

Luxury and fashion are betting on sustainability and supply chains: this is how Made in Italy wins

The heir to the group worth over 4 billion is responsible for ESG plans. Focus on global partnerships, digital passport, regenerated nylon, circularity. «Let's set an example by protecting the supply chain»

The entrance into the «task force» for fairer, more environmentally friendly and circular fashion which is part of the larger Sustainable Markets Initiative project, wanted by King Charles III and led by Federico Marchetti. Membership in the national network of the United Nations Global Compact, the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world, which in Italy has exceeded 500 members. The third edition of the Sea Beyond project, in collaboration with UNESCO for ocean conservation education, has just been relaunched through the new collaboration with Libraries Without Borders, for a first social project. Three initiatives, the last in chronological order, which tell of a long-term and ambitious commitment. It is that of the Milanese luxury group Prada, 4.2 billion in revenues in 2022, which starting from 2019, with the signing of the Fashion Pact (today more than 160 members committed to reducing the impact of fashion on the planet) is creating a network global alliances and initiatives to support the sustainable transition of the world that we have known until today. «There is no contradiction between the environment and economic growth, the solutions are there, we must commit to putting them into practice - is convinced Lorenzo Bertelli, born in 1988, second generation of the family, son of Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli, who leads the Corporate strategy social responsibility of the group—. The membership of the SMI that we are announcing today is the last piece of a network destined to grow further. Nobody has the turnkey solution to save the planet, the scientific and political scenario is constantly changing and for this reason it is essential to be at multiple tables, to understand which direction to take and continue to do

it in the right way. And collaboration between the public and private sectors is increasingly necessary."

Transparency factor

Knowing full well that the saying "He who does it for himself does it for three" is the antipodes of the commitment to a "just" transition, to guarantee economic growth which can also mean redistribution, inclusion, environmental and social regeneration, Bertelli admits that "our commitment is a duty. Luxury has different and important margins, it is necessary that it becomes the leader of a possible revolution. Companies have the responsibility to behave virtuously and to influence virtuous behavior." That of the Prada group is a "heavy" entry for the task force that refers to Marchetti and will be the only one in 2024. "We have known each other for some time -

explains Bertelli -. With Aura Blockchain we had already entered the Smi: the experience we have gained in the field of "digital product passport" can make an important contribution to the path to guarantee greater transparency and traceability. Now we will also contribute directly as a Prada group." A concrete example of the applicability of the digital passport is the pilot project of the Prada Eternal Gold collection, entirely made with recycled gold and traceable diamonds, thanks to which the consumer accesses information on the raw materials with which the product was made and on the supply chain.

«Transparency is the key - Bertelli is convinced -, consumers must trust brands, transparency is a value, sustainability itself is. making sustainable choices means giving the right value to things. Of course it costs money, but it shouldn't be understood as a cost." However, it certainly requires investment and support. For example, since last July 1% of the Prada Re-Nylon collection has supported the Sea Beyond project. «We have converted the whole production of nylon, a material that is in Prada's DNA, from regenerated virginia - explains Bertelli -, in this way we create products without using new resources.

I care a lot about Sea Beyond because it is an educational project dedicated to the new generations. Spreading the culture of sustainability is the key to the turning point, obviously it is a long-term work, which is why we must start today to see the fruits as soon as possible". The group is also a member of Textile Exchange, the global non-profit that seeks to innovate the world of fibers and materials to find solutions with low environmental impact, while the focus remains on the circularity of production and processes. «With five other Italian brands we founded Re.Crea, dedicated to the management of the end of life of textile products. Furthermore, in the short term we aim to reach 100% certified leather - Bertelli lists -. We reduce virgin plastic in our packaging and with the Prada Group Re-Set project we reuse materials from fashion shows and events." Bertelli is the mind and driving force behind these initiatives and is also aware that this is a challenge to be overcome at the supply chain and Made in Italy level.

«Since the 1990s we have believed in the integration of the supply chain, which is fundamental for preserving Made in Italy and giving value to the territory - he explains -. Fortunately, today working in the fashion supply chain is back in fashion, there is a lot of demand, we also see it in our Academy. It is an important phenomenon. Made in Italy is an added value that we cannot lose or betray. We have an advantage as a country, we must not waste it. And we can do it in a sustainable way." Soon it's time for calculations. On March 7 the group will present the results for 2023. «We expect a positive closure, but I can't say more», says Bertelli. Pinault, owner of Kering, said that luxury will experience a decline in the medium term. «Not even the luxury customer is unshakable - admits Bertelli - it is a complex moment for everyone, but the sector will hold». And on the rumors of the group's sale to the French of Chanel "it is not worth commenting", he concludes.