

**Second-hand Clothing Market: an alternative Sustainable Practice or another Fashion Trend?**

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**Abstract**

Under the intensification of the image culture, the capacity to connect at speed and the desire to experience the man-made fantasy, consumers are placed in an immediate gratification of continually evolving temporary identities, and therefore in a never-ending contest to purchase more. At the same time, the cultural standing of alternative fashion is changing, resulting in the rise of second-hand clothing market, in which high end ‘vintage’ stores, designer-focused consignment stores, and boutiques thrive.

This paper is a methodologically well-executed primary research on the re-sale and (re-)evaluation of second hand clothing in the NY-based “buy-sell-trade” vintage and modern clothing retail store Beacon’s Closet. The author has conducted on the ground research at the four different locations of Beacon’s Closet, observing and describing the organization of the buy-sell trade in these stores, as well as the retail design and atmosphere at the various locations. Interviews with the owner, staff as well as customers have been also conducted to gain insights into the various practices – the buying and selling – through which this used clothing store functions as a fashion institution.

The aim of this research is to demonstrate the practices that are part of the local second hand clothing trade as it is situated within particular thriving neighborhoods and communities in Brooklyn and critically examine the role of the sellers and buyers, as well as places/locations, as they act together as agents in the re-fashioning of used clothing, and thus contribute to fashion studies and other disciplines with a perspective on sustainability issues.

**Keywords:** retail, memory, revival, recycling, NYC

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