what are the benefits for them to showcase their lines at the White show?

BBB: WHITE has consolidated its role as a reference platform with constant growth with each edition. In February, the influx of buyers and operators in the sector exceeded 25 thousand visitors, with a growth of 6.8% of foreign markets. Today the show is visited by the most important international buyers thanks to the careful work of scouting, our effective communication, social media and influencer relationships, press conferences and targeted projects specifically designed for the labels.



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JD: What are you expecting to achieve at the show this season?

BBB: We continuously strive to do better than the previous season, both with WHITE MILAN and with WSM. For the show dedicated to women's fashion, we would like to exceed the 27 thousand attendee record registered in September 2018, while for WSM we'd like to exceed around 15 thousand visitors. To do this we are working on special targeted projects and scouting, which has always been our strong suit.

JD: What is your growth strategy with respect to the White show?

BBB:Our direction aims to further increase the presence of international buyers, implementing more marketing strategies, and increase incoming investments, thanks to institutional partnerships. Furthermore, we try to offer buyers from all over the world, who see White as an established appointment, an increasingly diverse and modern brand mix, a selection of original and high quality labels.



Joseph DeAcetis Contributor

Acclaimed American Journalist and International Editor. My interest lies in the pace and direction of trend adoption in luxury fashion and lifestyle, access to real-tim...

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