

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Chlo reveals foundational efforts toward social, environmental justice

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Members of Les Btisseuses collective lay bricks for Chlo's SS22 show seating structure. Image credit: Chlo

By NORA HOWE

French fashion house Chlo is showing the inspiration behind its collaboration with Les Btisseuses, a network of individuals committed to the promotion of eco-local materials and women builders, for the SS22 show.

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Les Btisseuses trains women refugees in ecological construction to help them integrate into society, and provides a way of introducing diversity into a male-dominated sector. To bring these efforts to light, the seating at Chlo's spring/summer 2022 show in Paris was constructed entirely by members of the collective.

Building blocks of justice

The Les Btisseuses collective was initiated by Eugnie Ndiaye with the goal of bettering the planet through social justice.

Prior to launching the project, Ms. Ndiaye has fought for inclusive planning policies that emphasize the value of citizens in the construction and transformation of space.

Through Les Btisseuses, she hopes to increase the skills of women in the environmentally-conscious construction sector, with a focus on utilizing Earth's raw materials.

Inspired by this mission, Chlo felt compelled to incorporate Les Btisseuses in its collection debut, and has released a short film unveiling the story.

Les Btisseuses is a collective that provides tools and skill-building to women refugees

The minute-long vignette opens on a group of five women. Shots of hands smoothing out clay material are met with shots of women combining various raw materials.

In a voiceover, Ms. Ndiaye recites a poem she wrote touching on themes of justice, empowerment and inclusivity.

"We will build walls, standing like trees without foundations," she says. "Rooted, we will shape walls."

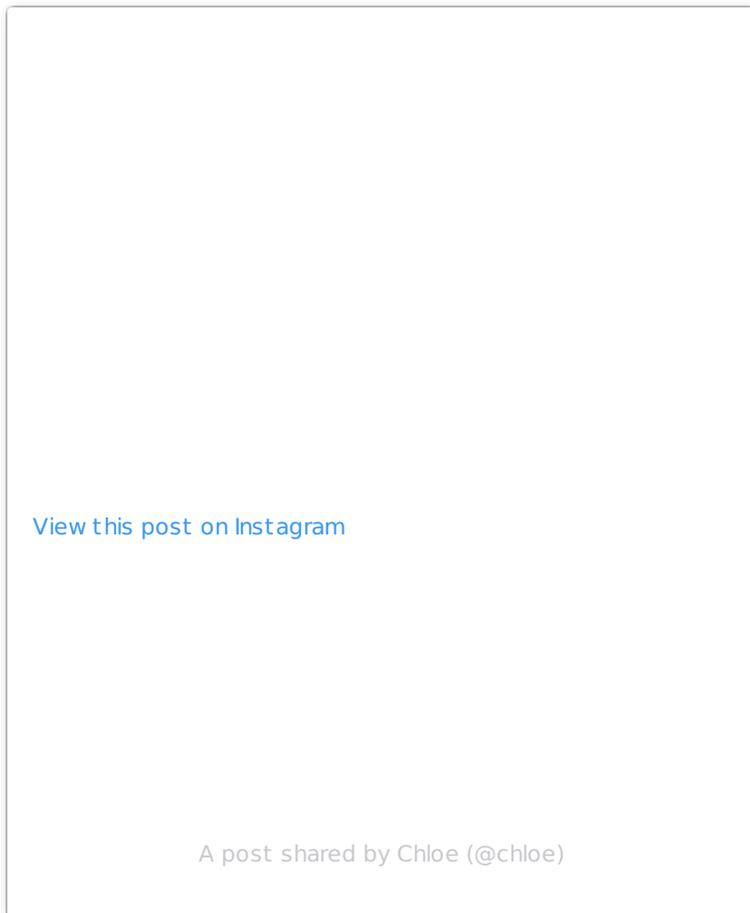
Viewers watch as these women draw up plans for the seating structure, blend raw materials and shape bricks.

"We will make walls with our own hands," Ms. Ndiaye says. "Our own tools and our own machines; on the march for real life wanderings."

A large crate of bricks sits near the Seine River, where Chlo's show took place. Close-up shots of the bricks being handed off one-by-one evoke a collaborative nature to the project and the overall mission of the collective.

The seating structure begins to take shape, as viewers watch the group placing bricks in the forefront of the video while the Notre-Dame Cathedral stands tall in the background.

Since appointing Gabriela Hearst as creative director in December 2020, the brand aims to be one of the most environmentally conscious luxury goods companies in the industry.



Ms. Hearst's first runway show for fall 2017 was produced to have as little an environmental impact as possible and, since then, her commitment to sustainability has grown stronger. The designer sources deadstock materials, opts for eco-friendly fabrics like linen and chooses recycled yarns whenever she can.

Chlo's new business model hinges on social sustainability with a particular focus on the advancement and empowerment of women, in addition to environmental responsibility ([see story](#)).

Encouraging women

In celebration of International Day of the Girl on Oct. 11, Chlo introduced three beneficiaries of its UNICEF program Girls Forward in Jordan.

The "Girls Forward in Jordan" film featured seven girls who share their thoughts about gaining digital skills and accessing the labor market. Launched in 2019, the Girls Forward initiative aims to advance gender equality through solutions developed for young girls to excel in the future workplace.

In 2019, Shiseido's Cl de Peau Beauté, in partnership with UNICEF, launched a philanthropic initiative "The Power of Radiance" as a vehicle to recognize the efforts of individuals who have taken action to drive positive change in their communities through education, skills development and empowerment.

This year, Cl de Peau Beauté's "Power of Radiance" program invites educators, parents and children to learn more about the importance of STEM education and explore the STEM game ([see story](#)).

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