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25 FOR 25 SERIES

## CÉLINE BONNAIRE

*25 for 25 is an original content series by Gucci and CHIME FOR CHANGE to mark the historic milestone of Beijing +25 in March, as well as Women's History Month. The series will highlight activists, CHIME Advisory Board members, partners and supporters who represent the progress made on gender equality over the past 25 years, and the emerging next generation continuing this critical work.*



CHIME is honored to feature Céline Bonnaire, Executive Director of the **Kering Foundation**. The Kering Foundation was founded in 2008 and is dedicated to combatting violence against women in three main areas: Americas, Western Europe and Asia. The Kering Foundation is a founding partner of CHIME FOR CHANGE and has collaborated with Gucci and CHIME on projects supporting women around the world including CHIMEHACK, a hackathon to develop technology solutions to eliminate barriers to reporting violence against women, and Women Bylines Paris, CHIME's intensive journalism program to train and amplify the voices of women and their underrepresented stories. Learn more about the Kering Foundation's programs and impact at **KeringFoundation.org**.

Discover Céline's reflections on the fight for gender equality and learn about what has motivated her leadership for more than a decade below.

### **What are your hopes and expectations for gender equality in the next 25 years?**

It would be idyllic to say that in a quarter of century, I hope that gender equality is not something that we are still striving for, but a constant, unquestionable tenet in our existence. However, reflecting on our history, it might take quite a bit longer. Thus, my greatest wish is that in our trajectory for equality, we remember the tension between power and privilege and that not all challenges are experienced through the same lens. Our fight must be intersectional; conscious of the barriers and biases that are oft invisible and our future is one created in unison with the mission statement, 'nothing about us without us'.

### **What does gender equality mean to you?**

Gender equality is purpose-driven advocacy to re-design a world that was cultivated for a specific few. It is an understanding that gender is not binary and often, the most important and powerful actions one can take is to listen, make space, amplify voices and continuously ask the question, "Who is not in the room?".

## **What keeps you energized and committed as a leader for gender equality?**

To create change, it is often necessary to share vulnerable and intimate parts of yourself with the world, in the hope that hearts and minds are transformed – beyond sympathy to empathy, and then to action. This public exhibition of oneself can be exhausting, at least for me. What drives me is that by participating in this public discussion, it might swing the pendulum so that the next generation won't have to explain who they are in order to exist – they can just be.

## **What advice would you give younger generations on how to advocate / work for gender equality as they get older?**

Continuously ask why – with kindness. So often, the codes of our society have been embedded without any thinking as to their purpose. Often, change is impossible because we have never been brave enough to imagine an alternative. Be curious, be ambitious, be tenacious and be kind.

## **Who do you look to as an example / role model in the fight for gender equality?**

It's difficult to choose. In politics, it would be Jacinda Ardern and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. They are both presenting a new definition of leadership; one that is imbued with empathy and a deep understanding of the power of the human experience. In writing, it is Jia Tolentino, Zadie Smith, Reni Eddo-Lodge and Michaela Cole. In art, it is Kara Walker, Yumna, Kimberly Drew, Amy Sherland, and Toyin Ojih Odutola. In advocacy, it is Rebecca Cokley, Aoife Martin, ChellaMan and Suzy Byrne.

