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COLLECTION:
VOLUME IV

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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Scott

The Hidden Workforce

August 4, 2016

There's the nature of child labour in all its hellish combinations.

One example is child slavery. It's a subset of it. Child labour is estimated above 200,000,000 children. That's 18 times the number of children in Canada as a whole. It's 'jaw dropping'.

The kids in child slavery are a much smaller number and going through some of the most severe forms of degradation, humiliation, abuse, and exploitation. They might not know better either. But we do.

And that's the point. If the world leaders don't, and citizens don't, do something about it, few others can or will.

Collective Action

August 5, 2016

To begin combating large problems, we need to collaborate and work together.

The nature of large-scale problems can be solved through collective action. Collective action via the small contributions multiplied over people.

Multiplied over, this can mean use of things that produce carbon to combat climate change or global warming. It might not mean the best economic system at the moment. But it does provide a survivable future for the next generation.

Upcoming generations will be dealing with the same issues as us, but with science we can make great progress. Collective action, scientific and not-so scientific, has compounding effects. It changes the policy, law, and production of society.

The production and energy consumption of energy as well as the production of the goods and services that consume that energy. That means moving from something like hydrocarbon producing energy sources to less hydrocarbon producing energy sources, or even solar or nuclear power.

If we can work together, get our 'house in order' and collaborate on small networks and small scales, we can have an impact that brings great change. It's a bit like 'think globally and act locally'. Every single contribution towards a common goal counts.

An Interview with Anna Sundari

August 5, 2016

Tell us about yourself – family background, personal story, education, and previous professional capacities.

I was born and grew up in England. I spent a lot of time in Brighton, Glastonbury, and Southwest England. When I left school, I qualified as a hairdresser. I started travelling at the age of 20. I went on a trip to Australia. I was travelling, meeting amazing people, and studying philosophy and spirituality. I went to India at the age of 21. I started making jewelry and leather accessories. The business has expanded after that. I have always been into working with natural fabrics. I have one brother and one sister. Both are younger than me. They are in London. My parents live in the countryside.

What is the importance of ethical fashion?

It is to support the communities and not sweatshop labor. My ethic is that we work in an environment where everyone is happy and paid well. We have a relationship with the people producing our line, our clothing.

Also, we are working more with natural fabrics. We are trying to find more sustainable fabrics. Fabrics that can be more of a solution rather than part of the throwaway fashion industry. We aim to make clothes that don't fall apart. That doesn't go out of fashion. Fashion is such a quick industry.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion?

It is making clothes that don't fall apart. That are biodegradable and won't pollute the planet. Cotton pollution is one of the biggest polluters in the world. It is finding more natural fabric solutions rather than contributing to the problem. We don't want polyester fabric.

(Laugh)

What is the inspiration for Sundari Creations – and its title?

Sundari is a Sanskrit name. It was given to me about 10 years ago. When I was doing yoga in India, it means "Beautiful." The whole Sanskrit name means "divine mother of inner beauty." It is more commonly known as "beautiful." When you break down "beautiful," it means "Be-You-To-Full." The whole concept of the line is to feel complete, to feel themselves to the full, and to feel confident.

What makes Sundari Creations unique?

It is to have more cutting-edge designs and using natural, sustainable fabrics. A lot of the natural clothing is often plain and simple – not so creative. It is our mission to create cutting edge designs with natural fabrics. It is targeting a wide range of people, too. For people that live in the cities, practice yoga or dance. It targets adventurous spirits as well.

It supplies wholesale clothing, jewelry, and accessories. Why these products in particular?

I am creative and love using different materials. We are more specialized with the clothes and the jewelry. The accessories are a fun product to make. It's, for me as an artist, a fun material to make products with. I use leather because its strong lasting and natural and a by product. That's part of the idea. It is working with natural fabrics. Fabrics that is strong. It's because I am creative and like different materials.

(Laugh)

You have an offer of \$1,000 for minimum orders. How does this improve the livelihoods of small businesses?

We give a small starting price because it is not a huge investment for small businesses. We do have to have a minimum because it's easier for our production house and everyone involved. We have to dye the fabric and print it. We need minimum orders to keep it realistic.

You have a close relationship with pattern makers, seamstresses, and tailors, and do not have products from sweat -shops. How does this improve the ethical considerations for the products – consumer and suppliers?

It helps to pay more attention to the way that our clothing is produced. A lot of the stuff from the high street stores these days we have no idea where the products are coming from. I know that when something is sold for less than a fiver (£5). It costs me more than that to make.

So, whoever is making that item, they may not be being paid that well. When you're buying clothes, it is important to consider how that item is produced. Animals have been mistreated, especially when demand is high. It is important to start noticing where our clothes etc coming from, where they are made, the fabrics etc.

The main value seems to be fairness. If someone is working in a condition, making a product, they should have adequate pay and fairness is part of that. Also, it is important to know what conditions are like for the person – to be more involved at that level. Obviously, the consumer can't be involved at that level, but they can do some research at least – if they have the time. (Laughs) Support smaller labels and local designers.

What is the importance of that close relationship with the producer to you?

I love the people that I work with. I support them. Not just because I love them. I want to have fun, have good communication, and know everyone's happy. Like in England or America, you want everyone to feel happy and feel appropriately paid for his or her work. In Asia and other places where a lot of clothes are made, there are people that are mistreated.

Conditions aren't always so great. Everything these days in made in Asia, China, and Vietnam.

For me, I enjoy having the good relationship with my staff and know that they are happy, enjoying what they are doing, and everyone is getting paid right.

What other work are you involved in at this point time?

Mainly, I am working on clothing and designs. Also, I teach yoga, which I do volunteer for deprived children in the community and the neighborhood. I do some healing work.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I love being creative. I am more, and more, working on the ethical and natural fabrics. I am trying to support the market for Eco ethical clothing. For the clothes, I feel that it is hopefully going to be part of the solution to the environmental problems that the fashion industry is creating.

Fashion, without plastic materials. I like that aspect. I feel like I can help be part of the solution making sustainable clothes. I love to express the creative side. I love to express my spirit and sharing what I've learned. It is being healthy and present. I think yoga is great for everybody. If you do a bit each day, you can feel vitalized by getting the circulation and energy moving. The healing, its good to help one another.

What is this healing?

I do many healing modalities such as Reiki and Theta; it's a life style and adds to healthy living.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

It's great. They are promoting ethical fashion. It is important in the current times with consumerism as the reality we're living in, where things are mass produced and not really made to last. Trusted Clothes is great because they are supporting the same beliefs as me. They are making a change for people to be more aware of what they're purchasing, what the materials are made from how it's made, where it's made. Is it what they really, really want or is it because it is a bargain and cheap? It changes the way we look at things to something more serious.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

I don't know.

(Laugh)

I think I've said it all. I promote holistic healthy lifestyle. That my label and designs are part of the holistic lifestyle. It is all, in essence, the same thing. It is looking good and feeling good. Eating well, everything is part of that.

It is good to eat well, eat healthy food, and know what you're wearing. Be healthy. That's what I'm communicating.

Thank you for your time, Sundari.

An Interview with Sukhdev Hansra

August 6, 2016

Tell us about yourself – family background, personal story, education, and previous professional capacities.

I am a British Indian. My father and grandfather came to England in the 1960's, as my grandfather was part of the British Army. At that time, being in the British army allowed families to resettle in the UK.

We are a close knit family. I have one brother, who is married and has three boys (the oldest of whom is in university). My family all live in one family house in Reading, England. I still have a room there too.

Unlike my family, I decided to live and work in various places in the world. I wanted to see more of the world than Reading or the UK. I have lived and worked in the US, Dubai and England predominantly, but have also had short stints in Colombia (travelling) and Lithuania (working for the UNHCR and teaching English).

My parents have no formal education (not even high school). My father is the oldest of three, and my mother was the oldest girl in her family (2 boys, 4 girls). As such, and in keeping with India at that time (and even now), they had to help with family work. My father worked on the farm and my mother looked after her younger siblings.

My father came to England at the age of 16 with GBP 3, no English and no education. Through hard graft he taught himself mathematics that would help him run a business, English and reading to a rudimentary level (though he still can't write). After a number of labourer jobs, he started his first shop, and from there he went on to be quite successful as an entrepreneur.

I tell the above story because I also wanted to be an entrepreneur, but in a different way. As my father never had an education, he valued it higher than anything else. He wanted to make sure I had an education.

My father was also quite strict. I did well in school, and then went on to get my first degree, a Bachelors in Computer Science focusing on Artificial Intelligence from Aston University in Birmingham. I thought I was going to be a neural network engineer at the time, but that never materialized.

I took a year off to go live and work in Lithuania. During that time, I planned out what my next 10 years should be: complete my year abroad, Masters (1 year), and then work in several 2 year stints to gain the skills I needed.

So I worked as an IT consultant in London and Boston and with projects in Tokyo (2 years), strategy consultant in London and with projects in Paris (3 years), MBA (2 years) and then in finance in investment banking in New York and London (actually 3.5 years).

You can see that some of the jobs were longer than the 2 years I envisaged. This gave me a grounding in how to organize and run companies, as I had a good understanding of IT and ops, marketing, and finance.

During this time, I tried to volunteer my time to worthy causes. I used to work as the finance director at Yaa Asantewaa in London, a black arts charity, for 2 years, and at Junior Achievements in New York giving classes on everyday living.

When I moved to Dubai, volunteering became very difficult due to the restrictions on good causes and foundations, so I decided with my business partner at Isthmus (Javier Cervino to start up social impact projects instead (see below).

Along the way, I have helped to start-up a number of companies, both as a partner, and as a consultant for others. The most prominent is a finance consulting company, Isthmus Partners, which is a corporate finance company that has been operational since Feb, 2009 in Dubai.

I have also helped to started up The Carbone Clinic (see below), which has been a major part of the last 3 years for me. **Chanzez** is a startup that I have been working on for the last year, which is in its initial phases.

As stated above, along the way I picked up a degree in Computer Science from Aston University, a Masters (ADMIS) from the London School of Economics, my MBA from Columbia business school in NY (majoring in finance and economics, and entrepreneurship), and my CFA.

On the personal side, I live and work in Dubai currently, and am married to Marina.

What is the importance of ethical fashion?

First, we need to ensure we are speaking the same language. For us ethical fashion is clothing that is produced with labour that is provided appropriate working conditions, paid fairly and are managed assuming the dignity of workers. This is our main focus, and sustainability is a longer term objective.

This is important on a human level. I think everyone can agree with that, but many are happy to turn a blind eye, as it is too difficult and entrenched as a problem for any one individual to think they can help.

On a business level, this is important too. It reduces staff churn, increases productivity and helps service levels. This is not simple academic babble – we see it in the project we run. Ethical labour standards are the first thing we look for in each of our social impact projects, and we grow out from there, as you will see in how our clinic operates (see below).

What is the importance of sustainable fashion?

For us sustainable fashion is production, use and disposal of clothing in a way that will have the least impact on the Earth.

As sustainable fashion impacts so many people (through purchases and production), but also the earth (through the whole lifecycle of growing fibre such as cotton through to production

with the use of chemicals through to disposal of clothing) it is an industry that needs a more sustainable production cycle. It is not even a question to ask why, but how and when can we help.

We are new to the sector, so we are still learning how to ensure sustainability. Essentially, we are focusing on one small part of the production cycle, but hope to vertically integrate over time, so we can be responsible for the whole cycle for our products.

How that happens will evolve over time. We are realistic about the learning cycle for us, as well as for the market and production.

Our current focus will be to purchase organic material, and not use chemicals in the process of cutting, sewing and packaging. We are still working through our supply chains, so this will be our first aim. Later, we will look at weaving and growth of cotton itself, but this is a longer term goal.

You work with start-up companies that have social impact. What companies?

Our main success story has been The Carbone Clinic in Dubai. This is a clinic for children with autism. We helped start this clinic because we saw the need (in the autism field), and the poor way in which services were provided in the region (no regulation, few qualified staff, and many clinics that operate purely as a money making scheme).

We are not a charity, a strictly for-profit company, an NGO or a non-for-profit company. We are a hybrid. We operate like a for-profit company. Therefore, we are as efficient as possible. We are competitive on market rates, salaries, and compete with everyone else in the market. The difference is what we do with the profit.

The majority of the profit goes towards raising awareness of autism, paying for services where parents of children cannot afford services (on a means tested basis), and helping to influence government policy (through trying to regulate Applied Behaviour Analysis correctly, as a treatment for autism).

With this method, we are never in a position of continuously asking for money, as we generate funds with which to run our social impact programmes. The minority of the profit is used to pay shareholders, as we do need to attract investment.

We also ensure internally that we run well provisioned staff. That means a lot of investment in training. As well as all the normal training employees should expect from a clinic, we also fund Masters programmes, the cost to become board certified, etc.

We do this with our administration staff also so our accountants become chartered, our IT staff upskill in new technologies, etc. Our staff also get real progression opportunities through promotion once they show they have aptitude for the next level and have taken advantage of the training we provide.

This mix of running like a pure for-profit company, having a social impact project funded by the profit and ensuring our staff are treated properly is evident in all our projects. We find that it helps both improve productivity and reduce churn of staff. People who work with us

stay, grow, and ultimately make our services better. Over three years, the clinic has gone from a startup to being one of (if not the) most prominent autism clinics in the MENA region.

We also work with start-ups as consultants that want to make a social impact. For instance, we helped to finance Talah Board, a wood board production company that produces OSB board from palm tree waste (the fronds that are chopped off). 95% of this waste is either incinerated or dumped into landfills.

Talah Board will be able to take at least 20% initially of this waste to produce new wood board that can be used for multiple purposes, predominantly in concrete form work to start with in the development of new buildings.

We are also involved in the due diligence and financing of new bio fuel companies.

Why those companies with social impact?

We are looking to start social impact projects in a number of sectors. The important thing is to find markets that are large and where the impact is wide reaching. Healthcare, education, textile production, farming, and energy are all sectors that we would be interested in.

Your recent venture is Chanzez. What is Chanzez?

Chanzez is a clothing production company, which aims to initially produce ethically, and then look at more sustainable practices across the lifecycle of its clothing production. We expect people to want fashion, rather than need fashion. We aim to fill this gap in the mass market. So we are not looking to be high fashion or to produce eclectic designs.

We aim to fulfil the staple clothing functions, with designs that are contemporary and appeal to the masses. This means t-shirts (to start), jeans, button down shirts, etc. We will look to produce for men (first batch), women and children.

We are looking to produce on a mass scale, so we can sell at fair prices. Though our production costs will be higher, we aim to be profitable by reducing other costs such as marketing spend. We also are looking to make less in profit, but enough to attract investors.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

See above

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

That is a complex question. I firmly believe this type of work is a duty. I have the skills I have because an immigrant moved to an unfamiliar country where he had no money, could not speak the language and could not get a job that would pay him fairly.

That immigrant's hard work gave me my education. I could use it to gain just for myself: I work in finance (which is a dirty word in many circles), which pays well. Why spend the time to do start social impact projects?

A couple of things:

- 1) It would be unfair to all those that were born into a country of no opportunity and whose parents did not have the chance my parents had (what little chance that was) for me to use my skills purely for personal gain. Using the skills, I have learnt for only a fraction of my time to help start social impact projects is not really that taxing on me.
- 2) I am fortunate. I like what I do. I don't have a 9-5 job. Some people would find my job tedious and boring, but I like finance, economics, and negotiating contracts. I enjoy organizing, working through organizational structures and process charts. I like working with people and helping to train them. So I don't see the work as a chore.
- 3) I used to think that I needed A, B and C to be happy. Over time I have realized that it is not A, B and C that makes a person happy, but the pursuit of A, B and C. It is the desire to get up and have purpose. Achieving A, B or C ends the journey. Ends are never as good as beginnings or the middle (I find). Also, I start thinking of A, B and C as less necessary.

With regard to organizations/companies, and so on, like Trusted Clothes and Chanzez, what's the importance of them to you?

I think there should be more organisations out there like Trusted Clothes and Chanzez. Once there is a critical mass of such organisations, they will have a greater say in how things are done. What matters in this world is the power wielded by companies that have the ear of consumers.

That may be unfortunate, but in the large part true. So once companies that produce ethical and sustainable products have enough of a market share, suddenly things will start to change. For that to happen, ethically minded companies and organisations need to appeal to the masses, not by preaching, but by just doing.

Create the products people want regardless of how they are made. Make them sustainable and ethically in the background. People don't really want to know how they are made, and don't really care. Making the products people want is what is important. Companies should produce them ethically regardless.

So the importance of these companies is not as individual organisations, but as a market share. It doesn't matter they do not relate, or even if they compete against each other. The point is that they have to become a larger piece of the overall pie.

Thank you for your time, Sukhdev.

An Interview with Christman Hersha of Noble Denim

August 8, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I graduated from Ohio University in Athens in engineering– from there, I moved to Austin, TX to play music. I played & toured with my band, and worked as an Audio Engineer & publicist for artists for about 6 years. I got a little burned out at the slog and late nights– so I moved back to my home state of Ohio with my wife.

There, I met my soon to be close friend Chris Sutton. He’s the creative director and designer at Noble and the company was his brain child. We actually started playing music together (surprise) and had a really good go of it. We worked very well together creatively and practically, and he asked me to help him launch Noble.

I pretty much handled the operational side, and he handled the product & creative side. I had a natural inclination to computers, programming, organization and basic ‘left-brain’ stuff... so stepping into the role of C.O.O. felt very natural.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion to you?

It just feels like the right thing to do. Sourcing ethically and running our business with sustainability at its core was among some of the first tenants we put in place. Chris, his wife Abby (our CEO, and biggest advocate for sustainability) and myself started down that road early.

It was a need we saw in 2012 when we founded Noble– there weren’t a lot of denim companies or clothing companies for that matter who were successfully doing everything the way we thought it should be done. In truth, there are a few parts to it: sourcing, production & transportation.

A company like Patagonia (who we all very much enjoy) does a phenomenal job in their transparency and sourcing. But their factories are in Asia– even though they are run properly, that is a long way for those goods to travel to meet their American customers, and that is done on a container ship that spits out a massive amount of CO2.

We wanted to make things ‘closer to home’, source them sustainably AND work to find smaller factories that were hit hard by NAFTA. We felt that those three pieces would help us make our product the cleanest, most sustainable and ethical out there.

