

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Stella McCartney stresses climate change in ongoing diverse video series

October 20, 2020



Stella McCartney is featuring climate change activists in a new series. Image Credit: Stella McCartney

By NORA HOWE

British fashion label Stella McCartney is amplifying the voices of BIPOC women on the topic of social and environmental change through her recent video series.

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In a time of political, social and environmental unrest, the brand's namesake founder and designer has partnered with "Mothers of Invention" podcast producer and co-host Thimali Kodikara to ignite a conversation surrounding gender, race and climate change through interviews with industry leaders. Ms. McCartney has been an environmental and social advocate for years, openly discussing and adopting ways in which people both in and outside the fashion industry can take significant steps towards positive social and environmental change.

"The series creates awareness and offers new insights on issues that concern BIPOC women. Just the making of the series points to a fashion industry that is more inclusive and kind," said Thoma Serdari, director of fashion & luxury MBA and professor at [NYU Stern](#).

"Sustainable is a word with a much broader meaning. It is refreshing to see Stella McCartney actively correcting its meaning by allowing the word to mean exactly what it means: a sustainable world is one that can continue existing in perpetuity without problems," she said. "To achieve this, we need to consider all sorts of challenges that make the world a hostile, unhealthy, and dangerous place and this includes human rights and social justice."

Women for change

The series deeply examines the issues that inspire these changes and amplifies the voices of women who advocate for this growth.

The first installment of the content series, which launched in September, introduced attorney and activist Tara Houska who has continuously been an advocate for Indigenous rights and against fossil fuels in North America throughout her career.

"Mothers of Invention" co-host Maeve Higgins speaks with Ms. Houska about how she became an environmental litigator, her involvement in the Dakota Access Pipeline protests and her experience demonstrating at Standing

Rock.

Native people are often the first community to experience the impact of climate change as pipelines run through their land.

"People heard about Indian people again," Ms. Houska says in discussing the benefits of the Dakota Access Resistance. "[They] recognized that we're still here, and that our lands are still greatly at risk that we are still dealing with disparate living conditions."

Stella x Mothers of Invention: Tara Houska

In the most recent installment of the series, Ms. McCartney and Ms. Kodikara introduced marine biologist, policy expert, author and New York native Dr. Ayana Johnson. As a marine biologist, Dr. Johnson has built a career on the foundation of conserving our oceans and developing nature-based solutions for combating global warming and rising sea levels.

Dr. Johnson is also the founder of the [Urban Ocean Lab](#) which cultivates rigorous, creative and practical climate policy for the future of coastal cities.

"One of the themes of our work with Urban Ocean Lab is figuring out what policy framework we need to deal with sea level rise and changes in extreme weather events," says Dr. Johnson. "To think about coastal ecosystems and how we can protect and restore them so they can protect us."

"We need a new framework to not just prevent the bad stuff but enable the good stuff," she says.

Dr. Johnson is developing and providing free and easily accessible resources for people to learn more about climate change, ocean conservation and ways they can help in the climate justice movement.

Stella x Mothers of Invention: Dr. Ayana Johnson

As a respected fashion industry leader, Ms. McCartney is leveraging her platform for the voices of women of color and encouraging individuals to consider where they want their industries, economies and communities to be in the future.

A lesson for luxury

While this series does not explicitly focus on fashion industry personnel, Ms. McCartney has brought a bigger conversation into her world. Climate change has been a theme for her eponymous British label in past campaigns, and continues to permeate the industry as brands have begun shifting their strategies with regards to social and environmental consciousness.

In 2019, Stella McCartney used its winter advertising as a call to arms for consumers to tackle the issue of climate change. Bringing to life the idea of protecting the planet, the brand filmed models sharing their take on the five things that could be done to save the world. Among the tips were tangible tactics such as using reusable bags, taking public transportation and forgoing paper coffee cups. The also shared ideas for improving the world such as "make love not war" and "be kind" ([see story](#)).

Stella McCartney is also one of the 32 fashion companies joining forces to tackle environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity restoration and ocean protection, seeking to scale up their individual efforts with common objectives.

Led by luxury group Kering, under the mandate of France's President Emmanuel Macron, the Fashion Pact launched during a G7 meeting in 2019. While each of the pact participants has their own environmental initiatives, the project aims to leverage strength in numbers to enact change through the private sector ([see story](#)).

"Questioning whether sustainability should be the pillar of a brand is like questioning whether we need oxygen to breathe," Ms. Serdari said. "The answer is obvious it focuses on long term gains as opposed to short term financial returns, which is what most fashion brands have been focusing on since the 1990s."