

The Trusted Clothes Collection: Volume VI



Scott Douglas Jacobsen

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The Trusted Clothes Collection: Volume VI

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To the Schroecker family for the chance to grow as a stray Canadian Cheshire cat, honing a craft early in my career through an entirely new arena of writing, ethical and sustainable fashion.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Foreword by Scott Douglas Jacobsen

This is another in the last collection of interviews for *Trusted Clothes* based out of Ontario, though done in Langley, British Columbia, Canada. These are interesting endeavours. All of them small to medium businesspeople. Certainly, there is a formulation of these businesses as a landscape akin to a gaussian distribution.

In my experience in that industry, most of the small and medium businesses are women. From young adult to early middle-aged, they work hard. There are some men, but not that many. A small cohort of super-high achievers like Tom Ford at the highest end, but not in the ethical and sustainable fashion industry as far as I know. He should enter it. Tom Ford, as seems apparent, turned Gucci around from a faltering if not failing business into a successful one.

He's a business ad fashion genius. So much so, Jay-Z has a song after him: "Tom Ford." Ethical and sustainable fashion could use this type of person in it. There's definitely woo in that area of fashion, as with many areas of global society. However, the idea, or the principles, of ethical fashion to reduce damage to the environment and harm to people, and sustainable for ecology, make sense.

Regardless, there's more not-woo than woo, so that's a net win. Also, giving people skills in awful circumstances is better than entering something like sex trafficking in Thailand or something. It's a trade-off. As I noted in the previous collection, the central issue is the scaling up of this type of business. How do you do it? Essentially, if we could get mega fashion brands such as Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Dior, and Chanel, to shift, then the whole market does.

This isn't unfeasible. These industries – whole brands – were invented overnight, in essence, and, thus, this can be done again. The central question for analysis is the tilt of one of the pillars in fashion, whatever one and wherever, to make this style of industry-wide change. If it is shown as sufficiently profitable and cost-saving over time, then the profit motive should shift the corporations, accordingly, as pressure from shareholders may, as Picard says, "Make it so."

These small and medium businesses in enough numbers can make small to medium impact. However, their collective pressure and example may help with this shift as well. I do not view big brands as evil or polyester fabrics as the work of the Devil, but as means by which to make a more ethical and sustainable path forward in one area of human consumption.

We live in the world. We live with the world. We are part of the natural world. Our ethical considerations should extend this personal concern to the natural world because nature is in us and so us. I do not mean anything spiritual or mystical, but something concrete and material. Our health and sustainability as a species is connected to our ingenuity and consumption patterns.

We'd be wise to take the innate nature of Nature in us as a fact for implementing production and consumption patterns.

January 23, 2024

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Trusted Clothes

An Interview with Kathleen Murphy of Kámen Road

December 18, 2016

Kámen Road offers limited edition travel and work bags made on the West Coast of the United States. The company, founded by Kathleen Murphy believes in ethical and sustainable design and business practices. Read more about her and journey into sustainable fashion.

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

First, I want to thank you for this opportunity. I was born and raised in San Jose, California – the Santa Clara Valley – now Silicon Valley. My family traveled the United States in a van all Summer long. My dad was a teacher, bird watcher, absolute nature lover, and conservationist in his own way. My mom is the most life loving person known to me. She is a map lover and was our navigator. We stopped at every historic landmark on every back road. We explored the most beautiful landscapes. I will never forget the desert sunrises and the weeping willows of the Bayou.

Travel became what I needed to do to think and to understand my place in the world. I was a creative kid – inward. I loved the game of soccer and loved simple, open, and quiet spaces. I saw shapes. I wrote poetry. I ended up writing proposals for non-profits for more than 15 years, but I hit a wall. I had no creative outlet. I did not have experience sewing or making. So, I thought that I could never do it.

I stopped writing proposals and started to focus on what I wanted most of all, which was a travel bag that could hold everything that I truly loved. My favorite sweater, shoes, socks, books, etc., in one bag for one month. I feel strongly that when we only possess what we love, and know who and how they made it, then we are most fulfilled and connected to our life. We can ‘live free and content on the open road’ like Walt Whitman said.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I had to pay for my school clothes. I had an aunt and grandmother who were amazing shoppers in terms of quality. I learned to spot the highest quality clothing on the clearance racks in the outlet stores. I also could see the mounds of cheaply made clothes. I could see the waste, but I needed clothes. I wanted clothing and shoes that would hold up and have something uniquely special. I wanted to see woven patterns and colors that were purposeful and personal. In the 90s, the Adidas child labor scandal broke. I loved everything Adidas as a soccer player, and I woke up then to the sickness behind what I bought. I started to pay attention to Fair Trade. In San Francisco before Renegade arrived, I found shopping events that featured individual designers. Talking to them, understanding their passion and the challenge of costs and high-quality design work was the tipping point for me.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

I think studying literature and the liberal arts – history was so interesting to me – to understand how people lived throughout time—what they wore, the social barriers, architecture, and how it defined relationships. My college education brought to the surface my great passion for art and design. I would wander the halls of the art building at San Jose State. I envied those students, their creativity, and all their ideas expressed in all kinds of mediums. I couldn’t really draw so I

thought creating art was not possible for me. I loved to write but it wasn't the exact expression that held me. I had all kinds of ideas but didn't have the skills to capture in form what was in my head. Professionally, I started to write proposals for sustainable business models, and I was hooked because there was now a very real bridge between social good, and products and services that were carried through with ethics, and people, and opportunity in mind all along the way.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

For me, it is life changing. Consumers can know exactly the materials and processes that go into making what they buy. They can see and perhaps understand better the difficulty of the decision making for brands and what we will not compromise on and what we must compromise on at times. Large companies when they choose ethical and sustainable practices can ensure that mass production, if it is a necessity in terms of the global economy, can offer and ensure safety, prosperity, and mobility in a person's life. That is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion. That, as consumers, designers, small businesses, and large companies, we are making sure that what we want in our lives is equally possible for someone else. Not through charitable giving always, but in making our everyday and special consumer purchases a real expression of our belief in and support of all people.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

I have to say Andy Goldsworthy. I know that he is not in fashion, but I so admire what he has shown is possible in terms of nature and beauty.

What is Kámen Road?

Kámen Road is a travel and work bag collection that uses natural materials that last the longest and age the best, using local artists and makers as much as possible, with the ultimate goal of one-bag travel so we can connect better with the world around us every day.

What are some of its feature products?

Right now, we offer a signature leather and hemp canvas weekender, a laptop/book bag messenger bag, a portfolio case, and soon to be released touring bag.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

All people – all lifestyles – who are seeking very personal connections with the people who make their bags.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911) and the Pakistan Garment Factory Fires (2012). What is the importance of human rights and worker rights in this new movement, and to the garment industry?

I hope that ethical and sustainable fashion is no longer a new movement very soon. To answer your questions about workers, especially women, and children, we have to ask: how is a material product ever more important than a person's life? Fair labor standards should be a given. If you would not work in that factory, why should someone else? The fact that the fashion industry is still connected to these tragedies is absolutely a human rights violation.

The fact that companies don't know about the conditions of the factories is impossible to understand. We know that large fashion companies have auditors that are responsible for conducting factory inspections, but exploitation still happens, so where is the break down? Can we monitor, report, and correct labor violations as individual consumers and people in the fashion industry as a global community instead of one country versus another?

Right now, consumers have options to purchase nearly every type of clothing and accessory from ethical and sustainable brands. The higher cost of ethical brands is said to be a main reason for a consumer's decision to buy larger and cheaper brands. I understand, and I am open to, identifying every possible method that will show people what is at stake when companies produce without caring about the human impact of their profit.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

I think of all the Fair-Trade organizations and all the brands investing in their workers, but it is still not enough. We have fair trade certifications. We still have the tragedies. Do we have a global march? Do we write a global agreement? Do we already have these mechanisms in place but without enforcement, we continue to put material things over people. I usually speak to the choir about our consumer power to change the fashion industry. But at every show, I have an opportunity to talk about the decisions that I make and how ethical and sustainable business is an ongoing process of research, improvement, and ultimately social good.

What topics most interest you?

Biomimicry, sustainable travel, a contemplative life.

Did you have a mentor in this work?

I stepped in blind and have learned so much from so many people. I have to say Maureen Dougherty of Quiet Clothing and my friend Beth who works for an environmental organization. We have debated every topic in the consumer world and challenged each other to consider our actions. They have inspired me so much by their commitment to sustainable living and they support my vision as someone creating a material product.

Have you mentored others?

I am so new myself. I have so much to learn. I am always here to help people who have an idea. I hope to encourage every person to pursue his/her creativity and ideas. I have met with start-up entrepreneurs in the online marketing and social media space who are committed to ethical and emerging brands. I would do anything to help in order to make sustainable fashion a driving economic force.

What is the importance of mentors in the fashion world for professional, and personal, development?

Mentors are critical touchstones when self-doubt starts to blurb and weaken your vision. Our experiences may be completely different in style and approach, but they give me the reassurance that I am on the right track.

They don't dismiss or limit the discussion of any topic or idea. Their honest critique on a practical level has saved me so much time. Their passion inspires me to stay the course. My mentors in the fashion world understand the crazy rants and ramblings, the confusion, the moment of clarity, and the joy of design for me, which is to give a person something that they love and will cherish for a lifetime.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at all levels. Why?

I am not sure.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

It is really life changing. I was never really fulfilled until I worked to create this vision, I had of traveling freely with one bag that could hold everything that I loved. I did it. I know now that I can realize my ideas in a form that is as useful, ethical, personal, and beautiful as possible at this moment. I have so many ideas and I now have a way to express them and give a product to someone who knows that we value their work, their life, and their travels like our own.

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

I still write proposals for non-profits. Because of Kámen Road, I focus on job training and job creation because I felt that I could not give back enough as a small business owner.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Still thinking.

Any recommended means of contacting Kámen Road?

Through the contact page on our website, www.kamenroad.com and follow us on Instagram @kamenroad

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

I want to thank Trusted Clothing and all your supporters very much. Together, we can bring more and more ethical brands to more and more people.

Thank you for your time, Kathleen.

An Interview with Esther and Javier of Dlana

December 19, 2016

Tell us about your partnership and how you got started?

We met at a conference on ecology and environment in Vitoria, a beautiful city in northern Spain. We had already spoken on other occasions, since we both volunteered in a state organization, but it was the first time we could share a joint space.

At that moment, we realized that we had many things and common desires, being few months later when we started to consider creating a business project together.

