

# Tempered rebound

- Consumer discretionary sector outperforms the broader market in August
- Fashion Engagement fund slightly outperforms MSCI ACWI
- US consumer sentiment falls in August fuelled by concerns on higher prices

## Market review and developments

In August, the global market delivered positive returns, driven by the Materials, Healthcare and Consumer Discretionary sectors. The Information Technology sector, which is the largest sector in the MSCI World Index, underperformed, while the Utilities sector was the only sector which generated negative returns in the month. The Consumer Discretionary sector, which is the largest sector in the Fashion Engagement fund, generated positive performance and outperformed the broader market. Within Consumer Discretionary, Textiles, Apparel and Luxury Goods – the relevant sub-industry for the Fashion Engagement fund – also outperformed the broader market, after a prolonged period of underperformance. Finally, the Consumer Staples and Materials both sectors generated positive returns and outperformed the market.

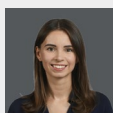
In August 2025, the University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index fell to 58.2, a 5.7% decline from July and the first decline in four months, primarily due to heightened concerns about the economy and rising inflation. While the index remains 11% above April and May levels, the decline in sentiment in August was visible across demographic and income groups. In particular, buying conditions for durable goods fell to its lowest reading in a year, and over 40% of consumers spontaneously mentioned high prices eroding their purchasing power, a higher share than in previous months. Finally, the market is eagerly waiting for the Bureau of Labor Statistics' jobs data for August after the US job market slowed substantially in July and job figures from May and June were drastically revised downwards. Unemployment rate is expected to tick slightly higher, while change in payrolls are expected to be modest month over month.

In line with developments in the Consumer Sentiment Index, company comments on the health of the consumer remained subdued in August. Walmart flagged that lower and middle income households were adjusting consumptions in light of higher prices and that discretionary categories impacted by tariffs saw lower unit growth as customers reallocate spending. In beauty, specialty retailer Ulta's shares fell despite reporting a strong quarter, as management comments suggested that consumers continue to prudently manage their day-to-day spending and monitor pricing trends in response to tariffs.

Finally, spring / summer 2026 fashion weeks are just around the corner, with New York kicking off in the second week of September, followed by London, Milan and finally Paris. Jonathan Anderson will present his first women ready-to-wear show in Paris, three months after his inaugural men's collection for Dior, which was a critical success, praised for its soft rebellion.

## PORTFOLIO MANAGER'S UPDATE **AUGUST 2025**

Marketing material for professional investors, not for onward distribution



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Deputy Portfolio Manager

## Performance

### Last month's performance<sup>1</sup>

During the month of August, the Fashion Engagement fund delivered a slightly positive absolute return and outperformed the MSCI ACW Index, but underperformed slightly its internally constructed benchmark. The **Premiumization** cluster delivered the best performance, followed by **Automation & Digitalization** and **Sustainability & Circularity**. The **Casualization & Value** cluster returned negative performance weighed by **Crocs** and **Pandora**.

Within **Premiumization** – the fund's largest cluster, accounting for 33% of assets – most companies delivered positive absolute returns. **Galderma** (+8.8%) continued to perform well, after strong second quarter results in July, as prescription data for its new atopic dermatitis drug remained solid. Improved sentiment on China driven by the acceleration in its stock market rally in August, ahead of 3<sup>rd</sup> September parade, supported the performance of luxury stocks in the second half of the month, notably **LVMH** (+6.7%) which was up for the second month in a row, as well as **Moncler** (+5.8%) and **Prada** (+5.2%). **Richemont** (+4.1%) benefitted from improved sentiment on China, as well as comments from the CEO of competitor Swatch describing the US watch market as strong. **Hermes** (-2.8%) declined slightly after underwhelming results at the end of July and **Marimekko** (-8.1%) declined after a soft quarter.

