FASHION ENTERPRISE & INNOVATION CLUB

FASHION GOES BAD.

WHEN CLOTHING HAS A SHELF LIFE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16 · 2 PM PACIFIC
ADOBE CONNECT



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COLD OPEN

Your dress expires at midnight.

You bought it for $800. You wore it once.
Tomorrow, the fabric begins to break down.

Would you still buy it?

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THE PREMISE

What does “expire” even mean?

01 Degrades

The fiber chemically or biologically breaks down under specific conditions.

02 Transforms

Color, texture, structure, or appearance intentionally changes over time.

03 Disappears

A controlled trigger, such as water, causes a layer or component to dissolve.

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THE SCIENCE

Rotting is not the same as dissolving.

DISSOLUTION

Water separates or solubilizes a material. The dissolved material still exists in the environment.

BIODEGRADATION

Microorganisms break materials down under appropriate conditions. Temperature, moisture, oxygen, and time matter.

A disappearing garment is not automatically a sustainable garment.

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RUNWAY PRECEDENT

A dress that melted onstage.

HUSSEIN CHALAYAN
SPRING / SUMMER 2016

At a 2015 Paris runway show, water dissolved the models' outer dresses, revealing different garments beneath.

Performance art ≠ everyday biodegradable clothing



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MATERIALS ALREADY EXIST

Can a T-shirt return to the earth?

THE PLANT + ALGAE T-SHIRT

Vollebak developed a plant-derived shirt with algae-based printing, designed to biodegrade in soil or compost in roughly 12 weeks under described conditions.

Important: 12 weeks refers to end-of-life biodegradation—not “12 weeks until it falls off your body.”

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BIOFABRICATION

What if you grew your clothes?

BACTERIAL CELLULOSE

Microbes can create cellulose sheets that researchers and designers have explored as leather-like and textile materials.

The hard part: durability, water response, scalability, comfort, and cost.

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THE DILEMMA

Do we want garments to die sooner?

THE CASE FOR

Special-event use · less persistent waste if actually composted · provocative art · innovative materials · lower storage burden.

THE CASE AGAINST

Shorter use cycles · repeat purchases · disposal complexity · new waste · safety and accessibility concerns.

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REALITY CHECK

The EU is trying to stop fashion waste.

4–9%

Estimated share of textiles placed on the European market that are destroyed before use.

JULY 2026

EU ban on destroying unsold clothes and footwear took effect for large companies, with specific exceptions.

“Made to decompose” and “made to be thrown away” are not the same.

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BRAND STRATEGY

Sell the expiration—or sell the experience?

THE RENTAL

Dress exists for one event, then is professionally recovered or reprocessed.

THE TRANSFORMER

The garment changes color or reveals a second layer at a chosen moment.

THE COMPOSTABLE

A durable-enough item has a verified end-of-life plan after it is no longer usable.

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FAST AUDIENCE VOTE

Which would you actually buy?

A / $250

One-night dress: visually transforms during your event.

B / $120

Wearable for years, then compostable through a verified program.

C / $45

Conventional dress you can wear repeatedly.

VOTE A, B, OR C — THEN DEFEND YOUR CHOICE.

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THE BIGGER QUESTION

Is an expiration date a feature or a flaw?

“If a brand could engineer your clothing to expire, should it?”

VALUE / ETHICS / SCIENCE / PROFIT

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

THE FASHION INNOVATION CHALLENGE

CREATE A COMPANY.
REINVENT THE GARMENT.

Design a fashion product that transforms, expires responsibly, or gives clothing an unexpected second life.

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COMPETITION BRIEF

What every company must submit

THE CONCEPT

Brand name + customer
Visual mockup / sketch
Transformation or expiration mechanism
Reason customers would buy

THE BUSINESS

Price + production estimate
Marketing and positioning
Safety + environmental tradeoffs
End-of-life / return plan

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SUGGESTED TIMELINE

A few weeks to build your brand.



OCT 16
Challenge revealed

OCT 23
Optional team check-in

OCT 30
Proposed submission deadline

NOV 6
Proposed live pitch event

Dates are proposals; final details will be shared by the club.

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LIVE EVENT

FASHION SHARK TANK

01 PITCH

2-minute pitch: problem, innovation, audience, price.

02 DEFEND

1 minute of investor-style questions about viability and impact.

03 WIN

Audience and/or judges score originality, feasibility, and responsible design.

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CLOSE

Fashion is temporary.
Great ideas last.

What should the future of fashion be designed to do?

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REFERENCE NOTES

Further reading

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EU unsold clothing rules / European Commission

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/ban-destruction-unsold-clothes-and-shoes-enters-application-2026-07-17_en

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