



Season1-Episode4

Fashion in 2023

Journey Fashion

It is June 2023. Ellen, a young fashion designer, is getting ready for her online conference with her team working for a big fashion brand. For this purpose, she is wearing her old favorite black dress. Back in isolation time in 2020, when clearing and throwing out her boyfriend's ugly clothes was her only hobby and she hoped he would never realize – which worked out very well - she also found this dress again in the corner of her wardrobe.

Thanks god, since COVID-19 getting styled is much easier, she is thinking to herself. People around the globe started working from home more often. And therefore, do not need to be fully stylish dressed. Now new fashion trends are pantsuits with knee length pants, trendy scarfs and brooches. Everything nice a camera can capture during an online meeting.

But Ellen is quite sure, that most of her team members are actually wearing jogging pants during online meetings - while they only pretend to be always fancy dressed. But it is a taboo to ask. She decides to put her white silk neckerchief, perfectly matching the dress. The silk is made from rose leaves. One of the new sustainable materials the fashion industry uses recently.

Because consumption had changed. While customers were not able to shop fashion during isolation time in 2020 and now do not need to, because of working from home, people started thinking about what they really need and what brands they want to support. Ellen and her colleagues had to rediscover the real value of clothing. Their new motto is, less clothes but more soul, sustainable but extraordinary. In today's meeting they will be talking about the use of leather made from apple peels for their new collection, as the Oktoberfest is just around the corner.

Agnes:

Welcome to our podcast 2023, your window to the world beyond Covid-19. Today it's 21st of July 2020 and this is your host, Agnes Kunkel. Today the official cases worldwide count 14.700.055, confirmed global casualties are 611000. Our topic today is fashion in 2023 with our guest Sylvia Daun from Kismet Yoga style. Yoga has changed your life. After almost 20 years in the business, you started your own company and you wanted to put your ecological and human values into practice in a company with casual, sustainable, feel-good fashion for many yoginis and yogis. As a start, you took a teacher

apprenticeship in India. Today, Kismet yoga style produces fashion that inspires many people. Your products are produced in India and Portugal. Fair cooperation with suppliers is important to you. In addition to your entrepreneurial activities, you offer yoga and meditation seminars for companies when possible. Hello, Sylvia.

Sylvia:

Hello Agnes.

Agnes:

Thank you very much for being with us (laughs). Covid-19 has changed our lives dramatically and it will have long term effects. You are a yoga teacher and entrepreneur. Do you do Yoga more now in this time of social distancing and travel restrictions?

Sylvia:

To be honest, I do not practice more yoga than before. I had my regular practice every morning after getting out, like half an hour. For me, Covid time was so busy managing our online shop because of substantial growth of the online business. Thus, there was not more time for me to practice.

Agnes:

You are a special case. What about other people? I think I have heard, things like yoga and meditation are practiced more when people stay at home.

Sylvia:

Yes, that's my impression, too. In fact, many people faced fear and insecurity and yoga is a great tool to be you in a better way. I guess many people started with online courses because all the yoga schools were closed due to Covid-19. But it was my impression that online classes, were uploaded quite frequently for many people, who had no idea of yoga before. Covid was really pushing.

Agnes:

I started yoga one year ago. I had some male participants, who showed me some interesting posts, where yoga lessons were taught. And yes, now I practice, like you, half an hour after getting up. As we stood so long at home, how do you think this will affect our fashion ideas? As we heard the story about Ellen in the beginning, a young lady whos has changed her ideas about fashion in 2023.

Sylvia:

Yeah, I think we see fashion trends; since ten years fashion is getting more casual than it used to be before. And I think Corona is not making the trend, it's enhancing it. I think the time of formal fashion is over anyway. We want to be more comfortable in our everyday lives. Now it is even more in banking, where clerks are just a bit more casual than they used to before.

Agnes:

Is there a link that also many formal occasions were absent, like no weddings, no theatre and no parties? Typical reasons, especially for women to buy new and fashionable clothing.

Sylvia:

Yeah, I think that's just the time now, we don't have parties or weddings. We can dress more comfortable in our everyday life and it's accepted to be dressed more casually. We will enjoy even more to dress up occasionally. I think this Covid time will be over in a year and then in the next wedding I will enjoy to dress up (laughs).

Agnes:

You're saying it's a little bit bipolar. A part of the fashion is not so much fashionable, more relaxed, but maybe leisure can also be fancy.

Sylvia:

That's the fashion anyways. And I think fashion in the last 10, 20, 30 years, since the 80s, in fact became inspired more by sport. And I think it's a development over decades and now it's at its peak. People want to feel comfortable in their everyday life. I think the new beauty is that you have a relaxed phase. It's easier to look relaxed as well.

Agnes:

Well, maybe you have read that Siemens has announced for 140.000 employees to be free to stay three days in home office to work remotely. Do you think other companies will follow this trend?

Sylvia:

I hope so. I think it fits much more our modern lifestyle to work from home and not just from home. For sure, it's good to meet your colleagues in the office as well, but to have a more flexible working life than it used to be is also good.

