

ARTS & LIVING

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Shop ethically, make money and stay on-trend Buying secondhand to avoid fast fashion

MARY PITTS
Staff Reporter

As more students become aware of the downfalls of fast fashion companies like Urban Outfitters, Forever 21, Fashion Nova and H&M among others, savvy shoppers are turning to online, secondhand clothing sites like Depop. Many of these shoppers are boycotting said shops as a stance against human rights violations, cruelty and negative environmental impacts.

Sophomore Alex Escribano is disheartened by the lack of ethics behind the production of many popular brands' clothing.

"The overproduction of clothing is a big problem. Brands overproduce to keep up with demand and end up throwing away the clothing that's leftover," Escribano said. "Not only does it affect our climate, but these sweatshops that the clothes are coming out of are not good conditions."

A feeling of unease when supporting big name brands is part of what led Escribano to start shopping secondhand.

"I think if people were more conscious of where their clothes came from they would take care of them for longer or maybe choose to look for secondhand items and support sustainable brands," she said.

Escribano is not alone in her sentiment. Second-year student Mabel Padilla started shopping secondhand as a hobby three years ago. It helps ease her conscience as well as her wallet.

"Personally, I try to not directly support stores like Urban Outfitters because there are better alternatives to shop ethically and sustainably," Padilla said. "For budgeting purposes, shopping second hand is always a great environmentally friendly alternative to buying marked up vintage-looking pieces from Urban Outfitters."

SHOP ETHICALLY AND MAKE AN INCOME

For many avid thrifters, consignment shopping is more than a hobby and a way to shop ethically. It's a source of income as well. Escribano, a textiles major, and Padilla each run their own Depop stores.

Depop is "a peer-to-peer social shopping app based in London" where users can buy, sell and trade on-trend and vintage clothing items, as well as accessories and art. Because many of the pieces on the app are pre-owned, they are often marked-down from the steep prices of retail stores.

"Thrifting and shopping on Depop are way cheaper than shopping at stores like Urban Outfitters," Escribano said. "I've gotten pounds of clothes for under \$20."

Depop is great for those looking for second-hand clothing that fits a specific sense of style. Each store tends to reflect the personal tastes of its owner; their store contents are made up of the pieces they personally gravitated toward and selected from stores or their own wardrobe.

"I'd like to say my style is influenced by my favorite aspects of my life," Padilla said. "Right now I'm into really bright colors and goofy dollar store hair accessories like butterfly clips and fuzzy scrunchies, much like the accessories I wore in the early 2000s as a child."

Although it can be convenient to purchase trendy items from fast fashion brands, thrifting online and in-store can help shoppers curate a more unique sense of style while saving money.

"Since clothing from the 80s, 90s and Y2k is very on trend most clothing brands are coming up with pieces that are very decades inspired," Escribano said. "So, instead of paying \$60 for some mom jeans I can just head to the thrift store and get them for \$2."

Fast fashion items can be seen everywhere, so the special touch of older, thrifted pieces can help you stand out. Escribano's Depop store is also an outlet for her passion for reworking old, damaged clothing.

"Most of the time the items are dirty, stained or ripped and I just fix them up to give them a second chance at life," Escribano said. "These clothes range from real vintage to on-trend pieces. I usually check to see if there are any stains and take those out. If there are any holes or it's unraveling



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anywhere I either sew them by hand or with a machine."

CHOOSING ON-TREND, UNIQUE PIECES

Reselling clothing is a great way to contribute to recycling while keeping your wardrobe feeling fresh and new. Instead of holding on to pieces that tend to stay in the closet rather than getting worn, gently used items can generate an income for students who love to stay up to date on trends. This frees up more storage space for new thrift store finds as well.

When out shopping in thrift stores, it can pay off to stay on the lookout for pieces that are high in demand. Sophomore Nayel Padilla looks out for popular, easy-to-sell items when thrifting specifically for her Depop store.

"When I find things to sell on Depop I tend to gravitate towards trendier clothes or clothes that I've noticed sell quickly and more often," she said. "An example would be shoes. Nike Air Force 1s sell on Depop super fast, so whenever I find a pair while thrifting I always pick them up regardless if they fit me or not. Because I know that they will sell no matter what unless they're like completely trashed."

It can be easy to get discouraged when digging through endless racks of clothing for the perfect items to sell online, but the extra effort can be worth it in the end. Escribano made around \$1000 from her Depop store over the summer.

"Keep an open mind when thrifting," she said. "People always ask me how I have the patience, and it's only because I know I'll find something unique and I keep an open mind about everything."

Because Depop is saturated with fashionable and quirky shops — with over 10 million users according to their site — it's important that sellers put just as much effort into the aesthetics of their store online in order to gain the attention of buyers.

"Upload regularly, be super descriptive with your captions, and make sure your pieces are shot with good lighting," Mabel Padilla said. "Whether it be a studio light or just natural light coming through your window, they need to pop."

While this takes a considerable amount of time and effort, the hard work just might pay off in increased attention from buyers.

"You can sell whatever you want. All you have to do is present everything in a way that's appealing," said Escribano. "Good lighting, modeling, posing and styling the clothing in a way that lets the customer imagine themselves in it. The key is to stand out."

DEPOP STORES TO CHECK OUT

