

Collective Fashion Justice

Strategic plan

2024



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Message from the Director

When I coined the term 'total ethics fashion' at the end of 2020, it was through frustration transformed into hope, and a dedication to a genuinely holistic view of what it means to value life over profit. Today, the fashion industry has undoubtedly transformed, too. Gratefully, in small part, Collective Fashion Justice has contributed to that change, as have so many of the organisations, advocates, and researchers we collaborate with. And yet, the urgent need for total ethics fashion persists.

Garments continue to be labelled as 'ethical' due to the fair, living wages paid to artisans, while ignoring the injustices of what those people stitch together – the skins of slaughtered animals. Equally, 'cruelty-free' labels mark many animal-free accessories, despite the exploitation of people paid poverty wages to make them. 'Sustainable fashion' collections contributing to over production out of alignment with our planetary boundaries persist. Still, as an industry, we are yet to acknowledge that sustainability is not only about what Earth can literally sustain, but what we can rightfully, and morally sustain.

And so, at Collective Fashion Justice, we persist with our work towards a total ethics fashion system: one which prioritises the life and wellbeing of people, our fellow animals and the planet before profit.

In the last year, we have released a book, *Total Ethics Fashion*, a manifesto which can be endorsed by those also seeking this kind of fashion future. Its asks are clear: a just transition beyond animal-derived, fossil fuel-based, and native-deforestation driven materials. The payment of living wages to all of fashion's working people. The reimagining of fashion to exist within planetary boundaries through degrowth and circularity. All of our work thus far has aligned with these goals, as will our future works.



I am proud of the achievements toward these lofty goals that we have obtained in the past year, as a very small, but very mighty charity. We have shifted citizen perceptions, secured major policy changes at an industry level, and influenced governments to act on fashion's serious problems.

2024 will be Collective Fashion Justice's fourth year, and undoubtedly, our impact will only strengthen and broaden. As more decision-makers endorse our manifesto, as we partner with more educational institutions to influence the next generation of fashion, and as our calls grow louder and more powerful within the industry and governments, we are ready to ask for more on behalf of people, our fellow animals, and the planet. And we are ready to provide for them.

In the next year, we will continue to align our target stakeholders – citizens, students of fashion, industry members, and government agents – with the goals of a total ethics fashion system. We will then move them from theoretical agreement that we must prioritise life over profit, and towards action. Tangible policies, investments, and changes. And finally, we will lay the groundwork for the kind of large-scale change that is urgently and sorely needed, but that will inevitably take years to be fully realised. This means significant phase out strategies for shifts beyond unjust materials and practices. The changing of how fashion is taught to those who will help us shape it in coming years. The transition of government support from the exploitative, to the ethical and sustainable.

The pace at which our impact is expanding is constantly increasing. As such, this year we have a strategic plan for just one year, rather than two. By the end of 2024, we believe that Collective Fashion Justice will be capable of transformation beyond our current capacity and imagination – just as was true at the end of each of the mere three years we have been working for total ethics fashion.

Until then, I look forward to a 2024 full of serious, dedicated, and just work for a fashion system which truly sees the inherent and unshakable value of the planet and all life on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Håkansson', with a long, sweeping underline.

