

# Fast fashion is still awash with new plastics

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Use of plastic in fast fashion is still strong unfortunately. (Rawpixel pic)  
PARIS: Who would have thought it? Fast fashion retailers aren't meeting some or all of their commitments on sustainable fashion, to help reduce the environmental footprint of the world's second most polluting industry.

At least, so suggest the findings of a report from the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), which analysed more than 10,000 items from some of the UK's leading fast fashion websites, including Asos, Boohoo, Missguided and PrettyLittleThing.

## Up to 89% of items contain new plastics

Like other players in the fashion industry, fast fashion firms have often committed to start – or continue – efforts to improve eco-responsibility, with

the intention of proposing new collections that are more respectful of the planet – and of textile workers.

However, research carried out in May suggests that fast fashion's love for plastic is far from over.

Quite the contrary, in fact, since the majority of items sold online were made at least partially from fibers derived from petrochemicals, such as polyester, acrylic, nylon and polyamide.

The RSA report states that, on average, 80% of the items listed on the fashion websites surveyed contained new plastics.

According to the findings, Asos appears to fare better than the other sites studied, with 65% of clothing containing new plastics, while PrettyLittleThing comes off particularly poorly, with no less than 89% of clothing made with new plastics.

And the findings are just as illuminating when it comes to items made wholly from plastic, with an average of 49% of the clothes on these websites made entirely from new petrochemicals.

And that figure that reaches up to 60% for some of the fast fashion brands studied.

### **Low levels of recycled materials**

While some fast fashion giants have focused their recent marketing on sustainability and circularity, with more recycled materials, the RSA report reveals that, in reality, these only represent a tiny fraction of the fibres used to manufacture their clothes.

On average, only 3% of the clothes listed were made with recycled materials. And for some brands that falls as low as 1%.

The study also notes that, across all the websites analysed, certain garments containing both recycled and virgin plastics were still found to feature the term "recycled" in the product title.

Moreover, consumers who regularly turn to fast fashion aren't necessarily aware of the amount of plastic that may be in their clothing.

The RSA reports that only 49% of frequent fast fashion shoppers admit to buying clothing that contains synthetic materials.