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**PRESS RELEASE**

20th June 2019

**THE BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL HOST FASHION FORUM, A THOUGHT LEADERSHIP EVENT FOCUSED ON INVESTING IN THE FUTURE**

The British Fashion Council (BFC) concluded the fifth annual BFC Fashion Forum on Tuesday with a key note talk from Edward Enninful OBE, Editor in Chief, British Vogue and Gwyneth Paltrow, CEO & Founder, goop. The event was expanded this year to run over to two days allowing for the second day of the event to focus on Positive Fashion, a key stream of work for the BFC. The overarching theme for this year’s event was ‘Investing in the future’ with content co-curated by innovation consultancy, Current Global, designed to encourage conversation around everything from business growth to sustainability.

BFC Fashion Forum is an annual think tank and thought leadership event that brings together industry leaders from fashion, investment and technology to collectively debate and share knowledge. The event showcases businesses with high growth potential and encourages business connections to generate investment opportunities through networking between the curated list of individuals in design, investment, finance and technology alongside the broader fashion community of digital influencers, entrepreneurs and lawyers. This highly curated network takes time out of their businesses to join the conversation about how to shape the industry going forward.

From international expansion and changing business models to technological advances; the topics of day one included ‘Building the next big British brand’, ‘How data and experience are transforming retail’, ‘How new business models are affecting culture’, ‘Working smart, not hard: Driving efficiency in the supply chain’, ‘Managing challenges and driving growth’, ‘Investing in innovation’. Day two focused on Positive Fashion and included topics such as, ‘The role of AI for sustainable supply chains’, ‘Designing for circularity’, ‘Moving the needle: Creating a fair supply chain’, ‘How female leaders can thrive’ and ‘Where sustainable innovation is needed’.

BFC Fashion Forum is hosted by Stephanie Phair, Chairman, British Fashion Council, Caroline Rush CBE, CEO, British Fashion Council and Sian Westerman, President, BFC Business Pillar and BFC Fashion Trust co-chair and is comprised of a series of panel discussions, brainstorms and workshops with speakers which included **Chris Morton,** Lyst, **Christopher Wylie,** H&M, **Edward Enninful OBE,** British Vogue **Elizabeth Paton,** NY Times, **Emma Grede**, Good American, **Gwyneth Paltrow,** goop **Henrietta Rix & Orlagh McCloskey,** Rixo, **Ian Pattison,** Google, **Jo Ellison,** Financial Times, **Jo Malone CBE**, Jo Malone, **Jocelyn Wilkinson,** Burberry, **John McPheters,** Stadium Goods, **Michael Beutler,** Kering, **Nick Molnar,** Clearpay, **Paul Dillinger**, Levi’s, **Stuart Ford,** The Woolmark Company, **Susanne Tide-Frater,** FARFETCH and **Roland Mouret,** Roland Mouret.

The BFC has published two new reports on the fashion industry that were distributed at the BFC Fashion Forum 2019 which are available to download below.

[**Direct-to-Consumer: A New Model for British Fashion?**](https://www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk/uploads/files/1/Direct%20to%20Consumer.pdf)

[**How to Scale Designer Fashion Businesses**](https://www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk/uploads/files/1/How%20to%20Scale%20Designer%20Fashion%20Businesses.pdf)

**Key findings from the two days included:**

**Brand & Community**

Defining your brand values and ingraining them into your business is more important than ever – particularly when looking for investment. The customer is even more discerning, unpicking and understanding what the customer really wants and having dialogue with them is key. It’s important to involve customers in your marketing and product development. If they are part of the process, they will love the product even more.

**The Retail Mix**

The Highstreet isn’t dead, translating the brand from online to physical stores is more important than ever. Brands must focus on store experience rather than just the transaction; customers want a physical space to engage with brands. Direct to consumer has seen a lot of growth recently and has built a number of businesses quickly. However, don’t rule out wholesale – with a good partner it can generate valuable brand awareness.

**Culture**

In the early days it is important to co-create culture with your team and adopt a co-created code, it can’t be a mandate – that is how you get your employees to buy in. Workplaces need to adapt so they work for everyone. Workplaces need to make everyone feel included – a diverse workforce will equal a better representation of the customer. Diversity is not just for marketing and PR it should be across the whole business and represented by the team businesses employ.

**Change**

The industry is responsible for making a change. Fashion is great at storytelling and we should use the platform we have to educate. The younger audience is key – we need to listen to them and give them what they want. There is so much to do but bigger brands can help make changes that smaller brands can benefit from. Act now, don’t wait.

