

# FASHION

MAGAZINE

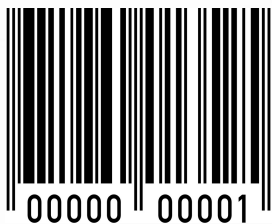


# 4/11

## COVER STORY

FASHION: OUR  
GREAT EQUALIZER

WITH AVRY JOINER  
AND SARA  
COMPOSCARCONE



# Fashion: Our Great Equalizer

By Cameron Glymph

Fashion has long been an undervalued art form. While some claim to be above the “shallowness” and “indulgence” that the fashion industry allegedly postulates, the reality is that clothing directly impacts our presentation to the world– and all of us are subconsciously aware of this reality. One wouldn’t dare show up to a job interview with a wrinkled shirt or go on a date with scuffed shoes– this is because clothing, at the very least, *matters*. There are valid critiques of the fashion industry: it can be elitist, and the environmental impact that it has is incredibly damaging. In the 21st century, however, the ordinary person has been given the opportunity to harness the fashion industry and reconfigure it to be their own via the internet. Fashion blogging and influencing are slowly revolutionizing and rebuilding our access to fashion and the impact that it has, and in the process are rectifying problems within the industry.

Two fashion bloggers, Avry Joiner and Sara Camposarcone, are proving that in the 21st century, fashion is no longer a symbol of the elite– it is an invitation to build a future that includes all walks of life, colors, textures, patterns, and styles. Fashion is our latest equalizer.



The connection between fashion and equality may seem like a stretch, but it is incredibly relevant. The fashion industry has historically excluded different body types, colors, and people from their representation. This is detrimental for many reasons: for one, representation matters, and seeing realistic bodies is essential for us to relate to and feel connected with the clothes that we wear. In addition, purposely excluding different kinds of people bars them from participating in the bright future that the fashion industry holds. Inclusion within fashion is the best way to make sure that the industry does not leave anyone behind— as it elevates in status, the acceptance of others also elevates in status.

The internet is the perfect avenue for this great change to manifest. From advocating for sustainability in fashion to taking risks that no one else dares to do, Camposarcone and Joiner are changing the fashion game. The internet, while an unorthodox way for fashion trends to manifest, is changing the way that the average consumer interacts with fashion for the better— Camposarcone and Joiner fully take advantage of that. While both influencers represent two completely different styles, they are representatives of the ways in which fashion can be used to empower, uplift, and create a future where all of us are included in the majesty of high fashion.



## Breaking out of the Trend Cycle

The fashion industry as we know it has forever relied on the trend cycle to popularize innovative styles. The major fashion hearths of the world, New York, London, Milan, and Paris, host events twice a year that celebrate and showcase the work of the most relevant fashion houses in the world. The most popular designs then diffuse hierarchically, first among the elite and then among the general population. One notable aspect about modern internet fashion is the fact that many of its influencers operate outside the trend cycle, and in fact are trend-resistant. They do not seek to conform to the norm, and often purposely go against it. Camposarcone describes her style as “maximalism,”

which is defined as expressing extravagance and purposefully creating a spectacle out of everyday attire. On Camposarcone's Instagram, it wouldn't be unusual to find accessories like lettuce earrings and to see stripes mixed with polka dots or clashing neon colors. Camposarcone's style is not easily forgotten but it took a while to develop.

Camposarcone states that her shift from following trends to the grandeur of maximalism was gradual. She states that earlier in her life she "used to wear a lot more black and muted colors, probably because [she] wasn't comfortable dressing the way that [she dresses] now. With an evolution of her confidence came an evolution of her style. Now, she proudly rocks whatever she pleases: "My style has also evolved as I've built confidence in accepting and loving myself and not worrying about what other people are saying."

Similarly, Joiner has found an element of clarity in the process of breaking out of the relentless trend cycle. Joiner describes her personal style as "dopaminergic," which was popularized by influencers in Northern Europe and features color blocking and bright, uncommon colors. Joiner states that her shift to her personalized style was also slow: "Back in 2019, I really set out to find my own style. I was feeling so lost. I kept following trends and it felt like there was a new trend every other week. It was tiring but it happens when you aren't completely comfortable in your style." After a lot of trial and error, Joiner grew into her current style as she gained confidence.