What is Noble Denim – source of its title, and its mission, productions, and vision?

Noble was the name of Chris’s grandfather. Not only does it have a personal connection to him, but the word itself sparks a lot of pre-existing feelings in people– ethics, quality, altruism. It seemed a perfect name to create a vivid idea of the product, along with that personal touch.

Its mission has been the same since we started– to make premium garments, in the most sustainable and responsible way possible. We leave no stone untouched in this pursuit (from organic inks or recycled packing materials, carbon offset shipments, sourcing within 200 miles, etc.).

We started doing all the sewing ourselves in our Cincy workshop, but quickly became overwhelmed at the demand... so at that point, we looked for help and learned about all of the factories around the Midwest who were highly skilled, but under worked due to NAFTA and companies moving operations to overseas. We decided to embrace that network wholeheartedly.

You're a co-founder of Noble Denim. What is the importance of collaboration and teamwork with the creation of new companies?

Simply put, a single person can't do everything. If they try, they certainly can't do everything well. Chris and I were lucky at first since we both specialized in VERY different areas. He– with the eye on design, skills at the sewing machine and visual communication & me on organizing, problem solving, commerce and web.

That still wasn't really enough though, and his wife Abby, and Chris's college buddy, Sam, joined the team once we formally incorporated. They all brought very clear and unique skillsets to the table. We could all go about our own tasks without butting heads really at all– we trusted one another to be the master of their domain and still very much enjoy those roles.

One of Abby's skills is understanding people, and bringing people together. So through her structure, we've all become a very tight-knit and comfortable team. That collaboration was so important at the beginning (and continues to be important).

What things become easier with co-founding a company?

You know that everyone has skin in the game, so the motivation is steady with all the partners. Since all of the partners head up different specialized departments within Noble, we can always lean on each other and rely on each other to get stuff done. That is incredibly refreshing.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

Noble isn't for everyone. It is a premium product, made for someone who knows what they want. It probably wouldn't be a great jean for someone who has never owned a pair of Raw denim. It is a lifestyle and requires a lot of devotion to make that pair of Raw jeans your own.

Plus, you probably wouldn't notice all the extra features and thought we put into certain areas to make them more durable or comfortable. We realized this from the beginning, but we still had the dream to create sustainable garments for the masses. So, we started a sister-brand: Victor Athletics. It has taken up pretty much all of our extra time, and it's awesome.

Victor makes vintage-inspired ALL organic athletic wear for men and women. All sourced and made in the USA (even the cotton is grown here). As I mentioned, it is a lot easier to acquire organic knit fabrics in the US than denim. With Victor, we use the same code of

ethics as Noble, but decided to price the items direct to customers (so no wholesale, no extra markup for 3rd parties).

We wanted to take the barrier of entry WAY down for someone to get a USA made, organic cotton garment. So far, it has been met with open arms. We launched Victor via Kickstarter and to this day it is the 3rd highest grossing fashion Kickstarter campaign of all time. That was a big help in granting us affirmation on the idea.

Victor just turned 1 in the spring and we've been able to open a brick and mortar store in Cincinnati that doubles as the Noble Denim workshop. We offer custom hems, denim repairs and special small batch releases there, as well as stock all the Victor stuff. It's been pretty fun.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I think the validation that people WANT what Victor and Noble make is pretty awesome. It has been a passion of all of ours to create sustainable garments, and now we are able to make them for the connoisseur (noble) and the general public (victor).

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

Since we started down the long road of making our product ethically, we've watch the climate of the garment industry shift. It is much easier for new companies to start up with very little funding, and the 'field' is that much more saturated.

Some follow what we've done and attempt to make their products close to home, but we still don't see a large push for creating organic products. That was one dream of ours that we still strive for...we'd like to offer much more organic fabrics, but the fact is, they are incredibly difficult to source.

We've been able to offer organic knits and a basic indigo selvage... but as for different weights, colors, washes, it isn't easy. Cone Mills in N. Carolina for example used to make organic denim, but stopped because the demand didn't match their standard conventional denim. They have no plans to start up again.

This is certainly disappointing from a sourcing standpoint, but we still try to push the envelope and our customers do respond to it. Our organic products have sold very well and we are always getting requests for more options. I think this is one area we will continue to focus on to differentiate ourselves from the masses— plus, it is right on par with our mission: to create the highest quality garments, in the most sustainable way possible.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Glad to know that this idea of sustainable fashion continues to gain traction! Hopefully it isn't just a trend and people will continue to vote on how they want businesses to run with their dollar.

Thank you for your time, Christman.

An Interview with Katherine Soucie of Sans Soucie Textile + Design

August 9, 2016

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

The importance of ethical fashion to me is based upon a holistic circular approach to designing, producing and consuming fashion and textiles in the 21st century. It is system that involves a consideration of our environment in its entirety — our resources; use/reuse/recycling of these resources, respectful modes of production that does not exploit cultures, modes of production, humans and/or animals and a focus on the development of alternative business models that will encourage the further development of the local production and consumption of textiles and clothing.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

The importance of sustainable fashion is more than just buying fabric made sustainably. It is a social and moral responsibility. In the 90's when I was in design school, I was told I couldn't do what I wanted to do because there was no market.

Flash forward 20 years and after 13 years of establishing my design studio and practice I am doing it. I believe that it takes more than just using resources that are deemed 'sustainable' to claim yourself as sustainable.

Yes, it is important that we address resources – they are finite. I however believe that sustainability begins with creative use and reuse and using materials that are already in existence or are by-products from other industries to produce new textiles, garments and accessories.

We have way more materials in our environment than we can even possibly consume and we are the first society in history to exist that has had to create landfills to deal with our waste. I think sustainable fashion is informed by ones' value system, knowledge and experience and the design decisions that are made are driven to contribute to the greater good in some way.

I believe sustainable fashion is meant to be specialized and should be approached in this way. I think the more important element to sustainable fashion is telling a story that needs to be told.

What is Sans Soucie Textile + Design?

Sans Soucie Textile + Design is a zero waste textile and design studio established in 2003 in Vancouver, Canada that specializes in transforming pre-consumer textile waste, specifically waste hosiery produced in mills in Canada and the USA.

This material resource is dyed and printed using low impact dyes and inks before it is remade into new textiles for clothing, accessories and 3D forms. We use and reuse all the water, waste ink, threads and offcuts from our process into our bespoke made to order limited edition collections.

What makes the company unique?

We transform pre-consumer waste hosiery into new textiles that are produced anywhere else in the world. We produce by-products from this material resource into cultural products that are 100% Made in Canada. We also a supplier of waste textiles to textile artists and craftspeople who work with our waste textiles to produce jewelry, rugs and fine art.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

My current schedule includes costume designing, public speaking and educating on the value that waste textiles has to offer as a creative material resource in craft and design, and mentoring various sustainable projects globally.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

Knowing that I am creating something that will live beyond my years on this planet and that fact that I contributing to the greater good.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

I think we have a long way to go but the movement has been started and in my opinion there is no looking back. I have spent time in the Southeast of the USA where the majority of textile and clothing production existed prior to offshore production taking over in the latter of the 20th century.

From my experiences, the impact of this departure was necessary. Although they are still trying to recover from this loss, the people and of these environments were exploited and underpaid.

A revival is occurring in this area and are operating from a more mindful, sustainable approach. The sad thing is that what left the USA and Canada has only repositioned itself offshore and continues to exploit cultures, humans and animals. The Fashion System as we know it is deconstructing and has been for some time.

The more awareness that is created on the issue will pave the way for ethical and sustainable to grow and be the future of fashion.

Thank you for your time, Katherine.

An Interview with SeeMe Foundation, Caterina Occhio

August 10, 2016

Before diving into the main conversation, what's some of your background – personal, educational, professional, and so on?

I was born and raised in Naples, Italy. There, I studied political sciences and, at 27, I moved to the north of Europe. I went to Berlin first for a short internship, then Brussels where I earned an MA in Geopolitics and worked at the European Commission and various UN agencies...

Also, you've worked with various European Union and United Nations agencies as a development aid manager. What tasks and responsibilities came these positions?

I did, I worked for as a development aid manager for about 15 years. I was supporting employment and institutional reform and was specialized in the socio- economic integration of women.

You founded SeeMe in 2012.[i] It's an ethical fair luxury brand, which produces heart-shaped jewelry, and accessories. The products are handmade by women victims of violence and are used to support other victims of violence. With this in mind, what was the inspiration for its founding, and its name?

Well, after 15 years of mere reporting on various issues affecting women, trying to come up with solutions that are rarely put in motions, I really wanted to take matters in my own hands. I've always had the itch of doing something creative and SeeMe is the result of that together with my experience in politics and the deep desire to act and make people's life a little better.

The premise was to create a product could potentially save the world in its own way, by looking good and creating wealth for all those involved. And SeeMe, well, it is a little inspired by my own initial and the desire to do my own thing (C=Me) as well as the idea that looking at problems isn't enough, one needs to really see them. "SeeMe, don't just look at me" was the first slogan of the brand.

SeeMe provides ethical sourcing for alternate fashion brands as well. What is involved in this?

When I created SeeMe I did not buy workshops, instead I helped build them and I never tied them to SeeMe. These workshops are independent, but SeeMe being Fair Trade certified, they are too, plus they are very professional and the quality they produce is fantastic.

I use this angle to appeal to well known fashion brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Missoni or Karl Lagerfeld... It goes something like, "I know an amazing producer that does amazing things, completely handmade, for a fair price and great quality. Plus, they are fair trade certified!" And they love it!

Since the products themselves are hearts, the clients of SeeMe can join in the #heartmovement with the heartwarming purpose to have love replace violence. Where did this idea originate for SeeMe?

When I first left my job and started doing jewelry, I must say I was excited by all the possibilities and I started exploring different style directions... I really wanted to give my own twist to some of the amazing things I saw in the souks of Tunis or Ankara.

That's how the traditional silver circle chain, widely used in traditional Tunisian jewelry became a heart... It really stood out from all the other things I was doing and decided to drop everything else and just go with this strong symbol. The chain literally became a heart and I find it a beautiful metaphor for what SeeMe is endeavoring...

Have you had any commentary or feedback from workers, the women victims of violence, about the benefits to their own lives from this work? What kinds of things meant the most to you?

Oh yes! I am in constant contact with the workshop in Tunis... The team is headed by a workshop director, then there are two master artisans, and all the girls. And the poor boys are not only their trainers and mentor on the job, they are also their protectors and counsellors...

They are all such an amazing family; it is heart warming... There is this one woman who worked with us for a while, when she arrived she was a shell of a person, alone with her son, completely lost...

After a year with us, however, she started regaining confidence and, after putting some money aside thanks to her job with us, she took her own leap of faith and opened a small afterschool space for children with disabilities... I am so extremely proud of this.

Now, SeeMe is about to support the United Nations through United Nations Women.^[ii] That is, the collaboration with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.^[iii] What are the contents and purposes of the support for the Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women?

We are so proud of this. In fact, the UNTF to End Violence against Women selected our heart as symbol for their 20th anniversary. Knowing that the official color of the cause is orange, we have created a whole Orange Heart collection including two necklaces, bracelets, and an upcoming tote bag (but the bag is still under wraps...).

There are some other serious issues to do with patriarchal cultures and single mothers. Single mothers will be shunned by that larger culture, which can create problems once out of their shelter homes and unable to find work. A job that can pay for them and their child or children. How can and do these women attain the appropriate training for work that can sustain a steady income?

The girls usually start their training while still at the shelter; they are then trained by master goldsmiths with decades of experience in the jewelry field and soon thereafter they are employing and start receiving a salary that allows them to pay rent and live comfortably.

SeeMe also provides funds for schooling and other necessities for the kids.

SeeMe has been a source of income and a safe resort in Tunisia and Turkey. Why these countries?

I worked extensively in these countries; this is where the idea of SeeMe was born, where I saw a necessity and where the quality of the handicraft allowed me to produce luxury products...

What other provisions does SeeMe give to women victims of violence – in obvious need of assistance?

On top of training, work opportunities, steady income and emotional support, the SeeMe women also get funding for their kid's schooling and need and, most important but less quantifiable, they regain their pride, independence and love for their lives...

SeeMe does a form of outreach to other fashion world brands through positive influence of them such as Karl Lagerfeld, Tommy Hilfiger, Vogue International, and others. What is the process for positive influence of these additional brands in the fashion world?

SeeMe is the result of the desire to produce beautiful product while providing economic and emotional support to all the people involved... An idea that, in its simplicity, got wide support from the fashion world.

What are the most in-demand product of SeeMe?

The very first product created, a big heart hanging on a very simple chain, is still the most loved and has become our iconic product... Link
– <http://seeme.org/collections/necklaces/products/large-heart-with-long-chain-silve>

What is the importance of the companies and organizations such as SeeMe or United Nations Women?

Violence against women is a complex issue that needs to be approached from different angles... Having brands providing training and job opportunities, organizations providing funding, and media providing coverage and shedding positive light on the issue all contribute to making the lives of less fortunate people that much better...

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

I am just so glad to see that more and more people are jumping on the ethical fashion train, embracing slow culture and minimal yet meaningful consumerism... Never lose faith in humanity.

Thank you for your time, Caterina.

No, thank you Scott, it is an absolute honor to be interviewed by you for Trusted Clothes.

An Interview with Davina Ogilvie

August 11, 2016

Tell us about yourself – family background, personal story, education, and previous professional capacities.

I come from a hairdressing background, so I have dived deep into the chemical world, and witnessed the side effects first hand! Day after day, with my hands coated in chemicals, and fumes chocking me, and my clients- well, my conscious just kept at me- to walk another path.

Fascinated by products and beauty, I began to unearth just how toxic these industries really are! From a young age, I had always had a keen interest in natural chemistry, so I began to follow this interest, and learnt how to create my own skin care.

Combining my Naturopathy studies and my diploma in Spiritual Healing, I took a leap of faith into the unknown, and here I am- a director of my own natural skin care company, helping to support, educate and contribute to a better world- an eco-world!

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

Knowing that the clothes on my back have come from a source where people have been treated like humans, and paid well for their work, is what contributes to a fair world. I want to be part of that!

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Knowing that our clothes come from environmentally responsible resources, that respect the earth and its people, is the fashion I'm proud to wear!

The strive for Sustainability and Humanity, is constant conscious work.

I long for the day, when it will be legal, to provide my skin care range- from within Hemp Plastic! All things, Eco, Natural, Healthy, Sustainable and Conscious- are just common sense.

Chemicals are hidden within so much of what we use, consume and apply-daily. Teaming up with other companies that are for an Eco World-is what I live for, together we are stronger, together we can make a difference!

What was the inspiration for earth skin & eden – and its title?

I have been making my own skin care on & off for about a decade now. My concern about the petrochemicals within mainstream skin care is what lead to the creation of earth skin & eden. We source certified organic & superior natural derivatives to create our unique body products.

Our name is symbolic; it represents our purposeful meaning behind our natural skin care company.

Earth-gratitude for life, respecting all inhabitants & elements of the Earth.

Skin- respect for the health of humanity, providing organic & natural skincare, with a holistic foundation.

Eden- love for all that is natural, using sustainable sources from earths garden to nurture & repair your skin.

What makes earth skin & eden unique?

We have created a no foam Body Cleansing Crème that is naturally ecological! It is designed to not only gently cleanse & nurture your skin with pure naturals, but also teaches the user how to simply save water!

Our goal is Water-conservation; our focus is Natural Beauty.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

I'm a busy mum of 3 teenagers, so balance is crucial. I love to write and share what I know. I love to help folk to awaken to a eco way of life, for the sake of their own health & well-being, and those who they are responsible for. I also brainstorm my formula's to come...

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

Every day, I wake energized, because I know I am doing what I was meant to do! Helping to educate people about the dangers of hidden chemicals within skin care. By encouraging others to look at what they can do in their own lives, to contribute to better health and well-being is what makes me smile.

With regard to organizations/companies, and so on, like Trusted Clothes and earth skin & eden, what's the importance of them to you?

Conscious Living contains the power to wake the people of the World!

The more we can support each other in our quests to leave behind a world that teaches our generations to come, how to 'right the wrongs' is a World that brings hope, health, shared wealth and happiness.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Thanks for the opportunity to share a little about me and my skin care company!

Thank you for your time, Davina.

An Interview with Carolyn Kitto of STOP THE TRAFFIK

August 12, 2016

Tell us about yourself – family background, personal story, education, and previous professional capacities.

I live in Sydney or on Qantas. My background is in youth worker, strategic planning, human rights and international development. I had one of those families that shifted around a lot and I had lived in around 20 houses by the time I was 20.

So I have learnt to make a home where ever I am. I live with my best friend who is my business partner and husband. We have an open home and always have people sharing our home. We have one daughter – who some people call a dog – our black Labrador Mo, some chickens and a sometimes thriving vegetable garden.

What is the importance of ethical fashion?

I don't think anyone wants to be wearing someone else's misery. Do you?

What is the importance of sustainable fashion?

We have moved to the “fast-fashion” cycle world where entire ranges and collections in stores can change every few weeks and consumers are expected to fit into this cycle and discard their old clothes and purchase the latest.

A fast fashion cycle requires the work force who creates the garments to be incredibly flexible and there for they can also be disposable. The work comes in fits and starts and to match that cycle.

What is STOP THE TRAFFIK?

STOP THE TRAFFIK in Australia is a coalition of around 30 organisations from development agencies, faith groups, businesses and trade unions. We campaign as consumers and activists to end human trafficking.

We work with business to raise awareness an help them with traffic-free business practices. Everyone who is trafficked is trafficked from a community to a community so the more people know what human trafficking is and what they can do about it, the harder it is for traffickers to operate.

What makes this pertinent now?

We now have more people in modern forms of slavery than the rest of history combined. It is not right and it is not sustainable. The world's economic system cannot continue to operate on the exploitation.

How severe is human trafficking and slavery in developed countries?

Human trafficking is the fastest growing illegal crime and the International Labour Organisation estimates that the profits are in the range of \$US 150 billion. Where ever there are countries with large numbers of people who are poor who perceive that they can have a better future in places that are richer, human traffickers can deceive them. In developed countries, it exists and it is growing.

