

SHARING RING ECO NO MY

WHO
CARES
DISCUSSING
WITH
PANOPLY

Think Twice loves to meet people that are at the origin of beautiful initiatives. In that way being able to contribute to improve our way to consume and propose alternative to buy less and throw out less, we've made very good advances. Emeraude Nicolas has wished to discuss about it with Emmanuelle Brizay, founder of Panoply, Nora Gherbi, founder of Who cares and an ex-student from Parson's School, Camila Abisambra.

“Having more fun and being more «responsible». We had in mind to reconcile these two ideas as we felt there was a general frustration in the market.”

Emeraude Nicolas: Think Twice loves to meet people who are at the forefront of beautiful initiatives. This to contribute to the improved way of consumption and to propose alternative to buy less and throw out less, we have made great advances in this respect.

Emmanuelle Brizay: Ingrid Brochard and me launched Panoply 18 months ago with the objective of making shopping for fashion more fun and more “responsible”, to reconcile these two motion to fight against a certain kind of frustration: fashion that is often too expensive and that passes very quickly. It became complicated to get pleasures, to follow the desires that brands give us. As we approach 40, we have proved that the frustration of never having enough or never having what we need is always present. The objective of Panoply is to reconcile the need for something new and the desire to wear certain clothing while being more responsible. You should know that a garment, a dress for example, will be worn only one to seven times, which is very little. Fashion is the second most polluting industry in the world, information that is not known by a big part of the public. Our job is not to be negative, but to find the good message which brings about an awareness. The solution proposed by Panoply is to share through a clothing rental service. For that, we have built a wardrobe of more than 4000 pieces that we can borrow, whether its for an evening, or more regular for personal or professional occasions. This to fill the desire to always have something new, to consume more, but doing it in a responsible way and with quality clothing.

EN: Nora could you present your project Who Cares to us?

Nora Gherbi: Who cares, was born in NY in 2008. My objective was to merge my passion which are humanitarian and philanthropic work to my job which is to advise the expansion of international corporations. Corporate social responsibility or CSR, always felt a bit blurry and not properly adressed. I moved to New York right before the 2008 financial crisis. My office window was facing the Lehman Brothers headquarters; I had a front row seat to the collapse of the financial system. Lehman Brothers went bankrupt they moved out and (just a few days later) another financial institution moved in with new traders only to repeat the same practices. That's when I decided to research corporate institutions. That research led me to create and promote a new model and corporate culture based on notions such as caring and empathy. These notions are central the corporate role, I advocate for: the Chief Care Officers. WHO CARES!? also promotes good corporate practices, in hopes that they are replicated.

EB: It's true that the word responsibility has a connotation of a task, very negative, but the word caring feels more voluntary and like a bigger concept. It can encompass the clients, the providers, the employers, the environment, etc...

NG: That's how Who cares was born, with the objective to give tools and promote practices that help executives of all industries in making more conscious caring choices that are good for business and also for the environment and consumers. Fashion is an industry with many « wrong » practices so it became one of our priority focus. We put a series of campaigns into motion, and the first is focused on Fashion. We launched the campaign during the Fashion Tech Summit organized by More Dash. The campaign is called Dress Like You Care and it invites, designers, influencers and consumers to take part in a movement, centered around a manifesto - the campaign provides easy practices to apply on a daily basis.

EB: Don't forget about the notion of immediate comfort despite the desire to honor our values and to be in total harmony with our principles. We are sensitive beings, and no one wants the drama of Rana Plaza to happen again. But a lot of people also want to buy their t-shirts for the least expensive price possible or to take a car instead of public transportation, or to drink coffee in a disposable cup rather than carrying a thermos all day. People don't want to think every minute or to feel perpetually guilty. So the challenge is to really reconcile our main principles with every little decision we make every minute.

NG: It's true, the playful side could help. The idea is to simplify life of those who wish to be more caring by giving them easy tools, like for example vintage shopping. In Paris it's very easy to find quality vintage pieces which have a positive impact because it allows to recycle and repair instead of throwing away, to make alterations, etc... it's truly easy.

EB: A lot of people throw out clothing because it's stained or they don't know how to fix it. Now, they can come to your house and take the garment for cleaning and repair and the being it back to you. Service are evolving a lot. On the contrary, it's a shame that brands are still very cautious in regard to used clothing, also called the second hand. Hermes developed a collector service, but only with accessories. Otherwise, they're very strong with recycling with Petit H. But I don't see any of the other big groups because they're afraid of degrading their image and to lose control of the counterfeit. We can understand that. In luxury watchmaking the products get more value as time passes, and that can make us think. This is due to the fact that there is no concept of season, that there are fewer products, and that the turnout is slower. It's true that if one had, as we do in fashion, five hundred references that come out every three months, that would not be possible.

Camila Abisambra: One of the things that I love at Panoply is the idea of a shared economy because of the values like solidarity, of course you hear terrible stories of people who destroy garments and trash Airbnbs but for the most part people do to take good care of things because they know they are sharing these items with other people.

“The word « responsibility » has more of a notion of a chore, it's very negative, whilst the word « caring » is more voluntary and larger. ”

EB: To be honest I feel that there still needs for some education, i also feel that the expectation of the clients are extremely high and sometimes disconnected from the value they are ready to pay. Customers are going to pay for a dress they are renting for four days, about 15% of its retail price and it includes delivery/collection, dry cleaning so it's not expensive but they expect the piece to come really as brand new and i understand that, we try and we really pay our best effort in quality control but sometimes we see people come in and they will try on a dress that is 2000 euros and they wont even take their shoes off so i feel that people expect a lot and yet the responsibility of that item, being well taken care of by them ,is not fully integrated ,but some are super careful.

Many people we've talked to expect the millennials to be the first clientele of rental unfortunately thats not what we see, because young clients, people in their 20's, have been brought up with fast fashion which we didn't have when we were young ,and some of them have only known fast fashion so as a matter of fact they don't know what real quality means, what a good fit is ,they don't value it, The contrary we see more women in their 50's, the more you advance in age and the more detached you get from ownership because you know its not going change your life, you know it hasn't had that impact, it hasn't made you happy anyhow. So it's something that was a surprise to us and we thought there would be more prejudice with older clients and as a matter of fact its quite the contrary and they are more responsible because its also comes with maturity. I know it's generalised obviously.

NG: I think that the sharing economy is only at the beginning of what the scope of sharing actually means today. I think people are slowly getting acquainted with the whole dimension of what it means to live in the era of a sharing economy. I think that we are really going to see an evolution in behaviours, it will be growing and changing and consumers will be adapting more and more. The definition of consumption is evolving as we speak. People are not going to be exploring the world the way we explore it today. Companies like Airbnb are only bound to grow in scale and in terms of offer.

EB: Changes like these don't happen overnight but i feel like even Airbnb, its a new way of consuming but people were already going to a hotel, going on holidays, renting houses somehow, it has changed, it made it cooler, made it easier but it's still a usage that people were already having. So changing the way people consume is to actually” change”. To create something they weren't doing before.

EN: It's a huge adjustment, a huge gap.

EB: Huge shift but also to be honest changes like these do not happen miraculously it also takes means because to communicate and make it more of a public debate that takes a lot of money.

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