

Bring Your Bling: Met Gala, 2024

Thomas Jefferson Model United Nations Conference

TechMUN XXXI



High School Specialized

Co-Chairs: Nivika Gandhi & Vaishnavi Kuriti

Dear Delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to TechMUN XXXI, and more specifically, Bring Your Bling: Met Gala, 2024. We will be serving as your co-chairs during this weekend of debate and discussion, and we cannot wait to hear all your research and solutions. This committee will take place in the modern era, with all of you serving in the positions of Met Gala attendees, from the designers who craft the clothing used to make statements to the influential celebrities and politicians who wear the designs. Your positions each hold a unique insight that will provide crucial knowledge needed in order to solve these issues. The first issue addresses fashion on the public stage, thinking about who gets invited to such grand events and whether or not they propagate elitism. The second topic talks about sustainability in fashion and how the industry can shift to be more environment and climate-friendly.

In terms of this committee, we are looking for delegates who will represent their position while engaging constantly in leadership, discussion, and debate. We will be weighing the content of your speeches just as much as we will the activeness of a delegate; staying relevant to debate is vital in a committee like this. Most importantly, however, we are looking for growth. We want to see each of you grow as a delegate during your time here, in all of the skills listed above.

Lastly, both of us are looking to make this weekend as informative, worthwhile, and memorable as possible. Whether this is your first high-school Model UN conference, your last, or somewhere in between, we hope that you leave this weekend with more knowledge than you walked in with. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email us at metgala2024@gmail.com.

Nivika Gandhi & Vaishnavi Kuriti

Co-Chairs, Met Gala, 2024

Topic 1: Fashion on the Public Stage

Introduction

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala, also known as the Met Gala, is a fundraising event often recognized as fashion's biggest night out. First established as the "Costume Institute Gala" in 1948, it quickly evolved into the spectacle we know today under the direction of the legendary editor-in-chief Anna Wintour, who transformed the night into one of glitz and glamor for the fashion world's biggest stars. In the modern day, the Met Gala is a night of showcasing the creativity and ingenuity of designers, celebrities, and influencers from across the world, while reimagining the history of fashion and its future. With its bold looks and prominent attendees, the Met Gala has also become an event of social influence and public stances, with the Gala being used by its attendees to make statements on important issues or send messages about the controversial nature of

fashion's past. Past instances include New York House Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's 'Tax the Rich' dress¹ in 2021, along with Carolyn Maloney's 'Equal Rights for Women' gown that called for the ratification of the Equal Rights



Amendment². Statements like these have not only brought added attention to the Gala but have also attracted criticism for the Gala's promotion of extravagant luxury and spending in the realm of fashion, in comparison to greater world issues. Controversy also surrounded the 2023 Met

¹ Hills, Megan C. "AOC caused a stir with her statement-making Met Gala gown." CNN, 14 September 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/aoc-met-gala-alexandria-ocasio-cortez-dress/index.html>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

² Chamlee, Virginia. "Carolyn Maloney's Met Gala Dress Calls for ERA." People, 14 September 2021, <https://people.com/style/congresswoman-carolyn-maloney-wears-suffragette-themed-met-gala-dress/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

Gala, where the theme of ‘In Honor of Karl [Lagerfeld]’ drew great criticism from activists and celebrities alike, due to Lagerfeld’s offensive past³. It seems that with all eyes on its attendees, the Met Gala has become the perfect stage for displaying fashion’s impact on our society while making an impact on fashion and our society in the process.