What about developing countries – especially compared to developed countries?

When someone does not have an education or a job future they or their families are more easily deceived. Human traffickers prey on people's hopes and dreams.

There are over 200,000 girls trapped in human trafficking right now.

There are 200,000 girls trapped just in a small area of India working in the spinning weaving and dying mills through a human trafficking scheme called the Sumangali Scheme. This area supplies most of the world's cotton knit fabric.

Could that be a low estimate?

That estimate is probably low. The scheme has recently been expanded to a nearby state. There has been a decline in the use of the name "Sumangali" but the scheme still exists.

How are these metrics derived from their evidentiary bases, their empirical foundations?

It is very difficult to calculate exactly the number of people who are trafficked. It is an illegal crime so people attempt to hide it and to hide their profits and to hide the number of people they are trafficking. No-one puts on their tax return or profile, "Profession, human trafficker"

In Tamil Nadu where the Sumangali Scheme is operating, it operates in most mills, so my knowing the approximate total number of employees you can estimate the total number of girls in the scheme. There are local NGO's and auditors who work in the factories and are able to provide fairly accurate figures.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

We work in the cocoa industry. Two thirds of the world's cocoa come from west Africa where mainly young boys are trafficked from surrounding countries to work on the cocoa farms.

We work in tea where the form of poverty that tea pluckers and factory workers are kept in, generates a unique situation of poverty where human trafficking thrives. Here we are particularly focusing in Assam. We have been raising awareness about the trafficking in the fishing industry in Asia. We also work on raising awareness of the harm and abuse of trafficking in Australia.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I love that people who would not normally come together, will come together to work on how to end human trafficking.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them to you?

They are leading the way and showing how it can be done.

An Interview with Melissa Ferreira of Adhesif Clothing

August 15, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

My mother worked in garment production factories in Montreal throughout my childhood. I grew up with her sewing at the kitchen table after work, doing alterations for extra income. Naturally I learned how to sew from her.

I taught myself how to design from taking apart vintage garments and seeing how they were put together, after spending many years as a vintage clothing buyer right out of high school. I love everything vintage and it remains to this day my main source of inspiration.

Vintage clothing, music, historic & modern architecture, vintage cars, vintage appliances...they have all withstood the test of time because things were built to last and because they've lasted the pieces leave behind a legacy with abundant stories to tell.

I have always been an extremely independent, resourceful and creative individual. Since childhood I've always been dreaming, inventing, creating, drawing, imagining, making imaginary worlds to live inside of.

With never ending ideas brewing, it was a natural direction in my life to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. It was only after I completed a Self Employment program at Douglas College many years ago that I was able to start a business as an independent artist/designer.

I started Adhesif Clothing in 2003, opened my own boutique in 2010 and never looked back. Adhesif Clothing is a Vancouver, BC clothing company that produces handmade memorable one-of-a-kind garments.

Every article of clothing has its very own distinctive personality with a visual array of eclectic prints & color compositions. The result brings a striking presentation of polished yet playful pieces that are also Eco friendly.

What is the importance of ethical fashion and sustainable fashion to you?

As we are all well aware of, today's global situation concerning the environment and the commercial fashion industry is one of the major causes of waste and exploitation of poor third world conditions often providing unfair low wages and thus a low quality of living conditions for the millions of garment factory workers.

The low quality garments distributed for sale in the wealthier western societies like H&M and Joe Fresh are bought up because of the low retail price points and often discarded only after a wear or two.

The implications of manufacturing fast fashion/disposable textile items leave a huge impact not only of the consumption of the worlds precious natural resources but this way of doing things also taxes the lives of the impoverished.

Said all this, much of the driving force and underlining passion for hand producing the garments for my clothing label, Adhesif Clothing, come from an endless desire to create cherished high quality pieces that will be worn and loved for many seasons while also literally reducing textile waste from the landfills. This thoughtful process is part of the slow fashion movement and I believe up cycling is the way of the future.

Fun fact, for every 1 pound of fabric that is recycled 70 gallons of fresh water is saved in the environment. Over the course of the last 12 years we at Adhesif Clothing have helped save a minimum of 20K pounds of discarded textiles for the landfill that probably counts for at least a lake or two!

What is Adhesif Clothing?

Handmade with up to 95% vintage + reclaimed materials + 100% HEART Adhesif Clothing produces locally made one-of-a-kind garments in Vancouver, BC.

Every article of clothing has its very own distinctive personality with a visual array of eclectic prints & color compositions, a truly well thought out process. The result brings a striking presentation of polished yet playful pieces that are also Eco friendly. This way you not only look good but feel great too!

What makes the company unique?

Everything we create is made by hand with up to 95% reclaimed materials, and is one-of-a-kind. There is literally no way for us to duplicate the same fabric composition of our designs within our collections. I always tell my clients that our garments have a heart beat and a story to tell with their own little unique personalities and they agree.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

I just completed the photo shoot for our Spring-Summer 2017 Collection and now I'm working on our Fall-Winter 2017 photo shoot taking place in Germany this holiday season with an amazing creative team I've had the pleasure of working with several times already.

I've also had the opportunity to work with Microsoft on character development on a TBA video game coming out this December 2016.

In the community, I am currently helping to co-ordinate group of 30 local artisans called the Coastal Creatives artisan group for the 1st annual Vancouver Mural Arts Festival. I'm also the main organizer for the Nifty for Fifty Sale now in its 10th year running by 2017 which promotes and supports the handmade work of 30 local artists and designers from the West coast.

Aside from hand producing my own pieces by hand and running my boutique 6 days a week, I also participate as a vendor at least a dozen artisan markets annually like this past Filberg Festival and the upcoming Circle Craft Christmas Market to name a few.

I'm working on my 5th publication with a US publication called Belle Armoire Magazine.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I always say there's a fine line between brilliance and insanity. Doing this type of work requires an insurmountable amount of perseverance, hard work, confidence, foresight, genuine vision, passion and above all else love.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

Funny enough when I started my company well over a decade ago the term "upcycling" or "repurposing" didn't even exist. Now everywhere I look be it social media or at art markets I see many designers implementing a reclaimed element to their work.

Sometimes I get asked if I feel threatened by the new completion but personally I think it's wonderful to see slow fashion becoming a global movement. It's not a passing trend by any means and I'm proud to be one of the founders for future generations to follow in the foot prints of.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

We have an amazing Etsy shop that we post new pieces onto bi-weekly with currently 200 OOK items to choose from.

An Interview with Alyssa Kerbel of Mini Mioche

August 16, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I am a wife, mother of two (an 8-year-old daughter and a 4-year-old son) and a serial entrepreneur. I started my first business when I was in my 20's. It was a wholesale fashion agency based in Toronto.

We represented a number of different adult fashion brands – both men's and women's, and sold them to stores across Ontario and the Maritimes. After the birth of my daughter in 2007, I felt a strong desire to do something different (in addition to running the agency) – something a little more creative and something I would ideally have more control over.

At the time I found it very difficult to find simple, good quality fashion basics for infants – especially ethically made basics and in neutral unisex colours. So drawing upon my fashion industry experience, I decided to start mini mioche and about 6 months later we launched our first collection of organic, Canadian-made infant basics.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

To me there is no reason why it should be allowed or considered ok on any level for people in third world countries to be paid pennies and treated so poorly to make clothing for people who can afford and would be willing to pay a little more to know that no one is being harmed during the manufacturing process.

The clothing industry has become one that is all about margin and how to make things faster and cheaper and that is unfortunate. I think as the customer is becoming more aware and more educated, they are seeing the value in supporting businesses who don't necessarily do it the cheapest but do it in an honest, ethical way.

Our goal is to produce clothing for kids that not only looks good and stands up to wear and tear but is made locally and by people we know personally – people we know are paid a fair wage and are treated well.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Sustainable fashion and ethical fashion go hand in hand for me. I feel that our customer is willing to pay a little more for something organic and ethically made because they also know that it will ideally stand the test of time. A better quality garment means it will wash and wear well and can be passed down from one child to the next, to the next, to the next.

What is Mini Mioche?

Mini mioche is a collection of organic, Canadian-made fashion basics for infants and kids newborn to 8 years of age. In addition to our own apparel collection, the company also sells an edited selection of the best footwear, gear, toys and books.

What makes Mini Mioche unique?

We are the only company in North America that offers a full seasonal collection of organic, eco-friendly locally made infant and kids fashion basics. Our collections consist of styles we would wear but in mini size. We create clothing that looks great but that is also comfortable and functional for kids to wear (something that is not that easy to find).

We also offer a highly curated selection of fashion footwear for kids – the largest selection of footwear that is ‘take down’ from adult brands (basically mini versions of adult shoe brands such as Doc Martens, Adidas, Converse, Vans, Native, Sorel, People, etc.).

What is the greatest challenge in founding a business?

I would say for me the hardest part was figuring out how to make the business profitable without compromising on our company values. The reality is that making an organic product and making it locally means that it’s a lot more expensive to make and yet the retail price points on kids clothing need to be relatively competitive if you want to cater to more than a small, niche market.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

We just launched a new brand called Brockton Basics by mini mioche. It is a wholesale, private label company that offers the mini mioche infant and kids basics as blanks for other companies to print on. We have had countless requests from companies looking to print on our basics over the past few years and we are now in a position to offer that program on a wholesale level.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I definitely love my work but the things that I love most about it aren’t necessarily the daily ins and outs of my actual job – it’s more about the journey and who I am on it with. It’s learning something new all the time and being constantly challenged.

It’s having fun doing it. It’s creating something that is hopefully going to be long-lasting. It’s about making jobs for people and mentoring young colleagues. And it’s amazing to hear from customers and fans of the brand who write to us or tell us that it has actually impacted their lives or their child’s positively in some way.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what’s the importance of them now?

Like I mentioned earlier, I think that ethical and sustainable fashion is going to become more important to businesses moving forward. The consumer is becoming more aware and educated and cares more now than ever about where, how and by whom their clothes are made.

It’s slowly becoming less about fast fashion and cheap manufacturing and more about quality-made, ethically-made product at a reasonable cost. That’s a good thing.

Thank you for your time, Alyssa.

An Interview with Eva Power of The Ethical Silk Company

August 17, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

My background is in sociology so starting a textiles company was a big change for me. I have family in India and spent a great deal of my twenties traveling in the East (India, Pakistan, China, Mongolia, SE Asia, Iran & Central Asia) so it felt natural to base the tailoring in India, especially as the silk I use is manufactured there.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

The fact that ‘ethical fashion’ is even an issue shows how distorted the industry has become. The tragedy of Rana Plaza in 2013 seemed to bring about the start of some form of change with high street chains agreeing to raise working standards for the workers but three years later, nothing substantial seems to have happened. ‘Ethical fashion’ should essentially just be ‘fashion’, the ethical side of it should be assumed.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

The fashion industry’s impact on the environment, especially the towns and villages where a lot of the raw materials and synthetics are produced, is far greater than most people can even imagine. Working with sustainable materials, like natural fabrics is beneficial for both the environment, but also for the consumer, natural fabrics are by far more comfortable to wear. In an ideal world, sustainable should be the norm.

What is The Ethical Silk Company?

Our product line is solely 100% eco-friendly mulberry silk products. Having begun with bedding and accessories, our range now includes ladies’ loungewear – silk robes, pants, slips and tops.

What makes the company unique?

The particular type of silk we use is a one of a kind. There are other types of eco-friendly silks, but this particular mulberry one is really beautiful – it’s softer than regular silk with a pearly natural finish.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

At the moment I’m working on a new print for S/S17 and a future line for men & women using a different weave so that’s exciting. I also have a young family so things are pretty full on with that, to say the least...

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

For quite some time before starting The Ethical Silk Company, I knew I wanted to work for myself and as trying as it can be, both mentally and financially, I wouldn't have it any other way.

The company began small but as sales grew and customers returned, I knew I was onto something. Launching the loungewear last December and the response it got really gave me the confidence to move forward.

The ethical production in terms of the silk and the tailoring was always the direction I was going to take – the alternative is just not an option for me as I need to be able to stand above the company, its products and its ethos.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

It's amazing to see how many start up fashion companies there are with such a focus on their ethos surrounding production. Now, more than ever, it's hugely important for them to be supported and encouraged, especially as the high street stores don't seem to be doing anything to change their labour practices.

As ethically sourced products generally cost more to produce, Ecommerce has opened up so many possibilities as customers have access to companies they may not have known about before and it also helps ethical and sustainable companies keep their prices competitive as a result of selling direct.

I feel transparency is central to running a sustainable business, being able to give your customers knowledge of the various stages along the production line.

Any advice for women in leadership?

Do your research, know your market and watch your cash flow like a hawk. Know your business inside out and the direction you want it to take. Listen to advice (lap it up) and bring in experts in the fields outside your expertise but at the end of the day, it is your business so remember that.

Thank you for your time, Eva.

An Interview with Mark Oliver of Yogiiza

August 18, 2016

Yogiiza is an organic clothing brand founded by Mark Oliver and his wife Dawn. Their aim is to make a clothing brand that reflects yoga values. Read on below to know more about our interview with Mark.

Tell us about yourself – familial story, education, and prior work.

My wife and I are business partners. We've been married 5 years. We've been together 7 years. We have a 22-month old son.

In terms of personal, story, how did this lead up into getting into Yogiiza?

Yogiiza is from my yoga practice. Also, it's from my relationship with my wife. My childhood was spent in nature, in the woods, and surfing, and fishing. It deeply affects my character. It affects my vision for how I want the world to be for my children and the children after them.

Yoga and meditation creates self-awareness. It creates the realization that the world is a manifestation of the self or a reflection of the self. So, as the self goes, so does the world. To create a business, that business has to be a reflection of how I want to see the world.

Hopefully, it gives earth and nature lovers choices that bring about the change that they want to see in the world. So, when we decided to do a brand that services our relationships within yoga and the hospitality industry, we couldn't do a company any other way. We had to do a company with conscious values.

Our first and foremost mission is to save the planet. It's to give people choices to save the planet. Those individuals' choices add up. Those organic and environmentally friendly choices.

Everybody wants to choose organic today. If you choose anything else, the environmental situation could change overnight. So, it's up to us as entrepreneurs and conscious capitalists to give people choices that are a reflection of our values and have that manifest as the world we want to see.

Ghandi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Ghandi is one of the most famous yogis in the world.

(Laugh)

You picked a good source.

(Laugh)

It's part of self-awareness. Yoga improves self-awareness. For example, when you practice how your foot is touching the ground, how your spine is, how your head is in relation to your shoulders, you cultivate a sense of presence.

For those conscious capitalists and entrepreneurs, any advice?

Take, for example, fire, it's a good thing. It keeps your house warm. It's a beautiful tool of mankind, but you don't want to burn your whole house down. You should have your values, but keep an open mind.

Don't be afraid of the middle path, when you're too radical, there's a certain violence in that mindset. Keep your values, but understand everything is the will of God. Otherwise, it wouldn't exist. So, don't beat yourself up too hard. Try not to be a fascist in your beliefs.

Fire is a good thing. Plastic has its uses. Plastic has its utility within the world. But do we have to wear it, sleep in it, eat with it, right? It's too much.

Fascism never gets us anywhere. Anything that you make people do at gun point doesn't work. (Laughs) It's forcing your values on people at gun point like. They don't work. Try to work with what you have, be uncompromising, pick your values wisely.

It's a bit like the artist versus the politician. The artist tries to seduce someone into way of life and the politician tries to do it at 'at gunpoint', as you noted, or by force in some way.

It may be just the opposite.

(Laugh)

Violent revolutions often come by artists like Che and Castro. The politicians, what their flaw is that they do compromise too much, they're too malleable, too bendy, too wishy-washy. There's no room for real leadership.

But there's room for leadership in entrepreneurship. When you're an entrepreneur, you're in control of your vision, and so make sure you pick your vision wisely. You can go down a fascist path, but that doesn't help anybody.

A lot of the businesses in ethical and sustainable fashion are small or moderate sized. What do you see as the importance of bringing them together in networks so that you can bring about larger effects in terms of consumers' choices and getting the word out about it?

I think we all support each other on social media a bit. But, at the same time, reaching commodities of scale can be determined by your own beliefs, if you don't believe it's possible, then it's never going to happen in the first place.

However, if you look at what's happening, H&M is one of the largest consumers of organic cotton. Target is number two. Walmart is quickly becoming the largest distributor of organic produce.

We're seeing prices being driven down within the organic niche. So, it's possible for a sustainable brand to reach commodities of scale. We're doing our best to do it.

We are targeting large brands like Royal Caribbean and Hilton Hotel because these large brand partners have the largest impact on the choices. I think your proposition that all of these brands are small, and they need to group together in some sort of co-op, is misplaced.

I think you need to expand your vision and understand, and do what it takes to realize your vision for an organic planet – or whatever it is for your business.

Where do you see the company heading into the future?

I see us moving into mass distribution and very large numbers to have as big an impact as possible. You need to have as big an impact of all of the other large brands to come around to being sustainable as well.

You have to show and demonstrate to them that the public demand is there. The most recent studies say that 65-80% of Americans buy organic products. The problem that we're seeing is that only 3% of production is organic.

There's this huge demand out there. But because it's very small supply, it makes things more expensive. Pretty much in every way, shape, or form, to grow organic-based products is cheaper than conventional-based products. Organic costs less.

The reason why organic products cost more is because there is very little supply and very high demand. The notion that these brands are small is because of small thinking. That's why they're small. There's plenty of demand out there.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time? Outside of the company, do you have any other projects ongoing involved with ethical and sustainable fashion?

We have Yogiiza, the brand. My wife has a hospitality business. She serves products. She has yoga services and wellness services. But that's under the Yogiiza brand too. Also, we supply hospitality towels and linens. It's a new business.

What we're doing with that business is licensing the Yogiiza brand, we're doing that under the Yogiiza label in organics. We're getting hotels to move very large volumes of towels and giving the opportunity for them to choose organic.

It's a quantifiable change and difference for these corporations on their environmental impacts. Let me explain. If you have one pound of conventional cotton, it takes twice as much carbon as one pound of organic cotton.

It's an actual pound-for-pound difference. It's 2,000 kilos of carbon for every 1,000 kilos of conventional cotton grown. It's ~940 kilos of carbon for every 1,000 kilos for organic cotton. For every pound of cotton that we sell, it takes 1lb of carbon out of the atmosphere.

