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## BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER - NOT THE PHONE HOLDER

**Lara Brent** | [@LaraJBrent](#) 18th October 2018



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*Another year, another front row of mobile phones instead of faces. Are catwalks better experienced from behind a screen? Or were the first-hand experiences of Parisian haute couture, more awe inspiring 20 years ago?*

What were once exclusive events that only top magazine editors, and the head buyers of department stores could purchase tickets for; now feature bloggers, influencers and celebrity best friends on the Front Row. Catwalk shows have been taken over by social media and I think that it's about time that it stops.

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Josh Newis-Smith, fashion editor at Grazia, said: “We’re all watching a show through our phone, rather than our eyes” and I couldn’t agree more. Everyone turns up to the latest collections with their iPhone ready, in hope of catching the perfect boomerang, and that at least one outfit fits in with their Instagram aesthetic. Since mobile phones and social media were introduced we seem compelled to photograph everything we see, rather than experience it for ourselves. Are we that worried our own memory isn’t sufficient? Do we really need to use our phones as a backup?

Catwalk shows started off as one-off experiences, much like when we visit the theatre. If you missed Marc Jacobs SS95 collection, then that was your fault. But now, everyone records these displays and so they live on past the moment. If we can avoid filming Les Misérables, then why must we film Dolce and Gabbana’s AW collection?

With everyone now seemingly a videographer, these once restricted-view only events, have now lost all their exclusivity. Fashion is no longer for those who have professional interest or knowledge, but can now be accessed immediately by anyone, and everyone, allowing them to voice their uneducated opinions.

However, some experts, such as the head buyers of big department stores, would argue that social media has had an incredibly positive impact on the fashion industry. These money chasing industry members are constantly searching for ways to increase sales, and this could be it. With 30.4% of UK clothing shoppers using social media to inspire their clothing choices, we can see the vitality of this technological advancement.

Sites such as Twitter have enabled brands to quickly converse with their clients, ensuring that next season’s collection is something wanted by a large clientele, and therefore secures sales. Instagram has also helped with fashion’s productivity through the introduction of ‘Paid Partnerships’ and their new ‘swipe up’ feature on their stories. These have helped to give more direct links to fashion accounts and websites, further securing more business for high street stores.

Fashion has, as a result, become less about what Anna Wintour has to say on the latest trend, and more about which trend will sell the fastest. So, although fashion has vastly helped with the economics, it may end up with some of us losing our jobs.

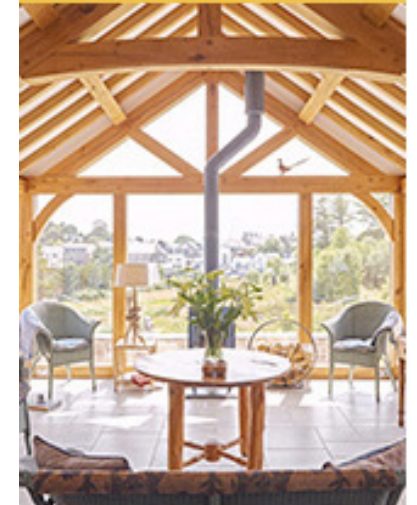
Trends have taken over fashion sales, while catwalk collections have lost their intrigue. Paolo Riva, chief executive of Diane Von Furstenberg, remembers when there used to be “a dramatic spike of sales when the collection was delivered to stores” but now, “that trend is longer the case”. This shows us how social media has changed the way in which fashion is consumed, causing the pace of fashion to become even quicker.

While the faster pace of fashion improves sales, it is also having a detrimental effect everywhere else. Mental health is something that fashion deeply affects with young people being pressured to be stick thin and owning designer clothes from the moment they’re born. This negative impact is something that needs to end, but with the incorporation of social media – will it ever?

Dr. Nick Knight from GQ magazine refers to social media in a very similar way to which he would with illegal drug use. He states that social media “suck[s] the health out of a person’s mental constitution and leave[s] space for low self-esteem, anxiety and depression”. This fatal effect of social media

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mixed with the high expectations of the fashion industry is causing our youngest generation to suffer from a whole host of mental health problems.

Social media isn't just having an adverse effect on the fashion industry, it is also damaging our mental health.

So, although it is easy to argue that social media has had a lot of benefits for the fashion industry, it is mostly damaging the foundation we have grown to love so much. By speeding up an already fast-paced corporation, all that is left behind is a mess of mental health disorders, a lack of exclusivity and waste products. We need to find a way to stop incorporating social media so heavily before we lose the industry that we took so long to build.

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