Relevant Issues

With an invitation being one of the most coveted in the fashion world, the Met Gala remains a poster child for exclusivity and elitism in the eyes of much of the public. Tickets to the Gala are incredibly expensive at upwards of \$50,000⁴, and the guest list is curated to only include the most prevalent and prestigious members of high society. Given the steep price tag, attendance at the Gala is often limited to those who can afford it, resulting in a guest list with little to no representation of marginalized or diverse communities. With the exclusivity of such an event, it’s no wonder that the Met Gala is often viewed as perpetuating inequalities and social hierarchies within the fashion industry. The Gala is also frequently associated with luxury brands, allowing them to showcase their products by dressing celebrities at the event. This only reinforces the prominence of popular fashion brands while marginalizing lesser-known designers and businesses that lack the connections or resources to participate in such a high-profile event. The Gala also promotes unrealistic beauty standards along with consumerism, further alienating those who don’t agree with or fit into the mold of traditional glamor. With such a narrow approving audience, the future of the Gala may be negatively affected by its controversy and in danger of staying relevant in a continually modernizing world. Therefore, the Met Gala must find

³ La Ferla, Ruth. “Karl Lagerfeld and the Controversies That Color His Fashion Legacy.” *The New York Times*, 1 May 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/fashion/karl-lagerfeld-controversy.html>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

⁴ Burga, Solcyré. “Met Gala 2023: Here's Everything You Need to Know.” *Time*, 30 April 2023, <https://time.com/6275873/met-gala-2023-everything-you-need-to-know/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

ways to adapt to the current standards of fashion, and begin embracing diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility to keep up with the evolving world of fashion.

Possible Solutions

Perhaps one of the reasons the Met Gala is so detached from the public world is due to the secrecy of the event, as attendees are not allowed to film whatsoever once inside. In fact, the only part of the Met Gala that is shown to the public is the Red Carpet, meaning little is actually known about what goes on inside the event. By streaming the event globally, the Gala can start reaching a wider audience beyond those who attend, allowing both fans and critics to experience the event while also creating greater engagement and understanding around it. The Met may also consider creating more exhibitions and installations within the museum solely focused on the Gala and its iconic history, whether focused on memorable outfits or yearly themes. These exhibits can showcase the fashion, art, and culture promoted by the gala every year, while subsequently helping more people understand the Gala's importance.

Another way the Gala may choose to increase public approval is by extending the invite to a wider range of people, including more public figures, activists, etc. Coupled with a decrease in the average cost of a ticket, this may help increase the diversity and inclusivity of the event. The Gala may also start to utilize social media more when publicizing the event, encouraging attendees to share their experiences and outfits with users or partnering with influencers and content creators to cover the event on social media. This can also help the Gala reach new audiences and demographics and popularize the event. However, some may argue that broadening the guest list may eventually decrease the prestige of the event, as it is somewhat famous for its exclusivity to only those of high society. In fact, the Met Gala has received

backlash from fans in the past over the invitation of influencers⁵, with some believing them not to be at the same standard as the celebrities that are known to frequent the Gala. Discovering the balance between inclusivity and prestige is crucial when attempting to enhance the Gala's publicity while remaining the premier event in the fashion world and ensuring its survival in today's modern world.

Questions to Consider

1. What efforts can the Met Gala take to improve representation of diverse or marginalized communities at the event?
2. What responsibility does the Met Gala have to represent a variety of fashion brands, and how may it do so?
3. What place (if any) do influencers have at the Met Gala?
4. What actions can the Gala take to improve engagement with and understanding of the event?
5. Should the Gala restrict political statements being made on the red carpet? Why or why not?

Helpful Links

<https://www.vogue.com/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-met-gala-video>

<https://www.vogue.in/content/everything-need-know-met-gala-according-andre-leon-talley>

<https://www.vogue.com/article/met-gala-political-statements-brief-history>

<https://time.com/6275632/why-the-met-galas-karl-lagerfeld-theme-is-controversial/>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrities/2022/05/02/high-fashion-has-inclusivity-problem-designers-legacy/7369209001/>

⁵ Fear, Neve. "Exploring Influencers Place at the Met Gala." Hello Partner, 20 September 2021, <https://hellopartner.com/2021/09/20/exploring-influencers-place-at-the-met-gala/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

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<https://njurbannews.com/2023/05/03/met-gala-2023-a-night-of-diversity-and-glamour/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