That's just the carbon, then we get pesticides and herbicides. They cause all of the cancers. If you trade out for organic over conventional, we're eliminating 1/3lb of pesticides and herbicides for every pound of cotton.

If you look at a hotel chain like Hilton, and if they were to go with organic for their sheets and linens, it would be 130 million pounds of carbon out of the atmosphere per year and 50 million pounds of pesticides and herbicides.

When you look at blue water pollution, you have an 90% reduction of blue water pollution from organic farming compared to the conventional, on average. If you switch every pound of cotton from conventional to the organic, you're taking one pound of carbon out of the atmosphere. 1,000-room hotels can eliminate 200,000 pounds of carbon.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

Oh my god! It's awesome. Every day, I can't wait to get up and go to work, contact my people, and have staff meetings. We're on a real mission. If you look at these numbers, these environmental numbers. It's huge. We're stoked.

We're stoked to give people choices. It's a family business. It's not even work that we do. It's our life. It's part of our lifestyle.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

All peoples understand that it is their personal choices that are manifesting the world that they see. When consumers, all of us, look on the shelf and see this product is organic and the other is not, then choose the organic one!

If you're an entrepreneur, please understand and create choices that bring about the change that you want to see in the world, it's important. Business is the only thing that is going to create change. People wait for government to do something. It's not going to happen.

It's business that gives people choices that are a reflection of the world that we want to see.

Thank you for your time, Mark.

UN: Principles of Women's Empowerment

August 18, 2016

The women's empowerment principles were put out by UN Women to put forth the main thrust of women's rights in addition to the economic benefits. The statement is that equality means business.

The first principle is that you need to establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality. This means that you can encourage the ability of women to enter into the highest rungs of the corporate leadership ladder.

The second principle is treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination. All this means is that in socio-cultural life individuals deserve respect and support with respect to their human rights. They should be treated on merit.

The third is the need to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers. The equality that comes from this is that the well-being of men and women, their health, can then be better taken into account for the improvement of the workplace, the quality of work, and the society.

The fourth is promote education, training and professional development for women. This means that the women in societies have the ability to have access to education, and the encouragement of this to allow them to achieve their full potential.

The fifth is implement enterprise development, supply-chain and marketing practices that empower women. This is a subtler one. However, it can include the many, many aspects of women's empowerment at the socio-cultural level through the influence of advertising and marketing targeted to women and their empowerment.

The sixth one is the need to promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy. This might be called collective action. It is a collective initiative to advocate for equality in communities, townships, cities, provinces, territories, states, and nations. This then flies out into regions of the world for women's equality.

The seventh is measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality. In other words, this means the ability to quantify, whether qualitatively or quantitatively, the progress of gender equality in all domains of domestic, public, and professional life.

Taken together, the whole floor of the society will rise and improve. These are the basic principles laid out with some examples from me or interpretations from me of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

Ways We Can All Save Water Daily

August 19, 2016

The nature of sustainability is the nature of saving energy and one way to do that is to use less water in our daily routine.

My personal favorite is shorter showers instead of taking baths. I like the idea of a single short shower in the morning or what some may refer to as “navy showers”. A **navy shower** (also known as a “combat shower”, “military shower”, “sea shower”, “staggered shower”, or “G.I. bath”) is a method of showering that allows for significant conservation of water and energy by turning off the flow of water in the middle portion of the shower while lathering.

If I happen to work out or work outdoors for an extended period of time, then I will actually take the time to have a shorter shower in the morning and the night.

Most of the time, I have the time down to about three minutes for showers.

The second way I conserve water daily is to turn off the tap while brushing my teeth. Turning off the water while brushing your teeth saves three gallons each day.

Cutting our water use and saving on water and energy bills doesn't have to affect your daily routine. These simple changes can make a huge difference to the amount of water we use.

An Interview with Shirley of Wolfbait & B-Girls

August 19, 2016

Tell us about yourself – family/personal story, education, and prior work.

I learned to sew from my DIY dynamo Mom and pursued a degree at FIDM in San Francisco. Soon after graduation I began my own collection of women's contemporary clothing, Bruiser.

Around that time, I joined forces with a baker turned dress maker Jenny Stadler. For more than a decade now, we have been reinventing what purpose fashion serves.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

Ethics to me are about lifestyle. Your ethics are reflected everyday in the choices you make, including what you wear, what you buy.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

The fashion industry is second to OIL in the amount of waste it produces. I have two young daughters who deserve better than what we are doing now.

What is Wolf Bait?

Wolfbait & B-girls is a retail venue/studio space for more than 200 local artisans.

What makes Wolf Bait unique?

More and more shops across the country now follow our model of supporting local talents that we began more than 10 years ago. That makes every shop like ours unique to the neighborhood it is representing. Logan Square, Chicago is an expressive community, and you can see what it has to say at Wolfbait & B-girls.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

My partner Jen and I explore lots of creative ideas outside of our clothing lines, from puppet making to falconry.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work?

I find satisfaction in all aspects of Wolfbait, and what it has come to represent. From the simple joys of following a garment from a concept all the way to the consumer in our humble space, to the big picture of supporting and encouraging the artisans of this city, and inspiring people to think differently about what they buy and why.

What's the importance of them ethical and sustainable fashion companies now?

In fashion, in agriculture, in all areas of our modern life, it is important to make educated choices. The more everyone learns of the TRUE COST of their wardrobe/lifestyle the more

they will have to think about those choices/purchases. Hopefully this will lead to a less wasteful and more humane practices in consumer goods of all sorts.

Thank you for your time, Shirley.

An Interview with Susan Cadman of Miik

August 22, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I am driven and active, and have a passion for fashion and the great outdoors. I am a 3 times Ironman triathlete and mother of two amazing young children.

I graduated from University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Statistics. I then went on to work at a large Marketing agency for many years, working with many large national and multi-national companies.

When I had my children my priorities changed and it was important for me to focus on my family. I decided to leave the big agency and corporate world to be involved in something I truly believed in. Something that felt good in my gut. Something that had more meaning...something I could really help grow and that's how I ended up at Miik.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

For us, it starts with the people. All of our clothes are sewn by people. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect, paid fairly and in proper working conditions. The apparel industry is the second largest polluter in the world...only second to oil.

I want to be part of the leading edge toward reforming the fashion industry. It's a commitment to our belief in slow fashion and creating a healthier environment for future generations. I want my kids and their kids to grow up in a better place.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Sustainability to me means renewing resources at a rate equal to or greater than the rate at which they are consumed. It is absolutely critical to protecting our future.

At Miik we of course use eco/sustainable fabric but sustainability is not just about the fabrics, it's about the designs. We design our pieces to have a classic look, to ensure that they are going to be in style for seasons to come, not just for one season.

We call it, Style with Staying Power!! It's also about our extremely small footprint – we produce everything locally, cutting down on transportation and supporting local business. We strive to incorporate sustainability in everything we do, even to the smaller things like using recycled boxes and shipping bags.

We also encourage our customers to focus on sustainability, knowing that even when our clothes leave us, they are still sustainable. 95% of the collection is machine washable in cold water...eliminating harsh chemicals and reduction of hot water.

What is Miik?

Miik is a Canadian luxury clothing brand that embraces ‘slow fashion’ in a world so consumed by disposable clothing. Milk strives to lengthen the time between the purchase of your clothing and its eventual disposal in two ways: by using sustainably sourced fabrics that don’t lose their shape, fade or pill like other natural textiles, and by designing timeless yet striking pieces that stand the test of time (or that can be enjoyed season after season).

Miik is challenging the status quo of fast fashion with our timeless pieces, commitment to sustainability, and custom milled luxury eco fabric that feels like first class. It is style with staying power.

What makes the company unique?

We believe less is more. In fact, our philosophy is quite opposite of that of most other fashion brands. We actually want consumers to buy less, but to choose and buy quality.

What really sets us apart and makes us unique is our luxury fabric and the fact that we have an extremely small footprint. We custom mill our sustainable fabrics locally. From yarn to hanger we do it all in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area); design, mill, dye and produce under fair working conditions.

By custom milling our own luxury fabrics, we choose what goes in it; the weight, the “hand” and the finishing. Our fabrics are milled to last; they hold their form and colour while offering uncompromising stretch, softness and durability.

For example, most bamboo fabrics are milled to a much lighter weight and usually with another fabric like cotton so they don’t have the same lasting power, softness or the luxurious drape of our fabric.

As well, bamboo yarn takes to dye and holds the colour better so our colours are more saturated and won’t fade even after years of wear. Miik is sustainable by design!

Since we produce locally we are able to control the quality at every step of our production. At any given time, I can personally go and see each step of the garments life...to ensure we are producing the best quality product.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

Miik is involved in many professional and charitable groups. Just recently we were a part of Fashion Takes Action “Design Forward” Fashion show. It featured Canada’s top designers who have made a commitment to ethical practices, without sacrificing style.

We also work quite closely with local fashion schools and their fashion shows and various different projects. We also were one of the very first fashion brands to sign on with Canopy and their new Canopy Style to support ethical practices and preservation of the environment, forests and trees.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

My work brings me great joy and fulfillment. Not many people can say they love what they do every day! Knowing that I am making a small difference in the way we consume fashion

and teaching my kids and the next generation about slow fashion really makes me feel good about what we are doing.

What is also so appealing is that Miik is a small company so I get to have my hand in both the design/creative side and then of course the numbers and the business side. I actually thrive on both sides of the business...and there are not a lot of jobs where you get to do both!

I also have some flexibility in my job. This is extremely important for me...it allows me to also be a Mom. I am able to bring my kids to school, work hard, make a healthy dinner, be active, attend field trips if necessary and balance work and life. Once the kids go to bed...I typically go back to my desk at my home office. ☺

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

It is actually very critical now for fashion brands to think both ethical and sustainably. The rate at which the fashion industry is destroying our environment is much quicker than we are able to restore it. Too many people are dying and working in unfit conditions...the health concerns are astronomical. The time is now!

Any advice for women in leadership?

Embrace it. Have confidence and own it...lead by example. Take ownership of your own success.

I really want to make sure that woman young and old can “unpack their fears”. Fear is consistently one of the biggest challenges woman face in the workplace. The fear that having a family and raising children will reflect negatively on their commitment to their careers. It is possible to do both successfully.

I want to make sure my kids see, understand and learn that leadership has nothing to do with what gender you are rather it's about finding the best person for the job.

The fashion industry disproportionately affects young women in developing countries. I would love to be able to be, at least, a small part of making a change in their lives. Supporting ethical and sustainable fashion is definitely a big step in the right direction.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

When it comes right down to it, the magic is in our fabric.

An Interview with Melissa Stieber of More Than Half

August 23, 2016

More Than Half is a fair trade clothing retailer started by Melissa Stieber in downtown Kitchener. Read more below to know about More Than Half and ethical fair trade clothing brands.

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

Well I grew up outside of Baden, Ontario and lived there until I was married in 2007. I then lived in Toronto for a couple years with my husband where I managed a Ten Thousand Villages. It was there that I started to think more about Fair Trade fashion and why I couldn't find any stores selling it or if it even existed.

We had moved back to Kitchener and I worked at a wholesale bakery for three years as retail/office manager. I worked side by side the owner learning about all aspects of business. I knew I wanted to eventually work for myself but wasn't quite sure what that looked like.

With the knowledge, experience and confidence I gained at that job combined with my passion for fair trade and ethical fashion, I had my light bulb moment and opened up More Than Half in 2013.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

It's important because it's the only right way to produce clothing. Exploiting people, mistreating animals and destroying the environment is not worth it to just save a buck.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

The fashion industry is the second most polluting industry. Not sure I need to say much more than that.

What is More than Half?

MTH is a Fair Trade and organic clothing boutique. We sell women's and men's clothing that has been produced ethically and sustainably from raw material to end product.

The name comes from part of a quote an MLK Jr. Sermon, "And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half of the world."

What makes More than Half unique?

We are unique because we focus more on the people that produce the clothing than gaining the highest profit from consumers. Fair Trade is no charity but it helps to create opportunity in developing countries and to alleviate poverty.

We try to educate consumers about who is making their clothes and the process the garment goes through. Once consumers understand how clothing is made, the work involved and the effects it has, they start to think differently about their purchases.

What is the greatest challenge in founding a business?

Retail is tough, especially right now. You see many large retailers shutting their doors. There are many factors in whether you will be successful in retail or not, but right now we find that the market for our clothing is too small in Kitchener-Waterloo and a lot of people are shopping online. Focusing online will help us to target our market better.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

I currently leading a non-profit group, Fair Trade Kitchener. We are a small group of fair traders who wish to see Kitchener become recognized as a Fair Trade Town with Fair Trade Canada.

Involves a lot of education, promotions and support from the community as well as the Kitchener City Council. We have had a few events so far and hope to do much more this fall and for the holiday season.

What meaning or personal fulfilment does this work bring for you?

I don't do this to make myself feel good, I do it because I don't know what else to do. Fair Trade, ethically living just makes sense to me, life shouldn't be any other way. We shouldn't be harming each other for profits and it makes me sick every time i think about how we have treated each other throughout the years. Slavery is more prominent now than ever, racism, environmentally damage, it's all at an extreme high, but so also is our denial and selfishness.

If I'm not doing something to better this world, then the life God gave me is just wasted.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

They are the future of fashion. They need to be supported if the fashion industry is ever going to change.

Thank you for your time, Melissa.

An Interview with Hillary Sampliner of Nuvango (Part One)

August 24, 2016

Hillary Sampliner is the creative and fashion director at Nuvango, an innovative sustainable fashion brand that is heading 3D printing for the fashion industry. Know more about Hillary and Nuvango below!

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I grew up in a neighbourhood called Parkdale in downtown Toronto, an artistic and multicultural neighbourhood that provided me with profound social and cultural experiences that shaped the type of creative I am today.

Relentlessly pursuing artistic endeavors as a child, I was lucky to have the encouragement and support of my parents who would sign me up for art classes, entertain my ever changing crafting needs, and educate me artistically and culturally by taking me to neighbourhood festivals, museums, and art galleries.

It was no surprise when I had my heart set on attending Etobicoke School of the Arts (ESA) for high school. I auditioned and was accepted as a visual arts major where I met some of my closest friends and collaborators today.

I honed my artistic skills at ESA and developed a passion for design and textiles, designing a collection for the school's fashion show, and as yearbook editor. I decided to attend Ryerson School of Fashion for University, gaining a Bachelor of Design Degree, and several awards for my final collection.

Graduating university is where my real adventure began, I decided to open up a small studio doing custom bridal and eveningwear in downtown Toronto, and simultaneously designing collections for my brand, Ruth Weil.

Named after my grandmother, Ruth Weil had a good run of three years showing at Fashion Art Toronto, garnering the attention of stylists, actors, and media, and helped me figure out my own strengths and weaknesses as a designer and business owner.

It came to a point where I no longer felt I was learning, developing, or feeling rewarded by my work. I was barely making ends meet, and I had a slew of service industry side jobs to keep me on my feet. I needed a change.

When most people go back to school for a masters, I decided to sell everything I owned and move to Europe for an unpaid internship. I considered this to be continuing the educational path that was right for me.

I wanted to learn new techniques, be challenged, and gain hands on experience working abroad for one of idols, Iris van Herpen. Moving to Amsterdam to work in a Couture house was one of the best career decisions I've ever made, I learned trade secrets of the Couture

industry, was inspired into new ways of thinking about challenges, and gained confidence in my abilities as a designer and an artist.

Working with Iris was not fun or easy, she is a difficult person but also a genius. Learning skills like laser cutting, 3D printing, and participating in Paris Couture Fashion Week made the negative experiences all worth it.

I ended up leaving after 6 months and moving to the UK where I worked for Mary Katrantzou, a digital print based fashion designer. She was a wonderful mentor, boss and creative. I helped prepare for the Fall 2013 London Fashion Week showing with Mary and her team, and then moved back to Toronto to catch my breath.

In 2014 I attended the first 3D Printing for Fashion Design Masterclass in New York City at Eyebeam partnered with NYU and Shapeways. I was one of ten participants over a two-month course teaching the technical skills needed to create 3D printed apparel but also analyzing the social, economic, environmental, and aesthetic implications of designing using this technology.

I was connected with some heavy hitters in the 3D printing world and absorbed as much information as I could in the hopes of becoming somewhat of an expert in the field. I teamed up with two other participants to make a 3D printed garment that contains over 800 separate and movable parts interconnected to make a mesh-like structure.

This piece was displayed twice in New York City in art galleries, and was featured at Dutch Design Week, as well as written about in Wired Magazine, Huffington Post, and several other publications.

This piece had inspired other projects since its release in 2014 that have taken the concept a step further. Since coming back to Toronto for the second time, I began working at Nuvango, starting as an associate designer, and quickly moving my way up to become the Fashion Director.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

Ethical fashion has been a part of my dialogue since first year university where we learned about overseas manufacturing, sweatshops, and the waste produced by the fashion industry. It made me passionate and aware, and was a turning point in my beliefs about the industry.

I vowed then and there to never work for a company whose practices were unethical. This made my career path that much more challenging because there are so few companies that follow a sustainable and ethical supply chain, but this also makes the work I do now that much more important.

After closing my business and before moving to Europe I was looking for work. I was working retail and wanted desperately to get back into design in some way. I applied for several design jobs in and around Toronto, landing an interview with a high profile fast fashion house.

I was never passionate about securing the job as print designer but I needed something. I was given a trial assignment to knock off a Chloe floral print to the best of my ability. I was shocked. I didn't think it was right.

As I dug deeper I started to hear unsavory feedback about this company from current, and past, employees citing some of the companies' best practices which included such actions as negotiating lower garment costs with overseas factories. Connecting the dots, I knew this also meant the people sewing the garments would be in unsafe conditions for slave wages.

Shortly after declining the position with this fast fashion retailer, one of their factories collapsed, killing over a thousand innocent people. I was happy I had made the decision to decline the job, but I was outraged that no one was taking responsibility.

In the race to the bottom, none of the companies who negotiate for lower garment costs wanted to admit that their decisions were directly related to slave wages, unsafe working conditions and thus, the factory collapse.