**Positive Fashion**

Positive fashion and sustainability initiatives are an imperative from an ecological and consumer stand point. The case is being made for the circular economy and while there is a way to go there are many initiatives exploring how to effect meaningful change. The Fashion industry needs to come together as a whole, with the largest companies driving the initiative – self regulation and incentives for good actions are preferable to legislation which might not deliver the right outcome

The British Fashion Council would like to thank event partners, Clearpay, Current Global, DHL, The Bicester Village Shopping Collection, The Ned and The Woolmark Company and our masterclass and workshop hosts, ConsenSys, Fashion For Good, Accenture, Powerfront, Quibit, Shopify, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Innovate UK and Verisium. Thanks goes to the BFC Fashion Trust for curating the closing talk.

**The Innovation Space curated by Current Global:** CLO Virtual Fashion, CoGo Connecting Good, Heuritech, Hologrm, MERCAUX, MOBIRY, OBSESS, Powerfront Inc, QUBIT, Reflaunt, Shopify, Social Vend, SYTE and Verisium

**Fashion Forum 2019 Topics and Speakers**

**Opening Keynote**

Victor Luis, CEO, Tapestry, Inc. in conversation with Jo Ellison, Fashion Editor, Financial Times

**Building the Next Big British Brand**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Sian Westerman, Senior Adviser, Rothschild & Co and President of Business and Investment Pillar, British Fashion Council

David Belhassen, Founder & Managing Partner, Neo Investment

Frederic Court, Managing Partner, Felix Capital

Karen McCormick, Chief Investment Officer, Beringea LLP

**Working Smart, Not Hard: Driving Efficiency in the Supply Chain**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Lauretta Roberts, Managing Director & Editor-in-Chief, The Industry London

Alex Valdmann, Creative Director, Rapha

Laura Culligan, Director of Innovation, Strategy & Operations, Burberry

**Keynote**

Jo Malone CBE, Founder & Creative Director, Jo Loves in conversation with Rachel Arthur, Co-Founder & Chief Innovation Officer, Current Global

**Blockchain Applications for the Creative Economy - Presented by ConsenSys**

Masterclass

Vanessa Grellet, Executive Director, ConsenSys

**The People Puzzle: How New Business Models Are Affecting Culture**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Moira Benigson, Founder, The MBS Group

Chris Morton, CEO, Lyst

Garbhan O’Bric, Group President, Ridley Scott Creative Group

**Driving Loyalty Through One-to-One Personalisation - Presented by Qubit**

Workshop

Leah Anathan, Chief Marketing Officer, Qubit

Michael Manby, Team Lead, Qubit

**Current Global: Investing in Innovation**

Presentation

Rachel Arthur, Co-Founder & Chief Innovation Officer, Current Global

**Love the Way you Pay – Starting up a Fashion Payment Platform – Presented by Clearpay**

Masterclass

Nick Molnar, Founder & CEO, Afterpay (Clearpay)

**How Luxury Leaders like Gucci Deliver High-End Customer Experience Online - Presented by Powerfront**

Hadar Paz, CEO, Powerfront

**Business Success Stories – Managing Challenges & Driving Growth**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Rosanna Falconer, Brand Consultant and Co-Founder, FashMash

Clare Hornby, Founder & Creative Director, ME+EM

Henrietta Rix & Orlagh McCloskey, Co-Founders, RIXO

Misha Nonoo, CEO & Creative Director, Misha Nonoo

**The Store of One: How Data and Experience are Transforming Retail**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Maghan McDowell, Innovation Editor, Vogue Business

Gareth Pope, General Manager, Lululemon EMEA

Ross Bailey, CEO, AppearHere

Susanne Tide-Frater, Chief Consultant Augmented Retail, Farfetch and Browns

**Closing Keynote**

John McPheters, Co-CEO & Co-Founder, Stadium Goods in conversation with Liz Bacelar, Co-Founder & CEO, Current Global

Day Two

**Sustainable FashionRoundtable by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Innovate UK**

Roundtable

Lynda Petherick, Head of Retail, Accenture UKI

Alison Robinson, Director of Corporate Affairs, NERC

Tom Fiddian, Creative Industries Lead, Innovate UK

**Emma Grede, Co-Founder & CEO, Good American in conversation with Funmi Fetto, Contributing Editor, British Vogue**

In Conversation

**Designing for Circularity**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Kirsty McGregor, Deputy Editor, Drapers

Christopher Raeburn, Creative Director of RÆBURN and Global Creative Director of Timberland

Francois Souchet, Lead, Make Fashion Circular, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Stuart Ford, General Manager, Western Hemisphere, The Woolmark Company