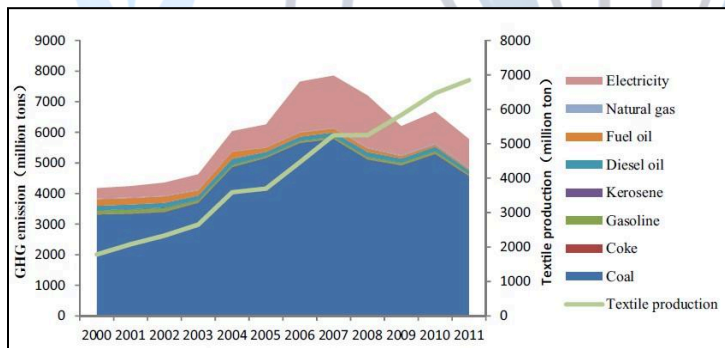
Widjojo, Conchita. "A Complete History and Timeline of the Met Gala: Details, Photos." *WWD*,
27 April 2022,
<https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-scoops/met-gala-history-how-it-turned-from-fund-raiser-to-fashions-biggest-night-1235167840/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.



Topic 2: Sustainability in Fashion

Introduction

Since the Industrial Revolution, the fashion industry has grown exponentially due to technological advancements and globalization. This expansion has transformed fashion and clothing into a conduit for self-expression, with the Met Gala being the epitome of creative expression and sartorial innovation. However, the fashion industry has also become one of the largest contributors to environmental degradation and climate change. Contributing to nearly 10% of all carbon emissions, the fashion industry has a significant yet widely overlooked carbon footprint.⁶ The widespread adoption of mass production techniques, reliance on fossil fuels, and exploitation of natural resources have led to a significant increase in carbon emissions,



deforestation, and pollution. Studies show that over 100 billion garments are produced, and 98 million tons of oil are used in the manufacturing of synthetic materials which make up

these clothes⁷. Additionally, social media continues to promote a stigma towards outfit repetition. This, along with the rise of fast fashion which has also intensified the industry's environmental footprint, has caused garments to be treated as disposable commodities, resulting in clothes being worn only seven to 10 times before being disposed of. Now, the fashion industry is grappling

⁶ Climate Feedback. "The Clothing Industry Produces 3 to 10% of Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions, as Accurately Claimed in Patagonia Post." *Climate Feedback*, 2020, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://climatefeedback.org/claimreview/the-clothing-industry-produces-3-to-10-of-global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-as-accurately-claimed-in-patagonia-post/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1710987925618306&usg=AOvVaw1j6VylaJF6tEXpdIvnDRbg>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

⁷ Neto, Marcos. "In Pursuit of Always Better-How Fashion Can Be Part of the Climate Solution." United Nations Development Programme, 22 Apr. 2021, <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://stories.undp.org/in-pursuit-of-always-betterhow-fashion-can-be-part-of-the-climate-solution?source%3Dshare-UNDP&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1710987925618898&usg=AOvVaw0NliCoWX91u503v9VuOb5b>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

with the urgent need to reconcile its economic success while simultaneously addressing its contribution to the climate crisis.

Relevant Issues

The fashion industry's significant contribution to environmental degradation is one of the greatest concerns when it comes to sustainability in fashion. The production of clothing involves cultivating of raw materials, manufacturing processes, transporting textiles, and distributing the clothing, with each stage leaving an indelible mark on the planet. From the intensive water and pesticide use in cotton farming to the toxic chemicals discharged during textile dyeing and finishing, fashion production exacts a heavy toll on natural ecosystems and biodiversity. Moreover, the industry's reliance on fossil fuels for energy, coupled with the proliferation of fast fashion—a business model characterized by rapid production, low-quality garments, and short product life cycles—has resulted in an alarming increase in carbon emissions and waste generation.⁸