Ignorance was no excuse in my opinion, anyone who has ever sewn knows how much time and skilled work goes into making something as basic as a tee shirt, and that buying a tee shirt for under a dollar does not add up to fair wages or good working conditions.

I wanted to do something, I decided I needed to change the industry from within, from the position of the designer, of the business. I made it my goal to find a company that prided itself on local and ethical manufacturing, and to set an example of what an ethical business could look like.

I wanted to show that consumers are willing to pay a higher price to know that their clothes were made with care by people like themselves, who are paid fairly for their skilled work. I wanted to show that a seamstress, a printing press operator, and a garment cutter are respectable and highly skilled jobs that should be regarded as such.

I made it my career goal to find a company that shared this value where I could help shape the new face of ethical manufacturing.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Sustainable and ethical fashion are one in the same in my opinion. Conducting a business in a sustainable way is ethical, in turn, part of being an ethical business means partaking in sustainable practices.

The apparel industry has evolved since the industrial revolution to become one of the most wasteful and fickle industries. The demand for trendy, disposable clothing is what drives the fast fashion industry to produce for volume at a low cost rather than quality.

The implications of fast fashion are only now being discussed despite the industry moving in this direction since the 1950's. Before mass production, clothing was made to last and would be cared for, repaired and passed on for generations until it literally fell apart.

Eliminating disposable clothing in favour of quality, long lasting garments is the only way to move in a sustainable direction. Rethinking the way, we consume clothing as a society and

reconsidering the perceived low value we put on garments will foster a new appreciation for garment workers, their skills, and a willingness to pay a premium for quality garments.

What is Nuvango – its title, mission, productions, and vision?

NU-VAN-GO, rhymes with mango – comes from the idea of “the new Van Gogh”

An Interview with Hillary Sampliner of Nuvango (Part Two)

August 24, 2016

What is Nuvango – its title, mission, productions, and vision?

NU-VAN-GO, rhymes with mango – comes from the idea of “the new Van Gogh”
The changing landscape of the art world makes room for new creatives to blossom and show their work on the versatile medium of apparel.

Nuvango is a fashion and lifestyle brand focused on collaborating with international artists to create wearable art for the masses.

The associations of “wearable art” and “the masses” usually do not go hand in hand, but at Nuvango, our goal is to make art accessible. Our apparel is unique, well designed, produced ethically and sustainably, and is affordable. Not to mention, we give back to the artists that we collaborate with.

Our mission is to inspire die hard creatives and people new to the art world to curate their bodies like a gallery. To mix and match, make political and social statements, and to be bold. To reimagine beauty, and rewrite history by telling a story with your visual identity.

What makes the company unique?

Nuvango has a unique story. Starting out ten years ago as Gelaskins, an art inspired tech accessory brand, Nuvango was born two years ago when the founders Drew Downs and Jamie Pichora decided to expand their vertically integrated manufacturing business and add apparel manufacturing to their product offerings.

The most unique factor that sets Nuvango apart from other businesses is not that we work with artists, or that we are produced in a major North American city.

Our unique factor is our on-demand manufacturing process. Aside from small boutiques, home sewers and mass customization factories, Nuvango is pioneering the on-demand approach in the fashion realm.

This highly sustainable business model allows us to produce only what is ordered, eliminating waste and need for warehouses full of inventory. A garment is only produced after a customer has ordered and paid for it, then the unprinted cut garment has artwork applied to it and is sewn together and shipped out.

This business model is a reaction to the fast fashion apparel business which produces the most waste of any industry in the world. Without holding an inventory, Nuvango is able to keep on trend and adapt quicker than most businesses, if a style is not selling we can discontinue it without having to sell through, or dispose of old stock.

The other defining factor of Nuvango is the factory itself, set in downtown Toronto, this three story historical building is a hub of creativity and inspiration to those who work there and

visit. Previously a macaroni factory, the Nuvango headquarters house our head offices as well as our vertically integrated production facility. Upon entering the building, you are hit with beautiful original artwork, quirky installations, and friendly faces that make Nuvango so unique.

Our production facilities look and feel very different than most garment factories. The production floor is bright and airy, spanning the first and second floor of this beautiful post and beam structure. Looking around you see many sewing machines, large printers and presses, and tables for cutting. It is quite an impressive set-up all under one roof.

The faces behind the machines are that of a diverse workforce. Young, new graduates of college sewing programs sit next to European veterans of the industry, they share jokes, experiences and knowledge. This is the new face of manufacturing in North America, one Nuvango is proud to be a part of.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

Just this year I taught my first lecture to Ryerson fashion students about 3D printing technology. I find teaching to be very rewarding and I like being able to share my knowledge and predictions about how the emerging technologies in apparel design are changing the industry and the way people design.

I am involved in a collaborative research project with several professors and PHD students analyzing the nuances of fitting garments to a body that is size 22 or higher. There is little research done on the different body types at this size and how to accurately fit clothing on this niche segment of the market.

Part of the research involves body scanning various individuals, analyzing measurements, and 3d printing custom body forms. I am acting as a technology and fit consultant on this fascinating research.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I like to keep my finger on the pulse of technology and new developments in textiles.

Continuing to learn is what keeps me inspired and coming up with new ideas. I hope to one day leave a lasting mark on the world of fashion by changing the way people think about the industry, by inventing a new technology or process that has a positive impact, and by continuing to push the envelope of what is possible in design and manufacturing.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

Many people believe that by giving garment work to factories in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and China, we are giving people jobs and work that they need to sustain their own life, and build their economy. While in part this is true, unfortunately due to corruption, these garment factory jobs are not empowering people to provide for themselves.

The wages made by garment workers are unfit to sustain an individual, let alone to provide for a family. By giving certain overseas garment factories contracts, we perpetuate the

acceptance of slave wages which will continue unless consumers demand more of their apparel brands.

Sustainable and ethical manufacturing is hugely important right now. I believe we are at the point of a paradigm shift towards transparent manufacturing. Companies are now considering environmental factors much more than before in part because of governmental laws, but also because sustainability is hugely marketable.

Apparel companies have realized this shift is coming and are using those ideals as a marketing tool. Consumers, now more than ever, are checking labels, reading about companies, and are willing to put their money where their mouth is.

The trailblazers of ethical manufacturing are paving the way for more businesses to become sustainable by figuring out the nuances of bringing production back to North America and competing in a society focused on the bottom line.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Beyond the company we have built with Nuvango, we are also creating tools for other brands, bands, artists and designers. We are building an app that will allow anyone with a website to plug in the same manufacturing capabilities we use everyday at Nuvango. Stay tuned to www.notion.ca for more details.

Thank you for your time, Hillary.

An Interview with Jennifer M. Brown of Under The Root

August 26, 2016

Under The Root is an intimate apparel design house that encircles and creates hand structured lingerie, loungerie, and boudoir accessories by Jennifer M. Brown. Read more about the interview below:

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

My childhood story is not one for the faint of heart. There are no warm fuzzies and financial support backups or luscious love stories. The story is one of reclamation. I was the oldest of three in a single parent household.

My father was a victim of the Vietnam War and subsequently abandoned our family when I was 9 years old. My mother did her very best although made poor choices which landed us all in the world of sexual, domestic, and emotional abuse. The one constant in my life was dance classes. I began working in the dance studio for trade of classes at age 14.

When I was 15, my decision to take a sewing class spawned an impetuous desire to somehow connect the impoverished world to the fantastical by means of an apparel tightrope. The skills gained in the next 2 years were to be quite literally danced over.

In my adult life, dance had taken over and fashion flipped to leotards, warmups, wrap skirts, and pieces for body mover comfort. Most of the time the materials were upcycled and/or refurbished, used clothing pieces. As whimsy as some may think a dancer's life is, quite the opposite is true.

There are bruises, sweat, poignant falls, flips, aches, salt baths, body strategies and negotiations, grand or minuscule maneuvers. The breadth of challenge can be described as being submerged in the star-crossed love between pain and power.

It is at this particular crossing where Under The Root began to take shape. I did not take the conventional, educational path to fashion design though. I studied dance, practiced as a performance artist, designed costume for stage and film, then styling for boutiques. There is a compendium of these creative skills, which bleed into the designs and brand today.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

Ethical fashion and the decision to purchase ethical fashion sits heavily on the individual buying decisions. The options for ethical apparel choices are vast, impeccable, and essential. We now have the ability to research the aspects of a company and ask questions, which receive genuine answers.

The influence of ethical fashion has shown a positive outcome that gives way to an exceptional planet and peoples. The respect of human rights, environmental impact, and a

transparent supply chain are three main values that take an active role in poverty reduction, sustainable livelihood creation, plus minimizing and counteracting environmental concerns.

Ethical fashion represents an approach to the design, the elements of manufacturing, the benefits to the people and communities, and the overall acknowledgement of a brand's social responsibility.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Sustainable fashion is a category related to and included within the ethical fashion concept. While ethical is directly affected by an individual's values, cultural perceptions and points of view, sustainable fashion generally refers to the methods, materials, and processes of garment production.

The sustainability of a garment is crucial and one of the basic ingredients for high quality workmanship.

What is Under the Root?

Under The Root specializes in the compassionate and transformative revolution of sensual alchemy for body movement visionaries. The affectionate brand continues to conjure designs that support the channels to a sustainable planet, imprint an expression of functional sensuality onto your skin, and offer a fair wage in exchange for high return in quality work.

These intimate apparel pieces provide a practical, yet ethereal wickedness with a mission of equilibrium.

What makes Under the Root unique?

Under The Root creates intimate apparel for the modern, minimalist, body mover who activates with a subtle alchemy.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

There are irons in the fire at this point of original designs for dance companies and performance artists. I just signed up to work on wardrobe stylings in a local, Seattle theatre. Also, a collection including rune casting cloths, tarot reading cloths, altar cloths, and tool satchels launches in October 2016.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

This question has an extensive answer although I will work towards paring it down to the underlying reason Under The Root exists. It goes without many more words that I forged this brand from the ashes of my frustration with the intimate apparel industry and the greed that was running rampant without regard for the planet and its peoples.

When I began to dig a little deeper as to why I was driven to continue on, here is where my values rested first:

Sensuality is inherent with every human body. The word may begin with the letter 's' but it is quite different than sexuality. It claims the right of a body without repression or compartmentalized pleasure zones, and it is a natural, whole being submersion in sensory exploration. You do not need drugs to hold hands with it, and it creeps over you when lingering too long as a shadow.

Sensuality is freedom and there is never a wrong way to ingest it with yourself. You can wash with it in the rain, dry in the light breezes, lay on the rocky ground cover, or bring it to the fire. It is yours to claim. Even a quick moment of non-action sends it the message to smolder with you.

These words above are a personal calling card to make room for it in yourself and others. Do away with the judgment of what it is supposed to look like, talk like, act like, or be. It is yours; every last drop of the blood of it is yours. Others may see it just as you may see others, but make no doubt that it belongs to the only one who sees it as a completed circle... you.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

We are beyond the need to explain the worth of the ethical and sustainable companies. It is time for innovation across all facets of the industry. In order to sustain the evolution, the acceptance begins and ends with authentic, design leadership.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Thank you for your dedication, appreciation, and care to the evolution of our fashion industry. Certainly, it is to take a village as we enlighten the populace and change the status quo.

Thank you for your time, Jennifer.

An Interview with Jessie Atkins of BERG+BETTS

August 30, 2016

Jessie founded the sustainable watch brand Berg and Betts in 2013, selling casually on Etsy then launched her very own website at BERG+BETTS.

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I am a mom to two little boys under the age of three, a wife to my wonderful husband, and I am the founder of the sustainable watch business BERG+BETTS.

I have formal education in human nutrition and for most of my twenties I worked in that industry with a fire in my belly that said I was meant to do something different. I come from a family of makers and creative entrepreneurs and I always knew I was destined to work for myself in one capacity or another.

My passion for re-purposing started very young with an attitude that if I wanted something, I could make it, and if I didn't have the materials, I could find them. This passion for re-purposing combined with the desire to be my own boss lead me to start BERG+BETTS.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

Ethical fashion is very important to me as a producer, a consumer and as a human. It's important that we all strive for transparency in our supply chains and that we support businesses who are making an effort to upcycle, re-use or re-purpose materials, pay fair wages and who treat employees with dignity and respect.

The shift to slow fashion won't happen overnight but businesses and consumers recognizing the need – that's important.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Sustainable fashion is the foundation of BERG+BETTS' mission. We've all heard it before, but the fashion industry is the second largest polluter in the world and perfectly good, often new textiles are filling our landfills. Finding ways to reduce waste and sustainably produce clothing and accessories is absolutely imperative to the longevity of the industry and our environment.

What is BERG+BETTS?

BERG+BETTS crafts sustainable timepieces out of surplus scrap leather that would otherwise go to waste. We believe you shouldn't have to sacrifice style for sustainability and it is our mission to provide eco-friendly products that are sophisticated, responsible, and affordable.

What makes the company unique?

Not only do we not produce textile waste, we actually take waste, re-purpose it and eliminate it. Watch straps require such a small amount of leather that it was a no-brainer for us to source scraps from the biggest waste producing countries in the world and turn it into fashion forward timepieces.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

Being a mother. Hands down the hardest, yet most fulfilling job in the world. Between my two boys and my business, I have three children that require all my attention and competing priorities are a daily struggle.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

A lot. I am creatively fulfilled and I am learning more about business everyday. More importantly, I am doing something really good and important for our environment while setting an example and paving the way for sustainable fashion in Canada.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

They are the way of the future. They need to become the new normal. It's rare that a business can change its practices overnight, so we need to support those who are conscious of the need for change and who are moving us in the right direction

An Interview with Bernard Seys of Efaisto

September 1, 2016

What is Efaisto in terms of its vision?

Fashion is a trillion-dollar industry worldwide. We are all affected by it. However, we think fashion is broken. We want to fix it by making fashion custom-made. That means ethical and sustainable. In order to do this, we need to build a global network of artisans.

The vision is to bypass large fashion brands to go straight to the makers of the products. By doing this, we are able to provide ethical products to the consumer, produce custom-made products from the producer.

Now, we are starting and sourcing in Vietnam with the artisans. We are selling mainly to clients in France and Belgium. It is to start. It is to expand sourcing countries because there are many artisans throughout the world.

Of course, it is selling to other countries. We want to expand to the rest of Europe and then the US.

In terms of Efaisto and its production line, what are the most prominent products?

We started two months. We began with four products: shirts, leather shoes, leather bags, and wallets. We want to start on a focused basis. We know there's a market for these products. There's not question about that.

We can redefine the product range by the fact that the products have a value to all customers. It is all handmade – by human hands, by artisans. We have a story to each product. With these two factors, custom made and handmade, this creates the product range.

Already, we know a lot of artisans doing a lot of great work on many, many products such as furniture too. Also, we have contact with people in South Africa, Peru, and Bolivia. At the moment, Vietnam is the major focus.

We start there, but the vision is to create a global network.

How is the relationship with the producers and the company?

Our relationship with the producers. I think they like us. They have been working in the neighbourhood for 40 years. They have been doing their business, doing it well, and doing it locally.

They are under pressure now because Vietnam is opening into the global market. So, we have to take global fashion brands. All of the Vietnamese consumers buy mass market. They are not going to artisans anymore.

They have been making products forever. Customers in Europe love what they do them. We say, “We can help you sell to them. Keep doing what you’re doing, you’ll sell in London, in Paris, in Singapore.”

They love our clothes.

(Laugh)

These artisans. These makers. They want people to live from what they do, to become fashionable. They value the consumer feedback. What they’re doing is not only selling clothing, but they consider the craft as an art, the sales in Paris is important.

When we send them pictures of the customers wearing the products in Paris and Brussels, they’re so happy. We offer them recognition other than including better working conditions.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

We launched two months ago. We are still making sure that we can scale the sales. We are selling more and more. We have to make sure the customers receive what they ask for. That’s for all business. Next step is to work on the volume.

We need to make sure the whole process is working smoothly. That’s for the team. For me, I’m in Brussels right now, as you can see.

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

I am meeting investors in another two weeks. We view ourselves as a textile hub. We refer to artisans. As such, we view this as artwork that we can sell. Now, we need investors. We are raising funds at the present time.

What meaning or personal fulfilment does this work bring for you?

I was I’m not into fashion at all.

(Laugh)

I’ve worked in finances before, for the corporate world. Going shopping in the mall or with my girlfriend has always been an ordeal, and then I discovered Vietnam, I discovered the market where I can fabric and leather.

I discovered the makers. I would enter the shop and pay \$30 for a custom-made, tailored shirt. It was my shirt. I was the only one wearing it. The price I paid went right into the maker’s pocket. I knew the guy has a son.

He was studying abroad. The whole family was supporting the son abroad. I’ve always wanted to use my skills to have an impact. A real impact on the world based on my skills. Here, with my partner/co-founder, he’s a software guy. I’m more on the business side.

We use what we've learned to improve everyone's lives such as the artisans or the consumers. We are doing something. Something that we consider useful for others. We are doing better.

It is a feeling of self-fulfillment, self-actualization. We want to do something meaningful. We think it's needed too. We think the fashion world has a big problem at the moment. Many industries are being disrupted by technology and innovative skills.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

We have a niche. It is not about fashion, exactly. We support eco-fashion and ethical issues. Of course, we want to bring more ethics into fashion. We think this will work only if we bring something more.

Many ethical fashion brands only advertise themselves as ethical. It's their main selling point. It's a good vision and needed now. But to get out of a niche market of people who will only buy ethical, we need to bring something else, which will appeal to other people.

We want people to think, "Rationally, it is better to buy from them." You can get a custom-made product for the same price, which is the whole innovation. It is amazing as such. We combine ethical aspects and the custom-made.

We think this appeal to a larger portion of the market rather than being ethical or custom-made alone. Those markets appeal to certain people. We think combining both emotional and rational is the way.

We're not only an ethical business. We're both. We can see this working. Our customers, we ask them, "Why are you buying from us?" It is the custom-made aspect. It is important. It is convincing the consumers.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Trusted Clothes is, obviously, about ethical and sustainable fashion. As I said before, we believe that ethical business must be strong on both aspects: ethics and business. That's why we are working on these two dimensions.

We want to use all business and technical skills to promote the concept and more relationships. The only way to change the environment of fashion and to have a large impact is by combining these dimensions, which are equally important.

