

Collective Fashion Justice

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2022

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Message from the Director

Collective Fashion Justice exists to create a fashion system that upholds total ethics, by prioritising the life of all animals; human and non-human, and the planet. For too long, conversations around improving fashion have been tunnel-visioned by looking only at one pillar of justice, be it environmental, humanitarian, or anti-speciesist. It is time to combat all three key injustices together.

We believe that the perils and injustices that run rife within the fashion industry are intrinsically linked. Working to deconstruct just one form of oppression in this system, without addressing or even recognising the others will never be effective. Underpinning the mistreatment of fashion supply chain workers, the killing of animals, and the destruction of the natural environment for fashion is a common thread; the idea that some lives are more precious than others, and the commodification of individuals to cogs in a machine, to mere materials, to resources here only for our use.

At this moment in time, more than ever, we must dismantle destructive and oppressive ideology, which is costing us lives, happiness, and safety on and of this planet. While fashion is seen by some as vapid or unimportant, it is in fact a way of expression - an art form that allows for identity development and pride, for revolution. We all wear clothes, and we all say something to the world in what we choose to clothe ourselves in. It's time our choices reflect what we really want for our world.

Collective Fashion Justice, as the name suggests, believes a collectively just fashion system is entirely possible. Over the next two years, we will begin our work to bring this system into fruition. The most effective way to do this is by primarily addressing animal fashion supply chains. Within these, we can and will illuminate and help to uproot all three key fashion injustices; against humans, non-humans, and the planet. Our approach will be threefold.

Firstly, through advocacy and intervention, we will ensure that the animal supply chains causing the most collective harm are centralised in discussions of fashion ethics. These supply chains and the materials which come from them are often an afterthought in dialogue surrounding the fashion industry, despite their being the most obvious place to begin the work for a totally just fashion system. We will demand industry hold itself accountable to these problems and educate consumers who too often are misled about the real cost of their fashion choices.

Secondly, we will collaborate with other organisations, groups and individuals who seek to create a fair fashion future. By working with environmental, social and animal justice groups, we can build relationships and secure a wider movement for total ethics in fashion. We refuse to leave anyone behind on this mission.

Finally, we will consistently work to transform the fashion system, by influencing decision-makers to make smarter, kinder choices, and drive wider industry and legislative change to protect us all. We will ensure that solutions to fashion injustices are totally just, protecting not only some of us, but all of us: human and non-human, and our shared planet.

The benefits of creating a collectively just fashion system stretch far beyond our wardrobes. Every animal, farmer, material and garment-maker deserves safety. The communities surrounding them, often filled with marginalised and vulnerable people, deserve protection too. In building a total ethics fashion system, a new way of living and relating more broadly will be presented; one which values life, and the quality of it, first and foremost.

We do not exist simply to point out injustice, what is wrong, and what must be better. Collective Fashion Justice will lead the way in constructing a better world for everyone touched by the fashion system. We will provide tangible solutions, which benefit everyone and which are relatively realistic, should we see the true value in them. We will bring about a just, fair world. We hope you will join us.

Why Collective Fashion Justice exists

Systemic violence against animals

Every year, over 73 billion sentient, non-human beings capable of joy, fear and suffering are reduced to fragmented body parts industries turn into food and fashion materials. At least another 96 million animals are commodified and brutally killed specifically for their fur. It is important to note that 'materials' like leather are not mere 'by-products,' but financially valuable to the meat, dairy and leather industries, and that despite misperception, wool is indeed a slaughter industry, too.

Animals in all these industrial systems are incarcerated, mutilated, and stripped of their autonomy - and ultimately, their lives. In a deeply speciesist world, despite our being the same in the most fundamental senses, some animals are valued more than others. Humans are seen as the pinnacle of existence, holding dominion over everyone else; our beloved dogs and cats, the farmed animals supposedly here only for our want and will. This misguided belief leaves non-human animals wrongly excluded from discussions of fashion ethics too often. Collective Fashion Justice is dedicated to changing this.

Suffering of farmers and slaughterhouse workers

Despite dressing in the skins and fibres of slaughtered or soon to be slaughtered animals, most of us cannot fathom killing another living being. Certainly, most of us would struggle deeply to connect and relate to another creature, and then send her to her death. But when we buy animal clothing, this is what we demand animal farmers and abattoir workers do on our behalf.