Both Joiner and Composcarcone reflect a common trend within the internet space that involves breaking free from the never-ending trend cycle. At the end of the day, trends exist for one reason: to make the fashion industry money. In recent years, the internet's far-reaching capabilities have made it so that instead of having trends that last for years or even decades (think classic 90s fashion) there are multiple trends in just one year. This not only exhausts consumers but also puts a huge strain on the environment: scrap fabrics often end up in landfills that take thousands of years to decompose. Defining your own style, as Camposarcone and Joiner have, seems to have an enchanting effect: in both instances, their confidence grew as they thought outside of the boxes the market constantly tries to put us in.

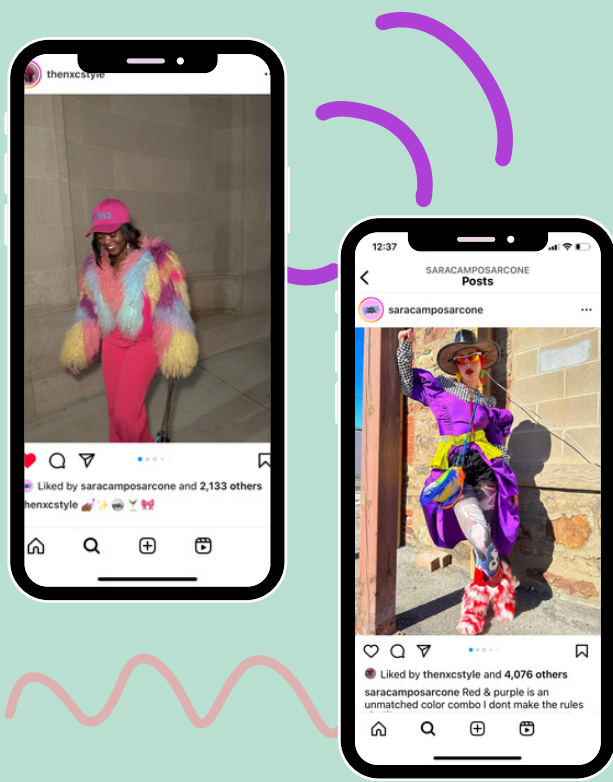


There is something about the self-definition process of finding your own style that is liberating in a way. When the market constantly projects ideas of who we should be based on what elite fashion houses think fashion should be centered towards, it's easy to feel lost, as Joiner reports. Defining oneself has always been an act of resistance, and one that is gradually turning the fashion industry as we know it on its head.

# Transforming the Industry

With breaking out of the trend cycle comes a need to address the issues within the fashion industry. One of the most pressing current issues is the fact that many fashion brands have an incredible impact on the environment. The average person consumes more than they actually need, leading to an excess of fabric in landfills that takes hundreds of years to break down. The fashion industry produces an estimated 92 million tons of waste each year and is unsurprisingly one of the biggest contributors to environmental strain.

Operating outside of trends means operating outside of the methods of the fashion industry, and both Joiner and Camposarcone are incredibly environmentally conscious in their sourcing of clothing. Compascarone thrifts all of her clothes, and she says that “another way that [she] practices sustainability in fashion is through clothing swaps: [she’ll] swap clothes with my friends rather than throwing them out.”



This method of not only buying clothes second-hand but also sharing within a close community is a great alternative to constantly consuming new clothes and contributing to waste.

Joiner has gone so far as to start her own online thrift store. She states, “A lot of my followers kept mentioning that I should open up a vintage store because the items I found were amazing. Fast forward to 2019, I realized I pretty much thrifted everything I needed but kept finding cute things still.” This inspired her to take that excess clothing, and rather than throw it away sell them online for others to consume. Vintage shopping is also a viable alternative to constantly consuming– it allows for access to luxury brands that might not be in thrift stores while still being sustainable and affordable for the average consumer.