**Casualization & Value** – the fund's second-largest cluster, accounting for 26% of total assets – saw positive performance from apparel manufacturer **Levi's** (+11.2%), which continued to perform after reporting better-than-expected second quarter numbers mid-July, and from **Deckers Outdoor** (+10.2%), which benefitted from improved sentiment as short term data pointed towards an acceleration in demand. Off-price retailers **TJX** (+7.7%) and **Ross Stores** (+5.4%) reported solid second quarter results, as consumers continue to seek value and both retailers maintain attractive assortments with gaps to high street prices. **Beiersdorf** (-9.9%) declined after issuing a full year guidance cut, as a result of the slowdown in its core brand Nivea in the second quarter. **On Holding** (-9.2%) declined after a broker downgrade, despite strong quarterly results, with topline growth in the high thirties and a raised full year guidance.

The **Automation & Digitalization** cluster (18% of assets) saw a positive contribution from merchant platform **Shopify** (+12.8%) after the company reported quarterly results strongly beating market expectations. **Stella International** (+6.5%) gained as multi-year growth trajectory supported by capacity expansion is becoming increasingly visible. **Zebra Technologies** (-8.5%) corrected despite a beat and raise at second quarter results. The market concerns about Zebra's customers being impacted by economic uncertainty and the acquisition announced by the company both weighed on the stock.

In the **Sustainability & Circularity** cluster (16% of assets), resale company **Winmark** (+20.5%) recovered after a sharp decline in June and uniform rental company **Cintas** (-7.5%) declined as market flows rotated out of the industrials sector in August.

The five best-performing stocks in terms of contribution to total return in August were **Shopify** (+0.6% contribution), **Winmark** (+0.5% contribution), **Galderma** (+0.3% contribution), **TJX** (+0.3% contribution) and **Deckers Outdoor** (+0.2% contribution).

The bottom five contributors in August were **Beiersdorf** (-0.3% detraction), **Zebra Technologies** (-0.3% detraction), **On Holding** (-0.3% detraction), **Crocs** (-0.3% detraction) and **Pandora** (-0.3% detraction).

<sup>1</sup> Performance in text is always in base currency.

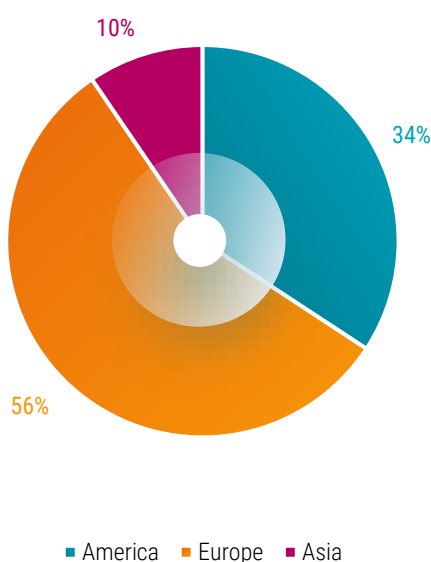
**Table 1 – Periodic performance comparison – August 2025**

	YTD	Last month	Last 3 months	Last 6 months	Last 12 months	Last 2 years p.a.	Last 3 years p.a.	Last 5 years p.a.	Since first performance date p.a.*
Robeco Fashion Engagement (gross of fee, EUR)	<b>-11.01%</b>	<b>0.24%</b>	<b>-5.07%</b>	<b>-13.08%</b>	<b>-5.53%</b>	-	-	-	<b>5.64%</b>
MSCI AC World Index TRN	1.11%	0.20%	5.25%	-1.15%	9.50%	-	-	-	19.59%
Excess return	-12.13%	0.05%	-10.33%	-11.93%	-15.03%	-	-	-	-13.95%
Robeco Fashion Engagement (gross of fee, USD)	<b>0.59%</b>	<b>2.52%</b>	<b>-2.13%</b>	<b>-2.17%</b>	<b>-0.10%</b>	-	-	-	<b>11.69%</b>
MSCI AC World Index TRN	14.30%	2.47%	8.52%	11.25%	15.79%	-	-	-	26.43%
Excess return	-13.71%	0.05%	-10.65%	-13.42%	-15.90%	-	-	-	-14.75%