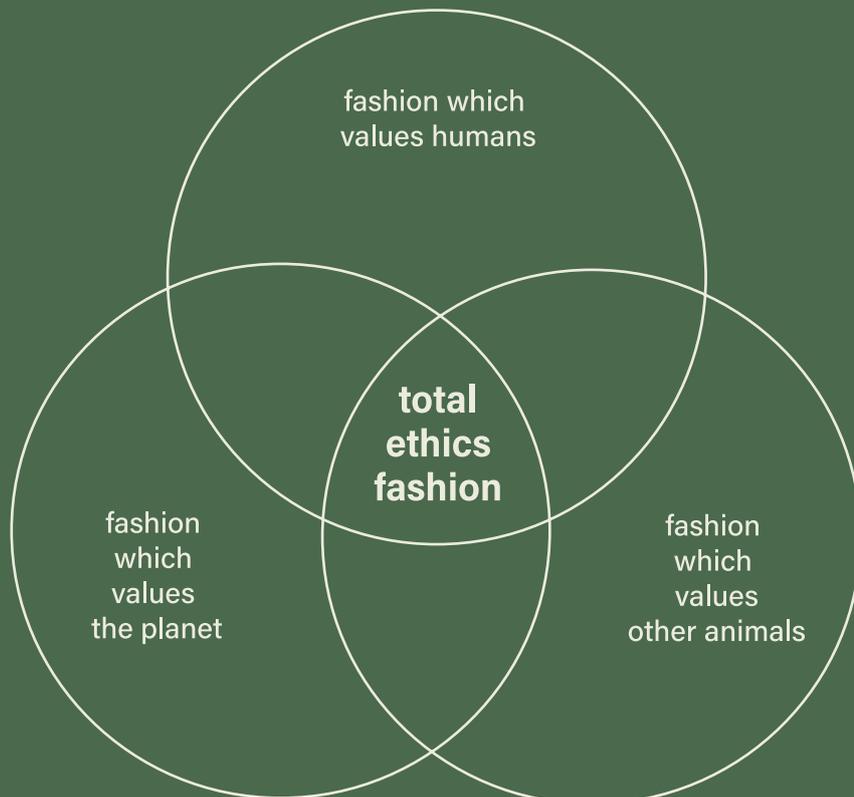
Emma Håkansson

The continued need for a total ethics fashion transformation

Today, the people who produce, are exploited for, and are harmed in the production of fashion are still not considered as serious stakeholders by the industry. Nor are animals who are reduced to mere commodities and materials through suffering and slaughter. Neither is the planet, its climate and biodiversity which are continuously impacted and depleted by the current fashion system. This harms us all. And while we have a moral imperative to act to change this, the fashion industry and its shareholders should also be aware that this will come to impact them and their profits, too. There is no fashion on a dead planet, no shoes to make when nature is stripped of its 'resources', no consumers to buy clothing when they properly understand fashion's current negative impact and prioritise just citizenship instead.

The life and wellbeing of people, our fellow animals and the planet is inherently intertwined. Though we tend to forget it, us humans are one of many unique and precious animal species. And all of us are a part of nature: we are not separate to it. To harm any part of nature, any of us, is to harm us all. The fashion industry is yet to properly understand this, picking and choosing which of its harms it will address, failing to understand the interconnectedness of the problems it perpetuates.

A total ethics fashion system is the antidote to this industry and global crisis.



Our approach and achievements so far

As an organisation, we continue to prioritise education and connection between stakeholders. Engaging only citizens, only industry members, or only governments to act for total ethics fashion, will fail us all. Just as ecosystems require a holistic approach to maintain their health, so too our human systems require interconnectedness to create real change. Citizens can influence industry and government, but so too, they, we, are influenced by the industry and government. And of course, while the government has a strong power to transform the fashion industry, industry lobbyists also shape government actions.

While we work to transform fashion by engaging these different but linked stakeholders, we also value collaboration – bringing together charities, researchers and advocates with different backgrounds and focusses, when we share common or connected goals.

This approach is working, as is our balance of exposing problems, with looking forward towards solutions. One cannot exist without the other.

The majority of our work has and will continue to focus on moving fashion beyond animal-derived material production and use. This is because it is the single most effective way to positively impact people, our fellow animals and the planet alike, alongside promoting healthy degrowth. No other material or production system harms each of these three groups so significantly. We need only to think of a leather supply chain filled with cattle exploitation and slaughter, farm labour injustices, deforestation, land rights violations, methane emissions, tannery worker ill health, environmental racism through pollution, and so many other issues to understand this.

The core of our approach is to refuse the commodification of individuals and of life, and to encourage our global fashion system to see a way forward in which its founding values of creativity and culture are placed ahead of a cruel kind of commerce which destroys the ecosystem it relies on to exist.

Our 2024 strategic goals

As in 2023, our goals for the next year focus on a number of interconnected key audiences: citizens (who are also, of course, fashion consumers), students who will become the next generation of the fashion industry, the current industry, and the political systems which influence all of these groups.

As noted, just like all elements of an ecosystem interact and must be connected to maintain their collective health, the same is true for our human systems and society. We are dedicated to engaging with all of these groups and building bridges between them, in order to produce positive change more quickly.

Audience key



policy
makers



educational
institutions



industry



citizens

1. Align our target stakeholders with the goals of a total ethics fashion system

Collective Fashion Justice is a very small but mighty organisation and without collaborators and a growing community of citizens, industry members and politicians, we will be unable to make progress towards total ethics fashion at the pace required by our global ecological and ethical crisis. In this strategic goal, we outline how we plan to grow this community through education and engagement.

1.1 Build a more powerful community for total ethics fashion with our manifesto

-  The total ethics fashion manifesto launched at the end of September 2023, and currently, it has been endorsed by over 500 individuals, organisations and businesses. Some of our most impactful endorsers include photographer Alexi Lubomirski, fashion school GCNYC, and a host of fashion lecturers across the globe.
-   In 2024, we aim to raise total endorsements to 2,000, with a focus on high-impact endorsers who hold decision-making powers at an institutional, industry or political level.
-   As part of this work, we also aim to bring the Total Ethics Fashion book into more stakeholder spaces, building more (at least 6) university library relations, hosting industry events and discussions. By mainstreaming the concept of total ethics fashion within our target stakeholder networks, we shift fashion's trajectory in a positive, much needed direction.