Of course, that's how sustainable fashion can take over the world!

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

Thank you for your time, Bernard.

An Interview with Maryanne Mathias of Osei-Duro

September 2, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

My name is Maryanne Mathias. My business partner Molly Keogh and I cofounded Osei-Duro in 2009.

I was born on a small Island on an “intentional community” off the coast of British Columbia, and moved to Vancouver when I was five. I attended the Vancouver Waldorf School from kindergarten to grade 12. There was a strong emphasis on working with the hands, and I developed a love for making things from an early age.

I studied Fashion Design and Technology from Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Vancouver, and after graduating promptly moved to Montreal to start a small fashion company. I made all the pieces myself, and hand dyed them all myself.

After growing frustrated with the fashion industry in general, I decided to take a research trip around the world, and designed textile based capsule collections in Ghana, Morocco, Egypt, and India. This was the genesis for Osei-Duro.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion to you?

At Osei-Duro we believe that business should be intrinsically ethical, and should exist to support society both by creating helpful goods and services, and creating gainful employment. Unfortunately, that is not the case, so we try to do the best we can with our business.

What is Osei-duro – source of its title, and its mission, productions, and vision?

Osei-Duro loosely means “noble medicine” or “powerful magic”. We aim to support local handicrafts in emerging market countries, with our main focus on Ghana.

What makes the company unique?

We were the first to bring rayon and silk for batik in Ghana. Since then over four companies have begun to do the same. We try to champion new techniques and ideas from traditional methods, to expand and support the apparel industry in Ghana.

Where do you see the company heading into the future?

We look forward to expanding our facilities in Ghana, while looking to other countries for production and inspiration.

What is the importance of respecting the rights and aesthetics of local workers?

We work in countries that are not our own, so it's particularly important that we understand the culture and norms of those places. We try very hard to consider these when making decisions.

How does respecting rights and aesthetics of local workers improve the products?

This is an interesting question. At Osei-Duro we strive to preserve the traditional techniques from a country or region, but we reinterpret the traditional aesthetic. For instance, with our batiks, we use the traditional method of cutting stamps from wood or foam and dipping them in wax to form a resist before dyeing the cloth.

But we develop new prints that would not necessarily be considered traditional or even beautiful in Ghana. But I think our batikers are encouraged by making something new from the old. And find inspiration in that. Even though sometimes it can be challenging.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

I became a fashion designer because I loved making things. And as the business grows I find myself more and more aught up in the business development side of Osei-Duro. So I've decided to make things for pleasure on my time off. At the moment I'm making concrete and copper plant stands and pots, and cotton canvas painted wall hangings. I've also taken up a small balcony garden.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

Whenever I get overwhelmed from the stress and consider quitting Osei-Duro I think of our first employee Kwaku. He is very hard working and loyal, and we've really seen him grow as we grow. If the business stopped he'd be out of a job, as would a bunch of our other employees and artisans.

So I'd say it's the work and relationships and knowing that in some small way we are making an impact.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

Ethical and sustainable fashion is where fashion as a whole, is heading.

Thank you for your time, Maryanne.

An Interview with Diane Kennedy of Diane Kennedy

September 6, 2016

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

Born and raised in Vancouver, BC, my love of fashion started at a very early age. By the age of four, I received my first real sewing machine and I enjoyed a lot of mother-daughter bonding as she taught me how to sew.

A moment stands out in my memory of a time when my cousin and I were playing with Barbie. She disappeared into the other room and quickly reappeared with a miniature bathing suit she had sewn herself! The idea delighted me and I honestly think that's what planted the seed in my mind that I wanted to create fashion.

After graduating from Kwantlen University Fashion Design program and several design and patternmaking positions, I bought a patternmaking service bureau called Fashionmark. In total I spent 20 years perfecting my craft and honing my ability to design excellent fit across all size categories before starting my first fashion brand; Diane Kennedy.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion to you?

Along with fashion, my other true love is gardening. When my son was little, he would play in my backyard often as I gardened and I realised very quickly that I absolutely did not want my young child sitting and playing on a lawn pumped full of chemicals and pesticides.

This led me to think more about what we put in our body, as well, and I made the decision to change our lifestyle to one of a more organic nature.

I guess you could say that when I became a mother, I became a bit more "Mother Earth", too. From how I take care of my family to how I take care of my business, I want to make sure I am leaving a positive impact on our environment.

In terms of the ethical qualities of my business, when I hear tragic stories of factory accidents in Third World countries, it breaks my heart and only bolsters my resolve to uphold my social responsibility to the global community as a business owner and consumer.

I strongly believe that it should not be anyone's goal to make a profit at the expense of another's quality of life.

In general, what is the company Diane Kennedy – its mission, productions, and vision?

Diane Kennedy's mission is to provide comfortable, yet flattering clothes to mature women of all sizes. We endeavour to accomplish this by ethically working with local factories & vendors and using Canadian made goods where possible.

Being a plus size myself, my vision for Diane Kennedy is a fashion line dedicated to making women feel beautiful no matter their size. We want our garments to find women who have struggled to find clothing that's tailored to them. We want our clients to feel included and

respected by the fashion industry (and by everyone!) by giving them something everyone wants: choice and inclusivity.

Aside from those basic descriptions, what makes the company unique?

Diane Kennedy is unique because nearly everything we sell is made from Certified Organic Bamboo that is knitted in Canada. As well, we only work with Canadian vendors and factories, so we can proudly say we're truly "Made In Canada".

The Canadian-made bamboo itself is incredibly luxurious and comfortable to wear because the fibres are very smooth and non-irritating, making it an excellent choice for those with skin allergies. The weight of the fabric gives a very elegant drape without being too clingy.

It's a high-end, luxury fabric with the comfort level of your favourite pyjamas. On top of that, our line is well known for our fit. While many fashion lines use one pattern to cut their sizes, we create 2 patterns; one for Regular & Plus Sizes, to ensure the best fit.

You sell sustainable, eco-friendly, and organic clothing. What is the importance of these fashion trends?

It's funny that you should categorize them like that. What others may consider a "fashion trend" has been part of my business model since the very beginning, nearly 10 years ago. "Fast Fashion" is a real problem in the industry right now.

I think it's incredibly important that both business owners and consumers make choices that contribute to our global community and does not support the manufacturing of poor quality, "disposable" garments. I want to be part of an industry that isn't the 2nd largest polluter on the planet. We are a business in this industry that creates quality, timeless fashion.

You use organic bamboo. What are the benefits of bamboo for selling clothing?

I love the fact that the bamboo fabric we use is knitted right here in Canada, at a mill that uses eco-ethical practices such as Hydro-electricity and dyeing methods which meet high Canadian Standards. The fibre holds dye remarkably well, and the colours on our fabrics are rich and deep. Our black bamboo fabric is such a gorgeous, true black.

This means that, in addition to being incredibly sustainable (bamboo is incredibly flood/drought resistant, does not require pest/herbicides or water irrigation to quick grow high yield crops) it is also incredibly resilient, making it a long lasting textile, perfect for garments that are expected to be worn often!

You aim to create figure flattering clothing. What does this mean in more concrete terms?

My experience as a plus size woman, in addition to my extensive design and technical background gives me great confidence in my understanding of a woman's figure and how to highlight our best features.

In my years of dressing women, I pay attention to how we dress and how we wear our clothes. For example, mature women like to have freedom of movement in their back & shoulders, while still having coverage for their arms.

As well, women like to have a choice of pant widths to accommodate areas of varying sizes of bumps like at the hips, thighs and knees. A smooth silhouette in the front to accommodate a curvier bust and torso as well as extra fabric in the tummy area are all considered. These are just a few of the things I need to keep in mind when designing to flatter all body types.

What is the importance of a plus-size movement and plus-size garment niche?

While other brands are starting to finally recognize the Plus Size community as a relevant market, Diane Kennedy has always had all inclusive sizing from Small through to 3X.

When I began research for my brand, I came across some very telling comments from women in our target market. It quickly became clear that Plus Size women wanted to shop for the same clothing and brands that are readily available in regular sizes.

It was dismaying for them to have to shop in the back corner of the top floor of a department store. These women wanted the respect of not being treated differently because of size. And so, it became my mission to focus on providing a fashion line geared towards great fit on both plus and regular sizes.

You work out of Vancouver, BC. What benefits come from having the company there?

Vancouver has a burgeoning but thriving fashion industry, fuelled by such local (but internationally recognized) clothing companies like Lululemon, Arc'teryx and MEC. These companies are very well known for their social/eco-conscious practices and it's wonderful that we are all based in a city that is quickly becoming one of the most well known "green" cities in the world.

Our studio and warehouse is right in the heart of our garment district, where many of Vancouver's clothing factories are located. This is such a boon for us, as it means we are within walking distance to many of our factories, giving us the ability to oversee production easily.

Where do you see the company heading into the future?

While the Fashion Industry is constantly evolving and developing new fabrications and technology, we like to keep our roots firmly planted in the idea that the fabrics we use are proven to be of exceptional quality.

Our clients appreciate the classic look of our items (like our Flex Pant & Serene Pant) and while we are always updating our catalogue of styles, we owe it to our loyal customers to always stock favourites. We are looking towards options for allowing a more personalized experience for our customers.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

Several years ago, we launched a brand new fashion line which we can also proudly say is “Made In Canada”. Cherry Velvet Dresses is a line of retro-inspired dresses geared towards women of all sizes (from S-3X) who love the classic look of Vintage/Retro/Pin-up style.

While Diane Kennedy’s core values center around Eco/Ethical practices, Cherry Velvet revolve around challenging the mainstream beauty ideal by catering our designs towards underrepresented sizes and providing empowering content with our social media presence.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I feel so incredibly lucky to be living out my childhood dream. While so many people are tethered to their 9-5, it gives me great joy knowing that what I do every day will make so many women happy.

It’s such a pleasure to see my clients in my designs and hear them talk about how great my clothes make them feel (both inside and out)! It’s a satisfying feeling to know that every design I produce is created with love, thought and consideration for how they’re made and who they’re made for.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Thank you for the interview. It was a pleasure to chat with you about my passion for size inclusiveness and eco-responsibility in the Fashion Industry.

Thank you for your time, Diane.

An Interview with Sarah Power of Inland

September 7, 2016

INLAND is a Canadian designer shopping event, a platform for designers and brands to sell their collections directly to shoppers, read on to know more about INLAND and Sarah. The founder and creative director behind the event.

Tell us your story of how you got into fashion.

I started doing a degree in communication studies, which lead me into a variety of roles including not-for-profit. It oddly involved me in getting a teaching degree, in education. I did a lot of travelling through it with the time off. I was Germany. I really, really came in tune with some of the design scene happening around the area.

Europe is pretty phenomenal. I was not comfortable in what I was doing. I returned and went to school for fashion. I went to the clothing show in 2007, which was a 25-year running semi-annual trade show that brought in about 300 vendors. It was international. There was this boutique section, Katie's Desires. I became fascinated with that area.

I went on to do some other things. I decided several years later to revisit the idea. The clothing show has collapsed. I was looking at this transformation of the retail environment, even locally and looking at local designers. There's significant work around fast fashion.

Many organizations are looking to bring light into the harsh and troublesome reality of all of that.

I rolled into the Canadian design scene, local manufacturing. I decided it was the perfect time to start a show that focused on promoting those things. That's where INLAND came to life.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion for you?

If we want to preserve humanity, if we want to preserve our creative culture, we have to look outside of the fundamentals of now, what looks good or fashionable. It is not about what is made fast and cheaply alone. It is about human beings who are in the living environment. We need to consider all of these aspects and put them together.

At another level, it comes down to survival. It comes down to survival of multiple species and in a healthy way. It is about education, ground-up networking. It is about educating children. It is about lobbying against corporations. Everything works better in the social fabric to think ethically and move in that direction.

With respect to expanding, you have mentioned in a short promotional video the need to or the hope for expanding into other parts of the world. Other major fashion centres. How would intend to go about doing it?

The concept of pop-up, which is what INLAND is founded on, is immediate short-term reach out opportunities for a curated environment for contemporary designers. They come together.

The nature of that business means that it is not static. It is not tied to brick-and-mortar situations.

It is able to move around the city, the country, the globe and gain international recognition. We live in a global world now. So, to take Canadian design on a global level, that recognition of the different brands and labels that exist. Unfortunately, fashion does have this need for glitz and glam, and credibility.

Canada has not made its mark internationally, but there is the opportunity to make that happen by taking the brand outside of the country rather than trying to build inside it. It is trying to do it from both directions. That is the reasoning behind it. The process for doing it is taking a show and popping up in different cities and growing from there.

One of the ways that this seems to be done is propping up certain fashion design people, have been around for a while, and have become personal heroes to people. Are there people that have become personal heroes for you?

First and foremost, I respect the emerging designer. I respect all designer, but the emerging designer is someone facing a vast landscape of competition, challenges, personal and social ethical debates on how to pursue a collection, how to engage with your customer.

So, my heroes are the designers that take the lead deeply into their passionate field. That is to design. It is very, very, very, tough to survive in that marketplace. I have to put it back on all of them. It is hard for me to point out a particular individual.

The majority of garment workers are women. Sometimes, children are a majority, dependent on the region.

Do you see ethical and sustainable fashion as concomitant with women's rights, child rights, be implemented – e.g., good working conditions, children don't work, children aren't slave, women have decent working conditions, women have decent pay, and so on?

Absolutely, absolutely, it is a fundamental part of ethical and sustainable manufacturing. It is to ensure that we are all living in a healthy, social situation, and not just in "developed nations," but across the world.

That's a given. There's no reason for anybody to live that way. I think this revival of traditional methods of manufacturing: small batch, slow fashion, shopping local.

It gives the public an opportunity to learn about the process. It has made pursuing that craft for everyone quite 'sexy' now. Before, people weren't pursuing fashion design sewing careers.

Now, people are taking on the craft. I am hoping that this is going to grow with regard to being in Canada and North America so that we can have a balance on a global level. Absolutely, women and children in poor countries are the typical person doing these jobs.

What other work are you involved at this point in time?

I work full time at the art gallery in Hamilton. I am the digital marketing and social media communications coordinator. So, I work in an arts community in Hamilton. I'm from Toronto. It is an industrial town built on industry. Therefore, there's large, large factory warehouse areas with extremely cheap real estate everywhere.

It is a growing design and creative culture area. Hamilton is becoming the new Queen West in Toronto, or even the Brooklyn through New York. There's a lot happening in the city. There are artists taking up spaces and starting businesses. Hamilton has a lot of idea. My 9 to 5 is working at the art gallery in Hamilton.

What personal meaning and fulfilment does this work, INLAND and the art gallery, bring you?

It allows me to connect directly with designers and creative people. I find that fascinating and inspiring, which pushes me to continue to want to promote them. I did go to fashion design school. I didn't produce a collection. I didn't have the determination or skill set, or patient, to be able to do that.

What I do have is an extraordinary enthusiasm for the art of design and I wanted to be able to promote that, that's what I wanted to focus on. Being in those environments fuels my energy and pushes me forward to help them out.

Last question, any thoughts or feelings in conclusion?

I think potentially just speaking to the ethical and sustainable fashion point. There's lots of questions and ideas surrounding what is made in Canada. Running a sustainable fashion pop-up, I get asked that a lot.

It is important for the industry to come together and start defining it and to look outside of that term for the sake of the designers and businesses that are here and have a good mind about what that means.

It is about who made the clothes and not where they were made. That's what I have been focusing on for change and hoping that's a positive one, where that takes me.

Thank you for your time, Sarah.

An Interview with Mallorie Dunn of Smart Glamour

September 8, 2016

We have a chat with Mallorie Dunn of Smart Glamour, an affordable, fashionable, and customizable ethical clothing line for people of all sizes.

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

My name is Mallorie Dunn – I am a 29-year-old fashion designer living in Astoria Queens in NYC. I've lived in NYC for over 10 years now. I started making my own clothes and teaching myself to sew as a preteen.

When I was a junior in high school, I began fashion sketching classes and then sewing classes as a senior. I continued to study Fashion Design at FIT in 2005, and then studied Art and Design Education at Pratt Institute.

I worked in corporate design, in the Juniors ready to wear sector – for about 2.5 years, and then left after feeling creatively stifled and frustrated at the varying negative attributes of fast fashion.

I switched to freelance and part time work – doing everything from tailoring, to tutoring, to technical design, to custom pieces – and during that year, I had the creative and physical energy to start thinking about what was really important to me when it comes to fashion. I landed at accessibility, ethical practices, and quality garments – which led to me to launching SmartGlamour in February 2014.

What is the importance of ethical fashion to you?

Ethical fashion is important to me for many reasons. As someone who handles every part of design – from conception to execution – I strongly believe that workers should be treated fairly and paid appropriately.

No matter how large SmartGlamour grows – the production of our garments will always, always be ethical. Additionally – I don't feel fashion is truly ethical – unless it is accessible to all bodies; this is a cornerstone of SmartGlamour.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Sustainable fashion is important to me also – for many reasons. I believe in quality over quantity and I believe fast fashion is hurting the planet in numerous ways. We devalue ourselves, so we buy low quality inexpensive clothing that doesn't fit properly – because we don't think we deserve better.

We throw it out and hurt third world countries in the process. It's a dangerous cycle.

What is SmartGlamour?

SmartGlamour is a body positive clothing line of ethically made, customizable fashion basics for sizes XXS-6X and beyond. We promote self acceptance and body love.

We have three main very broad goals: to empower women through clothing and help them on a road to body acceptance, to make good quality clothing that is sold at affordable prices, and to cut away at women on women hate that stems from insecurity and the belief that beauty and brains can not go hand in hand.

What makes the company unique?

What doesn't? Everything about SmartGlamour is unique. The fashion world as a whole – is very exclusionary and pretentious – and that's something I detest about it. Clothing and expressing oneself should be for everyone – and so SmartGlamour is for everyone.

When I say all, I actually mean all. I do not shy away from the reality of human being's bodies/shapes/abilities/differences – that is what makes the world a beautiful place. So I highlight those things – by dressing everyone, and celebrating everyone.

We also do this ethically – with available customizations. I have not found any other company that does what we do.

What is the greatest challenge in founding a business?

