

150 Brands Have Joined Emmanuel Macron's "Fashion Pact" to Make the Fashion Industry More Sustainable

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by EMILY FARRA

In July, Amber Valletta partnered with Stella McCartney and Extinction Rebellion to broadcast an urgent message about climate change.

A cursory Google search for this weekend's G7 summit pulls up headlines largely dominated by President Trump's behavior: At Saturday's dinner, he insisted the group reinstate Russia, which was removed from the then-G8 in 2014; he made several conflicting statements about the China tariffs; and on and on. But there's some news that's actually worth talking about: namely, that French president Emmanuel Macron (who hosted this year's summit) debuted his new Fashion Pact, a set of shared objectives the fashion industry can work toward to reduce its environmental impact. This comes three months after Kering chair and CEO François-Henri Pinault revealed he'd been selected by Macron to establish those objectives and assemble a "coalition" of brands at the Copenhagen Fashion Summit. Right off the bat, PVH (which owns Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger) signed on, and at this weekend's summit, Macron reported that 32 companies (and roughly 150 brands) have joined thus far.

The Pact is noteworthy for many reasons. For starters, it's a first-of-its-kind initiative that's uniting the biggest names in fashion, many of whom are known competitors. Back in Copenhagen, Pinault explained: "Despite what we're doing [to reduce our impact alone], things are not moving.

We really need to define targets together. The first stage is to choose three or four objectives that are top priority for the industry and commit to working towards them together to find solutions. I'm [confident] we will reach a level that none of us individually could reach by working alone." He stressed the need for collaboration over competition and sharing resources rather than focusing on exclusives and secrecy. On that note, the fact that Stella McCartney signed on speaks volumes: She left Kering in 2018 and recently joined its rival LVMH (which is absent from the coalition). Other brands who joined the Pact include Gucci, Chanel, Tapestry (which owns Coach and Kate Spade), Nike, Alexander McQueen, Prada, Hermès, Ermenegildo Zegna, Burberry, Gap, Zara, Nordstrom, and Capri Holdings (Michael Kors's new holding company, which owns Jimmy Choo and Versace).

What exactly are these designers signing up for? As Pinault suggested, the Pact revolves around science-based targets in three areas: global warming (the objective being to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 in order to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius until 2100), restoring biodiversity (with a focus on restoring natural ecosystems and protecting species), and preserving the oceans (namely by reducing the use of single-use plastics). For most of the signees, achieving the Pact's goals will require major changes and significant investments. Several are already on the right track, though: McCartney has led the way on eliminating virgin plastic by using recycled polyester, and she uses leftover and upcycled materials in her collections, which results in lower emissions than sourcing brand-new fabrics. Similarly, Zegna's Alessandro Sartori is designing his suits with the intention of recycling them in the future; Prada has vowed to use only recycled nylon;

Zara is shifting its focus to organic and recycled materials; Nordstrom just launched a Sustainable Style section; and Michael Kors, Gucci, and Versace have sworn off fur.

It's fair to assume those brands will keep on pushing those initiatives, but the aim of the Pact is for them to work towards even bigger goals together. Ideally, their concerted efforts should amount to faster and more impactful change in the coming years, though it's admittedly hard to think about 2050—or even 2020—while fires continue to destroy the Amazon. When and how will the fashion industry step in? Environmental activists have quickly pointed out the inconsistencies with the hundred-million-dollar donations Kering and LVMH made to restore Notre Dame after its April fires, yet neither company (and no company of a similar scale) has pledged that kind of money to the Amazon. Just this morning, Macron confirmed that the Group of 7 agreed on a \$20 million aid package to Brazil and its neighboring countries, though *The New York Times* pointed out that with tens of thousands of fires burning—roughly a soccer field and a half per minute—it's unclear how far that money will go.

Of course, there's plenty the fashion industry can do if a multi-million dollar donation isn't in the cards. McCartney shared that her company is donating to Rainforest Alliance, which works with rural communities to conserve forests and support sustainable methods; Amazon Aid, which works to protect the Amazon; and the World Wildlife Fund, which protects the planet and endangered species. On the WWF website, they've outlined three ways you can get involved: You can sign their petition and donate; you should pay closer attention to what you buy, and only purchase wood items that are certified and sustainably

harvested; and you should reduce your use of fossil fuels by supporting renewable energy in your area and taking public transport when possible.

As far as fashion purchasing goes, if you're eyeing a dress made from a wood-based fiber—cupro, viscose, rayon, Tencel, lyocell—it's worth finding out where it's been sourced. On that note, McCartney is currently working on a data analysis tool with Google that will gather data from other brands and quantify the environmental impacts of cotton and viscose, ensuring they're sustainable sourced. Ideally, the tool will evolve so designers can assess their performance on materials, emissions, water use, and beyond.

Another way you can help? Don't just hashtag #PrayforAmazonia on Instagram (or shame those who aren't shouting about it loudly enough). Support by donating if you can, and use your voice to demand change on a global scale. As Extinction Rebellion activist Sara Arnold told me last week, "We aren't going to fight this problem unless there is complete systemic change, and that happens through targeting the government, not through individual actions alone."