



Press Release, 7. September 2021

CIRCULAR CLOTHING IS THE FUTURE

If the planet is to be preserved for future generations, the textile industry must move from a linear to a circular approach. The vision of the initiators of CIRCULAR CLOTHING is a zero-waste industry in which resources are used in a closed loop. The Zurich-based start-up has created an attractive collaboration platform for Swiss textile labels and provides access to a joint Cradle to Cradle® supply chain and Cradle to Cradle Certified® certification. With the launch event on 16 September 2021, CIRCULAR CLOTHING, together with the innovation partner Migros Pioneer Fund, the certification partner EPEA Switzerland and the knowledge partner STF Swiss Textile & Fashion Institute, will offer in-depth insights.

The facts are impressive: in the last ten years, sales of clothes have more than doubled, i.e., more than 100 billion new garments are produced every year. Production is becoming steadily cheaper and faster. Within one year, 60% of the garments produced have already been thrown away. This is equivalent to one truckload full of clothes per second. Many of these garments are only worn once, if they are worn at all. The remaining 40% of clothes are neither sold nor used (source: Ellen MacArthur Foundation).

Paving the way towards circularity

The textile industry is now the second largest polluter in the world. The fast fashion sector in particular is on trial for its impacts, including the enormous consumption of resources, the exhaustion of people, the poisoning of ecosystems and the destruction of the very livelihoods of millions of people. These problems are omnipresent in the fashion industry, and they are very real. For the sake of our planet, we need to rethink the way textiles are designed, produced and used. "For the fashion industry to become more sustainable, it needs a circular approach and special support for small businesses. This is why the Migros Pioneer Fund is supporting CIRCULAR CLOTHING, a project which aims to pave the way for small Swiss textile labels to achieve circularity," says Corinne Grässle, project manager at the Migros Pioneer Fund.

Small and medium-sized textile labels face major challenges when it comes to sourcing circular materials. This is due to small production lots, limited human and financial resources as well as a lack of information. This is where CIRCULAR CLOTHING comes in: it offers Swiss textile labels a platform to work together using materials that are safe, healthy and circular. To facilitate this, it also provides the necessary knowledge on how circular products in the areas of fashion, active wear, outdoor wear and home textiles must be designed and produced so that they can be certified according to the Cradle to Cradle® standard.

By establishing this platform and bundling its members' interests, CIRCULAR CLOTHING aims to create a network of small and medium-sized textile labels, thus building the necessary purchasing power which will enable them to access suppliers of circular and certified materials plus finishing technologies.

A practical use case

In theory, the road from a linear to a circular approach is clear and there are good examples of large textile labels that are already on the ambitious path of circularity. But what does this step mean for a small label? Karen Rauschenbach and Yvonne Vermeulen, founders of the Swiss label the Blue suit and initiators of CIRCULAR CLOTHING, know first-hand about the challenges of producing sustainable fashion in top quality and small quantities in Europe. “Even though we focused on organic materials, durable products and ethical working conditions from the beginning, we wanted to break out of the ‘take, make, waste’ cycle found in the linear economy,” says Karen Rauschenbach. With that goal in mind, they decided to rethink circular clothing by using the high standard of Cradle to Cradle® design.

What does this mean in practice on the supplier side? “On the one hand, we try to convince existing suppliers to convert their production to the Cradle to Cradle® standard, and on the other hand, we approach new suppliers who already offer Cradle to Cradle Certified® materials or finishing technologies,” says Yvonne Vermeulen. The first samples of the new IMMINEENT collection from the Blue suit for summer 2022 are available now. In close cooperation with the certification partner EPEA Switzerland and their material and production partners in Europe, they will now gradually work towards the Cradle to Cradle Certified® standard.

With the Blue suit as a use case, the initiators have established a strong starting point to spread the Cradle to Cradle Certified® standard and to motivate other textile labels to join their cause. In doing so, they are striving to make CIRCULAR CLOTHING a powerful network for enhancing social and ecological responsibility.

