

ETHICAL FASHION SOCIALS 2011

March

UK Production Pioneers – A breakdown of the latest developments

DATE: Thursday 31st March 2011, 6.30 – 8.30pm

VENUE: 123 Bethnal Green Road, Shoreditch, London, E2 7DG

Ethical Fashion Forum present a discussion on the latest practices and developments in UK Manufacture. There will be focus on the recent debates held in the House of Lords by Baroness Young of Hornsey on Ethical Fashion.

An unmissable chance to be updated on the latest situation in ethical fashion – how industry, industry bodies and government are getting involved in the debate on UK manufacture.

Here at EFF we receive hundreds of requests for information per month, and during 2010 saw a rapid increase in those relating to producing in the UK. As highlighted in recent Dispatches, producing in the UK is by no means a guarantee on ethical or environmentally sound practices.

We invite all those producing, interested in producing, or supplying in the UK, or those just interested to join us in a conversation on the nature of the UK manufacture industry, how we can improve the sector and greater increase awareness and adoption of sustainable practices in the UK.

What happened:

Despite a last minute venue change, twice as many visitors attended the social than had RSVP'd. Around 40 people came to be informed of the latest events in Parliament introducing ethical fashion to the House of Lords. In March 2011 EFF Patron Baroness Lola Young led the first debate on ethical fashion in the House, highlighting fashion's importance as the 15th largest sector in the economy. She introduced some of the issues that are rife in the industry, but also some of the organisations that are leading and supporting fashion businesses that are changing lives for those within their supply chains. The majority of Social attendees were unaware of the Parliamentary debate or following All Parliamentary Party Group that followed in conjunction with London College of Fashion.

Main findings of the focus group:

EFF asked attendees to list what the UK manufacturing sector is doing well/right, poorly/wrong, whether a UK manufacturing body/label/community would be of most benefit to participants and what would its agenda be? Finally what recommendations made in the House of Lords would be most beneficial to your businesses of the participants?

Feedback given on what how the manufacturing sector was doing well highlighted: short lead times, supporting local employment and high quality production. However, clear feedback on what was poor about the manufacturing sector were a lack of technical skills and high capacity, difficulty to find manufacturers, lack of apprenticeship schemes and high production prices.

Participants all had a clear vision of what their ideal factory would include: transparent, with clear accreditation systems to back up claims of sustainability, which was flexible to different techniques and clients needs in terms of production.

“A body/community which would have the involved objective of 1) strengthening manufacturing specific skills available 2) empowering young designers to be competitive.” Anon focus group participant.

Participants clearly favoured Harold Tillman’s call for tax breaks for ethical fashion businesses, as the most beneficial recommendations for their business made at the House of Lords’ debate. Manufacturing co-operatives and apprenticeship schemes were both next in line as projects participants would like to be involved with.

“I love the idea of a manufacturer incubator and network for ethical out sourcing. Tax breaks for ethical [businesses] and UK manufacture is a must.” Anon focus group participant.

The APPG will take place biannually, the next in conjunction with MADE-BY later in 2011.

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Interested in the Ethical Fashion Social? See website for more information on how to become a Social Host. www.ethicalfashionforum.com/connect/socials

