

At Miami Fashion Week, A Focus On Sustainability

By [ALEJANDRA MARTINEZ](#) · 15 HOURS AGO

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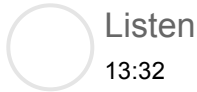
"The Fashion Lab" at the Miami Fashion Institute is where students gather to learn the necessary skills of the global fashion industry.

MIAMI FASHION INSTITUTE AT MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

From leather tanning to fabric processing to "fast fashion," the fashion industry is not known for being eco-friendly.

But at this year's [Miami Fashion Week](#), which kicked off Thursday, fashionistas are talking about how to make clothing more environmentally conscious. Fashion experts, designers and celebrities are gathering in the Magic City to discuss the industry's latest innovations and take part in runway shows.

Asanyah Davidson, Jamaican fashion designer and Chairperson of the [Miami Fashion Institute at Miami Dade College](#), has been an active participant in Fashion Week since it launched three years ago. She joined Sundial and spoke with host Luis Hernandez about what sets South Florida apart in the fashion industry and how she's promoting more eco-friendly fashion trends.



An interview with Jamaican fashion designer and Chairperson of the Miami Fashion Institute at Miami Dade College, Asanyah Davidson.

This has been edited lightly for clarity.

WLRN: Where do you place Miami in the fashion world?

DAVIDSON: We are upstarts. We have the best of both worlds. We're still a gateway. We have a lot of Europeans that come here. We have Latin America. We have to deal with temperature and that affects the way we cut things, the way things sit on the body. Also, colors. I'm always identified easily when I'm overseas because I will wear bright colors while everybody's wearing black. We're well placed to be the upstarts and to do things a little differently.

We're not New York or Milan or Paris...

We shouldn't try to be.

How do you describe the Miami Fashion Week summit?

In my mind there's always like two pieces to it - there's the summit, which is our sustainability conversation and it's really what set Miami Fashion Week apart from all the other fashion weeks that happen because they don't have a summit as part of their fashion week. And the fact that we've really focused that summit entirely on sustainability is a big deal for us. The second part, in the evening you have the runway shows. But really... the piece that excites us is the summit conversation piece about sustainability.

This has always been a criticism of the industry that it's not so eco-friendly.

We're definitely not eco-friendly.

How bad is it?

Number two in the world. People don't really look at it as all the parts. We are leather tanning, which is a lot of chemicals. We use an extreme amount of water to process fabrics. Right now, we're dealing with fast fashion or the high consumption of fashion. So there's a lot of pieces that



Asanyah Davidson (center), Chairperson of the Miami Fashion Institute at Miami Dade College stands next to college president, Eduardo J. Padrón at the opening party for the fashion institute.

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make it a bad industry.

Is the industry serious about trying to be more sustainable?

There is definitely some green washing happening in the world but a lot of the bigger corporations are making an effort to curb some of their habits. It takes a lot. These are established countries that have a lot of undoing to do and then redoing on top of that. The newer brands are all doing different things. We have a brand that's located here, called Reformation. It's completely sustainable.

As a consumer, where can I find out what's really going into making my clothes?

There's a great website called [Fashion Revolution](#) and they advise you on how to consume goods. They know that people aren't going to stop, but how can we be better consumers? Do you need to buy 50 different white t-shirts? And if you do they need to all be organic cotton. Yes it's a little bit more expensive, but at least you're not harming the planet. What is your fashion vibe and can second-hand shopping be your thing? There's different ways to consume, there's different things you can look for, there's different labels that you might want to look into.

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