We found the union of knowledge about the agriculture of Javi, born in Valladolid, and all his training in relation to climate change, sustainable development and environmental management, with the health conscience and person of Esther, born in Madrid, a pediatric nurse and neonatal for main profession, with training in the field of children's psychomotricity, fair trade and development of personal and social skills.

All this, together with an extreme sensitivity and affection for the work well done, care with respect to the animals and the desire that the Spanish handicraft be respected and endured, as an intangible heritage of great value. All of them represent common values that we believe enrich the project that we carry out today.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

Our concern for the environment and people led us to find local consumption alternatives related to our food or electricity consumption. But we were missing something and like we say "We are what we eat" we can also say "we are what we wear" so we started to investigate in raw materials, farming methods, collection and production, impacts on the environment and people, textile consumption alternatives, organizations and associations, and we begin to discover all the social injustices behind the world of fashion.

In the case of Spain, after months of study, we came to the conclusion that wool was one of the few raw materials that we could transform locally in an integral way, besides having, at present, in its management a problem in which we could Have a positive impact on a project to recover the fiber and the wool textile industry that still exists in our peninsula.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

In my case, Javi, my studies in agriculture led me to think that this is not what I wanted for the Earth, animals and people. The intensive production methods, the use of pesticides, herbicides, chemicals to squeeze our soils to the maximum, the excessive use of natural resources, as well as the forms of animal care used by intensive livestock, made me wonder a lot.

Especially to think that there was another way to obtain natural resources without wasting them, but on the contrary, generating closed cycles of product that do not generate eternal waste and give back to the earth in a positive way what is created from it.

On the other hand, in the case of Esther, studies related to health, maternity, childhood and how the habits of health and the environment influence her, make us as a team aware of the need to create textiles that empower our health and abilities, for which the wool has spectacular intrinsic

qualities, suitable for any moment of life, even with very positive and almost unknown effects for the protection of health.

In addition, the therapeutic capacity of weaving and the possibilities of creative development that wool provides for all ages, social classes and genders are well known.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

There is a whole social and business movement that offers and demands a change in the form of production, marketing and consumption. Gradually we are growing, organizing to gain visibility and we know that we have in our hand the power of social transformation, and offer a more fashionable view of fashion; Being an example of that can be made garments of any style and complements of design, obtaining a great benefit for the people and the planet.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

Our heroines and heroes are those people who are already occupying a space within sustainable fashion, putting their grain of sand and effort in demonstrating that another fashion is possible.

As Eduardo Galeano says: “Many small people, in small places, doing small things, can change the world”.

What is dLana?

We are a company that works to recover the value of wool as raw material in our country.

And we recover its value both through our work of disseminating information about the properties, history, traditions and wealth that is generated around the culture of wool; As well as a very careful and studied work of production of different spinning and sale of selected products, genuine and modern high quality, in addition to other services.

What are some of its feature products?

Mainly dLana offers multiple options for work and enjoyment with pure sheep wool.

From woolen top to spinning or making crafts, going through woolen yarns for knitting or crochet; To textile garments and accessories of 100% wool of own design or a creation service for designers and brands who wish to work with our yarn.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

For the moment, we mainly sell in our country, Spain, with specific orders from some clients and stores in France, Malta, Italy, Portugal and Japan.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911) and the Pakistan Garment Factory Fires (2012). What is the importance of human rights and worker rights in this new movement, and to the garment industry?

Human and worker rights are for us and for the sustainable fashion movement, universal and indisputable.

Our company is born under the principles of the economy of the common good, where not only people are taken into account, but also the environment, and the effects that this productive activity exerts on all the people who participate in it, looking for a win-win at all times.

Women and children are the majority of the exploited and violated work forces. What is the importance of the status of women's and children's rights in the ethical and sustainable fashion world too?

We know, thanks to our work in relation to fair trade, that women and children are the most disadvantaged in any situation of vulnerability, although paradoxically they are the ones that contribute the most work and development socially.

We understand that professional development should not put women in a situation of fragility, simply because it is a basic need.

The sustainable fashion is framed in criteria of respect to the environment and protection of the workers' rights, where a series of criteria of safety, equality and protection of the health of the workers are fulfilled, in which everything related is included with motherhood and the care of the children.

In our case, local production allows us to create products with complete traceability, in which we could tell our clients, with name and surnames, all the people who have intervened in each process until they reach their hands.

Children are the most vulnerable population. Women tend to have less status than men in societies including the right to decent working conditions, decent pay, to vote, and so on. What is the relationship between the need to implement women's rights and children's rights?

We believe that there is a direct relationship between the rights of women and children, since in most countries they are the main responsible for the upbringing and care of the home, in general. Some highly developed countries in social legislation are gradually implementing plans to incorporate men into this care, but much remains to be done, starting with gender education in schools and within families, and with the obligation to companies not to penalize the reproductive processes in women, nor in families with girls and boys of school age.

On the other hand, and returning to those families and countries more impoverished, we cannot fail to see that mother who works the field carrying her baby in the back or glimpse a path of hope and decent work as offered by companies such as Creative Handicraft in Bombay.

Every day the examples of another possible society increase and in dLana we are betting on modern and inclusive social models.

Child labour and slavery are problems, major ones. These include children throughout the world. Tens of millions of children in the case of child labour and a few million for child slavery. How can individuals get the word out about these other rights violations?

People can stay informed through NGOs like Amnesty International, or through more specific campaigns in the textile sector like Clean Clothes Campaign (cleanclothes.org) and make decisions regarding their consumption acts.

But, in any case, we believe that there is an international law that is violated systematically throughout the world.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

The people who work at dLana are very committed to all these issues and we believe that there are very different ways of solving, all of them complementary.

On the part of the consumers, it is necessary that there is more curiosity in what is behind the garments that they buy and also that with that information they seal quality stamps and responsible commerce in their purchases.

On the part of the designers and brands we believe it necessary that there is a demand in the traceability of the forms of production of the fabrics and threads that they use, as well as in the manufacturing of the garments.

By companies, strict compliance with human rights and workers, regardless of whether they are workers in your account or outsource services to other companies.

To the international justice, in this sense there is a need for fraud and crimes to be pursued, with exemplary penalties for each of the parties involved in cases such as Rana Plaza.

And of course, and not least, ask that every day there is a greater demand for compliance and improvement of working conditions by the employees themselves respecting also their right to strike.

What topics most interest you?

There are many interests that move us every day, but we believe that the most important is love. The beauty of life and being able to walk through it in a positive and calm way.

Did you have a mentor in this work?

We have learned a lot of self-taught searching for information on the internet, in books and especially doing a very important field research.

We have spent many hours listening to shepherds and artisans who have opened the doors to their homes and their lives, sharing their efforts and with those who have created a link of collaboration directly or indirectly. Something that we will never stop doing, as we continue to learn from everything we live and travel, which we consider fundamental.

Have you mentored others?

We believe that for the moment we can offer and share, but not mentorize, the experience is a degree and dLana has much to work and still learn.

What is the importance of mentors in the fashion world for professional, and personal, development?

It is important to have referrals, identify people who can influence you in a positive way and offer serious collaborations that bring benefits to all parties. All experience and information that helps you explore in your professional and personal field, which helps you grow and become a better person is something to take advantage of.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at all levels. Why?

In this case, we cannot give you an absolute answer. We are relatively new to the sector, and we imagine that there are sociological reasons that would answer this question.

While it is true that in our homes, we have always seen that only women knit or sew, while men were more concerned with arranging other matters more related to physical strength.

However, we know that in other cultures it is also men who perform many textiles works.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

With dLana we are demonstrating many things. Face to the public, we can work with the wool of our country in a satisfactory way, with quality and fully in the territory with our textile craftsmen, offering a complete traceability among many other things.

And in a more personal way, being able to fulfill the dream of helping people, respecting the planet, putting your little bit of sand to generate social change and knowing that you can overcome every day.

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

Right now, in dLana, Javi works continuously and on the other hand, Esther combines her work as a pediatric nurse in a public hospital, with all the activities and travels of representation of dLana.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Sass Brown and his book Eco Fashion was one of the first on sustainable fashion that we could read in our research.

But at the level of our country and without personifying in particular, we would like to emphasize all the work that the different Sustainable Fashion Associations are doing in our country working as a team, each in their region.

Any recommended means of contacting dLana?

You can contact dLana on any of our social networks: Facebook, Instagram and email info@dlana.es or visit our website www.dlana.es

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

We have liked your questions, both those that have allowed us to open in a personal way as those that have offered dLana express their opinion within the world of fashion.

A style of interview different from the usual that has helped us to reflect, recover and expose many terms and knowledge that the vortex of our day to day perhaps we forget to convey but that always go in the backpack of our woolly way.

Thank you for your time, Esther and Javier.

An Interview with Emily DeLong of Margu

December 21, 2016

Founded in 2016, Margu is a womenswear line created and designed by Emily DeLong. Combining classic silhouettes with vintage-inspired details, her clothing strikes a balance between playful femininity and quiet sophistication. Fabrics, notions, and trims are sustainably sourced from all over the world, and every garment is designed, cut, and sewn in her tiny studio in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

My interest in ethical and sustainable fashion developed pretty slowly, over the course of several years. I've been interested in fashion and shopping for a long time, and I've always thought of clothes as a vehicle for self-expression. A few years ago, I realized I had amassed a lot of clothing, a lot of which I wasn't wearing, and a lot of which was falling apart way too quickly.

Around this time, I picked up sewing again after a long hiatus, and I started sewing the clothing I wished I could find in stores: fun, well-fitting, not ridiculously trendy, and well-made. Sewing allowed me to connect with clothing in a way I hadn't before, as I began to realize just how much of a hands-on labor and craft it is, both in regard to the clothes I was making and to all the clothes I had bought over the years.

At the same time, I began reading and learning more about all the environmental and human rights issues at the heart of the fashion industry, and I began buying less and less to the point where now I only buy things I truly need. By the time I decided to start my clothing line, I knew there was no other option than to make it as sustainable and ethical as possible.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

To provide alternative choices to conventional and fast fashion. The more ethical and sustainable brands there are out there, the easier it will be to find ethical and sustainable products, with the idea that hopefully someday the ethical and sustainable option is the only option.

What is Margu?

Margu is a womenswear line that was founded in 2016. We create clothing slowly and thoughtfully, combining classic silhouettes with vintage-inspired details. We hold perfect fit and self-expression dear to us. We pride ourselves in offering clothing sourced from sustainable fabrics and notions, with everything cut and sewn in the USA.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Margu is a nickname of mine. I felt kind of weird naming the label after my real name, but at the same time the label truly is my personal creative project, so naming it Margu was a happy compromise.