1.2 Develop in-depth research in support of the urgent need for total ethics fashion and specific required actions to move towards this system

-   Last year, we produced research, reports and investigative footage relating to largely unknown and under-reported issues in fashion, and in 2024, we will continue this work.
-  We aim to contribute to 1 investigative campaign highlighting previously unseen fashion injustices, and at least 2 reports focussed on total ethics fashion solutions, the benefit of investing in these, and the negative consequences of the industry and government's potential failure to do so. This research will be presented to key stakeholders.

1.3 Make total ethics fashion solutions desirable and competitive against current and harmful industry practices

-  In our work, we have come to find that while research and fact-based evidence to support a just transition beyond fashion's most harmful materials and practices is critical, alone, it is not enough. Creative directors have significant power in fashion, and aesthetics drive both these individuals and the citizen consumers they create for.



We aim to produce 1 major film project designed to present next-generation materials replacing animal and synthetic inputs as more desirable than their current-gen counterparts. This project must result in increased growth the highlighted material innovation, connect new materials with brands not yet using them, and receive critical acclaim by the industry.

2. Move our target stakeholders from theoretical support towards total ethics fashion and to immediate and tangible changes

Our efforts to build a community supportive of total ethics fashion are futile unless this support is followed by action. While progress takes time and often begins with theoretical agreement, the state of the fashion industry requires immediate action and transformation. In this strategic goal, we outline how we plan to use our efforts to grow the total ethics fashion community, in order to produce immediate positive changes.

2.1 Secure policy changes from at least 5 major brands, institutions, or governments, towards total ethics fashion

-  While we aim to produce more overall policy changes than this, the key to our most effective policy work is to transform the policies of large players: major brands and retailers, as well as fashion councils and governments which impact a large number of citizens and industry practices both presently, and in the case of schools, in the future.

We are particularly focussed on securing policies that move fashion beyond unjust materials, and that prevent green-washing and ethics-washing (as these hinder all of our progress towards genuinely responsible, total ethics fashion).

2.2 Connect stakeholders to accelerate the progression of material solutions

-  Material innovation which benefits people, our fellow animals and the planet is expensive, time consuming and often, culturally challenging, due to long-held perceptions of current-generation materials such as, for example, leather and wool, as 'natural' and even 'noble'
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To progress this material innovation, we aim to connect at least 5 material innovators with brands and institutions that can support their growth and development.

2.3 Analyse the current position of target stakeholders in regards to total ethics fashion progress, in order to promote healthy competition

-  Progress is both more possible and fast paced when healthy competition amongst stakeholders is established, making a lack of progress towards total ethics fashion a publicly perceived lacking.

We aim to produce analysis and reporting comparing the industry's progress on some of fashion's most unacceptable practices, as well as comparing educational institutions and their teaching of total ethics fashion. These resources will be used to engage with analysed businesses.

3. Secure long-term support, engagement and action for a more just future from our target stakeholders

Some change is not immediate, but requires long-term strategic consideration. Presently, we are most concerned by government funding of exploitative and destructive aspects of fashion supply chains, a lack of funding for just transition opportunities and solutions, and the failure of fashion education institutions to effectively educate students on the impact of animal-derived materials. In order to impact all of our target stakeholders, these strategic goals work to address these issues.

3.1 Secure government support for just transition opportunities and advancement of the fashion industry towards total ethics fashion

-  In a just transition, those currently engaged in fashion production harming people, animals and the planet are supported in moving to more communally beneficial work. While this is a long term goal, we aim to work further towards securing government commitment to support at least 1 just transition opportunity.

3.2 Produce educational resources that can be used long-term by institutions, to ensure longevity of total ethics fashion education

-  Collective Fashion Justice has lectured on total ethics fashion across nearly 20 schools in 3 continents, but this work could be more effective if it was able to be repeated more regularly by a larger cohort of global students than our small organisation can reach in-person or online through virtual classes.

We aim to produce at least 1 fashion certificate program for universities to offer to students, and a number of resources designed for continued student use. These should reach at least 100 new students over 5 institutions within their first year, with an ongoing, growing impact.



Closing message

Collective Fashion Justice is a very small and endlessly hard working team of part-time and volunteer workers committed to a total ethics fashion industry.

We thank you for your interest and support of our work. Our goal of total ethics fashion is lofty and we are under no illusion that the road towards it will be easy. And yet, we are dedicated to persistently edging our way closer to it, each and every day.

If you would like to support our work through volunteering, as a collaborative organisation, institution, fashion industry member or policy-maker interested in creating change with us, or finally, a donor, who can help to make our work possible, please reach out.

info@collectivefashionjustice.org

