

Fashion by Foot showcases micro-sized businesses that design and produce exceptional, indie and bespoke clothing and accessories. It supports local independent creatives by introducing more people to the amazing product and talent we have right here in Melbourne.

We recently caught up with Melbourne based personal style specialist Donna Cameron of Fashion by Foot to learn a little more about the project, and to find out how we can get involved.

Q. For those who don't know, what exactly is Fashion by Foot and how does it work?

A. Fashion by Foot is a walking tour initiative I established with Briar Jasper-Batson (fellow personal image consultant and current President of AICI Melbourne Chapter). Together we run guided tours around inner Melbourne, offering the opportunity to meet local designers and learn about their creative processes. Our focus is exceptional, independent and bespoke fashion and accessories.

Fashion by Foot stands apart from ordinary tours because we teach you how to incorporate certain design elements into your outfits - so it's a walking workshop! And of course Briar and I are available to offer free personal style advice throughout.

After you book, you receive the address of our starting point. We begin with bubbles and nibbles (local delicacies of course!) before setting off on our walking tour of up to eight different locations. We get behind-the-scenes access to studios and work spaces where fashion and accessories are made and/or a designer's retail space. Midway, we stop to rest, refresh and chat.

Q. What was the inspiration behind this unique fashion journey? **A.** From as early as I can remember I've avoided looking like everyone else out there so I've experimented with clothing, sometimes borrowing from various sub-cultures and always seeking out good design elements.

Since becoming a personal style specialist, assisting clients with body image, colour and style challenges as well as personal shopping, I've been privileged to meet many local designers. My eternal quest is uncovering interesting and unique offerings for clients as I specialise in encouraging personalised and individual style. I hate fast fashion and I find chain stores so uninspiring!

We are really blessed to have such a vibrant independent fashion scene here. It's a big part



of what gives Melbourne its uniquely creative culture that, in my opinion, helps make it one of the most liveable cities in the world. But if we don't support these designers develop sustainable businesses, we will lose them!

Many people are too busy to uncover for themselves what's on offer so they default to fast fashion offerings out of pure convenience. Briar and I aim to turn this around by highlighting the exciting and high standard of fashion produced right here.

Q. From a fashion standpoint, why do you think it is important for individuals and fashion designers to connect and communicate directly? **A.** Retail giants encourage mindless consumerism, dictating rapidly changing trends by producing fast fashion at great cost to those who make our clothes and to the environment. It is wasteful and it needs to change. An open dialogue between maker and customer produces fashion that's driven by demand, resulting in a much more responsive and sustainable industry.

Many people are out of touch with the process involved in producing a garment and have been so conditioned to seek cheap options they've forgotten how this impacts the people who make our clothes. Becoming more mindful when buying clothes and spending a little more for quality Melbourne-made benefits us all. It strengthens our local economy, builds our unique culture and reduces the demand for clothes produced unethically.

Q. When is the next Fashion by Foot and how do we get involved? **A.** We have one last tour running before the end of the year, called the Brunswick Bespoke Tour. It's running on Saturday 9 December and tickets are available through Eventbrite.

More tours are planned for 2018. To be updated on our upcoming tours for 2018, keep in touch by following us at Fashion by Foot on Facebook and Instagram.

If you think this experience sounds perfect for someone you love, gift certificates are available. If you'd like one message us through Facebook or Instagram or email me at donna@bodymap.com.au

Interview by James Fox Photography by Fashion By Foot