What are some of its feature products?

We make a variety of dresses, skirts, pants, and tops that are as wearable as they are beautiful. Fit, function, and the ability to style pieces in multiple ways are all important to me. I'm

particularly fond of buttons, so you'll find a lot of button-front dresses and tops in our collections!

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

We exclusively use natural fibers, such as cotton, linen, silk, and hemp, in our collections. We focus our sourcing on high-quality materials that minimize resource use and pollution and that decompose back into the earth as quickly as possible. Many of our fabrics are GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) certified, such as our cotton double gauze lining fabric and our organic cotton twill.

I make a point of having several fabrics from each collection be handloom fabrics spun and woven by hand in India, they utilize an age-old process that preserves traditional crafts, creates well-paying jobs in rural areas, and uses no electricity to produce.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Margu?

All our pieces are designed, cut, and sewn in our tiny studio in Arkansas, USA. The fabrics and notions we use are sourced from all around the world; most of our fabrics and fibers right now are ethically sourced from India.

Getting a better grasp on our supply chain and providing that information to our customers is one of my biggest priorities; in the near future we hope to be able to map the life cycle of all our products, from seed to garment.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes! Since we use exclusively natural fibers and almost-exclusively natural notions, our products are designed to return to the earth much more quickly than conventional garments. Our garments are also designed to last a lot longer than conventional garments, too, which results in less waste and fewer resources used in the long term.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

The Margu customer is a thoughtful, creative woman who uses clothing as a way to express her identity. She desires high-quality clothing and is interested in the story behind it. She sees the value in ethically produced garments and is always searching for ways to lessen her environmental footprint without compromising her style.

There are twelve styles in our upcoming FW16 collection, which means there are twelve paper patterns in our studio, each hand-drafted and graded and hanging on a little hook.

What topics most interest you?

My two biggest personal grievances with the fashion industry are the amount of overconsumption and needless spending on the consumer end and the race-to-the-bottom mentality in regard to price and quality on the retailer end. Buying less, buying better, and respecting the craft of those who make our clothing are all important to me.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire \(1911\)](#) and the [Pakistan Garment Factory Fires \(2012\)](#). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

Many of the biggest garment-factory tragedies have been real-eye openers to those unaware of the problems in the garment industry and have helped create real change. The Triangle Shirtwaist fire led to a lot of much-needed laws regulations that surely prevented future tragedies.

The Rana Plaza disaster has unfortunately not sparked as much change in factory oversight in Bangladesh or the murky subcontracting practices of some of the world's biggest retailers as it should have, but the incident did open the eyes of a lot of people who had no idea that their clothes were (and still are) being made in such terrible environments.

There is still so much to be done to protect workers' safety and rights around the world, however, and waiting for the next disaster to happen before we enact real change is unacceptable.

Child labor and slavery are problems, major ones. These include children throughout the world. Tens of millions of children in the case of child labor. A few million children in the case of child slavery. According to the *Minimum Age Convention* (1973), labor before the age of 14, 15, or 16, dependent upon the country, is child labor. *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) represent the importance of children's rights on the 'international stage' in Article 2(2), Article 3(1), and Article 3(2). In addition, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) in Article 24(1-3) and *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966) in Article 10(3) delineate the importance of children's rights too. These stipulations about equality remain violated in the fashion industry, especially the manufacturing sector or the garment industry. How can individuals get the word out about these extreme children's rights violations?

Issues like child labor and slavery are so difficult to grasp in the Western world because we feel so disconnected with it. As consumers, it can be hard to comprehend that basically every product we see on the shelves of a store was made by a human.

I think the best way to shed light on the human rights crisis that is child labor is to continue to humanize our products and always remember (and remind others) that behind everything you own is a person and a story, however bad or good.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations, women and children, in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

Be informed, ask questions, and lead by example.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

It's great to be able to go to work every day and be a part of something bigger than myself. I alone cannot change the world, but I can help to create the changes in the fashion industry that I wish to see.

Thank you for your time, Emily.

An Interview with Ashley Denisov 1×1

December 22, 2016

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

I received my B.A. from UCLA in Design | Media Arts, where I began developing my interest in fashion and working at several fashion internships in LA.

I then began my career as a UX Visual Designer in the San Francisco/Bay Area while studying Fashion Design and Patternmaking. After several years of creating clean user experiences for clients in the e-commerce market, I felt ready to translate that knowledge into my own online store. 1×1, a clothing line I had been formulating for years, began when I moved back to Los Angeles one year ago.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I started my line knowing I wanted to manufacture locally and was incredibly lucky to meet with factories that delivered high quality services and directed me to some amazing sustainable material sources.

Our wool source, Imperial Stock Ranch is a great example of this. After hearing their story, it's hard not to want to work with them. They have adapted sustainable farming practices that reduce erosion and fossil fuels, improve stream water quality and benefit local fish and wildlife populations.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

Working to solve UI/UX challenges for large ecommerce sites, I had the invaluable experience of learning what makes a customer comfortable in a digital space and what encourages them to click the buy button.

I also observed my coworkers' online buying habits. Working in a creative office in San Francisco, people are excited to discover new products and brands. As a result, the designs for 1×1 are largely inspired by the people I worked with — creative individuals who value quality over quantity and are looking for something timeless yet unique to reflect their own personal style. Wardrobe staples they'll want to reach for again and again.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

More and more, consumers are becoming aware of the truth behind fast fashion: unfair wages and conditions for workers, and the excessive waste this trend produces.

Sustainable brands can begin a dialogue with customers and offer alternatives, but they are still hard pressed to compete with the low prices that come from fast fashion practices. To see impactful change throughout the industry as a whole, larger companies need to step up and make changes.

H&M's sustainable line, or ASOS's Eco Edit show that companies are eager to market sustainability to consumers, but it's hard to gather exactly what they have done to take significant steps towards fair labor or waste reduction. However, it does show us that there is a

demand among consumers to have sustainable options, and they may be encouraged to research products before purchasing.

What is 1×1?

We select some of our favorite wardrobe staples and design and release them — one by one.

Sustainability and local manufacturing are at the heart of what we do. We source ecologically responsible materials whenever possible, and we want our customers to know our product's stories. Releasing items one at a time helps tell that story.

We don't follow the traditional fashion calendar, releasing Autumn in the Summer and Spring in the Winter. Instead, we create items when inspiration strikes, hand in hand with local manufacturers. This allows us to have fast turnaround times and create timeless fashions that are relevant all year round.

What are some of its feature products?

Right now, we have two collections available: Wool and Shirts.

Our wool collection was our first release. It features 100% sustainable wool from Oregon.

By supporting farmers who produce a beautiful, quality product in a sustainable way, we are stimulating an industry that has been in steady decline since the 1940s. The United States used to be the world's fifth largest wool producer. Today, it accounts for less than 1% of wool production.

Our shirts are an essential collection of crisps, minimal designs. The fabric we use is a Tencel/Rayon blend that is very soft to the touch with a nice drape. Tencel is a sustainable fabric that is regenerated from wood cellulose. It is similar in touch to rayon and bamboo, both regenerated fabrics.

What topics most interest you?

Design, Innovative Fashion Technology, Sustainable Materials

Did you have a mentor in this work?

Suzy Furrer, Founder and Director of Apparel Arts where I studied Pattern Making and Design, is an amazing teacher who is giving students practical tools they can use to become employed by the industry or start their own business. I found her courses incredibly inspiring, as well as the support from all the teachers in this program.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at all levels. Why?

While fashion is an industry where women make up an overwhelming majority of the consumer base, men are still disproportionately dominating leadership roles in fashion.

“Even though women are entering the industry at the bottom, they are not rising proportionally to the top,” wrote Eric Wilson in a [2005 column](#) for the New York Times. Over a decade later, things have unfortunately not changed.

[Business of Fashion](#) analyzed the proportions of male and female designers for the Spring/Summer 2017 Fashion week season—they found there were more male designers

creating women's clothing than women. Julie de Libran, artistic director of Sonia Rykiel remarked "Women unfortunately are still seen as a minority...even if certain fashion houses were created by women at their time, today they often have creative leaders that are men."

So why do we see a lack of women at the executive level? Some believe there is a correlation between fewer female designers leading companies and men's current majority holding of executive positions. Although this is the overwhelming trend in most industries, we can hope that women will begin to obtain more leadership positions in an industry that speaks directly to their sense of style and self-expression.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas?

Women in Clothes by Sheila Heti – a conversation among women about how choosing the garments we wear shapes our daily lives.

To Die for: Is Fashion Wearing Out the World? by Lucy Siegle – a book about the current price of big-name brands and what we can do to become more sustainable.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

As our brand grows, I am very excited to develop new relationships with those who have dedicated time and research to innovative and sustainable fashion practices. Together, we can bring awareness to our consumers and change the way the fashion industry does business.

An Interview with Peri Drysdale of Untouched World

December 27, 2016

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I grew up on picturesque and pristine sheep farming high country on the edge of the southern Alps in the South Island of New Zealand. Until relatively recently New Zealand was primarily bicultural, with our First Nation people the Maori having arrived here first, then came settlers from United Kingdom. My forbears arrived from UK in two of the first four ships of European settlers to arrive in New Zealand. I spoke English as did everyone around me, only recently have I been learning some Maori language.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

I initially went to the local one room country school, reached by quite a long walk then a school bus trip, then at eight years old I was sent to boarding school in Christchurch, a city 100K away. As a child I had an idyllic life in the high country, swimming in crystal clear rivers; with a clear blue sky and surrounded by nature. I graduated as a registered nurse then went to work in cardiology until my first child was born.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I had started my business soon after our second child was born and was exporting to other countries very soon after. As I travelled around the world selling our knitwear visiting each country and area once a year I was watching I could see the environmental degradation going on, and I became really concerned about the trajectory the planet was on. I was also concerned at what our industry was doing to the planet, in particular cotton growing.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

Very little! I was selling dressed soft toys at the age of 12; and I designed and made all my own clothes but from there it has all been learning as I go. I started in business there were very few women in business here, and women were not well regarded as a good business risk. It was a little bit tough to overcome these issues.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

It is tougher to run a sustainable business and was much tougher back in the late 90's and even the 00's, but it is absolutely essential that sustainable and ethical fashion designers and businesses have pioneered a way for others to follow, as business is now the most powerful vehicle for change in the world, where once before it was government or religion.