**Moncler Case Study: Improving Loyalty and Value with Blockchain – Presented by Verisium**

Masterclass

Eldar Khayretdinov, Co-Founder, Verisium   
Vadim Kostomarov, Co-Founder, Verisium

**The Future of Circular Fashion: Assessing the Viability of Circular Business Models - Presented by Fashion For Good and Accenture**

Masterclass

Brittany Burns, Strategy Lead, Fashion For Good

Daniel Newton, Sustainability Consultant & Author, The Future of Circular Fashion: Assessing the Viability of Circular Business Models

Harry Morrison, Managing Director, Accenture Strategy & Sustainability

**Roland Mouret and Arch & Hook Talk Sustainable Solutions in the Fashion Industry**

In Conversation

Roland Mouret, Creative Director, Roland Mouret

Sjoerd Fauser, CEO & Founder, Arch & Hook

**The Role of Technology for Sustainable Business**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Liz Bacelar, Co-Founder & CEO, Current Global

Christopher Wylie, Research Director, H&M

Thomas Berry, Director of Sustainability, Farfetch

**Moving the Needle: Creating a Fair Supply Chain**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Sarah Kent, Senior Correspondent, The Business of Fashion

Jocelyn Wilkinson, Responsibility Programme Director, Burberry

Mary Creagh, Member of Parliament for Wakefield & Chair, Environmental Audit Committee

Michael Beutler, Sustainability Operations Director, Kering

**Levi’s on the Promises and Perils of Sustainability**In Conversation

Moderator: Elizabeth Paton, European Styles Correspondent, The New York Times

Paul Dillinger, Head of Global Product Innovation, Levi Strauss & Co

**Current Global: Where Sustainable Innovation is Needed**

Panel Discussion

Claire Bergkamp, WW Sustainability & Innovation Director, Stella McCartney

Ian Pattison, Head of Cloud, Google

Maria McClay, Senior Industry Head, Luxury Fashion, Google

Rachel Arthur, Co-Founder & Chief Innovation Officer, Current Global

**How Female Leaders Can Thrive**

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Kenya Hunt, Deputy Editor, ELLE

Chantal Khouiery, Chief of Culture, Value Retail

Sharmadean Reid, Founder & CEO, BeautyStack and WAH Nails

Sian Westerman, Senior Adviser, Rothschild and Co & President of Business and Investment Pillar, British Fashion Council

**Closing Keynote in collaboration with BFC Fashion Trust**

Gwyneth Paltrow, CEO & Founder, goop in conversation with Edward Enninful OBE, Editor-in-Chief, British Vogue

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**ABOUT BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL**

The British Fashion Council (BFC) was set up in 1983 to promote British fashion internationally and co-ordinate this promotion through fashion weeks, exhibitions and showcasing events. The BFC now supports designers beginning at college level and extending to talent identification, business support and showcasing schemes to help British designer businesses develop their profiles and business globally and promote British fashion and its influential role in Britain and London. The BFC Colleges Council offers support to students through its Foundation, BA and MA scholarships, links with industry through design competitions and Graduate Preview Day. Talent identification and business support schemes include BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund, BFC/GQ Designer Menswear Fund supported by JD.com, Inc. and NEWGEN which includes womenswear, menswear and accessories. The BFC also runs and owns charities including the BFC Fashion Arts Foundation, the BFC Fashion Trust and the BFC Education Foundation. Showcasing initiatives and events include London Fashion Week, London Fashion Week Men’s, LONDON show ROOMS, International Fashion Showcase, London Fashion Week Festival and the annual celebration of creativity and innovation in the fashion industry: The Fashion Awards.

**The Ned:** Set in the former Midland Bank building, The Ned was designed by Sir Edwin 'Ned' Lutyens in 1924. A collaboration between Sydell Group and Soho House & Co, the space includes ten restaurants, 250 bedrooms channeling 1920s and 1930s design, a range of men’s and women’s grooming services and ‘Ned’s Club’, where members have access to a rooftop pool, gym, spa, hammam and a late-night bar & lounge in the original vault.

**ABOUT CURRENT GLOBAL:** Current Global is an innovation consultancy transforming how fashion and retail brands intersect with technology. Its expertise is in driving the use of relevant innovations for both sustainability and the connected customer, tapping into its global community to power new strategies and game-changing results. Current Global is based in London, New York and Tokyo, and works with brands including British Fashion Council, Burberry, Google, Gucci, Mulberry, Swarovski, Shiseido, Tiffany & Co and more.