



commonthreads

WHY COMMONTHREADS? Words from the Horse's Mouth...

When I was young my parents used to have a book on our coffee table called 'The Web of Life' which was about Taoism and physics. For the first time the name made me think about the interconnected relationship I had with every single other object and being. Like the cycle of water that passes from plant, people, cloud, sea, lake, animals. When something detrimental like factory affluent passes into this cycle it effects every single other part of that cycle along the way.

Like the 'web of life' Common Threads [in English] means a common connection, experience, reaction, story, feeling. It's about a community.

For me *commonthreads is an ever growing collective around the world of energetic people who are using creativity as a positive way of changing some people's lives for the better.

Because *commonthreads has a strong fashion focus the double entendre also appealed to my punny humor.

We are particularly concerned with the common thread of textile production. You may not have thought about where the clothes come from that you buy. But it's a pretty sad story. And although you can't see it and it may feel like it's some poor people's issues in far off countries. If you shit in the nest you'll eventually get some on you.

From the farmer:

Typically it will be a cotton garment - since cotton provides 50% of the world's fiber requirements. It'll most likely be grown by a citizen from a third world county like West Africa. They will be paid appallingly since America blows cotton competition out of the water by lavishing \$3 billion-plus in subsidies on the 25,000 citizens who grow cotton (out of a population of 290m). If the American 'democratic' government had done the right thing about cotton at the WTO in Cancun the World Bank estimates it would have lifted almost 150 million people out of poverty.

50% of the profits the farmers do make gets sucked back into increasing pesticide usage [thanks to the American Pesticide giants like Monsanto] on a monoculture crop that keeps them locked into a debt cycle. The pesticides not only are really expensive but 3 million people are seriously ill or dying from agricultural pesticide usage.

Through to the environment

Cotton farming results in loss of soil fertility through high synthetic fertilization and heavy irrigation. It contaminates waterways through the leaching out of pesticides and from phosphate fertilizer run off into water, which creates an imbalance of algae resulting in the death of water creatures.

It is also responsible for increased salinity and the loss of bio-diversity through monocultures and high chemical use.

Through to the people that make it

Horror stories have been leaked to Western press of physical and emotional abuse in sweatshop factories in third world countries. Working for 11 pence an hour, 14 hours a day, 7 days a week. One interviewed worker said 'We feel like prisoners. There is no value in our lives. We are like slaves. Our hands are bound and our mouths are stopped.'

Through to you

A typical t-shirt will contain a teacup of pesticides and fertilizers.

You will drink the polluted water.
Your planet's fertile soil is being destroyed
You will throw out your old clothes and unknowingly to you it will end up in landfill causing an environmental nightmare. Your old clothes will also be pilfered as a part of a black market, sold to third world countries at ridiculously cheap prices resulting in their local textile market being crashed.

And now that you're totally depressed and feeling like it's too big what can you do?
You can get creative - recycle, revamp your clothes.
You can seek out fair-trade, organic and hemp alternatives.
You can put pressure on your government to demand incentives and support for organic cotton farmers.
You can tell your favourite designers to get ethical or you'll stop buying from them.

-ENDS

TICKETS ARE \$39.40 including booking fee
(includes complimentary drinks and bites until 9pm)

For tickets and program information: www.common-threads.net

*Tickets also available at Brisbane Powerhouse Box Office: 07 3358 8600 or
www.brisbanepowerhouse.org

For a more details, including profiles of some of the commonthreads* key players, visuals, interviews and images (historic and newly shot), please contact JANE BALKIN @ Jane Balkin PR & Projects on 07 3254 2191 or 0419 772 550 or janevbalkin@bigpond.com or jane@common-threads.net



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good works

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- * **Emergency Accommodation**
- * **Child and Family Program**
- * **Youth and Young Adult Support**
- * **Overseas Partnership Development**