

FUR Real: The Natural Fashion Choice

WITH A FRENETIC PACE, fashion trends run haute/cold from runway spotlight to the back of your closet and on to the donation pile or even the landfill. These days, with so many retailers carrying mass-produced 'fast fashion' it's easy to understand the concern for the environmental impact of all this disposable fashion. For consumers who care about how their choices affect the Earth, one product stands-out as a responsible choice—FUR!

David Sollman, executive director of the Fur Information Council of America, points out that, "Fur is a natural, renewable, and biodegradable resource." He elaborates that as a fashion material, "Fur is durable, reusable, and recyclable." Real fur garments are thus the epitome of 'slow fashion,' a term created in 2008 by author and sustainable design consultant, Kate Fletcher. In her book, "Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys", Fletcher describes the slow fashion movement in terms of seeing the big picture of a product and how from sourcing materials through design, production and consumer use, the item will fulfill a need with minimal impact on the environment. Fletcher encourages consumers to purchase timeless designs created from exquisite materials and quality construction techniques, and then properly caring for those items to ensure continued long-term enjoyment wearing an environmentally friendly garment.

Fashionistas can wear real fur confidently knowing that each stylish garment is hand made by skilled craftsmen (and women) using beautiful pelts that were responsibly sourced under the guidance of global standards and regulations. And while some espouse wearing faux fur, it's imperative to know that the fake version is extremely harmful to the environment and wildlife! Manufactured utilizing non-biodegradable petroleum and plastics, deadly carcinogens are released during the production of fake furs which when washed will release plastic lint fibers into oceans and rivers where they are ingested to the detriment of fish, mammals, and sea birds. As Mark Oaten, chief executive officer of the International Fur Federation, stated in a February 2018 "WWD" magazine article when asked about real vs. synthetic fur, "It makes no sense to use a product full of chemicals and plastics when you can wear a natural and biodegradable fashion item like real fur."

For those who opt to wear sustainable, eco-friendly fur fashion, proper care of a gorgeous mink coat, sheared beaver parka, fox bolero, lynx vest, or other glam outerwear garments is instrumental in ensuring continued wear-ability for many years and perhaps multiple generations and decades of usage.

At York Furrier, professional fur care services include: yearly summer storage in climate-controlled vaults, cleaning and hand conditioning (by the environmentally friendly furrier method (no harmful chemicals utilized), tending to minor repairs, and for updating an older fur's fit or fashion, work with the talented York Furrier Design Team to restyle shoulders, sleeves, or



PHOTO: COURTESY OF YORK FURRIER, INC.

From the York Furrier 86th Anniversary Collection, a York Signature Style Natural Lynx Sections Walking Coat with Fox Hood Trim.

silhouette. For furs that are handed down or inherited, choose repurposing the fur into home décor—pillows, throws, or blankets; accessory items—trim hats, gloves, boots, or handbags; add embellishments to collars, cuffs or a denim jacket; or create an heirloom teddy bear, tiny fur baby booties, or perhaps a coat for the family dog. The options abound!

To learn more about sustainable fur fashion along with fur care and maintenance, visit: www.YorkFur.com or consult with the York Furrier Staff in the Elmhurst City Centre store. 

Kathy Rezny is the former president of the Associated Fur Industries of Chicagoland, a FICA Executive Board Member, and Co-Owner of York Furrier, Inc. a purveyor of furs, fine outerwear and accessories since 1931.