A platform for collaboration

The insights gained from the use case form the basis for the collaboration with textile labels in fashion, active wear, work wear and home textiles. The requirements of Cradle to Cradle Certified® products are communicated by means of a guide and in studio workshops. A practical toolbox with material samples is designed to inspire new circular design approaches. The toolbox will be continuously expanded into a holistic Cradle to Cradle Certified® supply chain. This will eliminate not only time-consuming material research but also the demanding certification process for the individual textile labels, which will benefit from a cost-effective Cradle to Cradle Certified® umbrella certification for individual products.

Furthermore, CIRCULAR CLOTHING members have access to attractive communication opportunities on the platform’s channels and those of its partners.

The more textile labels that join CIRCULAR CLOTHING and bolster the network, the fewer restrictions they will have to accept in the future with regard to material sourcing and price requirements. “Only by joining forces will we be able to contribute to a paradigm shift in the textile industry,” says Karen Rauschenbach.

LET'S GO CIRCULAR – Launch Event, 16/09/2021, 5 pm, STF, Hallwylstrasse 71, Zürich

Together with its partners, CIRCULAR CLOTHING will provide an in-depth insight into the new platform for Swiss textile labels, which offers access to a joint Cradle to Cradle® supply chain and certification. Moreover, the first collection pieces of the label the Blue suit, which is already on the Cradle to Cradle® certification path, will be presented.

An evening in the spirit of the circular textile industry

5pm Door opening, registration, welcome aperitif and networking.

6pm Presentation of the platform with the participation of

- Corinne Grässle, Project Manager, Innovation Partner Migros Pioneer Fund
- Albin Kälin, CEO, Certification Partner EPEA Switzerland
- Sonja Amport, CEO, knowledge partner STF Swiss Textile & Fashion Institute
- Manuel Schweizer, CEO OceanSafe AG, supplier of Cradle to Cradle® Certified textiles
- Urs Schellenberg, CEO Schellenberg Textiles, Supplier Cradle to Cradle® Certified Textiles

7:15pm Apéro riche and networking

The event will take place in compliance with the applicable safety regulations of the FOPH. Due to the limited number of places, we kindly ask you to register by 9 September 2021 at the latest.

About CIRCULAR CLOTHING

CIRCULAR CLOTHING is a Zurich-based start-up founded by textile entrepreneurs Karen Rauschenbach and Yvonne Vermeulen in January 2020. Their dream is a zero-waste textile industry in which resources are used in a closed loop – for a better planet. They are convinced of the power of the Cradle to Cradle® model and want to make it the industry standard. By establishing the CIRCULAR CLOTHING platform, they aim to empower Swiss textile labels to join forces in order to boost the paradigm shift in the textile industry towards more social and ecological responsibility. www.circularclothing.org

About the Migros Pioneer Fund

The Migros Pioneer Fund looks for and supports ideas with social potential. It enables pioneering projects that break new ground and seek out forward-looking solutions. Its impact-oriented funding approach combines financial support with coaching services. The Migros Pioneer Fund is part of the Migros Group's social commitment and is funded by the Migros Group with around CHF 15 million annually. For further information: www.migros-pionierfonds.ch/en

About EPEA Switzerland

EPEA Switzerland develops and implements Cradle to Cradle® products and services for various businesses. EPEA Switzerland is an accredited assessment body for the Cradle to Cradle Certified® certification. www.epeaswitzerland.com/en

About STF Swiss Textile & Fashion Institute

The STF Swiss Textile & Fashion Institute has been THE centre of excellence in the textile, fashion and lifestyle industry in Switzerland since 1881. It offers numerous training and further education courses, from basic training to a Master's degree. With its incubator and makerspace, STF provides CIRCULAR CLOTHING with an optimal working environment. In close collaboration, STF and CIRCULAR CLOTHING want to promote the topics of sustainability and Cradle to Cradle® design and provide relevant information and educational offers to young start-ups and other stakeholders. www.stf.ch

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Images

Various pictures can be downloaded from www.circularclothing.org/presse.