

IN DEFENSE OF SLOW

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Course “Hållbar affärs-och produktutveckling”

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Technology has helped in a lot of aspects of our lives, from paying bills online to keeping in touch with old friends, but sometimes it all gets overwhelming and it's easy to ask, “do our lives ever slow down?” Enter the **slow movement**, a cultural shift towards making time to slow down. The movement's proponents are convinced that our speedy lives are destroying our health, families and communities. But slowing down isn't just about turning your mobile off during dinner, it's about a holistic approach to your whole lifestyle, from how you travel to what you eat and wear¹.

Slow Travel

One of the main components of slow travel is taking the time to be a part of local culture and connect with the people. Slow travel advocates spending time in one place, often in rental villas where travelers can easily fall into pace with everyday life of the local culture.

A common way to experience the local surroundings and culture is through the program, which stands for “Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms,” allows travelers to spend time working on an organic farm, giving back to the local community and being part of a culturally authentic environment (Brones, 2010).

Slow Cities

It's not just individuals taking steps to slow down - cities are doing their part as well. “Cittaslow” is an international network of more than 120 cities that have adopted a common set of goals to improve residents' way of life. The slow cities movement started in Italy in 1999 when Paolo Saturnini chose to keep his town of Chianti, in Tuscany, small and protect local business, and it has spread from there. Now a worldwide success, “Cittaslow” towns all commit to working towards over 50 goals and principles that will improve local life, evident in the movement's official slogan, “International Network of Cities where living is easy.” Taking ideals of the slow food movement, slow cities put a focus on sustainable agricultural practices, conservation of and support for traditional artisan products, hospitality programs, historic preservation, and educational programs for all ages (Brones, 2010).

Slow Food and Slow Fashion

Who has at least once ever heard the word “slow food”? I guess almost everyone on this planet. Thanks to the Italian Carlo Petrini founder of the Slow Food Movement in 1986, today other words such as “slow design” and “slow fashion” are commonly used in everyday language and in every dictionary.

Slow Food links pleasure and food with awareness, responsibility and defending biodiversity in our food supply by opposing the standardization of taste, defends the

¹ Brones A, “Be Still My Beeping Crackberry: In Defense of Slow”. January 19, 2010.

need for consumer information and protects cultural identities tied to food. It has spawned a wealth of other slow movements such as “*slow design*” and “*slow fashion*”². So slow in this context means designing, producing, consuming and living better (Fletcher, 2007). This is the approach in which designers, buyers, retailers and consumers are more aware of the impact of products on workers, communities and ecosystem³. At the core of the sustainability is a requirement that we make our systems of wealth creation less dependent on resource use. This way of thinking, it is of course linked to fashion too. Before talk about “*slow fashion*”, it seems logical to talk first about the expression “*fast fashion*” which defines the today’s textile and clothing industry. It’s fast in production-tracking sales with electronic tills and just in time manufacturing which can turn a sample or a design sketch in a finished garment just in 10-20 hours (Fletcher, 2007). Yet the fabric in fast fashion is no quicker to make or use than any other garment. It takes just as long to be spun, knitted, woven, cleaned, bleached, dyed, printed cut and sewn. The expression fast fashion is not really about speed, but greed: selling more and also making more money. Short lead times and cheap clothes are only made possible by exploitation of labour and natural resources (Fletcher, 2007).

At the core of low fashion is the idea of balance. Newness and innovation are represented, as is long-term stability. Slow fashion combines these layers and includes products that are designed for rapid imaginative change and symbolic fashion expression as well as those designed for material durability and emotional engagement (Fletcher, 2008).

Yet garments designed with the slow fashion concept, are still mass-produced, but they are done so in supplier factories that pay living wages and maintain high standards. Slow Fashion can be our own customized dress reworked from one bought for \$5 to one for \$700 which might be a handmade jackets crafted from clothing factory scraps.

The phrase “Slow Clothing” appeared in a December 2006⁴ essay by Sharon Astyk, a writer who lives on a small farm in upstate New York, outlined in forceful language a program of independence from the multibillion-dollar clothing industry and “its exploitation of poor people ... toxic pesticide use and the inhumane treatment of animals.” Ms. Astyk challenged US households “to create a single outfit for every man, woman, and child that is homemade. Slow Fashion can be defined by what it is - durable, made from recycled or organic materials, and made by someone paid a “living wage” (Holt, 2009). It is also about culture’s time (of the value of traditions and wisdom) as well as the more common timeframes of fashion and commerce (Fletcher, 2008).

² Fletcher K, “*Ecologist*”. June 2007

³ Fletcher K, “*Sustainable Fashion and Textiles*”. 2008 Hearst scan UK

⁴ Holt T, in “*The Christian Science Monitor*”. February 10, 2009.

Slow Fashion: the Italian reality

Based and born in Turin the brand "*Slow fashion - 100% Italian Passion*"⁵ characterizes the Italian spirit of artisan products in fashion. These will show off the certificates for the design and production in Italy, as well as the fact that the method of implementation is entirely handmade and industrial. Behind the work of artisans, true ambassadors of Made in Italy, there are manual skills and insights stylistic innovation, expertise, and taste so often handed down from shop to shop through the generations. Those with this mark will be new clothes for consumers who are looking for a promise of exclusivity.

"*REALE*"⁶ is instead the name of the project born thanks to Camilla Giacomini - designer and woman-product - and Daniele Scaboro - agent / representative of fabrics and clothing accessories of high quality. The clothes although innovative, are not subject to passing trends, but contrary they have a clear identity that does not get lost with time.

In a time when "Made in Italy is celebrated opportunistically by many entrepreneurs, the brand offers a real Italian product, sewn in Italy, using only Italian fabrics, environmentally sustainable and innovative (such as bamboo , modal, lyocell and seaweed) or noble as silk and cashmere.

"*Re-REALE*" is for recycling and highlights a particular focus on the environment. With clippings of our clothes and others the creative couple, makes little accessories and gadgets. This idea stems from the desire not to waste anything, not to escape so lightly what we have, ensuring different screw everything and reducing therefore the concern dump invades Earth. Their thought is to look at "old" things with new eyes, learning to transform them and offering a product that possesses a history and which contains memories that can continuously incorporate new ones. Even the store is furnished respecting this idea. Camilla and Diego have, in fact, used furniture and antiques with the goal of promoting non-vintage and so but - again - how many "lives" can be objects. "*REALE*", as a new consumer would expect from a brand of clothing, in addition to quality products, offers a substantial overall consistency in behavior. The average customer is no longer passive as before, is mature, competent, demanding, critical, he wants to be hunter trends. He must not only have a simple finished product in his hands, he must feel part of the history and the project. How the consumers can actively feels participant in this process? They can design and propose a model that, if it is in tune with *REALE* style, will be produced, not only for those who have proposed, but also for other customers. Moreover, the garments proposed can be personalized by making changes and choosing the fabric. The customer will also participate in many art exhibitions that take turns into "*REALE*" space and that promotes young artists which have the same "*REALE*"'s style.

⁵ www3.lastampa.it/moda. April 14, 2010

⁶ <http://it.reale-slowfashion.com>

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