What is the importance of fair trade?

Exploitation of workers is incredibly short sighted on every level.

What is Untouched World?

Untouched World is a casual luxury lifestyle brand based on a foundation of sustainability. The core of our collections is based around natural fibre knitwear, which we produce ourselves here in New Zealand, and our aesthetic is less is more, minimal.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Untouched World started out as a certified organic undyed mid micron wool collection of knitwear way back in 1996. The name spoke to us of what we would like to make a contribution to achieve for the world.

What are some of its feature products?

We are known for our knitwear in luxury fibres that stand the test of time, fibres that deliver the garments that have longevity, with lightness and high-performance characteristics, we have some innovative yarns and use a lot of fine beautifully high quality New Zealand merino grown with minimal intervention in the Southern Alps.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

We use mostly New Zealand merino and possum fibre, along with some organic cotton. We are constantly looking into new sustainable fibres.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Untouched World?

The merino wool and possum, raw materials are grown in New Zealand, designed in New Zealand, knitted by us here in New Zealand. Possum fibre is a recovered fibre which would otherwise waste, possums are an ecological threat to New Zealand and there are government eradication programmes to reduce numbers. Possums were introduced from Australia and populations have exploded. We spent several years developing a blend of possum and merino which is truly sensational.

For our organic cotton Project U garments, we make them from certified organic cotton grown in India and made by women in India who are being given a trade to get them out of sexual slavery, they are paid well, above the living wage; their children are offered education and there are development programmes for the women.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

We do a full lifecycle analysis on all our products and the bulk of our products will biodegrade, and if they don't, they will recycle.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

We sell from 18 years all the way up, but 35 to 50 is our core age group of customers. Our customer base is about an attitude to life and the world, rather than an age demographic. Our customers are generally busy people, travel a lot, are globally aware, and want clothes that multitask I style right across the day, and with ease across climates.

What topics most interest you?

I love art and design, outside of this my number one interest is water.

Untouched world funds a Charitable Trust which concepts and delivers leadership for a sustainable future programme for young adults. Two of our four programmes are called Waterwise. We are a founding member of the UNESCO GAP programme and on their website as one of three global exemplars in ESD.

Have you mentored others?

Yes, constantly mentoring both in fashion and sustainability.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

Phew this is a thesis!

Cheers

Peri

An Interview with Sarah Cooper of the Fableists

December 30, 2016

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I am Canadian, but am married to a Brit, so now make my home in the UK. We have four children between us. The Fableists is a family business.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

I met my husband working in the advertising industry. We still have a business in that area, covering news stories about global advertising and commercial production, as well as connecting people to work on projects.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

We have always tried to buy well, whether it was food, beauty products, or fashion. We are not fans of the disposable, like a bit of provenance and are drawn to vintage items for our home and what we wear. We did not set out on a mission to make ethical and sustainable clothing, we just wanted to make nice clothes that were built to last and that could take all the abuse that children hurl at their clothes. The clothes available to buy for our children all just seemed to have such shoddy craftsmanship. It initially started because we wanted clothes that would last down the line of four children, regardless of gender. When we started to research having clothes made, we came across a lot of information about ethics and sustainability. We could not stand the idea that if we weren't careful children somewhere could be making clothes for our children.

What seems like the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies? What seems like the importance of fair trade? What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

As far as I'm concerned, fair trade, living wages and sustainability are just how anyone should do business. We wanted to produce a quality product that we would feel good about putting on our own children. I don't know how anyone could think differently, if I'm honest. Countries like the UK began outsourcing manufacturing to other countries, where things could be made more cheaply. Now Britain has lost those trades altogether, so all the skilled labour is in the so-called Third World Countries. We researched having our clothes made in Britain and everyone advised us to get them made in India because that is where the skill is – not because it's cheaper. Regardless of laws, or watch dogs, we should just be paying a fair price for a product or service that we simply cannot get at home.

As for the certification that you can apply to have on your products, I'm not a massive fan. The factory that we use in India is certified by Fair Trade and GOTS. They have to pay every year to have these certificates up to date – and it's expensive. I would rather see the money they spend for their badge being put in to something more valuable, but they cannot continue to do the work they do without the badge.

The Fableists have not paid to have our items certified by any organisation but make sure that all of our suppliers have the certification and we have inspected the factories ourselves. We haven't

done that to earn a badge but to make sure that we are working with people that we can trust and therefore make products that we can believe in.

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

On the superficial side, the clothes are better made and more original. Makers who care about quality generally also care about provenance. I applaud all the high street brands adding sustainable lines to their ranges but at the end of the day, anyone making and selling mass quantities of clothing is profiting at the expense of someone else.

What is the importance of animal rights, especially in an ethical and sustainable fashion context?

I think that a lot of people would see it as hypocritical of me to comment because I am a meat eater.

Climate change represents one of the biggest medium- to long-term threats to human survival in reasonable forms. The Government of Canada, NASA, the David Suzuki Foundation, The Royal Society, The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and numerous others discuss this. Ethical and sustainable fashion relates to it. The reductions in hydrocarbon production from sustainable materials seem imperative sustain the further deterioration of the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment. What seems like the responsibilities of ethical and sustainable fashion companies in the prevention of climate catastrophe?

Everyone has a responsibility to do what they can to prevent climate change, and businesses should be held accountable for any damage that they do to the local environment where they manufacture clothing. Any environmental damage also affects the lives of the people living in the area. We use only organic cotton in our clothing in order to reduce the damage done to the land where the cotton is grown. Cotton requires a lot of water but the cotton we use is grown in monsoon-fed regions of India. The company that makes our t-shirts has been certified Carbon Neutral. These factories and companies were not difficult to find.

The Brundtland Commission Report described the need for sustainability. In that, we, the human species, need to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” for long-term sustainability. Does this seem correct to you?

One of my favourite chapters in the story of The Fableists is that the cotton we use is grown by a collective of organic farmers. These are small holding, family farms that would not have been able to survive without the collective. Farming in India has a suicide rate that is well-documented. Farmers cannot battle the cycle of debt on their own. They are not getting enough for their crops to sustain their farms. On top of that, they are using harmful chemicals that are being stored close to humans and livestock. The Collective has taught them organic farming principles, so that they can earn a higher rate for their produce. They have taught them to diversity their crops, more efficiently farm the land, and also to care for the land, with rotating crop cycles. The Collective supports the farmers in order to maintain farming in their country.

How can ethical and sustainable fashion contribute to the long-term sustainable future for the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment?

I think that consumers don't want to hear about ethics and sustainability. They are more concerned with how much they have than worrying about what they have. There has to be a sea change in the way that people think and act. So those in ethical and sustainable fashion need to focus on making more approachable and available clothing, rather than statement fashion.

The Sustainable Apparel Coalition invented [The Higg Index](#). It assesses some products' sustainability throughout the products' lifecycle. The European Outdoor Group and the Outdoor Industry Association developed an index of products' impacts on the environment throughout their lifecycle, the [Eco Index](#). Large regions with serious attempts to implement standards and quantitative analysis of sustainability of products throughout their lifecycle. Certifications, or standards and labelling, remain important, which associate with analysis. These include [Fairtrade International](#), [MADE-BY](#), the [Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code](#), the [Soil Association label](#) and the [EKOlabel](#), the [Okotex standard 100 mark](#), and the [European Eco-Label for Textile Products](#), and more. There's many. Do these helps systematize and clarify, or obfuscate and confuse?

I think that they are useful so that consumers know what they are buying but being rated, certified or included is so expensive and there are new standards being created all the time that it just becomes hard work and impossible for the producer. I also think that the vast majority of consumers know nothing of what these are, apart from Fair Trade.

[The Ethical Fashion Forum](#) developed the [Ethical Policy Framework](#). An ethical policy framework tool for those devoted to enactment of ethical and sustainable purchases, production, and business decisions. What do services such as these perform for the public, consumers, producers, and businesspeople?

I think the biggest problem is that most consumers have no idea about any of these initiatives, or even that what they are buying could contravene any kind of ethical policies.

What is The Fableists?

Sustainably made clothing for children that is well made and made well. The clothes are built for children to be children in. They are tough and beautiful. They are inspired by vintage workwear. We love the story of OshKosh, who initially made work wear. They decided to do a limited range of their engineer stripe dungarees so that children could 'dress like dad'. The demand was huge, so they launched an entire range for children. In the creative industry, which is our background, a lot of people dress in clothes that resemble our range. On the day of our photoshoot, my daughter had an outfit assigned to her. When she put it on, we realized that she was wearing exactly what her father was wearing that day.

What inspired the title of the organization?

We tell the story of our clothes. And it's a story with a moral.

What are some of its feature products?

Artist-designed and limited-edition t-shirts and denim shirts, dresses, skirts, jeans and jackets. Super soft cotton tops in classic designs that are reminiscent of our own 1970s childhoods when kids were just allowed to be kids.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

Organic cotton.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of The Fableists?

We come up with the designs and then hire someone to make the patterns for us. The samples are tried out by our own children. The cotton is grown and harvested by small hold farmers in India who are part of a collective of organic farmers. The clothes are manufactured by a factory in India that is certified by GOTS and Fair Trade. The factory and the collective have reciprocal ownership in each other's enterprise in an effort to help bolster their effort to keep high quality, ethical manufacture and sustainable production alive and well (and growing) in India.

Water use in production is an issue. What is the importance of reducing excess water use in the production of fashion?

The farms and factories are all located in monsoon-fed regions of India.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes. Of course, this will take time. We have also made sure that our clothes will last. Each item comes with its own 'passport' so that children can record their names and the dates that they owned the products. They are meant to be passed on to another child.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

I have no idea! We sell online, so I don't know who any of the people are, but they are mostly in the UK. We also have stockists in The Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada and Singapore.

Did someone mentor you?

No. In fact, not seeking more advice from those with the knowledge was our biggest mistake and has cost us immensely.

Have you mentored others?

My husband has worked with the WWF, speaking to the students in their university programmes in France and the UK.

What seems like the importance of mentors in the fashion world for professional and personal development?

It is key. Had we sought advice, we would have done a lot of things differently and our business model would have been completely different. We created this as a passion project more than a business.

The Triple Bottom Line defines three performance dimensions: the social, environmental, and commercial/financial. In contradistinction to the standard commercial/financial analysis alone, the Triple Bottom Line incorporates environmental and social performance too. Why should ethical and sustainable (and other) fashion designers and companies include the Triple Bottom Line analysis in individual and business performance?

