

JEWELRY

SeeMe blends beauty, meaning in jewelry with a heart

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SeeMe heart jewelry

By STAFF REPORTS

MUSCAT, Oman Conscientious consumers are a niche market that luxury is largely ignoring, according to the founder of fair trade jewelry label SeeMe.

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Speaking at the Cond Nast International Luxury Conference on April 6, Caterina Occhio, founder/CEO of SeeMe, shared how her work on female economic empowerment with the European Commission and United Nations agencies led to her entry to the fashion industry. Seeing a void in the market for ethical merchandise that consumers would also want to wear, she founded SeeMe in 2013, employing survivors of violence to craft heart-shaped jewelry.

Have a heart

SeeMe offers jobs to women who are leaving shelters, allowing them stability through craftsmanship.

Inspired while on a mission in Tunisia, Ms. Occhio's efforts with SeeMe originated there.

As the company expands into new countries, such as Lebanon and Palestine, Ms. Occhio makes sure that the women making the pieces are reflected in the designs, incorporating elements that speak to their cultures.

While the fair trade line is focused on uplifting women, the founder said she does not advocate charity. From her point of view, charity is paramount in a crisis, but there needs to be outlets for at risk populations after the emergency subsides.



SeeMe jewelry

On the same note, she prefers happy, meaningful shopping over guilty purchases.

Over the past few decades, the seeds have been planted for consumers to think more about the people behind what they buy. For instance, Nike had a scandal in the 1990s when its child labor practices were exposed, while the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh also made shoppers reconsider where their clothing came from.

With this consumer focus, Ms. Occhio urged the industry to think about making things that are attractive, have meaning and that are also commercially viable.

Despite changes in behavior, today's consumers are as appreciative as ever of luxury's central pillars, but brands must continuously adapt and evolve their approach to demonstrate value, according to a new report by Positive Luxury.

Between a bevy of geopolitical issues and shifts in consumer behavior, the brands that succeed at securing value, without tarnishing their hard-won reputations, have protected their heritage by embracing quality, craftsmanship and storytelling pillars through modern strategy. Positive Luxury's "2017 Predictions Report" suggests that a willingness to engage on a personal level, capitalize on social media data and collaborate with content and delivery models, among other tactics, provides a recipe for future success ([see story](#)).

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