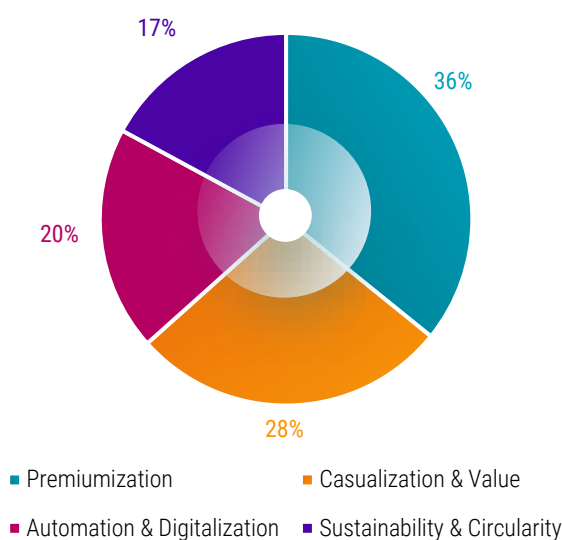
**Past performance is no guarantee of future results. The value of your investments may fluctuate.** Source: Robeco. Data as of 31.08.2025. Returns gross of fees, based on gross asset value. If the currency in which the past performance is displayed differs from the currency of the country in which you reside, then you should be aware that due to exchange rate fluctuations the performance shown may increase or decrease if converted into your local currency. Performance since inception is as of the first full month. Periods shorter than one year are not annualized. Values and returns indicated here are before cost; the performance data does not take account of the commissions and costs incurred on the issue and redemption of units. \*25.10.2023. Upon request information on other share classes can be provided.

### Portfolio review

#### Regional allocation



#### Cluster allocation



Source: Robeco. Data as of 31.08.2025

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### Portfolio changes

In August, we took profit in merchant platform Shopify after strong second quarter results, and reduced personal care company Beiersdorf and luxury brand Hermes due to softer fundamentals. We exited Crocs as headwinds are likely to linger into the next financial year. We added to luxury brand Burberry, personal and household care company Unilever and cosmetics manufacturer Cosmecca.

### Engagement activities

By the end of August, the total number of engagement dialogues was 92.

**Table 2 – Portfolio top 10 holdings**

Company	Country*	Company focus	Weight
Shopify Inc	Canada	Commerce platform to start, run, and grow a business	3.94%
Cie Financiere Richemont SA	Switzerland	Luxury conglomerate (Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, IWC, etc.)	3.82%
Galderma Group AG	Switzerland	Global pure play leading dermatology company	3.71%
TJX Cos Inc/The	United States	Off-price apparel and home fashion retailer	3.57%
Hermes International SCA	France	French luxury brand	3.51%
MercadoLibre Inc	United States	South American ecommerce and payments platform	3.49%
Zebra Technologies Corp	United States	Manufactures advanced data-capture devices for supply chain management	3.29%
L'Oreal SA	France	Global beauty company offering a multi-brand portfolio	3.28%
EssilorLuxottica SA	France	Leading eyewear player	2.98%
Industria de Diseno Textil SA	Spain	Integrated apparel company	2.98%
<b>Total</b>			<b>34.57%</b>

**Source:** Robeco \* Company domicile, data as of 31.08.2025

The data stated above may differ from data on the monthly factsheets due to different sources.

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### Outlook

The fashion industry has been through three unprecedented years, initially hit by pandemic-induced store closures, temporary shifts in shopping habits fueled by government stimuli and supply chain disruptions. This was followed by inventory destocking and a cost-of-living crisis across all major economies. Today, fears of macroeconomic, geopolitical and climate-related pressures are weighing on the sector, with most managements referring to 'normalization' and 'uncertainty.'

Consumer shopping appetite appears to have diminished not only in Europe and the US, but also in China and beyond – ranging from mass market fashion to sportswear, and even entry-level luxury. Despite these continued challenges, McKinsey Fashion Growth Forecasts predicts the global fashion market will post low single-digit growth in 2025, reflecting a structural deceleration following the post-pandemic boom.