Beyond its environmental footprint, the fashion industry is rife with social injustices and ethical dilemmas. The phenomenon of fast fashion has fueled a race to the bottom in terms of labor standards and wages, particularly in developing countries where garment production is outsourced. Workers, predominantly women and marginalized communities, endure long hours, unsafe working conditions, and meager pay, often toiling in sweatshops with little recourse for grievances.⁹ Furthermore, the lack of transparency in fashion supply chains makes it difficult to trace the origins of materials and ensure ethical practices throughout the production process. This

⁸ Changing Markets Foundation. “Fossil Fashion: The Hidden Reliance of Fast Fashion on Fossil Fuels • Changing Markets.” Changing Markets, 3 Feb. 2021, <https://changingmarkets.org/report/fossil-fashion-the-hidden-reliance-of-fast-fashion-on-fossil-fuels/>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

⁹ Nguyen, Lei. “The Danger of Sweatshops.” Earth.Org, 10 Oct. 2022, <https://earth.org/sweatshops/>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

opacity not only perpetuates exploitative labor practices but also facilitates instances of modern slavery and human trafficking within the industry.

Cultural appropriation is another pervasive issue within the fashion industry, where designers often draw inspiration from diverse cultural traditions and symbols without proper acknowledgment or respect for their origins. This perpetuates harmful stereotypes and erases the significance of indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship, further marginalizing already marginalized communities. Additionally, due to the prevalence of imported materials and garments, local designers find themselves constrained by limited market opportunities.¹⁰

Possible Solutions

To confront the existing challenges confronting the fashion industry, designers and manufacturers must prioritize their social responsibilities and implement novel, innovative solutions to promote sustainability in fashion. Sustainable materials such as organic cotton and recycled fabrics can be utilized to reduce environmental impact. Adopting circular economy principles through initiatives like clothing rental platforms and extended producer responsibility schemes minimize waste and extend product lifespan. Ethical sourcing practices can be supported by advocating for fair labor standards and supply chain transparency. The Met Gala has a history of extending invitations to some of the largest fast fashion brands.¹¹ The Gala has also been critiqued for not doing enough when trying to spread awareness about the environment. As one of the largest annual fashion events in the world, the Met Gala holds the social responsibility of encouraging sustainable fashion. Through collaborative efforts and collective action, the fashion industry can redefine its role in society and become a force for

¹⁰ Simoes, Mariana. "What Do Our Clothes Say about Us?" UNDP, <https://www.undp.org/blog/what-do-our-clothes-say-about-us>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

¹¹ International Environmental Technology. "Does the Met Gala Promote Fast Fashion?" Envirotech Online, 3 May 2022, <https://www.envirotech-online.com/news/environmental-laboratory/7/international-environmental-technology/does-t-he-met-gala-promote-fast-fashion/57865>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2024.

positive change, inspiring a future where fashion is not only stylish but also sustainable and socially responsible.

Questions to Consider

1. How can designers, politicians, and influential celebrities come together as Met Gala attendees to bring about a movement for change at the gala, which serves as a large-scale global stage for fashion?
2. How can the fashion industry move away from fast fashion while still allowing for the production of diverse and unique clothing? How can the demand for innovation and creativity be balanced with the need for sustainability?
3. What effect does the Met Gala have on the push for sustainable fashion?
4. How can circular economy strategies be implemented in the fashion industry on a broader scale? What role should governments play in regulating the fashion industry to promote sustainability and ethical practices?
5. How can technology be leveraged to improve supply chain transparency and traceability in the fashion industry?
6. How can the fashion industry support and empower marginalized communities, including indigenous artisans and garment workers?

Helpful Links

<https://unfashionalliance.org/>

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/climatecrisis/>

<https://www.commonobjective.co/#eff>

<https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>

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Dossier

Stella McCartney

Donatella Versace

Tom Ford

Calvin Klein

Christian Louboutin

Vivienne Westwood

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Carolyn Maloney

Taylor Swift

Blake Lively

Zendaya

Bad Bunny

Dua Lipa

Kim Kardashian



Kylie Jenner

Kendall Jenner

Gigi Hadid

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