The greatest challenge in founding my business specifically is simply doing everything myself. I not only design and hand make every item we sell – but I also take care of social media, customer service, public relations, photography, videography, marketing, and more. There are never enough hours in the day.

What meaning or personal fulfilment does this work bring for you?

Phew – everything. SmartGlamour would simply not exist without it's message of body acceptance and self love. I've had customers cry tears of joy in my pop up shops, decide to show their arms for the first time, buy their first swimsuit, etc – having accurate representation of bodies – and giving all bodies access to the same fashion is powerful.

It is teaching everyone that their body is not wrong – contrary to what the mainstream media is trying to tell us.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

Well – I think they were always important. But, I think consumers are becoming more conscious of the companies they spend their money with and where their clothing comes from. Even if not just for the ethical stand point – but because they want to get a quality garment for their hard earned money.

They want clothing that fits. They want to spend money on brands that they believe in. And companies that are ethical not only in production but also in practice and in representation are leading the way.

Any advice for women in leadership?

Love what you do. Stand up for yourself. Ask for what you want. And don't forget to take care of yourself.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

Follow SmartGlamour on social media – @smartglamour, and shop with us!
At www.smartglamour.com We also host one-day pop up shops around the country – so request your city, and come out when we are nearby!

An Interview with Cristofer Smith of Green Apple Active

September 9, 2016

Over the past twenty-four years, Green Apple Active founder and veteran athletic designer Cristofer Smith and his team members have pioneered 13 brands with wild success, winning several international design awards for his unique fusion of comfort & style.

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I've been in this business for 25 years. I was finishing a Masters Degree in International Business. A good buddy in school, his parents were manufacturing some of the best tennis shoe brands.

So, we would go to her factory and look around to have a couple beers at night and said, "Man, we can do this better." That's what brought us into this. We took our student loans and parleyed it into six sewing machines, built a cutting table out of plywood.

That's how the journey began. 25 years later, 14 brands through all the world's largest accounts, I now do my own brand because it is a vegan, organic brand. So, not everybody was into it, I said, "Okay, I'll do it myself."

I put my own finance into it. That's what brought me here. There's more to it, obviously. That's my plan. That's I got here in a design studio on the beach.

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

If you want to go before that, I grew up with 5 sisters. My mom was a model. We were from the Bay Area. She was trained by Jack LaLanne. We've always been in the health and fitness industry.

I raced motorcycles for a living. After I got older, I went back to school. My buddy and I decide to take our student loan and make this happen. That's how it all happened.

What is the importance of sustainable fashion to you?

Of course, the most important to us here is something that is comfortable, feels good, looks good, and is healthy to the Earth. All of our stuff is certified bio-degradable from Nelson laboratories in Utah.

When I developed this fabric, this textile, which is our textile exclusively. We sent it up to Nelson Lab. That's the US Lab for anti-terrorism. We put it up for many tests such as metals, pollutants and so forth.

No heavy metals, they couldn't detect anything. It was also antibacterial. It protected 100% UVA, almost, and was the most breathable fibre on earth by nature without chemical treatment.

The fascinating part was when they put it into earth soil and sunlight, then it biodegraded within 42 days without any harm. That was the real positive part for us because the plastics – the polyesters and the nylons – never go away.

I'm repenting. I did polyesters for athletes for 18 years. People still ask me to do it, Scott. I have to decline the offers. I appreciate them. But if it's not going to be this type of fibre, it's not me anymore. I have three boys. One graduated from college in May.

In a nutshell, I started from the ground up. I am self-taught. Edward's mom knew how to do everything. She was from Nicaragua. She taught us everything. The rest of it is trial and error. We built our own cutting tables, did our own markers and patterns by hand. Now, it's all computerized. So, I'm raw.

(Laugh)

(Laugh)

What is Green Apple Active?

Eco-active wear for free souls. It's an active brand that is based on comfort and sustainability. Since I've been digital 100%, I stopped selling the big to big retailers a year ago. I went back and learned digital business.

I meet with people every week. Since I've done that, we've listened to the consumer now, which is what I used to call the end user. It's very enlightening on why they purchase this brand.

90% purchase it for the comfort. The sustainability is second to the comfort. What I've done is based the line more or less on bottoms and pullovers, and jackets, the other stuff is carried. So, they can wear something vegan.

But I'm not into the high fashion mode. The end user has changed us. When you follow sales online, you get to see everything. We found out 85% of our sales were comfort with sustainability as a backup. We decided to go into that arena.

I got out of the competitive bras, tops, towels, and socks. By the way, I started Green Apple with the Golden State Warriors. They got my towels, sweatshirts, and socks. They freak out about it. That you can make a vegan athletic garment.

This is like 9 years ago. So, they bought it. They were the first ones to delve into it. I don't talk about it because I didn't get a license. I did it with the owner. He loved it. One of my cohorts and I flew up there.

They took good care of us. We went into the condominium there and the stadium. By God, it was a lot of fun. Now look at the Golden State Warriors, right?! I'm like gosh darn it. They

wanted me to get the license and continue. But Adidas was all over us. I didn't feel like going into that war.

What other work are you involved in at this point in time?

Besides being a dad, I design. I'm designing the line. I do all of the design currently because when I went digital I thought, "Let's regroup this." I stopped designing about 6 years ago. I brought on a couple of ladies.

I taught them the ropes. They did great at it. One of them wanted to move forward into another company. I said, "Go for it!" So, I took back the reins. I do production and design myself.

I have a partner. He's from Asia. He'll be over in a couple of weeks. We are opening up in Asia and Russia within the next 60 days. It'll be digitally controlled, but I formed an alliance. I was in Shanghai. I think 5 weeks ago.

We got a good thing going over there too. We're excited. They really like that California lifestyle there. It should be fun. For us, it is so cool to be able to experiment with a totally different culture.

I mean 100% different. So, this is funny because I told Eddie. My alliance over there. I said, "Don't you think you guys should design it and do the website?" He said, "heck, no. This will build value in the brand. They like California brands."

So, we are redesigning the website. We are going to release it this week. It'll come in 5 different languages. It's not redesigned for each different country. It's the same one that we run in California.

We'll run it here. They'll do SEO there. We do design here in California. Isn't that funny? It's cool, bro.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

Being part of the ecosystem, the most important part for all of us in sustainable companies is multi-faceted, obviously, because we need to do our productions in a clean way, try to make sure our warehousing and distro is all solar energy, and everything should be done as close to home as possible.

I understand athletic apparel is a niche market and it's special. So, it's tough to get it done in America, tough period. When they say 'America, getting it done here', there's not one American in the factories.

And I owned factories. I can vouch for it. It's multifaceted. It's about being solar powered, doing clean fibre, processing it in a clean way, and going as far into your company as you can, and being as environmental and sustainable as possible.

Saudi Arabia, that's my Middle Eastern customer.

(Laugh)

Breaking through, for us, in a nutshell, that's it. We're trying to get everyone into solar power, even the dye house has solar power.

Gradually, the business is changing. Let me tell you, it is the stubbornest trade because everything's on sale all of the time. So, there's no money to invest in infrastructure. It's been a very tough journey for me.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?

I want everybody to come along on the journey. Think about what they're purchasing, try to help us with vendors out here build a better world, make a healthier garment, and look forward to having our kids wear something that is a little cleaner.

For me, it's so profound I can't tell you. I lost a sister to environmental cancers. So, for me, it is very profound as a statement. Clothing is, and especially in the athletic trade, right next to the largest living organism called the skin.

Polyester is a direct derivative of plastic. So, when you read about plastic, you're reading about polyester. It's a few versions down. It is prudent to teach mom's, who are getting hip on that.

I have gotten fed up with preaching. So, I'm not going to preach to you. It's been a real long ten years. Ten years of working on going green, and I slept around in China when there was nobody over there in farmlands trying to find the right plants.

I went to Austria to find things like eucalyptus. I wet around the world to find the right plant for the active lifestyle. Bamboo came out ahead of everybody.

Thank you for your time, Cristofer.

An Interview with Christine Dubin of Miou

September 14, 2016

Christine Dubin believes in the vision of creating a better world. Her business MIOU is a socially and environmentally responsible knitwear company that stays true to the principles of producing fair-trade and eco-friendly products.

Tell us about yourself – familial/personal story, education, and prior work.

I am originally from France, but I now live with my family in the charming little town of Gibsons, BC. I studied fashion design in France, and have always gravitated toward classic, quality-made clothing. When I became a mother, I became very interested in children's fashion and wanted to come up with a line of clothing that reflected my values.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion to you?

It is evident to most of us by now that our rate of consumption is not sustainable; we are polluting and damaging our precious environment, and we are starting to see some changes in weather patterns due to global warming. Sadly, our innocent children will suffer most from our mistakes, and this does not seem right to me.

Also, being a mother in Canada, I have been blessed with a good standard of living. It is so upsetting for me that mothers in developing countries are vulnerable and suffer great hardships; they are struggling to earn a decent living and care for their children.

This is why it was important for me to create a business that takes environmental and social issues into consideration and do my part in helping to alleviate these issues in the best way I can.

What is Miou – source of its title, and its mission, productions, and vision?

Miou's mission is to have a minimal environmental imprint and improve the lives of the women we work with. We strive to grow and improve, create increased opportunities for impoverished women in Peru and worldwide, and also continue to reduce our environmental impact.

We want to create a holistic business that has the balanced energetic flow of providing and receiving so we can help heal our people and planet while creating one-of-a kind, quality clothing.

What makes the company unique?

We have strong ethical principles that we prioritize over profit. We offer quality clothing that is unique and produced slowly and skillfully. Each piece is like a work of art, and we are very lucky to be working with an exceptionally talented group of women.

What challenges arise in founding a company?

It can be challenging to find a balance between juggling business and family. When I founded my business, my youngest was not going to school yet, so I had a limited amount of time to dedicate to growing Miou.

Creating my business also added financial stress as I had to take on loans without a guaranteed outcome. They were many ups and downs, but through perseverance and learning, Miou is now more stable and continues to grow.

Any advice for women in business?

As a woman, I am operating my business in the spirit of care for others and the environment. I think that this is an important characteristic; as more women own businesses, this can help us create a better world.

My advice to other women is to stay true to their feminine principles while doing business so that we can influence the mainstream business world towards a broader perspective of harmony.

Any advice for new business owners?

To be patient. Success does not happen overnight for most business owners. It takes time. When starting a business there is much to learn, and the likeliness of making mistakes is quite high, especially for new projects.

At Miou we have learned that if we are working on something we're unfamiliar with, we invest small amounts of money so that if it does not work out it won't be devastating, and can still be a good learning experience.

We have also learned to take the time to contemplate what we have accomplished, even if we are not profitable yet. It is easier to stay the course when we feel passionate about what we do.

What meaning or personal fulfillment does this work bring for you?

I love going to Peru and meeting with the wonderful women who create our knitwear; these women are beautifully warm and also very proud, and they are grateful to be able to use their skills to earn an income, as the unemployment is very high in rural Peru.

I feel privileged to have them work for me, and it is important for them to feel appreciated and respected, as Miou would not be what it is without their talent and perseverance. We have a symbiotic relationship—working with the knitters and being able to make a difference in their lives is very satisfying to me.

Being creative is also important for me, and brings me deep joy; it's my unique expression.

With regard to ethical and sustainable fashion companies, what's the importance of them now?

We live in a world in crisis due to overconsumption. Products are often of poor quality, profit is the ultimate goal for many corporations, and environment and social rights are secondary.

Now that consumers are becoming more aware and wanting to care for the earth and the people who create their products, they are looking to purchase from ethical businesses who share the same values. As more businesses work from an ethical principle we can tip the balance to create a better world.

Thank you for your time, Christine.

An Interview with Bobbi Paidel of Tribe of Lambs

September 15, 2016

Bobbi Paidel, founder of Tribe of lambs is a Canadian Nonprofit company working to empower and enrich the lives of at risk children in India. Through the sale of their ethically made, high quality jewelry line. Read more about Bobbi and her work!

How did you get involved with ethical and sustainable fashion?

I ended up in India for 7 months after I worked in the fashion industry in Toronto for a few years. I had become a bit jaded with the superficial and unethical sides of the mainstream fashion scene.

It wasn't who I wanted to be, so I ended up in India. I was volunteering in an orphanage, when I really began to recognize the situation for children there. At the same time, I started working with jewellers and artisans making pieces of jewelry, clothing, and accessories.

We decided to make a difference by having a crowdfunding campaign for the kids. The campaign was such a success we decided to launch a full non-profit. When I returned back to Canada, I partnered up with two friends Dani and Phil. Together we started what is now Tribe of Lambs.

What do you think is the most important part of ethical and sustainable fashion now, especially with being jaded?

People are focusing more on things that are organic, how they're living their lives, and living in compassionate and meaningful ways. It is trickling down into ethical and sustainable fashion. People are really asking themselves important questions... Why does this shirt cost this much? Who made it?

Before, we never thought twice about it. It is an exciting time to be a part of sustainable fashion because it is progressing so quickly. People are turning towards that rather than bargain sales and mass produced products.

What was the origin of the title Tribe of Lambs for the company?

The name came from brainstorming with my friend Sarah who encouraged me in India (and also designed our logo and website with her company Superfein Creative Agency). The name stands for the tribe or the community that we're building of conscious shoppers and people into social causes, and the togetherness.

The lamb is representative of the kids we're supporting. Standing alone and; not supported, they can be weak and vulnerable, but together we can help empower them to have a strong and powerful life.

What are its feature products at the moment?

We have sold a lot a variety of jewelry and; accessories. However, we are currently streamlined to focus on rings. We use a motto: “One ring, one heart.”

Each of our rings are named after children that we support so that we can honour their stories and; keep connected to our mission of supporting children living with HIV. We have unisex rings as well as bracelets, necklaces, tote bags, and scarves.

What other work are you involved in now?

Tribe of Lambs, as part our business model, focuses our funding on our Compassion Projects, which works for the support of at risk and HIV positive children through partnerships in India.

We are currently partnered with Ray’s Home for HIV Positive Children in Jaipur and together we have launched our 6th Compassion Project; the School Scholars Project. We’re raising \$13,000 to send 54 kids to school for a year. That’ll be tuition, books, bags, and uniforms. Everything that they’ll need. We are at 65% of our goal since launching in the summer.

We also have a sponsor who is supporting our mission and projects. It’s a heating and plumbing company in London, UK called Ramki which is run by a friend of the Tribe who uses the buy1give1 model for his business.

The Compassion Projects are really what we’re focused on besides selling jewelry and fundraising initiatives to maintain a sustainable income for our organization.

Where do you hope Tribe of Lambs goes in the future?

Our two big long-term goals are on either side of our business model. Firstly, we would like to create our own jewelry cooperative in India to train and employ HIV positive men and women handcraft our designs and offer them independence through employment.

We are currently outsourcing our jewelry. I go there and design it, but I work with a small family operation who produce everything. I trust them completely to work very closely through the process but we want to offer the same opportunity to adults with HIV, as well as have complete transparency of our supply chain and production methods.

Our other goal in the next five years is to expand Ray’s Home. They currently have space for only 57 children, it is our goal is to help them increase the capacity by double or triple, as well as increase the living conditions of the children currently there.

There are 3000 children living with HIV in Jaipur city alone, with enough housing for 200. It’s a scary statistic. We want to work to improve it.

Any thoughts or feelings in conclusion?

It is to have the opportunity to share our story and hopefully to inspire people to shop ethically with other products. There’s always an avenue online. Consumers have such options, limitless options, to buy products that are made ethically or have an after-impact.

You can buy something you're going to buy anyways and can empower the life of somebody else while you're at it.

Why not do something good with the power that you hold when you purchase something?!

Thank you for your time, Bobbi.

Unpublished

Science, Rationality, and Environmentalism in the Context of Textiles (Part I)

I want to have some fun exploring some of the so-called ‘deep’ issues of sustainability through science and rationality and weave these back into the context of textiles. For the first part of this series, we will join together in an argument for science as a branch of philosophy and this should set the stage for part two to do with rationality, which will pave the way for part three devoted to science and rationality together as applied to environmentalism and how this includes textiles in a fundamental way – economically, too. Besides, this is a mere scratch on an iceberg, and the rabbit hole is rather deep, but if you’ll entertain my musings then I hope to return the same to you.[i]

Philosophy has come under a bad wrap recently, and this seems pretty wrongheaded and ahistorical, but, in sympathy and understanding, this makes perfect sense with some thought and seeing where others are coming from here.

We live in an area of the ascendancy of science and technology, or natural philosophy and its products, which originated with Aristotle in the 4th century BCE with the foundation of biology and taxonomy (*animalia* and *plantae* as the two original classifications for animals and plants, respectively).[ii][iii]

That is, the domination of the functional knowledge from the scientific process and the technological implementation of its knowledge in society.

In the developed nations, we can’t not see it, and the developing nations are going to be continuing to have to pay attention to it with even the simple consideration about the ubiquitous representation of cell phones. But what is science? It’s not so easy. Most have ideas, but these involve implicit premises about its definition, and its extent by implication.

So, what is it?

Science, any system of knowledge that is concerned with the physical world and its phenomena and that entails unbiased observations and systematic experimentation. In general, a science involves a pursuit of knowledge covering general truths or the operations of fundamental laws.

Some posit an epistemological naturalism for the foundation of science, but, in principle, science does not close off to these aspects of the world outside of the naturalistic. However, the tendency in history without formal argumentation seems like the trend towards natural explanations for natural causes. There’s even disagreement about the definition of the word physical. Does it mean simply material?

Physical is an issue. It’s mostly empty space and relative to an organism capable of detection of the sensory world, where “sensory” originates from the senses in conjunction with the central nervous system, mostly the brain receiving signals from the spinal cord and efferent nerves.

So if the physical world is a bit naïve, then what's physical – material?

That can be an issue as well because the definition of the material of the world can be a bit fuzzy. An ancient school of philosophy called the atomists posited the fundamental units of the world as atoms, where the basic constituents of every single thing in the universe are indivisible units of stuff, atoms – which is pretty much a direct translation of the modern term. So physical becomes material becomes atoms.

So physical, if it means material, means atoms. Is that really accurate? Well, up until the 20th century, it seemed convincing, but the march of science changed the conceptual landscape of the world. It only gets worse, no joke. Although, the gruesome nature of the nature of the plumb's length is pretty much the joke, if that's your kind of humor.

