

Civic Minds

Date: Friday, December 18, 2015

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Article Title: LUXURY PRODUCTS FROM ACCIDENTAL FUR

Section: Main, A3

Vocabulary:

Look up the definition of *stigma*. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

“Paquin counters that the ***stigma*** around fur has eroded in recent years.”

Comprehension Questions

1. Pamela Paquin’s source for fashion is either “tres chic” or will make you shriek. She creates neck muffs, leg warmers, hats and purses from what? What does she prefer to call it?
2. As owner of Petite Mort Furs, a 2-year-old Boston-area company, she said she’s offering the fur industry an alternative to what?
3. Keith Kaplan, head of the Fur Information Council of America, said his trade group considers all North American furs to already be what?
4. “Production of fur in North America is highly regulated with guidelines set through years and years (and millions of dollars) of scientific study,” he said via email, declining to comment on Paquin’s company or the general idea of using roadkill for fur. In fact, the populations of every species used by the industry today are what?
5. Kara Holmquist at the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, declined to elaborate, but said what about roadkill fur?
6. What has revived “fur” popularity?
7. The Fur Information Council of America said the U.S. recorded \$_____ billion in fur sales in 2014. Globally, it’s part of an over \$_____ billion industry.
8. What does her company name, Petit Mort mean?
9. Her fur products are high-end, ranging from \$_____ to \$_____, depending on the product and type of fur used. They can be found online and on Boston’s fashionable Newbury Street, where the company rents display space in a handmade goods market.
10. “The value that these products have is that they’re handmade, local and last a lifetime,” Paquin explains. “That’s not just couture and high-end, but that’s also _____.”

Class Discussion Questions and Essay Prompts:

- ***Have you previously thought about the fur industry and its practices? What is your opinion about it?***
- ***Does any of your family members own a fur? Why or why not?***
- ***Would you purchase a fur? Why or why not?***

Lisa Lange, a senior vice president at People for the Ethical Treatment for Animals, or PETA, said that there's "never an excuse" to wear fur, but that it's "far better" to wear roadkill than farmed fur. Others worry her products could only serve to prolong the industry they've spent decades trying to defeat.

- Do you agree or disagree with PETA's statement? Why or why not?

"All this fur is being thrown away," Paquin said. "If we can pick that up, we never have to kill another fur-bearing animal again."

- What are your feelings about Paquin's statement?

The Fur Information Council of America said the U.S. recorded \$1.5 billion in fur sales in 2014. Globally, it's part of an over \$35 billion industry.

- Did these numbers surprise you? Why or why not?

Heidi Forbes Öste, a San Francisco-area resident who purchased a fox-fur neck muff from Petit Mort last summer, said she's surprised at the pushback from animal-rights groups.

"They're being shortsighted," she said. "We should be encouraging people to buy sustainable fur. These are animals that are already dead."

"Clearly, advocacy had failed," Paquin said. "Alternatives must be found. Making use of animals that would otherwise be thrown away is sensible."

- Can you see their point? Is it sensible? Why or why not?
- Would you purchase road kill or "accidental fur?" Why or why not?

Paquin works with animal-control specialists to gather the carcasses but skins many of them herself. She considers the process almost sacred and doesn't care much for the "roadkill" label.

Each piece comes with a personal note explaining where and when the animal was found.

"It's a turnoff," Paquin said. "It cheapens my product."

- Paquin feels the term roadkill cheapens her product. How do you feel about that?
- Why do you think she includes where and when the animal was found?

Essay

"A business that promotes wearing real fur as fashionable and acceptable may well create more demand for fur from all sources, and could give all fur wearers a shield from legitimate criticism," said Virginia Fuller, of the Boston-area Citizens to End Animal Suffering and Exploitation, or CEASE. Paquin counters that the stigma around fur has eroded in recent years.

- Do you believe the stigma around fur has eroded in recent years? Why or why not?

Newspaper-related CBA activity: U.S. Policy

How the United States government interacts with the world affects people across the globe. Analyze and evaluate the causes and effects of US foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world.

- Using The Seattle Times e-edition, find an article from this week that deals with world politics or foreign policy.
- What are the main points of view from someone living in that particular country? How is that “view” similar and different than your own opinion, regarding the specific issue the article is discussing?
- Why is it important to study and learn about foreign policy? How does it help you understand the world we live in, using current issues and events?

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