We expect key top-down catalysts for the majority of companies in our investment universe to return confidence in Chinese spending at home and internationally, better-than-expected demand across the US and European customer cohorts, and prudent cost management. While we are somewhat cautious about the near-term outlook for the industry as a whole, we do see attractive stock picking valuation opportunities for well-managed companies with uniquely positioned brands and robust balance sheets.

From a sustainability point of view, in such uncertain times we believe it becomes even more important for brands not to resort to cost-cutting measures that put undue pressure on suppliers operating in less-developed economies.

The persistent and widening living wage gap problem continues to be a significant industry challenge, with only limited tangible progress made to improve working conditions for the millions of people it employs. We also continue to see technical difficulties and underinvestment in the much-needed commercial scaling of circular solutions for blended and synthetic fibers. While there are many innovative pilot projects between brands, manufacturers and startups on alternative materials, a key bottleneck persists: who should pay to scale up these technologies?

In light of these developments, our conversations with investee companies, regulators and multi-stakeholder initiatives suggest a tipping point is on the horizon, as legislation looms. The EU is leading the way, as it makes progress toward better transparency and traceability by establishing an EPR scheme for fashion in addition to regulations on greenwashing claims and an ecodesign framework. While there is no comprehensive or structured approach on how best to respond to tightening regulatory standards, many of the discussions with our investees indicated that such regulations are welcome. In fact, they are perceived to not only bring clarity, but also to allow for a more even distribution of responsibility among governments, brands and investors alike, as they scale responsible business practices (beyond brand-only responsibility).

We retain our enthusiasm and renewed conviction in the fund's dual objectives of delivering attractive long-term investment returns while driving systemic change in the industry through engagement.

#### Why invest?

Fashion is a large and important industry whose expansion over the coming decades will continue to be fueled by population growth, rising disposable incomes and conspicuous consumption. However, the industry is far from sustainable. On average, garment workers are paid 45% below local living wages, and less than 1% of garments are recycled into new fibers. It is critical that sustainable solutions are implemented to transform the sector's operations from a linear take-make-waste model to a circular one, and that important social issues such as workers' rights and wages are addressed. The Fashion Engagement Fund sees these challenges as value-generating opportunities. The aim of the fund is to capture financial returns and drive sustainable change in the industry through a disciplined, long-term investment approach supported by tailored engagement.

#### Sustainable investment objective (SFDR)

The aim of the sub-fund is to achieve long-term returns through investing in fashion companies that have the intent or potential to drive structural change by addressing the industry's sustainability challenges, such as harmful work environments, unfair wage systems, harm to natural resources, unsustainable sourcing of materials, and cradle-to-grave production models. This is implemented by actively investing in companies throughout the entire fashion value chain and actively engaging with them to achieve positive changes on set objectives. The sub-fund has a focused, concentrated portfolio with a small number of larger positions.

There is no reference benchmark designated for the purpose of attaining the environmental or social characteristics promoted by the fund.

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This document has not been registered with the Monetary Authority of Singapore ("MAS"). Accordingly, this document may not be circulated or distributed directly or indirectly to persons in Singapore other than (i) to an institutional investor under Section 304 of the SFA, (ii) to a relevant person pursuant to Section 305(1), or any person pursuant to Section 305(2), and in accordance with the conditions specified in Section 305, of the SFA, or (iii) otherwise pursuant to, and in accordance with the conditions of, any other applicable provision of the SFA. The contents of this document have not been reviewed by the MAS. Any decision to participate in the Fund should be made only after reviewing the sections regarding investment considerations, conflicts of interest, risk factors and the relevant Singapore selling restrictions (as described in the section entitled "Important information for Singapore Investors") contained in the prospectus. Investors should consult their professional adviser if you are in doubt about the stringent restrictions applicable to the use of this document, regulatory status of the Fund, applicable regulatory protection, associated risks and suitability of the Fund to your objectives. Investors should note that only the Sub-Funds listed in the appendix to the section entitled "Important information for Singapore Investors" of the prospectus ("Sub-Funds") are available to Singapore investors. The Sub-Funds are notified as restricted foreign schemes under the Securities and Futures Act, Chapter 289 of Singapore ("SFA") and invoke the exemptions from compliance with prospectus registration requirements pursuant to the exemptions under Section 304 and Section 305 of the SFA. The Sub-Funds are not authorized or recognized by the MAS and shares in the Sub-Funds are not allowed to be offered to the retail public in Singapore. The prospectus of the Fund is not a prospectus as defined in the SFA. Accordingly, statutory liability under the SFA in relation to the content of prospectuses does not apply. The Sub-Funds may only be promoted exclusively to persons who are sufficiently experienced and sophisticated to understand the risks involved in investing in such schemes, and who satisfy certain other criteria provided under Section 304, Section 305 or any other applicable provision of the SFA and the subsidiary legislation enacted thereunder. You should consider carefully whether the investment is suitable for you. Robeco Singapore Private Limited holds a capital markets services license for fund management issued by the MAS and is subject to certain clientele restrictions under such license.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in Spain**

