

The Thinking Watermill Society | April 2022

# Interview with Ms Ken Okada

(Founder of Ken Okada, Paris)



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# Introduction

**Ken Okada** is a phenomenal designer with over 20 years of experience in the fashion industry. She established the Ken Okada Paris fashion house in 2001 to specialize in high-end designer shirts that unify Japanese and Parisian style aspects.

In this interview, The Thinking Watermill Society learns more about Ken Okada, her fashion house and its objectives.



1. Your brand is well known for its unique harmonization of Japanese culture and Parisian allure. What inspired the decision to merge these two different cultures?

Being Japanese and living in Paris for the past twenty years, I wanted to combine the two by mixing Japanese purity and know-how with Parisian style and elegance.



2. You have been in the fashion industry for over 20 years and have viewed an evolution in fashion trends and consumer habits. What changes have stood out to you the most?

Consumers are consuming more consciously today. They are looking to consume less and better. This is an important value for Ken Okada Paris.

3. What do you think is the primary purpose of sustainable fashion?

I think its primary purpose is that it aims to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems.



4. The Ken Okada “Art of the Shirt” is an innovative concept and approach towards sustainable fashion, where a client gives you their old shirt for repurposing. What inspired this idea?

We are always looking to reinvent ourselves, to surprise consumers and always offer innovation and novelty with the ambition of continuing to adorn Parisian women and lovers of the brand. The idea of reworking shirts to give them a new look and make them more spectacular was decisive.

5. The “Made in France” tag indicates origin, quality and opposition to fast fashion. Does your brand use this mark and is it important?

Many of our pieces are Made in France. We make them in our workshop *1 Bis rue de la Chaise* in the 7th district of Paris. This is important because we want to keep our techniques of excellence in handmade pieces.



6. Additionally, 2019 statistics indicate that more than a quarter of the French population had a guilty conscience when buying new clothing. How do you maintain transparency with your present and future clients about the brand and its activities?

We are transparent with our customers through our website and social networks. We share our know-how, our values, our quality, our creativity to reassure them when they buy from Ken Okada Paris.



7. You have accomplished great achievements by creating over 30 different shirt collections, some of which are sold in stores and boutiques around the world. What does your brand do with its production waste?

We make sure that we have as little waste as possible and we look for innovative ideas. For example, with the “Art of the shirt” line we try to give a second life to pieces.



8. Ethical practices are also important within the fashion industry. What practices do you follow to ensure everyone in the supply chain receives a fair share of the profit?

We are currently working on it. Our ongoing project on the Art of the Shirt allows us to have better ethical practices.

9. Digital fashion has gained popularity since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. What are your thoughts on this?

I think it's a good thing, ethically. Especially if it helps to reduce overconsumption and overproduction.





10. What are your aspirations for the future of the Ken Okada brand?

We are constantly looking for new ideas and innovations to meet the demands of our customers. New projects for the brand are underway. *Follow us closely!*



Ken OKADA  
PARIS

Thank you for your cooperation on behalf of The Thinking Watermill Society. All the best in your current and future endeavours, Ms Okada.

# Learn More about Ken Okada Paris

**VISIT KEN OKADA PARIS**





# About The Thinking Watermill Society

The Thinking Watermill Society is a non-profit organization. In particular, it promotes the debate and exchange of ideas among its members regarding the changes underway in the economic, cultural and social landscape, together with the analysis of the consequences that said changes entail, so as to identify the possible opportunities of economic, cultural and social growth related to said changes.

Our headquarters are in Rome, Italy.

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