



PRESS RELEASE

The Academy of Arts in Warsaw, in partnership with FFI promotes the 8th edition of the **Global Fashion Conference, ONLINE**, on the **21st and 22nd of October 2021**.

Under the topic of the **Challenges of Fashion**, the international conference gathers hundreds of researchers and executives who will be sharing, not only research, but also innovative projects. The presentations were carefully selected among many submissions by the Scientific Committee using the peer blind review system.

In the second day of the conference two **Awards** will be announced: one for the best research on fashion innovation and the other one for the best research on fashion sustainability. The independent jury includes a representative from academia, Professor Carlos Melo Brito from the University of Porto, a representative from industry, Tahani Kaldéus, Head of Research of Re-newcell, in Sweden and a representative from the Press, the French journalist and writer Lucas Delattre.

Still under the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, with political changes and tensions across the continents, one senses the unease yet at the same time the aspirations to uphold human rights, in different cultures and models of society. The model of sustainable development in its fundamental components: social, environmental, and economic is becoming more urgent and necessary.

The closing of borders, public spaces and workplaces has led to a redefinition of everyday lifestyle. The turmoil we feel in political, economic and social terms calls for an urgent reflection and action.

Fashion is a global industry which had already multiple challenges to overcome:

- **of a social nature**, with the past relocation of textile production and manufacturing to countries with less stringent labour laws;
- **environmental** challenges related to production – due to a high proportion of non-recycled and non-biodegradable raw materials – as well as associated logistics and transport with their reliance on fossil fuels, which have been further aggravated by the rise of online consumption;



- **economic** challenges, in a two-speed world, more conscientious and less consumption-driven consumers exploring new ways of acquiring and using clothing and accessories such as buying second-hand, renting, exchanging as well as novelty-hungry consumers, with great access to information, who continue to base their choices on impulse, personal satisfaction and the desire to flaunt their status.

These challenges become even more conspicuous in the political, economic, and social situation we are presently experiencing.

In this year of challenges, the ONLINE edition of the Global Fashion Conference will take place from Warsaw, Poland, because this is one of those countries, where Fashion has reflected political, economic, and social changes in very striking ways.

Poland is a country, positioned between East and West of Europe, characterised by the peculiarity of a monarchy, whose representative was elected, and which was beset by conflict for many centuries. In 1795 the Polish territory was carved up between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, at the same time as the Fashion System began to emerge in Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Fashion culture in Poland was able to survive thanks to domestic textile production and the abundance of well-trained artisans living in Poland's largest cities.

When Poland became independent after the World War I, conditions were established for a fashion system to flourish. In 1918 Polish women won the right to vote. Following World War II, the implementation of socialism, the preference for domestic production and distribution and the utopia of people equal and united by wearing uniforms did not destroy Fashion. "Moda Polska", a state institution, was created in 1958 with the purpose of designing and producing modern, attractive Fashion. The regime hoped that, through its elegance, Polish fashion would stand out in Eastern Europe and establish itself as an alternative to Western fashion. And so, it did. However, links with Parisian Haute Couture did exist. In Poland translations of French and East German publications were censored, but published, and creativity was a positive value to be encouraged. Because of this, the author Anna Pelka¹ mentions that Polish Fashion had an important influence in East Berlin and beyond, since fashion events were promoted in Western fashion capitals and many women from the political elites of the nations comprising the Soviet Union flocked to Warsaw to buy their wardrobe. It is in this context that the first Polish fashion school emerges, in Łódź, with a close connection to Art.



The Polish brand 'Hoffland' could be considered the first Polish fast fashion brand and was unable to satisfy all the demand; the brand's design was modern, and garments were manufactured with low-cost textiles. It was launched by the journalist Barbara Hoff in 1963 and only disappeared in 2007.

After 1989 Poland is transformed, and the world is also altered because of this process of change. The Berlin Wall falls, Germany is reunified, the Soviet Union splits, and old cultural borders reassert themselves on a new world map. The Poles, who had always displayed great openness and creativity, witnessed the appearance of new, global brands in their country. Many investors saw in Poland the potential of centuries of its textile, clothing, and footwear tradition. With the development of the internet and later the advent of social networks, everything that happened in the world could and did happen in Poland. This openness also coincided with the emergence of social and environmental concerns, which led to the drafting of Agenda 21 and subsequently, in 2015, the prioritisation of sustainable development targets for 2030.

Poland remains a sizeable country where freedom and diversity in Fashion find opportunities. There is a major fast fashion brand LPP encompassing many labels that enjoy international success in Eastern European countries and Russia while embracing a sustainable program. Price sensitivity is relevant to many, but there are also people who value quality over quantity and find possibilities – between new designers, vintage, and second-hand shops and online – for owning fewer pieces of clothing, or pieces that can be swapped or upcycled. Poland, like many other countries boasts its own small brands incorporating the values of circular fashion, transparent communication, as well as attracting artisans who have survived difficult times. A lot of creativity is put into looking smart, feeling good and protecting the environment. At the same time, creative processes mean that with every year there are increasing examples of a creative and local approach, with a better understanding of Polish cultural heritage and what it might be in the future.

At the Global Fashion Conference, Aleksandra Pawelec from LPP and Monika Kędziora from ACEPHALA will talk about the contemporary situation of Polish Fashion, Tomasz Boscian - CEO UbraniaDoOddania will talk about resale. And Monika Malinowska-Olszowy, Vice Dean for Education of the Faculty of Material Technologies and Textile Design at Lodz University of Technology will share information about new textiles and circularity.



The journalist and writer Karolina Sulej will present her research about the role fashion, under the aspect of different personal belongings played in the preservation of self-esteem and dignity on death and concentration camps.

At the same time Janusz Noniewicz (Artist, Founder Fashion Design Course – Academy of Fine Arts – Warsaw) will lead an international panel on Fashion Education. Brazil, the USA, India and Italy will discuss not only fashion education and sustainability at graduate and post graduate level, but also at an early age. Responsible consumption means to be aware of the environmental and social consequences of the fashion industry.

Another topic will deserve the attention at GFC the funding for sustainability. In fact the financial systems still lags behind sustainable concerns. Christiaan Lensvelt , Senior Investment advisor of the Good Fashion Fund will be talking to Professor Isabel Cantista, Founder of the GFC project, highlighting the first projects this Fund is carrying in Asian countries.

Along with the presence of Polish Speakers, the GFC2021 welcomes speakers from Finland, Denmark, UK, Italy, Spain, Portugal, India, Brazil and USA.

Materials for Press use are available at GFC website Press Room. <http://gfc-conference.eu/contacts/>

In order to attend the conference a **PRESS PASS** is needed. Press accreditation form in the Press Room.

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1Pelka, A. 2014. **Z [politycznym] fasonem. Moda młodzieżowa w PRL i NRD** *in english* In [political] fashion. Youth trends in Communist Poland and Eastern Germany, referred in <https://culture.pl/en/article/politics-and-fashion-in-a-communist-poland> 22.02.2021