As humans, our natural instinct towards other animals are of curiosity and compassion. Work which demands a polar-opposite action to this instinct is detrimental to the mental well-being of these working people. Working in a slaughterhouse is proven to negatively impact one's mental health and outlook, with perpetration induced traumatic stress, coming from committing a violent act, being prevalent. Both slaughterhouse workers and farmers have spoken of their struggles with depression, unhealthy coping mechanisms which harm their loved ones, and of feeling trapped in work they wish they could be freed from. Collective Fashion Justice works for the fashion industry to recognise their responsibility to such workers in their supply chain, and to support them in their transition to safe, and just new jobs.

Inefficient, destructive planetary use

Our fashion system exploits the natural earth for economic gain without considering the implications of this on the wellbeing of our planet or other marginalised beings. From the unsustainable production of fibre crops, to the use of fossil fuels in fashion destined for landfill, and our most environmentally impactful materials, those made from animals, the way our industry engages with the earth must fundamentally change.

Most pressing, our use of animals in food and fashion sees greenhouse gas emissions more significant than the exhaust emissions from every transport vehicle in the world: planes, trains, boats and cars. Our destruction of native land for farmed animal grazing is erasing the Amazon Rainforest before our eyes, and covering over a third of all non-barren land. With the transition towards a more efficient, circular, plant and cell-based fashion and food system, this land could largely be rewilded, sequestering carbon and rejuvenating precious biodiversity on an enormous scale. Collective Fashion Justice works towards this regenerative fashion system which holds environmental justice central to its way of functioning.

The luxury of the few, at the expense of the masses

Leather, wool, fur and all other animal materials are largely luxurious goods, mostly bought in copious amounts by a small percentage of the global population despite the devastating impact on the rest of the human population. People of colour working in leather tanneries supplying the global west suffer disproportionately high rates of disease. Their communities live in such polluted environments that some are even known as 'cancer villages.' Indigenous land is stolen for industrialised animal agriculture and then used to inefficiently feed animals killed for their flesh, fur, skin, and wool, which could instead, feed the 690 million people around the world who go hungry.

Slaughterhouse workers, often migrants, are treated as expendable. They are often severely injured and sometimes die in the dangerous conditions of the slaughterhouse. The human injustices intertwined within our speciesist fashion supply chains are immense, and are addressed and deconstructed by Collective Fashion Justice.

Our vision

Our vision is of a fashion system that upholds total ethics, by prioritising the life of all animals; human and non-human, and the planet.

Our mission

Our mission is to illuminate the interlinked injustices in fashion supply chains that harm the planet, and human and non-human animals. By uprooting their intertwined harm, we work to create a total ethics fashion system.

Our core values

Collective liberation

Held most dear to us is the knowledge that true freedom exists only when it is offered to us all. Animal supply chains in the fashion industry harm humans, non-humans and the planet. It is not enough to work to protect and liberate only some in this system, but all. Our work within the fashion industry aims to operate within this collectively minded framework. No one shall be left behind.

Impact

As an organisation, we must strive to seek the greatest impact at all times. By setting targets and measuring success through each campaign and initiative, we can ensure our work is ever-improving and impactful for those harmed for fashion. We can only do this if first, the public is properly informed about issues in fashion. We will consistently measure the success of our outreach, education and advocacy to ensure we are doing our best.

Transparency

A lack of transparency in the fashion industry has allowed for great injustice to continue. As an organisation working for transparency and change, we must hold ourselves and our way of working accountable to the same standard.

Nuance

Recognising that the fashion industry is complex in its harm toward humans and non-humans, our advocacy must be nuanced. Victimised humans victimise non-humans, for example, and we must speak against both injustices even when it is difficult, complex, or unpopular.

Collaboration

Our vision of a total ethics fashion system is significant and complex. To see it come into fruition, we must collaborate with others, including with seemingly unlikely allies, who we will meet with empathy and inclusivity. It is through collaboration that we will see the end of injustice for fashion's sake.

Innovation

Just as humanity has caused such injustice, we have the tools to uproot it. Through innovation, cruelty and wastefulness can be made redundant. By supporting just new materials and modes of operating in fashion, we reach closer to a total ethics system.

Our two-year strategic objectives

As a new organisation, our goals over the next two years will help shape the trustworthy, reliable and recognisable identity of Collective Fashion Justice. Our goals lead us further towards a total ethics fashion system. They are both ambitious and achievable as we begin our efforts. As our organisation grows, we will be able to bring about greater goals and wins.

1. Get animal supply chains on the map

While more brands are becoming transparent and accountable about Tier 1 of their supply chain - where their clothing is made - there is a 'widespread lack of transparency' beyond this point, according to Fashion Revolution data. Where the materials clothing is made from, not just where the clothing itself is made, matters, and has impact on humans, non-humans and the planet.