We put all of our emphasis on the social and environmental and as such our business has not been profitable! The sustainable fashion world is very closed off, from our experience. There are many experts at the centre of the UK industry, but they are very difficult to be in touch with. Having the support of someone from the beginning could really have helped us to get our product off the ground. We have had some unbelievable press and have two lovely films for our

company but because we have not been willing or able to pay for membership in many organisations, we have not been able to gain any support. I think this is really the wrong way to promote something as important as sustainable fashion.

Thank you for your time, Sarah.

An Interview with Rachel Pines of Moonbird Designs

December 30, 2016

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I was born in UK and lived in Leicester until I went to Art school at 21 in London. My parents were teachers, and we were brought up as atheists with a strong social philosophy, my parents did a lot of voluntary and charity work which we were very aware of and helped with.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

I was always inspired by colour and pattern and theatre and joined a drama group very early on. I was lucky to be able to study theatre design at school and knew that's what I wanted to do for my degree. At art school, while I was studying in London, I was given opportunities to do work experience on some films and made contacts in the industry.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

After having children, I knew going back into films was logistically too difficult and the environmental cost of making big budget films was too much for me to deal with at that time. I had always wanted to design pyjamas and when I researched how to make it happen, I started to learn about how bad the fashion industry is

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

The most important thing working in films taught me was that you have to be a problem solver and every new project needed a completely new and innovative solution. This gave me a great base for solving the environmental problems I came up against in my fashion business.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

They are imperative to move the industry forward. Whether they do everything from behind the scenes or they sing it from the rooftops, every little bit helps.

What is the importance of fair trade?

I like the Fair-Trade model because it places the importance on the lives of all who come into contact with it. The profits are secondary and this to me is the right way around.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

I am very inspired by Safia Minney from People Tree. She has achieved what I would like to in the future, and she has shown me that it is possible to run a successful business and have big philosophies.

What is Moonbird Designs?

Moonbird designs loungewear, sleepwear and bedlinen for adults and children, and now we do breastfeeding tops. We aim to increase our ranges to include daywear and swimwear in the next year or so.

Moonbird loungewear is made using GOTS certified organic cotton.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Birds have wings and can fly free; we like to think freedom to do what you want is at the heart of our business and Moon because we started with pyjamas.

What are some of its feature products?

Pyjamas, nighties, dressing gowns, adults and kids. Bedlinen and blankets and breastfeeding tops.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

Organic cotton only with a blend of lycra for our jersey tops.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Moonbird Designs?

The cotton is grown in southern India and some of it is hand woven in Hyderabad. The rest is printed and manufactured in Jaipur and Lucknow.

Moonbird works with fabulous women in Sydney and in India.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes, all apart from the lycra content, which we have had to add to give longevity to our garments and flexibility with designing.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

Women over 30.

What topics most interest you?

I find it hard to pick one! I am very fired up about so many things. Healthy body image, LGBTQI equality issues, the environment, overuse of plastics on our food. The list is endless.

Did you have a mentor in this work?

I have had a few and they are invaluable. I'm always looking to learn from people but in lots of ways because we are forging new territory every day, we have to take lots of chances on things because they haven't been done before.

Have you mentored others?

Yes, in small ways. I don't have enough time to mentor anyone, but I love to give advice when I am asked.

What is the importance of mentors in the fashion world for professional, and personal, development?

They are incredibly important but as I said before it's important to move away from the old ways of doing things because if you don't then you are just following the broken system. The fashion industry is the second biggest polluter in the world, and we need to own our part in it and design a new way of doing things.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire \(1911\)](#) and the [Pakistan Garment Factory Fires \(2012\)](#). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

They bring them into the news and then people become aware. There will be more tragedies in the future because the consumer is still feeding the beast. Until we change our shopping habits, they will keep producing garments in this way that causes such horror.

Women and children remain the majority of the exploited and violated work forces. What is the importance of the status of women's and children's rights in the ethical and sustainable fashion world too?

The gender equality gap is still large here in Australia and until we address the problems at home, we cannot hope to improve the lives of those working in garment factories in 3rd world countries. The careers that usually employ women are often the lowest paid. Childcare workers are a case in point. It has always struck me as an idiotic idea that the people who are in charge of your most precious possession should be paid less per hour than your mechanic. What is more important? the education of your child or your car? But because childcare was always seen as a woman's job it is paid minimally.

Who are a women's rights and children's rights activist or campaigner hero for you?

Malala Yousafzai. Her bravery and focused determination to give all girls a voice and an education inspires me.

The *Gender Inequality Index* (GII) relates to the empowerment of women, gender equality, and international women's rights. The progress for gender equity is positive. Regressive forces exist in explicit and implicit forms. What seem like some of the explicit and implicit forms observed in personal and professional life to you?

Last night I watched the documentary 'Embrace' on body image. You only have to watch that film to see how completely rife the self-hatred of our (women's) bodies is. It broke my heart to realise that girls are all their time thinking that they're not good enough. No wonder that they find it difficult to speak up for themselves, at work, in relationships, in discussions. We think that we're making progress, but we have a very long way to go.

The development of capacities and freedoms for women are restricted through violation of fundamental rights. GII has three parts: economic status, empowerment, and reproductive health. Empowerment is measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women, and the proportion of adult women and men (age 25 and older) with some secondary education. Economic status is measured by the labor force participation rate of women and men aged 15 and older. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birthrates. If women had access and implementation of these fundamental human rights, would their livelihood and quality of life, even working life in the garment factories, improve?

Yes, without a doubt.

Two factors seem to matter in the discussion of gender equality in societies: economies and rights. Many girls and women, especially in developing nations, face disadvantages unknown, or less well-known, to boys and men. Women face discrimination in education, health, the labor market, legal status, political representation, and reproductive rights. When women lose, everyone – boys, girls, men, and women – loses. What might bring this basic fact, with ubiquitous positive consequences, into the public discourse in 'developed' and 'developing' nations?

I would love to see a comparison chart for all countries in the world showing the laws that govern the status and rights of women. There are laws in every country that would shock people to know how the rights of women are restricted.

A few years ago, I found out that in Italy if a woman owns a property by solely, that when she wants to sell it she has to get her husband's permission! (This may have changed but was the case 10 years ago.) These unfair laws are the kind of thing that teach women that they are not equal.

According to *Global Affairs Canada* (Government of Canada) in the article entitled *Women's Economic Empowerment: Guidance Note* (2016), women comprise 1/3 of formal business owners, 2/5 of the global workforce, and have responsibility for 8/10 of spending for consumers. Economies and societies lose potential "development and growth" without women. Possible national moral authority lost, too. Rights and economies imply each another. Rights for girls and women develops economies and, therefore, societies. Likewise, economic and societal development gives grounds for implementation of girl's and women's rights. What educational campaigns and pragmatic initiatives might the fashion industry encourage and support to improve the chances for girls and women?

The fashion industry has on the whole contributed to the problem of women's self-worth and ultimately their disempowerment. Their continued use of thin white models has given generations of girls the idea that their worth is related to their physical appearance. The tide is beginning to change though and hopefully it will become a tsunami.

According to the *Minimum Age Convention* (1973), labor before the age of 14, 15, or 16, dependent upon the country, is child labor. Children are the most vulnerable population. Women tend to have less status than men in societies including the right to decent working conditions, decent pay, to vote, and so on. Women bear the burden of childbirth in addition to the majority of childcare in the world. What is the relationship between the need to implement women's rights and children's rights, and the fashion industry?

It shouldn't be just up to the fashion industry to bear the brunt on this. I would like to see other industries where the majority of their products are manufactured in developing countries start the conversations about who makes their products. For example, gifts and electronics. Why can't we start to have TV's that make their casings from recycled plastic? Why can't we have Christmas decorations made with safe paints and recycled metal/plastics. Until we as consumers start asking brands for this, they won't change their practises.

Child labor and slavery are problems, major ones. These include children throughout the world. Tens of millions of children in the case of child labor. A few million children in the case of child slavery. According to the *Minimum Age Convention* (1973), labor before the age of 14, 15, or 16, dependent upon the country, is child labor. *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) represent the importance of children's rights on the 'international stage' in Article 2(2), Article 3(1), and Article 3(2). In addition, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) in Article 24(1-3) and *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966) in Article 10(3) delineate the importance of children's rights too. These stipulations about equality remain violated in the fashion industry, especially the manufacturing sector or the garment industry. How can individuals get the word out about these extreme children's rights violations?

There is a fine line between bashing consumers round the head with all these appalling stories and facts and educating them, so my vote would be for making ethical and sustainable fashion education mandatory in every fashion college. If we can educate the designers, they can't pretend they didn't know.

What mass movements or social movements can fight for the implementation of the children's rights outside of the fashion industry?

People power. Facebook has the power to change the world by uniting people everywhere through businesses, blogs and friendship groups. Never again will people be alone in their thoughts. We can now find like-minded people everywhere and educate our friends.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

It ticks all my boxes, social justice, art, colour and the environment. All of these things are equally important to me.

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

Being a Mum to my beautiful kids, they fill me with joy every day.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Author Lisa Heinze. She wrote 'Sustainability with Style'. She writes about her journey to consciousness which made me laugh and cry and was so similar to my own.

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Believing in myself!

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in personal life for you?

Anxiety. If I didn't have such strong beliefs, I would have packed it all up years ago, but I am too determined to make a difference, I didn't want to let the worries hold me back in the end.

Thank you for your time, Rachel.

An Interview with Carrie Asby of Sutter Larkin

January 5, 2017

Sutter Larkin believes that a positive image on the outside starts with feeling good on the inside. To get there, one-of-a-kind designs are used to bring out the best in each individual who puts on a Sutter Larkin ensemble.

Head designer, Carrie Asby, brings Sutter Larkin to life by mixing colors and textures unexpectedly and creating harmonious results. Each design had its own playful twist. Read more in our interview below.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I was raised in the beautiful state of Oregon. My parents are outdoor enthusiasts and have respect for our role on this planet. “Take only memories; leave only footprints” was taught to me at a very young age. My mother also taught alternative energy to high school students through the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. In our house, we didn’t just talk about the 3 R’s (reducing, reusing and recycling) we lived it. Being an environmentalist is not a title for me; it’s who I am.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

I’ve known that I’ve always wanted to be a designer. Right out of high school I moved to San Francisco to make an attempt. I wasn’t ready for it and got totally overwhelmed; I was 18 without any experience. With my tail between my legs, I returned to OR. I ended up getting into advertising.

After attending Burning Man in 2008, clothing design found its way back into my life. I was making costumes for the event as a way to express myself. I started wearing some of those items out.

