

# Karl Lagerfeld strengthens sustainability strategy with Repair Atelier pilot project

Transporting garments is a complex business. And, inevitably, some items will get damaged on the way from the factory to the distribution centre. But thanks to a pilot project launched by fashion label Karl Lagerfeld in partnership with Bleckmann, being damaged in transit doesn't have to mean the end of the road for clothes.

## A second chance for damaged garments

The Repair Atelier programme aims to reduce garment waste by creating a circular solution for damaged pre-consumer clothing (items that have never been sold or worn). Starting in 2023, the brand worked closely with Bleckmann's circular fashion experts – The Renewal Workshop (TRW) – to develop a renewal solution tailored to their needs.

This involved setting up a dedicated repair station at Bleckmann's warehouse in Almelo, the Netherlands, where one of our Renewal Workshop hubs is located. The Almelo team began by assessing 100 B- and C-grade pre-consumer products for renewal potential. They then set to work repairing them using TRW's proprietary renewal process.

The result? 57 out of the 100 items were repaired to grade A standard, ready for sale. "Building this initiative with Bleckmann and The Renewal Workshop has been a truly collaborative journey," says Rudy Boogaard, Senior Director Operations & Supply Chain. "Bleckmann is a best-in-class renewal partner."

## Garment renewal in the spotlight

To mark Earth Month in April, the repaired clothes were sold as part of an exclusive range available at the Batavia Stad fashion outlet in the Netherlands. The brand developed dedicated marketing materials to celebrate the launch, with in-store signage and bespoke wooden hangtags that can be reused in the future to minimise waste.

Karl Lagerfeld's marketing department also created stylish imagery and video content featuring our Renewal Workshop teams hard at work repairing the garments. These were shared by the brand and the Batavia Stad outlet via different channels, including LinkedIn and e-newsletters – a great way to spread the word about this important initiative.

## Towards a circular fashion future

Karl Lagerfeld already has a number of initiatives in place to reduce its environmental impact, from responsible raw material sourcing to recyclable and recycled packaging. And the Repair Atelier represents an exciting addition to the brand's sustainability journey, demonstrating its commitment to pursuing more sustainable operations.

“As part of our Karl Cares sustainability strategy, we’re committed to decreasing our impact on the planet,” explains Timothy Dreijer, SVP for Retail, Supply Chain & Operations, IT and Legal Affairs at Karl Lagerfeld. “Investigating new circular business models to ensure a longer life span for our products is an important part of this journey.”

## Driving progress on sustainability

Garment repair represents a strategic opportunity to reduce the environmental impact of fashion brands’ operations. According to the Ellen McArthur Foundation, implementing a repair model can result in greenhouse gas emission reductions of up to 31% compared to the usual linear model. And, inspired by the success of the initial pilot programme, the Karl Lagerfeld team is excited about the possibility of expanding its circular operations.

“We’re currently investigating a future scale-up of the Repair Atelier pilot,” concludes Rudy. “There is potential to renew up to 8,000 pre-consumer items per year, which would be another major step towards further integrating circularity into our business. We look forward to discussing with Bleckmann and The Renewal Workshop how we can transition to a full-fledged repair programme and keep pursuing our sustainability ambitions.”

**Reference: Timothy Dreijer, SVP for Retail, Supply Chain & Operations, IT and Legal Affairs at Karl Lagerfeld | [\(4\) Timothy Justin Dreijer | LinkedIn](#)**