Collective Fashion Justice will work to get animal supply chains on the map of fashion transparency discussions, highlighting the plight of non-humans, abattoir and farm workers, and the environmental impact of animal agriculture.

- 1.1 Deliver at least 2 campaigns highlighting abattoir and farm workers as fashion supply chain workers who brands are obliged to consider. 100% of campaigns must be featured in at least 5 media publications.
- 1.2 Deliver at least 1 campaigns which demonstrate animal violence as an inherent part of producing animal materials, a part which is funded by fashion brands and consumers. These campaigns will be led by industry footage and supported evidence. They must receive substantial media attention. At least 1,000 supporters should engage with the campaign by signing a petition to demand change from the fashion industry.
- 1.3 Participate in the creation of at least 1 paper regarding animal supply chains in fashion, with one focussed specifically on environmental impact. CFJ must be recognised in the publication of 1 peer reviewed paper.

2. Collaborate diversely, strengthen allyship

In order for all those non-humans, humans and ecosystems harmed by the fashion industry to be liberated from injustice, we must collaborate with those with greater knowledge and insight than ourselves on intersecting issues.

Collective Fashion Justice will work with other groups, unions, and individuals to spread the message of a total ethics fashion system farther than we possibly can alone.

- 2.1 Partner with a significant environmental organisation for at least 2 forms of advocacy and foster an ongoing relationship with them. Success here will be measured by a partnership review from our collaborator, and confirmation that they would be happy to consider us in future projects where we would add value as a collaboration partner.
- 2.2 Amplify the voices of animal supply chain workers in human-focussed campaigns that receive media and industry attention and consideration. 100% of human-focussed campaigns should feature the voices of animal supply chain workers.
- 2.3 Offer new data on wellbeing and rights for fashion supply chain workers to the industry, by collaborating with at least 1 group on a research-driven campaign.

3. Begin the transformation of fashion

The work of our first two objectives will help us to begin creating change in the fashion industry, even if it's small initially. In the movement towards a total ethics system, small steps must be taken.

Collective Fashion Justice will work further to inspire and secure positive change from within the fashion industry for all those treated unjustly under it.

- 3.1 Offer information and consultation on material ethics to brands. CFJ should provide such information to at least 10 brands that switch at least some products to the use of animal free, ethical and sustainable materials instead.
- 3.2 Urge brands to stop using unjust materials. CFJ must produce at least 1 project addressing an unjust material and promoting alternatives to it.
- 3.3 Make totally ethical fashion more accessible across different backgrounds and lifestyles. CFJ should consult with a diverse range of consumers in regards to access barriers, and build an initiative based on this consultation and relevant learnings.

Our foundations for success

As a new and growing organisation, we must build strong foundations which will allow our work to grow, and ensure we can continually transform fashion into a total ethics system. We will do this by:

1. Engaging with a diverse range of members of the public through all our initiatives.
2. Producing effective and thoughtful social and digital content, shown through our ability to deeply connect with industry members, consumers and advocates from a range of social justice movements relevant to our cause. This content will be successful because of the design, voice, and often unique or little known information and data shared through these.
3. Building an empowered, passionate, satisfied and motivated collective of people who work with us, whether in a volunteer or paid role. These positive feelings will be measured through anonymous surveying of those working with Collective Fashion Justice.
4. Obtaining the funds for at least 1 part-time employee, as well as 3 paid freelancers.
5. Continually researching effective activism to better our efforts.
6. Holding ourselves accountable to our goals, and sharing our successes and failures with our community. By sharing our strategic plan and an annual review of our work online, we ensure this transparency.

Closing message from the Director

Faced with the reality of our fashion system today - full of slaughtered and hurting non-human animals, suffering and exploited humans, and pillaged, dying ecosystems - a total ethics fashion system may seem unattainable. Indeed, there is a great deal of work to be done, but there too are a great deal of people willing to put in this work, who are already advocating for a better future.

Collective Fashion Justice is certain that by bringing groups and individuals together, we can strengthen the movement for a just fashion future, and diminish the amount of suffering existing today, as we reach for our ultimate vision. There is no time more important than now to stand together for this better future, as we face the reality that there may not be so much future left for humanity and many non-human animals, without substantial change.

I am proud to begin the work at Collective Fashion Justice, underpinned by the manifesto brought forward in my 2021 book, Sub-Human. I know that one day, there will be no need for terms like 'ethical fashion', because there will be no alternative. Justice and total ethics will be inherent to the fashion system of the future, which recognises it exists in a finite planet, full of individual, sentient beings who have free, happy lives that should never be otherwise.

With your support, we can make it happen. It will only happen when we band together.

- Emma Håkansson

Collective Fashion Justice

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