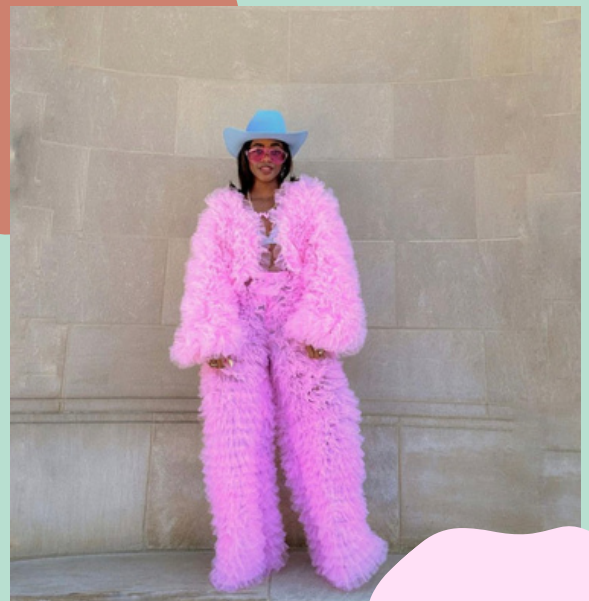
Camposarcone hopes that sustainability will one day be a larger part of the fashion industry: “There are a lot of apps out there where you can virtually try on clothing, and that’s great because it helps the environment, and it allows people to experiment with their style.” This is particularly appealing to people trying to find their own personal style, because, as Camposarcone states, “before you commit to buying anything, you can try things virtually and be more sure of them.” As of right now though, the fashion industry still has a long way to go. Internet influencers are years ahead of the games when it comes to environmental consciousness: as our climate crisis escalates more out of control, everyday people are becoming more socially aware of their consumer habits that may contribute to the crisis more.

Many of the brands that pump out multiple trends a year produce their clothing overseas, where poor working conditions, low wages, and even child labor are incredibly pervasive issues. This phenomenon, known as “fast fashion” is appealing to the average consumer because of the cheap cost, but is incredibly damaging to the environment and the people forced to work in terrible conditions. By actively going out of their way to trade clothes, thrift, and vintage shops, Joiner and Camposarcone represent a growing movement in online fashion influencing people to be more conscious of the impact that our fashion habits have on the environment. And their impact is substantial: with their influence, they are able to inspire their followers and viewers to do the same.

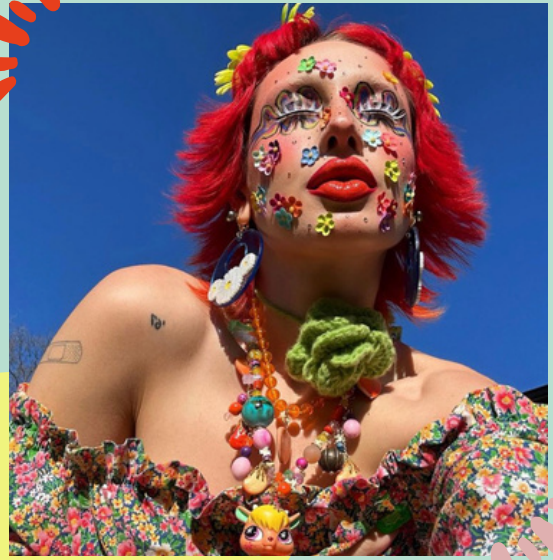
Yet again, online influencing proves to be a significant social force in society– one that might save our planet.

## Towards Redefinition: Hopes for the Future

Living outside of society’s prescribed standards is incredibly difficult: it comes with a lot of scrutiny and backlash from people who are uncomfortable with the unfamiliar. While it may be difficult to deal with, Camposarcone and Joiner are both optimistic that their interpretations of fashion will inspire others to step outside of their comfort zones, and also inspire change in the fashion industry. The movement away from the trend cycle that Joiner and Camposarcone exemplify will undoubtedly affect the profits of the fashion industry, and when there is money trouble there is almost always change.