20 years after I left San Francisco, I returned. This time wiser, with more life experience. One night out, my entire ensemble was designed and created by me. We were in a bar directly across the street from where I lived when I was 18. A woman approached me, inquiring about my outfit. She was convinced I was an established designer.

That was my sign to get back into fashion. So, I left my 20-year career in advertising and dove right in.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

There wasn’t another option for me, really. Being an environmentalist is who I am. Designing clothes is what I do. First starting out, I was surrounded by eco-designers, too. We were a community supporting each other and growing together. They definitely influenced me.

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

First there’s the bottom line: you get a better return on your dollar spent. Slow fashion is better quality and will last longer. Slow fashion also tends to be local which helps with community and employment. It also has the ability to adapt and adjust; nimbler.

Climate change represents one of the biggest medium- to long-term threats to human survival in reasonable forms. The Government of Canada, NASA, the David Suzuki Foundation, The Royal Society, The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and numerous others discuss this. Ethical and sustainable fashion relates to it. The reductions in hydrocarbon production from sustainable materials seem imperative sustain the further deterioration of the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment. What seems like the responsibilities of ethical and sustainable fashion companies in the prevention of climate catastrophe?

Fast Fashion is the second dirtiest industry in the world, next to big oil. That pretty much sums it up, doesn't it? If the fashion industry evolved to sustainable practices, images the impact.

What is Sutter Larkin?

Sutter Larkin celebrates individuals, not the masses. I create one-of-a-kind garments that enhance your one-of-a-kind style. Every piece as unique as the person who wears it.

As part of my "thoughtful design" practices and the love of this beautiful planet, I only work with responsibly purchased materials. This could be either rescued cast-offs or up-cycled vintage gems. I take the unwanted and turn them into the wanted.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Sutter and Larkin are two streets in San Francisco that cross. On that corner I failed as a designer. 20 years later, on that same corner, I was discovered as a designer. That's where I get the same of my line, Sutter Larkin.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

I try to work with all natural fibers as much as I can. However, my first protocol is that they are being prevented from going into the landfill.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Sutter Larkin?

As of now, I do it all. I design for the collection then collect the materials. All of this is done be foot, bike or public transportation. I clean with vinegar and backing soda and air dry as much as possible. I cut, sew and assemble, as well as tag. Then I photograph and write text for each item and post to my store. Last, I market as much as I can.

Did someone mentor you?

No. I learned everything from rolling up my sleeves and diving right in.

Have you mentored others?

Not yet, but I plan to.

What might make men more involved in the fashion world in general?

More involved? I would say that men are heavily involved already. Despite the fact that most fashion brands are catering mostly to women, very few are led by them.

What might make men more involved in the ethical and sustainable fashion world in general?

The bottom line. Educating them on eco approaches that will be more profitable in the end.

Will having men in the discussion and on-the-ground improve the implementation of children's and women's rights?

Absolutely.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

When my fans send me notes on how they got stopped on the street because of the way they were carrying themselves; they were walking with confidence because they were wearing a Sutter Larkin just for them. I love hearing how good they feel.

Any other work at this time?

I teach yoga and style, as well.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Stacy London.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

Right now, I would love consultation on how to get in front of my audience. Email is the best approach. carrie@SutterLarkin.com

What seems like the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Getting my collections in front of the right market; having people understand the price and value it.

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

Yoga.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

A lot of content/questions. Are you familiar with the book *Made to Stick*? It's a great guide to getting ideas/messages across clearly and concise. It's a great read. I highly recommend it.

Thank you for your time, Carrie.

An Interview with Gemma of IAIOS

January 6, 2017

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

My great great grandfather opened a little haberdashery in Granollers, a city near Barcelona. His son called Amadeu took over the business and started to manufacture knit clothing in a small manufactory. I recently found some drawings and notes of the original designs of his sweaters from the 1930's (attached IAIO amadeu). Since then, my father's family worked in the textile industry, (I am the 5th generation).

IAIOS Brand was first created by my father in the 90's, he was making t-shirts and sweaters, but he was forced to close the production when the crisis of the textile affected the Catalan and Spanish textile industry. The local/foreign competition (multinationals) was so strong that it was not possible to produce locally anymore.

Last year I decided to make the revival of the Brand with a sustainable and ethical concept. IAIOS is made in by a local, small manufactory with regenerated wool.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

I studied Art in Barcelona; my work was specialized in video art and decide to live in Mexico and in Germany. When I came back to Barcelona, I was not sure what to do next, so I decided to start again something new with a focus on social values.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I grew up in the shop of my father, so I have been connected to the fashion world all my live. When the economic crisis hit Spain, it was difficult for my family. This made me think about our choices and decisions. I realized how neocapitalism centralizes the money into the hands of a few while the rest have to work hard and lose more and more rights every day. The consumer has the power to decide the world he wants to live in, and I was completely sure about the kind of system I did not want.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

I think my art studies are very helpful in my work, especially in my brand communication.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

I don't think fashion designers and companies have to change people's mind or teach them what to do. Each one should work on thinking which way they have to make this world a bit better, mine is through fashion. The small initiatives, the unknown people, the anonymous consumers are the ones who can change something.

The actual system is not sustainable by itself and there is a lot of people who is already realizing this. To give my money to fair trade companies and offer an alternative fashion product with quality, style and ethical values, in these crucial moments, should be enough for me.

What is the importance of fair trade?

It is the alternative to the actual system, which is unfair and non-sense. Fair trade is the way to build a sustainable economy based on people. I am aware that there is a lot of work to be done concerning this issue because it means that we have to transform the current global structure.

What is IAIOS?

IAIOS is a brand of sweaters made with regenerated wool, that means that we use the surplus of other confections, and we recycle it to make thread. IAIOS sweaters are made in local manufactories, which respect the rights of workers and reactivate the textile industry of the region that has suffered a lot from the new aggressive models of commerce.

What inspired the title of the organization?

IAIOS was the name of my father's Brand. I decided to take the name of the Brand and apply a new fresh and modern concept. IAIOS is a name that we use in Spain to speak affectionately about an old person. That is why every sweater of the IAIOS collection is identified with an "old" person like artists, writers, philosophers and wise people who were able to leave a mark on our history and bring good things to the world.

I like the idea of how you can wear a Louise Bourgeois or a Viktor Korchnoi sweater because it lets you appreciate the value of wisdom and durable things made with care and consciousness for the environment.

What are some of its feature products?

I just make sweaters. I prefer to do a high-quality product that is made to last longer than make a big collection. A IAIOS is just a basic sweater made with consciousness and ethics which fits with almost everything. But at the same time, it is modern and stylish.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

The regenerated wool is a material made with recycled wool recovered from other confections. The wool is collected and separated by colours before it is being crushed and mixed with artificial fibres. With this mix, it is possible to achieve the twisting of the thread needed to start the knitting process.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of IAIOS?

The thread comes from a small manufactory in Olot, a region in Catalunya with textile tradition. The sweater is knitted and readymade in Igualada. An historical textile industrial city of Catalunya that suffered much with the closure of the factories during the crisis of the textile industry. The tags are made in Mataró, the merchandising in Granollers and I design the sweaters and communicate the Brand from Barcelona.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

No, the artificial fibres will not biodegrade but they can be recycled.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

My customers come from Spain, most of them in Barcelona. (at the moment)

What topics most interest you?

Sustainable clothing (and Human rights).

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire](#) (1911) and the [Pakistan Garment Factory Fires](#) (2012). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

It is sad that only when those tragedies happen the press and public opinion talk about the unfair and critical situation of these people.

Women and children remain the majority of the exploited and violated work forces. What is the importance of the status of women's and children's rights in the ethical and sustainable fashion world too?

The ethical fashion is supposed to respect all human rights.

Who are a women's rights and children's rights activist or campaigner hero for you?

I was in Lesbos last summer as a volunteer for the refugee's crisis. I knew many people working in projects who protect children and women who arrived at the isle. They are heroes.

The [Gender Inequality Index](#) (GII) relates to the empowerment of women, gender equality, and international women's rights. The progress for gender equity is positive. Regressive forces exist in explicit and implicit forms. What seem like some of the explicit and implicit forms observed in personal and professional life to you?

Women are in a disadvantage in their Jobs in Spain. For example, the salary of the Spanish men is 19.3% higher than the women's. Especially with the pregnancy issue, women have to go through difficult situations regarding their professional career. Last year our government tried to make abortion illegal. Being a single woman is kind of difficult in some situations of our normal life too.

Child labor and slavery are problems, major ones. These include children throughout the world. Tens of millions of children in the case of child labor. A few million children in the case of child slavery. According to the [Minimum Age Convention](#) (1973), labor before the age of 14, 15, or 16, dependent upon the country, is child labor. [The Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1989) represent the importance of children's rights on the 'international stage' in Article 2(2), Article 3(1), and Article 3(2). In addition, [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (1966) in Article 24(1-3) and [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (1966) in Article 10(3) delineate the importance of children's rights too. These stipulations about equality remain violated in the fashion industry, especially the manufacturing sector or the garment industry. How can individuals get the word out about these extreme children's rights violations?

One of the perks of today's technological advancement is the fact that we can access and distribute information more easily. We should use this technology for spreading such information not looking at cat videos.

What mass movements or social movements can fight for the implementation of the children's rights outside of the fashion industry?

Every mass movement starts from the individual. The Fashion industry is a part of our rigged economic system; there are many places in which children's rights are violated, not just in the fashion industry.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations, women and children, in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

We should not only be ethical, also communicative and transparent in all aspects, so we can lead by example.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at all levels. Why? What might make men more involved in the fashion world in general?

To be honest, I do not think that is the case, if there is a gender difference in some countries, and then it is a cultural thing. I personally know a lot of men working in the fashion industry, also in my own family. It is true that in Spain for example most of the seamstresses are women, but I think it is something that has to do with the education the people received in Spain during the dictatorship of Franco (the women's and men's work were very sexist). But for example, in Africa most of them are men.

What personal fulfilment comes from this work for you?

Every time I sell a IAIOS I steal a sale from Zara.

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

I organize conferences in my father's shop about different issues (for free). I work in communication for some retails, and I am always taking courses about various topics to learn new ways and improve myself.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

I recommend the program "Fashion Victims" from Jordi Évole in Salvados TV program:

http://www.lasexta.com/temas/salvados_fashion_victims-1

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, IAIOS?

I have information in my website, and I also post videos and pictures about my sweaters and the way they are manufactured.

