

# Love your clothes and pass them on, says Vogue supremo Wintour

Clothes should be cherished, re-worn and even passed on to the next generation, Anna Wintour, the influential editor of Vogue magazine said, calling for more sustainability in the fashion world and less of a throwaway culture. In an interview with Reuters, Wintour, considered one of the most powerful people in fashion, also said the industry was “a little bit late in the game” in pursuing diversity and inclusivity and that, despite the meteoric rise of social media influencers, Vogue would remain a benchmark for fashionistas.

Many brands are trying to bolster their green credentials and entice young environmentally-savvy consumers as the sector comes under scrutiny for fuelling a throwaway culture. But in good news for second-hand bargain hunters, Wintour, who has been at the helm of American Vogue for more than 30 years, said fashionistas should care for their clothes and even pass them on. “I think for all of us it means an attention more on craft, on creativity, and less on the idea of clothes that are instantly disposable, things that you will throw away just after one reading,” she said.

“(It’s all about) talking to our audiences, our readers, about keeping the clothes that you own, and valuing the clothes that you own and wearing them again and again, and maybe giving them on to your daughter, or son, whatever the case may be.” A 2016 report by management consultancy McKinsey & Company said global clothing output doubled between 2000 and 2014, with the number of garments bought each year per person surging 60 percent.

## Diversity on the runway

Instantly recognizable with her short fringed bob haircut and sunglasses, British-born Wintour has long been a front row staple at catwalk shows. The 2006 movie “The Devil Wears Prada” starring Meryl Streep as a no-nonsense editor of the fictional Runway fashion magazine is widely believed to be based on her. Thanks in part to social media, who and what should be in fashion had radically changed in the past decade, Wintour said.

Fashion weeks across the globe, where designers present their latest



Editor-in-chief of Vogue Anna Wintour delivers a speech during the Vogue ‘Change Makers’ event in Athens, Greece. — Reuters

creations, are seeing a more diverse mix of people, though Wintour said the industry had been slow on the uptake. “We are seeing a far more diverse and inclusive representation on the runway, on our social media channels and also in the pages of our different magazines,” she said. “I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we have so many designers of color in the United States. Until there is truly a voice at the table things will not change the way that they should. I feel we have long way to go.”

Wintour, who is also artistic director at parent company Conde Nast, was speaking to Reuters in Athens on the sidelines of the Vogue Greece ‘ChangeMakers’ event on Wednesday. Vogue Greece hit the newsstands earlier this year following a seven-year absence as publishers bet the county’s economic recovery after a debt crisis will revive an appetite for glossy fashion and lifestyle prints. Asked about the growing influencers’ effect, Wintour said they had “fun and varied” views but could never match the reach of Vogue. “Globally Vogue has 127 million followers ... I think that Vogue is the biggest influencer of them all on a global scale.” — Reuters

## Yves Saint Laurent jacket fetches record sum

A richly embroidered jacket by Yves Saint Laurent inspired by Vincent van Gogh’s “Sunflowers” was sold at auction Wednesday for 382,000 euros (\$420,000), a record for a garment from the celebrated French designer. The jacket, which was once modeled on the catwalk by supermodel Naomi Campbell, had been expected to fetch between 80,000-120,000 euros at the Christie’s sale.

It was bought by the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. The bright yellow and orange jacket took haute couture embroiderers Maison Lesage more than 600 hours to stitch by hand, according to the Yves Saint Laurent museum’s website. It was part of Saint Laurent’s 1988 spring/summer collection. Only four of the sequined jackets, which are lined with silk, were ever made.

Saint Laurent’s 1988 collection also featured an equally detailed jacket honoring another flower-themed van Gogh canvas, “Irises”. The blue and purple garment was auctioned for 175,500 euros—four times the guide price—in January out of the closet of Lebanese-born entrepreneur Mouna Ayoub, one of the world’s richest women. “I have always been fascinated by painting, so it was only natural that it should inspire my creations,” the designer wrote in a catalogue for a 2004 Paris exhibition. Yves Saint Laurent died in 2008, aged 71. — AFP

## Sarah Burton honored with Trailblazer Award



The creative director at Alexander McQueen will be handed the gong at this year’s Fashion Awards for her “empowering and narrative approach to shows”. Caroline Rush, British Fashion Council executive, said: “Sarah’s empowering and narrative approach to shows and her focus on community and appreciation of craft, technology and English heritage is what has made her one of the most respected designers of our time. Her commitment to sharing her vision and expertise with the future generations of fashion designers has been remarkable. She’s an incredible source of inspiration for many generations to come and we look forward to celebrating with her in London in December.”

Sarah has worked with a number of celebrities, but one of her most iconic pieces was the wedding dress that Duchess Catherine wore when she married Prince William, Duke of Cambridge in April 2011. And Sarah previously revealed she absolutely “loves” what she does and is grateful she can go to work every day doing what she enjoys. She said last year: “What everyone always wants to ask about are the three things I won’t talk about: the wedding dress, Lee and my family. But I always say, it’s so amazing to be able to go to work every day and love what you do, and I personally want that to be how I’m judged. The work - that’s the narrative, not what I do on the weekend.” — Bang Showbiz

## H&M-backed startup puts bacteria to work in green dyeing process

A British biotech startup is developing a method of textile dyeing that taps into the bright colors of birds and butterflies and has micro-organisms recreate them on fabric, slashing the use of water and heavy chemicals in the process. Based in the English city of Norwich, Colorifix has attracted backing from the venture capital arm of Swedish fashion giant H&M.

“We’re harnessing the ability of microbes in this case to be able to deposit and fix a pigment on to fabric,” Colorifix Chief Scientific Officer Jim Ajioka told Reuters. Common dyeing, with synthetic pigments, involves large concentrations of hazardous chemicals such as chromium and other heavy metal salts and consumes vast amounts of energy and water, with contaminated wastewater a big source of pollution.

Colorifix said its method uses no hazardous chemicals and cuts water use by up to 90% depending on equipment, pigment and fabric, and is carried out at lower temperatures than common dyeing. Shoppers’ growing awareness that apparel is one of the top-polluting industries is pushing image-conscious retailers to address the environmental impact of their clothes’ full life cycle. The dyeing stage has one of the biggest.

Colorifix, like French rival PILLI, harvests a color gene in nature and inserts it into a bacterial cell, tricking it to fill up with the color as well as duplicate. In Colorifix’s dyeing process, cells jump onto the fabric and release the dye on it, after which the solution is briefly heated up to kill them. Chief Executive Orr Yarkoni said Colorifix is about to launch industrial-scale trials in partnerships with fashion groups, including H&M, and textile manufacturers such as Switzerland’s Forster Rohner and India’s Arvind. The tests will be conducted at dye houses already supplying those brands.

“For the first pilots, I hope we have everything up and running by Christmas. We are starting on multiple sites simultaneously in Portugal, Italy and India,” Yarkoni said. If these are successful, Colorifix expects to launch commercially its 5-ml batches of microbes bulging with color, in 2020. Challenges include creating new hues on demand, maintaining standards of current processes and keeping costs down.

“The H&M group and Colorifix were in India this summer to, together with our production organization, see how we can develop the technique so that it can be applied to our production,” H&M spokeswoman Jeanette Mattsson said. “Given our size it takes more work to enable a scalable solution.” Colorifix’s other backers include Swiss investment firm Challenger 88 and Cambridge University. —Reuters