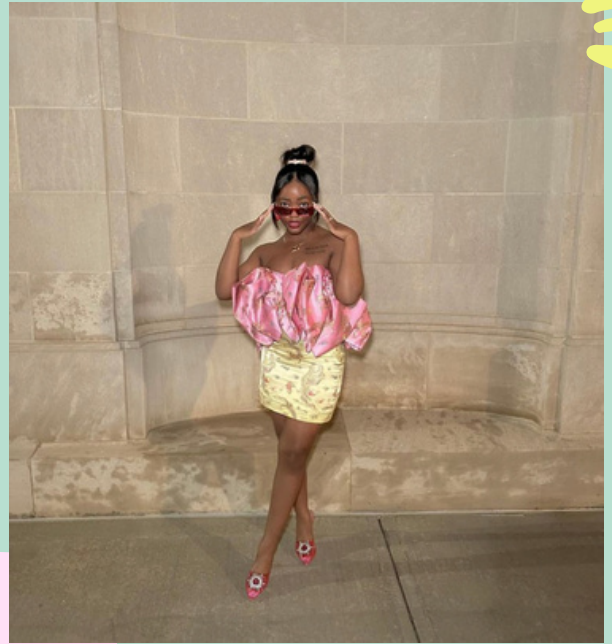


When reflecting on her experience of New York fashion week in Jan. 2022, Comparcarcone says that one of the things she looks forward to in the fashion industry is less rigidity and more fun: “I imagine there’s going to be fewer fashion rules and parameters on what you can and can’t wear.” Gone are the days of old fashion roles like “no white after labor day.” The ability to define fashion on your own terms is incredibly empowering, as it allows you to be the sole person responsible for your presentation to the world. The fashion industry, like many systems of power, operates on a hierarchical basis that isn’t fully transparent in its intentions. The people with the most power in the industry are able to wear clothing that reflects their own biases, including harmful assumptions about body types and race. Camposarcone and Joiner both show that the average consumer doesn’t have to ascribe to the standards set by the beauty industry though, and that self-defined styles are just as if not more appealing than the trend cycle. This keeps the fashion industry on its toes: Camposarcone states that more brands are “being more sustainable and inclusive. I loved seeing all the different shapes on the runways, and if you want real people wearing your clothes, you must put real people on the runway.” The real people, as Camposarcone says, are harnessing the power that fashion and self-definition can hold: and in doing so are evening the playing field of the industry.



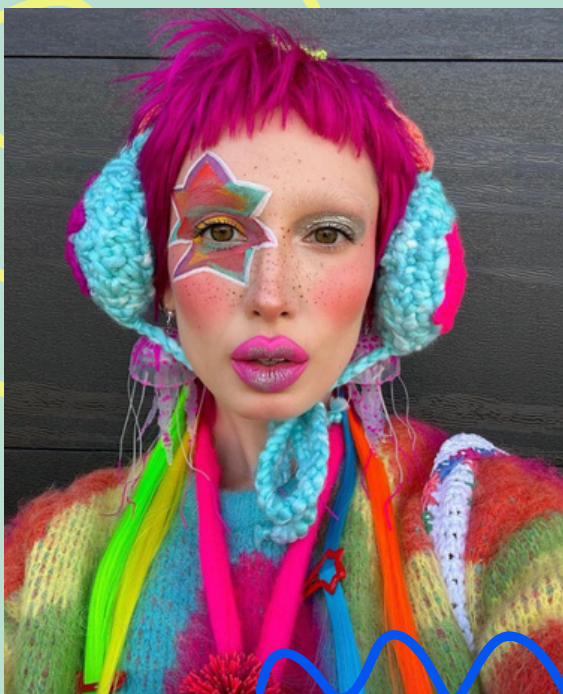
Joiner is also finding fashion to be less about rules and more about fun, saying “I really hope we... become more comfortable with people and their own personal style. Sometimes the fashion industry can be so judgemental; in reality, I think fashion should just be fun. If you’re comfortable with wearing something, opinions or rude comments shouldn’t matter.” Being OK with others not following the latest trends exactly forces the larger fashion community to be more accepting. While we may not understand why someone chooses to dress in a way that we’re unfamiliar with, the reality is that our differences enrich the industry and provide new perspectives on the way that fashion can operate. The more accepting we are of different styles, the more accepting we are of the differences in people. After all, fashion is an extension of our identities and the way that we present ourselves: everyone is different, and the sooner they accept that fact, the better equipped we are to understand others.

The world outside the trend cycle is one that is becoming more and more appealing as time goes on. It raises questions about the ethics of the current fashion industry, calls for adequate representation, and most importantly, gives people the opportunity to define themselves outside of pre-existing notions of acceptable fashion. Camposarcone and Joiner are redefining what it means to be fashionable, and that definition focuses on the individual as the ultimate determiner of beauty, validity, and style. Allowing your individuality to be the basis of your presentation through fashion is incredibly empowering, and it also turns the current fashion industry on its head. We are moving into a new era of fashion: one that is made by us, for us. Fashion is a tool of redefinition, empowerment, social change, and most importantly, empowerment. Fashion is a great equalizer, and we are made better by its influence. ●



Avry Joiner

Joiner is a full-time fashion influencer based in North Carolina. She plans on extending her brand by signing with an agency. All photos of Joiner were taken from her Instagram, @thenxcstyle.



Sara Composarcone

Camposarcone is a Toronto-based influencer. She has expanded her brand and legitimacy as a fashion influencer by styling other celebrities in eclectic ways.

All photos of Camposarcone, including the magazine cover, were taken from her Instagram @saracomposarcone.