And these sorts of assertions about the principles, let's stick with principles, of science show a jagged refinement of the process. It's not only certain monoliths. It's got dynamic parts, as well. Constituents that manage the general nature of its processes, or its overarching operations. Well what are they, hotshot? They are observation, review background information, state the problem, form a hypothesis, design and perform the experiment, collect and analyze data, and draw conclusions.[iv]

And if this is seen as the scientific method, that really, really gives the whole game away because science is not just knowledge, or organized networks of information and assertions that define disciplines – nope, nope, triple nope. It's a bit of those, but those are *derivative*; *they come from the scientific process practiced by people in coordination with machines and tools, too.*

I think of it as upstream-downstream with technology at the top and this feeding down into the economy, general culture, social life, public policy and so on. And, once more, this needs some backdrop. First, science means natural philosophy. Or, more properly, natural philosophy means science, because natural philosophy derives from philosophy – and natural philosophy garnered the name in recent intellectual history.

[i] *Alice in Wonderland: Chapter I* (n.d.). states:

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well.

Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her and to wonder what was going to happen next. First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything; then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and book-shelves; here and there she saw maps and pictures hung upon pegs.

She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed; it was labelled `ORANGE MARMALADE', but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar for fear of killing somebody, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell past it.

`Well!' thought Alice to herself, `after such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!' (Which was very likely true.)

Carroll, L. (n.d.). Alice in Wonderland: Chapter I.

[ii] Del Soldato, E. (2015). Natural Philosophy in the Renaissance. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

[iii] science. (2016). In Encyclopædia Britannica.

[iv] NASA. (n.d.). Science.

We're All One – No, Really

Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. The development, adaptation, and speciation of species. The theory comes from that text. Early evidence is followed from the *HMS Beagle* voyage. Evolution is true; evolution is hard, too.

It's often the target of illogical counterarguments and counterexamples. Because of misunderstanding, deliberate and unintentional. Evolutionary theory defines various classifications via taxonomy.

Taxonomy is about classification; the scientific study of classification. This is in biology. Evolution defines us, human beings, as one single species. It is not in a vague reference such as groups, races, ethnicities, genders, but, rather, we are defined as a single species via scientific classification. What does this mean?

It is such as a profound insight as to seem redundant, and so it's hard. One reason is tautological seeming things are skimmed over. And it's incredibly nuanced and deceptively simple. It means one of the most profound social and cultural interpretations from natural science in the modern era.

Over the last century and a half, this has not gotten enough press. It is a profound fact that all the conversations around ethnicity and race are in some fundamental, objective ways inaccurate. Even public science communicators such as Bill Nye say about the same thing, but he argues for it as a single *race*.

I disagree with Bill Nye on that single point. That's an outmoded term ripe for wrongful interpretation picking, selective quoting. Species is scientifically accurate, though race might be a colloquial olive branch. I am making an identical if not highly similar argument to him from the science of evolutionary theory, biology, and biological taxonomy.

The tree of life is a literal representation of taxonomy in a visual format for ease of interpretation. It's from single-celled organisms to multicellular organisms to mammals to proto-humans to primates such as humans.

Human beings as a species are one. It's a little less 'airy fairy' to me. And it is concrete. It is based on naturalism, empiricism, and science. That appeals to me. Not only that part, but it is true. But if you look at the international landscape and the timescale of evolution, the human species is only 100,000 years old.

And that means the 2,000, or 6,000-year-old civilizations are a blip on the evolutionary radar. That makes the idea of a single species profound. It breaks the barriers and boundaries of concepts that are quite minor by comparison, and even anti-scientific, pseudoscientific, or even junk science.

You can note the distinctiveness of cultures involved in sustainable fashion including the Maori in New Zealand, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada, Native Americans in Americas, the Incas and Mayans in South America.

And the suite of others throughout the world. These individuals are remnants from ancient historical periods and civilizations. On the evolutionary timescale, all ancient and old civilizations are a blip on the evolutionary record, of the human species.

Ethical and sustainable fashion is based around nuances and differences in clothing, which are part of cultures, sub-cultures, and personal identities. Cultures that are simply various facets and expressions of individual human beings that are part of one common human species. We're all one, even the science says.

History of Natural Fibres – Indigenous Lima Civilization

Lima culture comes from Lima, Peru, which was an indigenous civilization to Peru. It lasted from the years 100 to 650. The society was known for its ceramic artwork. It is constructed many, many temples. At present, Lima is one of the major population centers in Peru.

It is part of the early Indian culture, which was a time that the indigenous peoples created an oasis in the desert. The cosmology of this culture was magical in orientation. They lived in mythology and world by their light of spirit and the spirit influence the health and wealth of the land and people.

There was a drug use associated with coca leaves, which appears to have a hallucinogenic effect. There were sacrifices made to appease the various gods. These propitiations can be found, in remnants, via human burials of children.

The culture began to decline around 600 to 2 climatic and environmental alterations through droughts and El Niño. That prior indigenous conglomerate Alina disbanded and was dominated by other groups passively.

These ancient Peruvians never developed a system of writing. However, they did develop images and signs that were then woven into cloths and painted on fabrics, which was a pictorial language that communicated their cosmology.

With regard to textiles, they used cotton and animal first such as llama and alpaca. Textiles were an important part of the culture because of the consideration of wealth and status through them. Depending upon the textile, poor could not acquire or purchase sometimes.

But the rich could buy or acquire certain textiles. The textiles have evolved through it hits history to have various tapestries and blankets with differential natural dyes, which have various anthropomorphic and animal science, and geometric organizational and structural patterns.

These were the everyday clothing. There were ceremonial robes. And then there were the textiles that were made for design of religious worship center such as temples. The zippy things like wall hanging textile patterns woven into cloth.

We Need to Train More Environmental Scientists

Bold title, this seems like a necessity to me. But not as much as the need for highly trained scientists in the knowledge economy and Computer Age, we can't not do without it. We need it. Without the technological know-how to comprehend the natural world with precision, well, we'd be in a real mess.

We won't get our scientific answers from religious texts. You won't get it from pseudoscientific ideas like Reiki or Chi. Never have, and very likely never will, at least accurate, real, natural pictures of the world.

Although, we might find moral guidance on these issues. We need to send out our questions to the natural world through experimentation and wait for an answer. And that leaves us to ask about what experiments have been done, data has been gathered, and concerns, problems, and issues for human survival that have come out of this. Answer: many.

Environmental science is an interdisciplinary academic field. It works within the confines of information science, biological science, and physical science. It is a vast field. But it does have important elements. Relevant to major issues such as overconsumption and the waste from it, and climate change or global warming.

If we know that there is vast amounts of overconsumption and waste, the answer seems clear to me. We have run experiments. Well, not me or we, but the professional scientists. The answers have come back from the natural world. The answer is that we have tampered with the environment to such an extent as to produce what some call the Anthropocene.

It is a period of such power for humankind based on our technology that we have sufficiently altered the chemical and biological makeup of the atmosphere and biosphere to cause mass extinction and pollution. The pollution could end us.

Climate change or global warming is an immediate concern as well as for the long-term. That means engineering and other disciplines are relevant to it. Now if it's the case, and it is, we need to move forward in development of technologies that can better integrate our societies into nature with current levels of living.

Because people tend to not want to lose their standard of living. Especially for the children, they want a better life for the kids and grandkids. So I want to make a call. A call for action on education.

And an educational movement for more environmental scientist to work on these issues immediately. It will take half a decade at least to train people to then be put in the field. Once in the field, these individuals would be sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to advise, design, and implement technologies that could weaken the affects of climate change and overconsumption.

We are already doing too much. We have already caused a lot of damage. Our descendants will feel the effects of all this activity. But I think that we can at least make major moves fast to reduce the effects of the problems we've created.

This could be issues like reduction of biodiversity, endangering species, soil contamination, water pollution, greenhouse gases, airborne contaminants, noise pollution, light pollution, surface runoff, and other panic-stricken concepts.

But it doesn't have to be. And we can do something about it. We can do something now by training the next generation of some of the most needed scientists of the early 21st century.

Women have rights, too

When I reflect on human rights, I can't not think about international women's rights. Women all around the world have rights to many things. This can include freedom from oppression. You can include a promotion of the recognition of current rights.

It can mean civil rights to food, housing, education, to the right to vote. I think these are all important. And I wish to express that these are very important things in the world right now because women have for most of history never had these.

I mean for a lot of recorded history. Women have been economically dependent upon men. I mean economics is the basis for currency and currency's the basis for buying things. Money is the access point to most things in society. If it's gonna be a car, then that means travel.

This can be a house, which means shelter. It can also mean socioeconomic status which is related to income. Especially in the current year of high university tuition prices, that can lock out women because they do not have as well-paying jobs as men.

That means their ability to gain access to education is worsened compared to men. If you look at the single parenthood rate, it is mostly women. There are more single mothers than single fathers. It is almost tautological to say this because it is so common knowledge. I think so.

Actually, the single motherhood rate is rising all throughout the world at a consistent rate. It does not seem to be slowing down. That means single parenthood, which is mostly women, is going to be increasing, and so the same for single motherhood rate. It's going to be increasing.

And we are seeing extraordinarily promising trends, we are seeing glass ceilings go away for many, many areas. We're also seeing problems for boys and motivation. But that's different than ceilings. But the fact that more women are getting educated than ever before means that they can gain access to take their jobs at higher rates than ever before.

And jobs that were traditionally seen as less respect worthy are gaining more respect. I think of nursing. Most nurses are women. Also, the positions have a tremendous amount of respect and cachet in society are being taken by women such as medicine and law.

These are promising trends. Women gain the right to vote in the United States in the early 20th century. And the right to vote in Saudi Arabia in the early 21st-century. These are positive trends, but there is a lag time culturally for changes to happen for women.

A lot of this is tangled up with international women's rights. Women's rights are one of most important parts of societal development because if you take something that I'll call a meta-metric for measuring women's advancement comes from looking into the empowerment of women in each society. The more that women are empowered, then the more that the society thrives on every relevant measure.

Economic Independence of Women is Important (Duh)

One of the major parts of women's rights, empowerment of women, and international women's rights comes from knowledge to the individuals, the women - and men too (in an inclusive, humanistic, and respectful way), and each of these areas from NGOs, companies, and campaigning in labor rights organizations.

NGOs are non-governmental organizations that can work on the behalf of women in the garment industry or for international women's rights in general. Companies can implement working conditions and pay that is adequate to the task.

And campaigning and labor rights organizations can focus on the specifics of day-to-day work life for women throughout the developing world, even in the developed world. NGOs, for instance, can focus on women's access to decent and well-paid work in addition to redistribution of unpaid care.

Unpaid care can mean things like gender responsive public services. Men don't give birth. Women tend to choose to have children. That takes time from work, and possible career advancement - if the job implies it.

Look at poor urban or peri-urban areas in Ghana or South Africa, even India, the raising of consciousness, raising awareness about sexual and reproductive health rights is important, too.

If you educate individual women or groups of women in these areas, word-of-mouth can be another way for further education through community organizing from the information acquired from NGOs.

One of the benefits of NGOs and companies and labor rights organizations that work towards international women's rights with the empowerment of women is that there will end up being less gender inequality and sexual discrimination.

If you can provide women with some means of earning money that can allow them to be not economically dependent upon men, or just economically independent, it can permit them to be able to freely associate and freely work as they see fit, and allow them to likely have less violence or to be able to leave conditions of violence because they have the funds to do so.

That is also related to being economically dependent upon either some company or a possible partner. Other things that can be put into the workplace, for instance, or in the local area, can be things like anti-harassment telephone helplines that can help provide backup for women. This can be safe and secure and the people that are on the other side of the line can be knowledgeable and help women in poor conditions.

Want to take the minimum pledge?

I have an idea about a minimum pledge not to do with a pledge for minimum wage. Not to do with a minimum pledge for fundraising, rather, it's a minimum pledge for change in lifestyle. This could mean changing light bulbs. Using less water through laundry, or in dishes. So, a minimum pledge for making small change to sustainability in personal life.

Professionally can be included to because aspects of professional like include a work environment that doesn't necessarily promote sustainability. So, do you want to take the pledge? Sustainable living is an attempt, albeit an optimistic one, to limit the carbon footprint of an individual, which includes yourself or myself.

There's lots of ways to do it. You can look at your means of transportation. It doesn't have to be absolute. You could use a car some of the time. You could use the bus at other times. You could bike some of the time or walk at other times. Also, you can look at your own energy consumption with electricity or gasoline. You can look at the diet that you have.

For instance, some diets have a larger carbon footprint than others. Much of the carbon output comes from the home. Another major kind is meat consumption particularly beef. I don't recommend this trend of living off the grid. It seems pretty involved and probably ill-advised to me, but if that's your thing then okay.

You can look at having solar panels on your roof. It's becoming much more feasible as a form of energy in terms of its cost especially. You could look at hybrid cars or electric cars. There are more charging stations and grids for electric cars being put up internationally and more companies and cars being put up that work with those electric means of transportation.

You can look at newer cars with more efficient engines because the design, the chassis and the engine, might be lighter in weight than older cars. And a minimum pledge would simply imply that we use just one of these means. Or others that aren't listed. So, want to take the pledge?

Science Matters

Science matters. Science, or natural philosophy, finds patterns and principles about the world. Those come from the linkages and associations between facts found out by science. Facts are important. Facts bring to light the nature of the natural world.

That is, natural philosophy means science because science discovers the patterns and principles about the natural world. The nature of important global problems come from scientific matters. Of course, we have terrorism, religious extremism, malnutrition, disease, genetic disorders, natural disasters, possible and improbable threats of large asteroid impacts, and others.

Nonetheless, one major problem is climate change or global warming. Global warming stands atop or near the top of major problems. The facts that comprise the trend line of increased parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere and increased temperature over the recent centuries and decades point to a warming earth.

That means local weather and global warmth are changing because of this. This is human industrial activity among other things. We can mitigate the problem by taking into account our own patterns of consumption, and acting on it. That's where ethical and sustainable fashion can make a mark. We can waste less.

We can wear biodegradable clothing. Companies can advertise and market towards increased awareness about this. Of course, my own slant is that as far as the science is concerned. The nature of climate change is an engineering problem.

It is too big for individual nations or corporations, or collections of small-to-moderate sized businesses to manage. Each of the small and moderate businesses do their part. However, I know the fact that the major solutions to do with geothermal, solar, wind, nuclear power to 'combat' global warming are large-scale engineering projects such as solar power fields or nuclear power plants.

At the end of the day, in the next 25 years, we will need to transition into nuclear and solar power. In the next century, we will likely by the end of it come to a dominance of solar power. Although, sunlight hits the earth at incredible rates. The total global consumption is about 1/10,000th to 1/5,000th of the total radiation or sunlight that hits the earth.

Therefore, our consumption is quite limited with respect to solar constant. The amount of radiation from the Sun impacting the Earth. Much of certain wavelengths of light reflected back into the Earth increase the heat of it. All of these are engineering feats and discoveries with engineering solutions. It might require geo-engineering.

For our part, with respect to clothing and fashion, can bring awareness to the problems, the facts, and to the responsible consumption patterns of those in the most developed countries in human history. That means us.

Sustainable Energy, Consumption, and Lifestyles

By the end of the century, I would project the majority of energy will be either nuclear or solar (or both). Those forms of energy production will lead to different forms of consumption.

The kinds of things that the world needs are different sources of energy to meet the increasing demands of energy consumption. We can live sustainable lifestyles. These can be moderate in benefit, if diligent.

On the other hand, we do need to take into account the increasing needs of technology in our lives. Our collective energy consumptions are higher in spite of the increased efficiency of technology.

This is a common trend. This will be a continuing trend. However, the energy consumption will continue to increase because of the higher number of devices in our homes, in our cars, and our buses, in our schools, and, even possibly, in our clothing.

Even so, the efficiency will continue. Our knowledge of energy production and consumption gives us options, and those options breed both higher consumption and greater efficiency. It's just that the efficiency isn't keeping up with the consumption.

It can be counterproductive to use terms like 'good' and 'evil', or 'dirty energy'. They don't mean much, really. Because this can lead to simply labeling something as good or bad in terms of emotional valence, emotional value.

Rather, descriptions of impacts on individual lives and the reasons for certain things being better in the long term might be more effective, though less emotive. Solar energy is an increasingly desirable source of energy because the price of highly hydrocarbon producing energy sources continues to go up while the price for alternative energies such as solar, geothermal, wind, and someone, keep going down.

If you take the same amount of energy produced in the cost of producing that energy for each source of energy, alternative energy sources are becoming more economically viable. Tie that to a lifestyle, or make it part of it, we got it made.

Everyone is for Globalization

Everyone is for globalization. It depends on what you mean by globalization. It can mean the grassroots form through which people gathered together in communities and cooperatives to form networks from the bottom up.

Or, it can mean the networking and structural integration of large-scale companies across the globe from the top down. In either case, people like the idea of globalization because it is the wave of the future and it is continuing at an increasing pace.

It will unlikely be stopped outside of some catastrophe. That means that we need to get our house in order to prepare for a global economy, which we have to a large extent. At the present time, ethical and sustainable fashion can be an moderate and integral part of this.

It is something that needs to be expanded upon and explored. Since it is such a new large-scale phenomenon, we need to take to account that there are avenues that will not work and other avenues that will work to varying degrees.

The vast amount of networking that needs to be done is the place where exchange of common values can breed exchange of common knowledge. The exchange of knowledge can let us know what works and what doesn't work with respect to globalization.

For the bottom up, that means from the artisans and the producers in small to moderate sized businesses. I see nothing wrong with this. It's good. Anyway, I remain a bit on the fence because I see the need for a pragmatic approach with respect to the inter-linkages of small to moderate size companies and even some large-scale corporations.

Because the infrastructure is so deeply embedded that it would seem nearly impossible to simply remove it, but it can be shifted. And I love hearing about the stories of individual makers, artisans, and ethical and sustainable fashion company owners.

These are the people that are forming the basis for a movement and a new form of consumption. Forms of consumption that are consonant with the sustainability goals of the United Nations. It's an exciting time. And globalization is an inevitable and unavoidable consequence of this form of productivity and economy.

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