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VIVANESS2023

into natural beauty



VIVANESS: Elfriede Dambacher column

Insights – Perspectives – Rays of Hope

In the dark winter months, light lifts the spirits. I feel the same way when I manage to better understand a complex matter. More and more people would like to be conscious consumers. In the cosmetics market, sustainability is the number 1 issue across the board – and that's a good thing. It is not always easy to make informed purchasing decisions. Cosmetic products are a complex mixture of a lot of different substances and so it is not always an easy task to make a distinction in terms of sustainability between conventional and natural organic cosmetics, because a lot of different factors come into play.

However, if you delve deeper, you will find that sustainability is a concept that can be very elastic. As a fan of natural and organic cosmetics, I often have a different understanding of sustainability than that proudly claimed for their products by conventional prestige brands. Why is that the case? The history of the sector provides a reason: The roots of the conventional cosmetics industry lie in the fossil era. Over decades, the availability of mineral oil-based raw materials and the technical capabilities of laboratories were the basis for business success. Now, the picture is gradually changing, even if sufficient resistance to change can still be discerned. The market is changing.

More and more "nature-based" ingredients are being used, although these are still far from being comparable with the raw ingredients used in natural cosmetics. As for the matter in hand, when it comes to the product there is still a lot of scope for being more consistently sustainable. The natural and organic cosmetics segment has imposed stringent criteria on itself, which give consumers some guidance when combined with the corresponding certification labels. The boundaries are blurred when it comes to sustainability. Only when there is transparency along the entire supply chain can I determine what is in the jar and what isn't when I come to buy it.

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