Robeco Institutional Asset Management B.V., Sucursal en España with identification number W0032687F and having its registered office in Madrid at Calle Serrano 47-14º, is registered with the Spanish Commercial Registry in Madrid, in volume 19.957, page 190, section 8, sheet M-351927 and with the National Securities Market Commission (CNMV) in the Official Register of branches of European investment services companies, under number 24. The investment funds or SICAV mentioned in this document are regulated by the corresponding authorities of their country of origin and are registered in the Special Registry of the CNMV of Foreign Collective Investment Institutions marketed in Spain.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in South Africa**

Robeco Institutional Asset Management B.V. is registered and regulated by the Financial Sector Conduct Authority in South Africa.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in Switzerland**

The Fund(s) are domiciled in Luxembourg. This document is exclusively distributed in Switzerland to qualified investors as defined in the Swiss Collective Investment Schemes Act (CISA). This material is distributed by Robeco Switzerland Ltd, postal address: Josefstrasse 218, 8005 Zurich. ACOLIN Fund Services AG, postal address: Leutschenbachstrasse 50, 8050 Zürich, acts as the Swiss representative of the Fund(s). UBS Switzerland AG, Bahnhofstrasse 45, 8001 Zurich, postal address: Europastrasse 2, P.O. Box, CH-8152 Opfikon, acts as the Swiss paying agent. The prospectus, the Key Information Documents (PRIIP), the articles of association, the annual and semi-annual reports of the Fund(s), as well as the list of the purchases and sales which the Fund(s) has undertaken during the financial year, may be obtained, on simple request and free of charge, at the office of the Swiss representative ACOLIN Fund Services AG. The prospectuses are also available via the website.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in Taiwan**

The Funds may be made available outside Taiwan for purchase outside Taiwan by Taiwan resident investors, but may not be offered or sold in Taiwan. The contents of this document have not been reviewed by any regulatory authority in Taiwan. If you are in any doubt about any of the contents of this document, you should obtain independent professional advice.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in Thailand**

The Prospectus has not been approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission which takes no responsibility for its contents. No offer to the public to purchase the Shares will be made in Thailand and the Prospectus is intended to be read by the addressee only and must not be passed to, issued to, or shown to the public generally.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in the United Arab Emirates**

Some Funds referred to in this marketing material have been registered with the UAE Securities and Commodities Authority ("the Authority"). Details of all Registered Funds can be found on the Authority's website. The Authority assumes no liability for the accuracy of the information set out in this material/document, nor for the failure of any persons engaged in the investment Fund in performing their duties and responsibilities.

**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in the United Kingdom**

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**Additional information for investors with residence or seat in Uruguay**

The sale of the Fund qualifies as a private placement pursuant to section 2 of Uruguayan law 18,627. The Fund must not be offered or sold to the public in Uruguay, except under circumstances which do not constitute a public offering or distribution under Uruguayan laws and regulations. The Fund is not and will not be registered with the Financial Services Superintendency of the Central Bank of Uruguay. The Fund corresponds to investment funds that are not investment funds regulated by Uruguayan law 16,774 dated 27 September 1996, as amended.