

Synthetic Fibers in Fashion

When synthetic fibers were first introduced to the public they were perceived as innovative and very much creative. Synthetic fibers came at a much cheaper price than organic fibers. They were extremely durable and appeared to be better than organic fibers. The production of textiles could be done at a lower expense and much faster. One very famous high-end designer who used synthetic fibers during the 1950s was Charles James. One particular garment that I can recall from one of his many exquisite collections is the “SWAN” evening dress. This dress was composed of transparent silk chiffon, silk satin, and stiff nylon tulle.

For a long time synthetic fibers were perceived in a positive way, but little did we know about the damages these synthetic fibers have on our environment and our health. The threat that synthetic fibers pose on our environment is the micro fibers that are released from these fabrics after being washed. These fibers eventually end up in large waterways such as the ocean. When these micro fibers reach the ocean they act as sponges that absorb pollutants. The fish end up eating them and become sick. When we consume fish we can develop health issues as well. Synthetic fabrics are non biodegradable, which means they do not decompose like natural fabrics. And for that reason they are burned instead which causes greenhouse gas emission. Unfortunately today we see synthetic fabrics mainly used in the fast fashion industry. They are cheaper, faster, and extremely disposable.

Since Chardonnets time we have seen an increase in the usage of synthetic fibers. They are used in almost all industries but mainly the fashion industry. They are still to this day extremely popular. It would be hard for the fashion industry to move away from synthetics, but not impossible. There are many up and coming fashion brands that have made it personal to move away from synthetics. Many have offered alternatives and reasons as to why we must turn away from synthetic fabrics. The upcoming generations are environmentally conscious and involved.

The “SWAN” Evening Dress By Charles James



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