MODEM Dialogues - In conversation with Madame Lv

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Xiaolei Lv (Madame Lv), Secretary General of Shanghai Fashion Week Organizing Committee and Executive Vice Chairman of Shanghai Fashion Designer Association

Portrait Madame Lv ® SHFW
Questions conceived and hosted by Florian Müller

MODEM:
The art of balancing international appeal with local authenticity quietly defines much of your work. How do you navigate this delicate equilibrium in the evolving fashion landscape?

Madame Lv:
For me, these two aspects are not in conflict but in dynamic dialogue. Throughout development, I often face moments of uncertainty between global vision and local roots. In such times, I return to my core goals - clarifying what defines identity, refining how to connect with audiences, and coordinating my networks to maintain harmony. It’s an ongoing process of reflection and recalibration, helping me ensure that my work remains both internationally relevant and culturally grounded.

MODEM:
Emerging designers often combine cultural heritage with innovation. Is there a moment when you sense their vision deserves your backing?

Madame Lv:
In our industry, all designers who work diligently deserve encouragement and support.

Naturally, I pay closer attention to those whose work is both appreciated by consumers and successfully integrates cultural heritage with contemporary contexts while expressing their own perspective. Designers with a unique aesthetic vision can translate social, environmental, or cultural reflections into tangible creations. Through the power of platforms, I help these ideas reach a wider audience, gradually shaping a distinctive style for China's design industry.

MODEM:
Behind the seamless coordination of Shanghai Fashion Week lies a network of subtle collaborations. What insights have you gained from managing these intricate relationships?

Madame Lv:
Shanghai Fashion Week thrives on collective effort. From years of coordination, I've learned that decisions must grow from long-term trust and experience. Collaboration deepens through shared practice, where every partner's support strengthens the network. Over time, these connections evolve into a living ecosystem. By continuously exploring and adjusting, we've shaped a platform that unites global perspective with local depth, allowing creativity and cooperation to advance hand in hand.

MODEM:
Innovations in digital presentation open new avenues for creativity and connection. Might these changes encourage new audiences to engage with fashion?

Madame Lv:
Digital innovation has completely reshaped how fashion connects with people. From our Cloud Fashion Week with TMALL to immersive livestream collaborations with Douyin, we've seen how technology opens access and participation on an unprecedented scale. Beyond visibility, it builds dialogue-bridging designers, audiences, and commerce in real time. Recently, our collaboration with AI futurist Zack Kass at the SFDA MASTER CLASS further expanded this exploration, inspiring local designers to imagine future applications of AI in creation and storytelling. For us, digitalization is not just about tools, but about empowering connection, imagination, and shared growth.

MODEM:
The Shanghai Fashion Designers Association was relaunched under your leadership to support Chinese talent. In which ways does this platform deepen the impact of Shanghai Fashion Week?

Madame Lv:
For me, creative talent is the heart of everything we do. The mission of SFDA is to build a long-term ecosystem that nurtures designers beyond the runway. We support young talents in establishing themselves locally-through resources, mentorship, and exposure-while also helping them connect with global stages. This two-way path allows them to grow roots in China and express Chinese creativity to the world. Fashion Week is a highlight, but the Association's true value lies in continuous support - ensuring designers can evolve, sustain, and thrive across seasons.

MODEM:
Navigating economic shifts requires adaptability both from designers and organizers. Where do you find stability while steering through these tides of change?

Madame Lv:
I am very aware of the impact the current global economic environment has on the industry, and I never shy away from this reality. Stability, to me, doesn't mean resisting change - it's about building resilience within the ecosystem. For designers, it comes from learning and constant growth. That's why SFDA organizes training, sharing sessions, and resource exchanges, helping them adapt and keep creating value even in uncertain times. For us as organizers, stability means providing a supportive framework - resources, opportunities, and a sense of community - so creativity can continue to thrive.

MODEM:
Every season is also a story. What kind of emotions and memories would you like people to take away from Shanghai Fashion Week?

Madame Lv:
Each iteration of Shanghai Fashion Week expresses not only fashion, but also emotion, energy, and connection. What I hope people take away is a sense of possibility: that creativity can reshape life, and that Shanghai is a city where tradition and innovation coexist naturally. Whether it's through a show, an encounter, or a shared idea, I want visitors to feel inspired and emotionally engaged - to see that fashion here is not distant or exclusive, but alive, human, and constantly evolving with the rhythm of the city.

MODEM:
The gradual integration of mental health awareness into fashion dialogues signals new growth. Is this transformation already shaping attitudes where you are active?

Madame Lv:
Attention to mental and emotional well-being is increasingly shaping fashion. Emotional value is now central in brand-consumer interactions, expressed through clothing, spaces, and multi-sensory experiences, integrating naturally into daily life. This resonates strongly with younger audiences, for whom fashion is a medium to evoke feelings and express identity. Designers and brands are expanding fashion categories, using products, lifestyle experiences, and storytelling to meet emotional and psychological needs. In our ecosystem, this shift is already influencing attitudes, encouraging the industry to rethink innovation, creative expression, and social responsibility, and positioning fashion as both meaningful and human-centered.

MODEM:
Structuring a large-scale event while respecting individual creative journeys demands nuanced leadership. How have you refined your approach over time?

Madame Lv:
I have always felt that the greatest respect an organizer can show to creators is to understand and support them. My work is about highlighting and amplifying the strengths of each individual through events, allowing the wider audience to truly appreciate their value. In this process, I constantly learn - engaging more deeply with professionals, identifying each contributor's unique qualities, and finding paths that align with overall development. These ongoing adjustments ensure that every participant's potential can be fully realized.

MODEM:
Reflecting on your journey, what core qualities do you believe sustain resilience in the fast-paced fashion industry?

Madame Lv:
Passion. Because it is only when you are passionate about this industry that you develop genuine expectations; and with these expectations, you are willing to dedicate all your efforts to make your work meaningful and valuable.