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Consistency and constancy.

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in personal life for you?

The refugee crisis in Europe makes me so angry!

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

Gramsci... I also like Situationism.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

Thank you for your interest in my work. It is very important what you are doing, so I want to give you, my congratulations.

Thank you for your time, Gemma.

Thank you!

An Interview with Bea of Heke Design

January 7, 2017

Bea was born in Australia as the youngest of 3 kids. She moved to Canada at the age of 7. She worked in the music touring industry for a while. In between the music touring, she designed for her fashion brand Beazworx. She then founded Heke Design. Here is her story.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

Born in Australia, youngest of 3 kids. Moved to Canada at 7 years old.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

After high school, I started working in the music touring industry. First as lighting tech, then wardrobe, production, tour manager and personal assistant. Toured for about 20 years all around Europe, Canada, USA, Australia and NZ. Worked with artists like k.d Lang, The Tragically Hip, Colin James, BNL and Leonard Cohen and Diana Krall.

As for my fashion background though, I'm mostly self-taught. I have been sewing since I was 10, and while living in Vancouver I did a short diploma in fashion merchandising.

Then in between touring I managed to design for my Vancouver fashion brand called Beazworx.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I have always been an avid recycler and 2nd hand shopper, so when I learned of the massive amount of clothing thrown out from op shops, I simply HAD to do something about it.

Since I had just moved to New Zealand and was looking for something to do...Heke design began, and I've since discovered there is a whole underground, and growing movement of upcyclers all over the world.

What seems like the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

We cannot continue to use up the earth's resources, damage the planet with chemicals and pesticides or exploit workers. So, the more designers and companies doing this the more it will become the norm.

What seems like the importance of fair trade?

Caring for and supporting the makers. a general respect for all humans is just the right thing to do.

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

The craft.

Slow fashion cares about the story behind the garment, there is a respect for the clothing, the craft and the maker.

The Brundtland Commission Report described the need for sustainability. In that, we, the human species, need to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of

future generations to meet their own needs” for long-term sustainability. Does this seem correct to you?

I think we have more than enough to meet our needs (with-out compromising the future), but the issue is our imaginary “needs” that are fueled by the corporate marketing machines.

What is Heke Design?

Heke design is an upcycled, one of a kind, affordable, colourful eco fashion.

What inspired the title of the organization?

I live on Waiheke Island, so heke comes from that.

heke is a maori word meaning” to descend, migrate, coming to.” and Wai is water.

What are some of its feature products?

Our hoody top is a popular one, I do a summer and winter version, Colourful with lots of interesting prints and T shirt images. Also, the all wool sweater coat.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

I use a lot of cotton T shirts, wool jumpers, jeans. For me, it’s about seeing what items are being thrown out en masse and making them beautiful.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Heke Design?

I design everything.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

Women about 30-60. Usually with a definite eco interest, but also women that want something unique and colourful.

Did someone mentor you?

Not really, but I do have a business coach, and several supportive friends and fellow designers.

Have you mentored others?

Not in an official way, although, I’ve had a few students approach me, and I’m always happy to offer any support and consulting to any upcyclers, I certainly love the collaborative brainstorming that can happen with artistic projects.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

The satisfaction of knowing how much I am keeping out of the landfill.

Any other work at this time?

I do some teaching and upcycle workshops.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

Email. beazworx@gmail.com.

What seems like the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Sometimes it's overwhelming, the amount of waste, and I just cannot take it all.
Thank you for your time, Bea.

An Interview with Andrea Salinas of Now_Then

January 7, 2017

NOW THEN is an ecoluxury *swimwear* and neoprene *label* for Ocean minded women in search of a fashionable saltwater attire.

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

I was raised in a small town of Navarra, in the North part of Spain.

Since I have memory my two passions have been nature and fashion. I grew up between the fabrics, rough bodies and patterns from my grandmother who was a seamstress. My family gave me the sense of hard working and respect for nature.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I think being raised in the countryside, gives you a special connection with its nature. When I studied my Fashion degree this came to me in an organic way.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

I had a business university background first worked in renewable energies companies as a Buyer. I decided to follow my childhood dream moving to Madrid to study my Fashion Degree. I had some experience working at other Fashion retailers when I decided to start with my own brand. I think it is really interesting to combine both business and creative studies if you want to start your own business.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

I would say being in a direction which you find is the most honest you can get, and you can maintain it in the future if the business grows. And an area I would consider very important is have a good communication strategy for spreading all your efforts.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

Well, within the industry I have always been looking at Patagonia, I think they are an example for whoever wants to make a difference. I love their materials innovation and their strong communication power, I also love their spirit, how they build their story and keep honest about what they do now at the time they are massive company.

More from a personal side, my forever heroine is Dr. Sylvia Earle, marine biologist and environmentalist who I admire for her life connected and dedicated to the Ocean.

I also take the opportunity of highlighting someone who I have been enthusiastic about. Afroz Shah is an indian lawyer born in Mumbai. I got to know his work with a huge beach cleanup he organized teaming up with locals for more than a year cleaning up more than 4,000 tons of garbage. One day he decided he did not like what he was seeing from his window view, teamed up with some locals and started to clean up their beach. He started just as an individual and now they achieved a global goal, he has been now awarded by the UN Champions of the Earth award. We spoke about him in a post at our Journal, called “Versova beach of Hope”, this has been the most inspiring, hopeful story I recently came across.

What is NOW_THEN?

NOW_THEN is an Eco Luxury Swimwear and Wetsuits label inspired by the powerful combination of feminine-ity, freedom and Ocean love.

What are some of its feature products?

Our collection features Active-inspired swimwear made with Eco Premium materials such as recycled nylon from discarded fishing nets and marine waste and Petroleum-free neoprene wetsuits. We are also working in a new range of textile accessories collaborating with some artisans. We are always focusing on design, high-end materials, quality and responsibly making.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

We just had our first collection out this 2016 summer and we market our products mainly online. We sell mainly Spain and Europe, but we were also thrilled to receive orders from places such as Hawaii, Australia or Virgin Islands!

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911) and the Pakistan Garment Factory Fires (2012). What is the importance of human rights and worker rights in this new movement, and to the garment industry?

That means everything to this new movement. Rana Plaza was such a disaster and shame to the world, but we need the people to see this reality that some of us have been seeing by visiting factories across these production hot spots. I think the big change will come from the people, all of us have a big power when we decide where to spend our money.

Children are the most vulnerable population. Women tend to have less status than men in societies including the right to decent working conditions, decent pay, to vote, and so on. What is the relationship between the need to implement women's rights and children's rights?

I worry that this industry is grabbing whichever profitable gap in the world to squeeze it for a margin. We have to end up this.

Child labour and slavery are problems, major ones. These include children throughout the world. Tens of millions of children in the case of child labour and a few million for child slavery. How can individuals get the word out about these other rights violations?

Taking your time to be informed and take action. Not to spend a penny in companies that are violating human and child rights. This is the only solution, because if we are waiting the governments to apply the filters, to solve the problem, it will be too late.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

Association is key, we are a lot of small brands trying to make a difference, but we will have a bigger voice together at once. I think communication is crucial, because all these companies that are not performing in a good way, spend millions to take the public's attention.

What topics most interest you?

I am personally interested and involved in Ocean Conservation. I am a diver, and I am grateful for the connection I found within, whenever I am into the Ocean I came a more inspired, free-willed and motivated woman.

Did you have a mentor in this work?

Not specially a mentor but I have people I am thankful to find in some amazing people my path that helped me in professional and personal backing.

Have you mentored others?

I do not consider myself a mentor, but I collaborate with Istituto Europeo de Design as a teacher to help students about creating a sustainable brand.

What is the importance of mentors in the fashion world for professional, and personal, development?

Creating your own brand is a complicated path where you see yourself multi-tasking in a crazy way. It is so important to find help of professionals in some areas you are not the best at. Going all alone could be tough.

Also, the fact that we can be spending a lot in selecting the most eco-friendly materials but to get our message out there, involves a lot of money that small brands do not have. I think we need associations and the industry's attention to spread our word.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at all levels. Why?

I think that fashion can empower women. And women can empower a change, not just in fashion, but in the world.

I have been feeling this since I was a little girl, learning my first stitches by my grandma. I do not have much time to make my own things apart from job now, but when I can, I still feel that sewing is kind of therapeutic to me.

I think that Fashion is able to bound powerful women all around the world.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

For me it is important to know that I am working in a project it allows me to be honest in all the ways. No hiding any extra cost over the planet or the people. That makes you feel free.

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

I am most of my time busy with NOW_THEN, but I also work as a freelance consultant for specific projects.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

I am reading the book about the story of Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia, "I want my people go surfing", I am enjoying it, I also want my people at NOW_THEN to go surfing!

Any recommended means of contacting NOW_THEN?

I would be happy to take this conversation further and connect with any interesting soul J please write to: hello@nowthenlabel.com

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

I am thrilled to be able to speak about sustainable fashion and NOW_THEN. Thank you so much and congratulations for Trusted Clothes, we need more association all around the world to speak out our word!

Thank you for your time, Andrea.

Thank you so much for the opportunity.

Rachel Denniston of Hipsters for Sisters

January 7, 2017

Rachel grew up in a small suburb of Los Angeles where she resides today. Growing up in a creative environment with her mother who is an artist, inspired her to study Art History and Chinese in a small liberal arts school in Lexington, Virginia. Hipsters for Sisters is a label she founded with her mother and sister. Read more about her and their fashion label, all made in their L.A. studio.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I grew up in a small suburb of Los Angeles, California, where I reside today. When I was younger, my mother worked as a fine artist, and I was always nearby while she painted on these huge, larger-than-life canvases. I was really lucky to always be surrounded by such creativity—paints and papers and craft supplies. I had a very creatively enriched childhood. Today, my mom and I are business partners and I get to work with her full-time on Hipsters for Sisters.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

I studied Art History and Chinese at a small liberal arts school in Lexington, Virginia, but my passion has always been making things. Even when I was little, I'd be making purses out of glue and paper, so it just seemed fitting that during my senior year of college, my mother decided she wanted to reinvent the fanny pack and I was there to help her.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

My interest in ethical and sustainable fashion sort of grew in an organic way. I'd been vegetarian since as early as I could remember, and so when my mom and I decided to start making bags, we couldn't bring ourselves to use real leather—so naturally, we chose vegan leather instead. While we were perfecting our first designs, we learned about the toxicity of certain vegan leathers like PVC, so then we became even more discerning about the types of fabrics we used. We saw it as a necessity for everything we sourced to be safe for the environment and also the people wearing and making it. Although leather is always the least sustainable option in terms of fabric, we place strict requirements on the vegan leathers we do use. We require them to be free from organic solvents, odors and environmental toxins such as formaldehyde, pesticides, phenols, chlorine, heavy metals, carcinogenic and allergy-inducing dyes common in many synthetic leathers.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

There are so many different facets to having your own fashion brand, and so to be quite frank, it took a while for us to get the lay of the land and figure out how it all works. Although, I do think the study of art and art historical movements really helped with design.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

Ethical and sustainable fashion brands are really the future. I think, in a sense, ethical fashion is a movement against the rise of fast fashion, and rightfully so. It's a return to ethical and local ways of manufacturing—slow fashion, small quantities and local production means a lower impact on the planet. And if we can do all that while using sustainable and renewable textiles, then

hallelujah(!), we finally found a better and more conscious way of participating in fashion. If we no longer have a planet upon which to wear clothes, then what's the point of making them?

