

A window into Greenwich Village's Beacon's Closet

A place where window shopping might be a better approach

As you trek towards the Beacon's Closet outlet on 10 West 13th Street in Greenwich Village, you feel the difference of atmosphere thickening in the air. The average 'New Yorker' (think sneakers, trousers, a puffer jacket and a speedy gait) is replaced with youngsters frontlining the world of experimental and trendy fashion. Such is a crowd that breathes allure into a store like Beacon's Closet, where every colour and print has a taker and its vivacious assortment of pre-loved clothes await customers at the ready.

The display of the store is dotted with fairy lights, and the collection of miscellaneous jewellery and eyewear pieces greeting you at the entrance only finetune its hipster-like charm. A sequence of sublime lights boasts a canopy over the preying shoppers, of which many are dressed like they're headed to a Vogue photoshoot after. The glamour factor etched in every square inch of Beacon's Closet might lead you astray from the actual purpose of a thrift store, which is to make clothing affordable for the less fortunate (hey, no prizes for guessing). The primary objective of thrifting and Beacon's Closet business module ironically lie on opposite ends of a spectrum. To understand how, we'll have to navigate the store once again, starting outside and working our way in.

The decoration-ridden exterior and prime Manhattan location of the store is a dead giveaway of what its values entail, as its customers. Such a locale can only be afforded with exorbitant price tags to match and the right demographic to lap it up. If one were to head inside to confirm their

suspensions, they would not be disappointed. I, for one, hopped from rack to rack to really immerse myself in what the store had to offer. The compact racks, closely monitored by the store staff in a militant manner, are undoubtedly pleasing to the eye. However, attached to every article of clothing is a small, fading chip of paper— in grotesque contradiction with the rest of the extravagant outlet, and belying something quite sinister.

With some prices soaring from pumps for \$100, a leather jacket for \$170 and a basic cotton vest for \$34, one stands aghast in the face of gentrification and the unnecessary glamorisation of a practice that is a way of life for many by circumstance and not by choice. In a store priding itself on sustainability, shopping first hand sounds oddly like a better option.