Agnes:

When we work remote at home, no one will see us.

Sylvia:

Yeah, it's true. To be honest with you, I think if you work from home, it's good to establish a discipline. So for me, I would say I always wear a bit more relaxed clothing when at home. When I get stressed, I would not stop working in my pajamas.

Agnes:

That's great. Of course, I guess you are wearing kismet your Kismet Yoga style dress. But, do you think people see it as a liberation, not to be seen?

Sylvia:

So and so I guess. I think somehow it is a liberation. And I think it's quite convenient to have a comfortable dress code during the day. But on the other hand, you enjoy even more to dress up and to show off and to do display of your passion when you get out.

Agnes:

Well, we are doing this interview in our online teams' environment and we just see of each other the hair, the faces, maybe the shoulders. But we don't see the hands. We don't see the legs. What will this mean for fashion as, by the way, we are at home more often. But

in any moment, there is the chance to have a video conference with colleagues. What does this mean for make-up, glasses, hairstyle?

Sylvia:

Yeah, I think that's important. Anyway, I guess or what I see at the moment is that jewelry is getting bit more popular than it used to be and especially earrings, they are the new statement. And I think that's something nice when you present yourself in a video conference.

Agnes:

And what about scarves?

Sylvia:

Scarves, I think will always be in fashion so you can wear them or not. It's a question in what time, which fashion types you are in. Maybe when you're a little bit older, then maybe you can cover other parts (laughs).

Agnes:

What about perfume? You don't smell anything in video conferences.

Sylvia:

Yeah, but I think, the trend is that you don't smell like back in the 80s. When one had this feeling, oh God, when somebody passed by one either cannot stand it or it is kind of...yeah, fragrance shop. I think it's getting more natural. Perfume has become a kind of sensual travel, like visiting a spice market in Morocco. That's the kind of fragrances that you have.

Agnes:

You'll do it more for yourself, not to impress others.

Sylvia:

Yes, what I like is really natural, light fragrances.

Agnes:

Do I understand correctly, you are projecting that a more casual dress in the office will also arise from working remotely. You will wear a more comfortable clothing, that will change the outfit for the business, when you go to office.

Sylvia:

I think, I mean in Germany or especially in Frankfurt, when you see the banking staff style, they are not the main fashion city. I will say in other countries you can go in Birkenstock already. Maybe not when you're a lawyer, but in many industries, some employees are just doing business and procurement, the possibility that you can wear flip flops is higher. I mean, it's questionable, because Birkenstocks are of extremely comfortable style.

Agnes:

And what about the masks? I have heard in Hong Kong it's a fashion accessory.

Sylvia:

Yeah, it is and in Asian countries it is since many years an accessory. But I hope it will not become an accessory here because I like more seeing people smile. I hope we will see people smile in the streets again after Corona is over. For now, people wear it as a statement as well. You see it in the big fashion show, wearing masks that match you're the ones of your friends.

Agnes:

And with matching prints on the clothes. I would not be surprised to see things like this in the Western world, too.

Sylvia:

But I think it's just for a particular time. I think it may not be forever. In Asian countries, you can see it's a statement, like I said, since years, but they are crazy about fashion anyway. They do crazy fashion statements. I think we are not crazy enough for this kind of fashion.

Agnes:

Well, we'll see. What about men's fashion? In the story Ellen throws out her partner's clothes and he didn't even notice. Does it change for men's fashion?

Sylvia:

Yeah, I think for women it might be accepted not to wear a tie anymore. And you can be dressed in a shirt or just a jacket. Hence, I think for men it gets more casual as well.

Agnes:

Just a little bit more casual and relaxed.

Sylvia:

Yeah, I think for the men, they always say they want colors, but at the end they always go with dark blue or black (laughs).

Agnes:

We spoke about earrings are a big fashion statement. What about other accessories? We will see much less travelling, a business traveling especially, of course, holidays. I guess we will see a lot of holiday, but for economy reasons, for cost cutting, it looks like if business trips are strongly restricted as studies speak, of up to 50 percent. I guess that's not a big boost for suitcases, handbags, shoes and so one, which is important for men, by the way.

Sylvia:

Yeah. But I think if you travel 50 percent less, at the end, you might not need your coat and your shoes and your luggage. I think we need to wait. I cannot say if it has been affected, now, it is short period of time since the last few months. I don't know.

Agnes:

But these are very expensive items and maybe for saving money and costs. And I would not be surprised if the turnover sales volume is decreasing in this area.

Sylvia:

I'm not so sure about this because, as you say, they are very expensive, high quality products. So, I think even though it is just this idea of sustainability, I hope there will be a change that people buy more sustainable and qualitative. I'm not sure if it will have a bad impact in this industry.

Agnes:

You say, it's, you do not buy it so frequently. So, that will not change. Could you imagine that something completely new comes out of this period of lockdown as people are innovative: new materials, crazy cuts. The girl in the story, she has a rose silk scarf. I know bamboo fibers, but pedal rose, I haven't heard about it.

Sylvia:

Yeah, I mean, a lot of fibers, which are quite interesting as well. I think before Corona, there was already a lot on the markets, and I think it is good. I hope it will become more popular. For example, pineapple leaves are good for bags as well.

Agnes:

Yeah, you make fiber's out of pineapple.

Sylvia:

It is a bit like leather. Bamboo is a great material as well. It's all very sustainable. As soon as the consumers ask more frequently for sustainable materials, fashion is getting more sustainable. And other innovative things will show up. If it is sustainable, it will become more important and people be more aware of pollution and that we need to preserve our environment.

Agnes:

In your clothing, do you use new fibers?

Sylvia:

I mean, we use from our recycled polyester, which is made from pet bottles. The important thing about the fabric is, it doesn't look like plastic. It has a soft touch. Well, it's a high-tech material. And the other fabric I use is peach floss. There is one Austrian company, they make this fabric. And it's a great soft material, it consumes much less water than cotton.

Agnes:

It's from peaches?

Sylvia:

Yes, from the trees, from cellulose. I'm very much into this. For now, it's always complicated to work with a new fabric. But I'm looking at a moment when new fabrics are accessible and there is a lot going on in the market going.

Agnes:

We just talked about innovations, I have heard about a party suit or let's say a part of a suit where you have a hood over your head and the possibility to eat and to drink. But it's completely closed. I guess it goes down to the elbow and breast. Do you think this style of fashion is just a joke or could we compare it to neon, reflecting and funny clothing?

Sylvia:

Some might wear it, but it will not be a big fashion trend.

Agnes:

Sometimes I walk through the streets and I have visions. Much before I heard about this party suit, that people maybe for the reason of, of course, to filter out particles and germs at the moment of the Covid. But even this will help to filter pollution. Maybe in the coming years to come, we will have rooms which are highly filtered and clean and no pollution. And so inside, maybe in malls or certain restaurants or maybe at home. And when you leave the in-doors, maybe in a city like New Delhi or a place in China, where it's really polluted, people start to wear fashion like this to avoid polluted air.

Sylvia:

That might happen. Delhi, a place I know quite well and it's really badly polluted. I myself had allergic reactions in my face that caused kind of burning on the skin. Many people show these symptoms. There's a huge movement now in India to change it, people are really fed up with that. I really think they will change production. And as I produce in India, I produce with a company which is completely sustainable in dyeing and in printing – in everything they do. Awareness is growing. Last time when I was in India, they even started to separate the garbage in official places. India takes it now to another level. In the beginning, ten years ago, it was completely different.

Agnes:

That's great to hear. I have been to India and throwing away everything in the streets was quite common.

Sylvia:

I mean, coming from a place in Germany where we had a lot of steel industry in the 80s. There was no river not polluted. And now you can go for a swim in the rivers because it is cleaned up. I think this is going to happen in India.

Agnes:

To talk about another problem, we had lockdowns and restrictions and it has been said that the fashion collections for spring and summer may have to be destroyed. It cannot be donated, as this would cause a lot of tax problems. And when you donate everything, the market might collapse. Hence, we will see a lot of destroyed fashion items over the summer or this fall. In average, statistics say a person in Germany buys over 60 items per year and throws out around 60 fashion items a year. I think you don't share this habit. Will we see a change? Will we see more responsibility for the people producing the fashion we are wearing?

Sylvia:

I hope we will change our mindsets and we will buy more quality and buy less, as well as more long-lasting things. The biggest problem in fashion is the fast fashion. And they produce in such a minor quality you cannot even recycle. They would not serve as a cleaning rag. You cannot use this fashion for anything. I remember, 30 or 40 years ago, we bought more quality, long lasting things. But this fast fashion is new. And people buy more, let's say, 5 shirts instead of one. You wear them once and then throw them out. Its causing a lot of damage to our environment. People need to understand this problem. It is bad for the people who produce it, and for the environment. I think, textile it's one of the biggest polluters in the world. I think, something that has a value to us, needs to have a price. And when something is cheap, it does not have a value. You need to be more conscious. More brands are becoming really successful now, when they take the sustainable path.

Agnes:

Let's do a quick recap for our listeners. We will see earrings (laughs). We will have an enhanced trend to a more sports-sided motivated fashion style.

Sylvia:

Yeah, inspiration comes from all kind of sports.

Agnes:

Fashion will be more comfortable. What we have once called a casual Friday, might be now the standard business clothing.

Sylvia:

And fashion shows stimulate an active lifestyle, so I think that is the trend drops of today.

Agnes:

No problems for shoes and handbags, even when we don't see them in the video conferences. Hopefully we are a conscious about what we are buying. Maybe new fibers, more fibers from new materials and a lot of fun when dressing up after Covid is gone (laughs). Maybe in half a year we can talk again and some of our predictions may have come true. Thank you very much, Sylvia for your time and having you with us on the podcast.

Sylvia:

Thanks for having me, Agnes, with pleasure.