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

I love what Reformation is doing in terms of sustainable fashion. They've really changed the game by making it cool to care about the planet and has in turn, helped out a lot of us, small, sustainable fashion brands. I also really respect and look to the influential people that are using their power for good like Leonardo DiCaprio, and sustainable fashion icon, Emma Watson, and of course, the celebrities who participate in the Red Carpet, Green Dress movement by wearing (and re-wearing) sustainable gowns for red carpet events.

What are Hipsters for Sisters?

Hipsters for Sisters (www.hipstersforsisters.com) is a Los-Angeles based, hands-free bag brand on a mission to liberate women from their baggage. All of our bags are meant to be worn as belt bags (a revamped version of the fanny pack) and some convert to be worn crossbody. As a modern company, we believe we have a responsibility to the earth and so all of our bags are made locally and sustainably, using only the highest quality sustainable and cruelty free materials available.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Hipsters for Sisters is all about empowering women. 5% of the purchase price of every bag sold is donated to organizations that help empower women, protect the planet and animals. The name, Hipsters for Sisters, felt right, as we've always wanted to create a type of community for women (or sisters, if you will).

What are some of its feature products?

One of our best selling items is the Pocket Bum Bag (<http://www.hipstersforsisters.com/bum-bag-pocket-xl-black>). They're made with eco-friendly certified vegan leathers, Ultrasuede (made from post-industrial recycled materials) and organic cotton lining. These are really popular because they're particularly roomy inside, so you can take a lot of stuff with you, and also people love that you can slip your phone in the front external pocket which allows for easy access.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

We use eco-friendly certified vegan leathers and natural materials like organic cotton, hemp, and cork. We also use Ultrasuede, made from post-industrial recycled material. Sourcing is the hardest part for us, and we are always on the lookout for new, innovative, sustainable materials.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Hipsters for Sisters?

Our bags are all made locally here in Los Angeles by a family-run factory that treats its employees with respect and love. Our factory is just a few miles from our office, which makes it easy to run over and check on production. They often put together "potluck" style lunches where each one of them brings a homemade dish and shares with one another. We are so lucky to have such skilled craftsmen and women working on our bags and the opportunity to meet and visit with them frequently, since they're so close to our office.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Well, our bags are built so last. So, they should last you a good ten or so years, before they start wearing down. Although all of them will eventually biodegrade at some point, but probably not before you're done using the bag.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

Our bags are for all women, of all ages, all races, all ethnicities. All women need and want to be liberated and empowered. We are for everyone...except men, at the moment— but we are working on that! =

What topics most interest you?

I'm always interested in new ethical brands and innovative sustainable textiles. Also, art and how it intersects with fashion.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

It's rewarding to be part of a movement that is working to clean up the fashion industry, the second most polluting industry on the planet, and create more sustainable and ethical choices for consumers for a better, healthier way of shopping. It's also rewarding to be able to give back and support organizations doing incredible things for our planet. Because of our customers, we're able to give to organizations that help empower women, protect the planet, and animals. For example, last spring we saved almost 300 acres of Sumatran Rainforest through the Rainforest Trust, creating a safe haven for critically endangered wildlife including the Sumatran tiger, elephant and orangutan and keeping the land lush with CO2 loving plants and giving these animals a permanent place to call home.

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

Hipsters for Sisters is my full-time job, however, I also do some freelance writing on sustainable and ethical fashion.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, Hipsters for Sisters?

Of course, you can reach out to me at contact@hipstersforsisters.com and sign up for our newsletter (http://eepurl.com/F_wv9) to stay in touch with us about upcoming sales, events, and what's new.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

Thanks so much for taking the time to speak with me about sustainable fashion. So grateful for people like you helping to bring awareness for the need of transparency in the fashion industry and helping consumers making more responsible and ethical buying decisions.

Thank you for your time, Rachel.

Jen Lewis of Purse and Clutch

January 10, 2017

Purse and Clutch employs weavers & seamstresses in Guatemala & leather workers in Ethiopia to break the cycle of poverty in countries with limited job opportunities. Know more about them in our interview with Jen Lewis!

Purse and Clutch artisans in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, men & women are stuck in poverty because of a systemic lack of employment opportunities. Even skills training & education can't help if no jobs exist. By employing Ethiopians to make leather designs, Purse and Clutch creates opportunities for hardworking, incredibly talented individuals.

What is Purse & Clutch?

For the last 5 years Purse & Clutch has been an online retail boutique curating high quality, well designed, & ethically made handbags. We're passionate about long term partnership with artisans in developing countries who create their products with an emphasis on design & quality. These artisans are treated with respect & are paid a living wage for their region.

Starting this coming Spring, we're transitioning from a boutique curation of fair trade finished products to designing & producing our own line. This will allow us to know our artisans intimately by name, incorporate design input from our community, & control production from start to finish.

Our artisan teams consist of single mothers in Guatemala making gorgeous woven cotton fabric items & an incredible group of leatherworkers in Ethiopia where other employment opportunities simply don't exist.

As the manager of the workshop, Israel is incredible at keeping every detail straight for each handbag & manages his team with grace & confidence. He's also the mastermind who transforms our designs & patterns into life giving invaluable feedback with his extensive knowledge of leather construction.

What inspired the title of the organization?

It actually started with a play on the word clutch – as in the sports players who come through in the clutch, but when I looked up available domain names everything was related to car parts! From there I checked to see if www.purseandclutch.com was available & when it was, I bought it immediately! I loved that it was straightforward & transparent, which is exactly what I knew I wanted the business to be about.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on? / How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I grew up in Northeast Texas. My dad was born & raised in Jos, Nigeria & several of his siblings returned to West Africa as adults which meant that I grew up hearing about civil wars, lack of access to medical care, & stunning African countrysides. I knew I wanted to play a role in connecting needs & resources but really had no idea what that would or could look like.

I went to John Brown University in NW Arkansas to study Chemistry. Upon graduating, my plan was to continue my education in the field of nutrition researching ways to fortify indigenous

crops with needed missing nutrients in South America, but I was offered a job teaching Chemistry at a bilingual High School in Honduras. I jumped at the chance to live in Latin America. It became obvious very quickly that teaching at an affluent high school wasn't getting at my desire to connect needs with opportunities, so after the year I returned to John Brown University to get my Masters of Science in Leadership & Ethics. I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Fellowship with a non-profit leadership training organization called The Soderquist Center that gave me incredible insights into the non-profit world & access to amazing mentors who taught me to dream big.

After grad school, I moved to Austin to be back in Texas & closer to family as I pursued a career in non-profit humanitarian work. I got a job helping to cultivate a healthy community for a group of formerly homeless individuals that was much closer to my passion of connecting resources to needs, but I kept feeling frustrated that as a woman living alone, I didn't feel comfortable inviting the middle-aged men – many working through addictions – into my home.

At this time a dear friend from grad school had moved to Northern India to help start an organization that worked with locals to make handbags designed with their Western customers in mind. The stories she would tell me of the transformation that employment could bring captivated me. She told me there was essentially a line out the door of eager potential workers looking for a job, and that they just needed to sell more bags to be able to expand their workforce. She shipped me a box of handbags & as they were being made, I researched everything I could about how to start an online shop. From there Purse & Clutch was born.

It really is incredible how much of an impact employment can have on an individual's life as well as on her community. By changing the way manufacturing is done – from an exploitative industry to one that lifts its workers out of poverty – we can begin to unravel the cycle of poverty.

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

Slow fashion looks to add job opportunities whenever possible – not cut corners at any cost. We definitely take a slow fashion approach to production! While we could purchase already made & dyed thread to speed up production times, we wouldn't be employing as many women along the way. We opt for choices that extend the life of a product even if it's more expensive for us to make so that a handbag lasts season after season & doesn't need to be thrown away or replaced every six months. We do this by committing to high quality, natural materials as well as only launching new collections twice a year (Spring & Fall) that are timeless patterns & color combinations. In slowing down the fashion cycle, we hope to encourage our community to make educated, thoughtful choices about their purchases.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

The fabric in Guatemala begins with a boll of cotton. The cotton is spun into thread, then botanically dyed using traditional Mayan plant & insect recipes to get the perfect hue. The thread is then loaded onto a loom to become the vertical base called the warp. More thread, called the weft, is then passed back & forth to create specific patterns. The finished woven fabric is then sent to the seamstresses to make into the finished products you see on our site.

Any women's rights activist or campaigner hero for you?

Lately I've been inspired by Marian Wright Edelman, founder & director of the Children's Defense Fund who said, "If you don't like the way the world is, you have an obligation to change it. Just do it one step at a time."

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

We've just opened applications for a new Insights Focus Group that will be housed on Slack. We're looking for a group of thoughtful & creative influencers who can act as our sounding board as we develop our brand & continue to support fair wages in Guatemala & Ethiopia in a substantive way. Apply [here!](#)

An Interview with Lori of Conscious Elegance

January 10, 2017

Conscious Elegance creates fun, ethically sourced eco-chic wedding attire at a fair price. Sustainability, social responsibility, & affordability are their priorities and reflected in every aspect of their business. Designer Lori tells us more.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

When I hear the words ‘family background’ I think of my parents. I was born of Italian and Austrian/Romanian parents in upstate NY, and we moved south to small-town Maryland, first on the Eastern Shore (Salisbury) then in Central MD (Fredrick), for my formative years. I have one sister who is 20 months younger, and she was my best friend throughout our childhoods. My culture growing up was one of crafting, frugality and DIY, though not what one might consider artistic. My family valued education and independence and my mother went back to college when I was a pre-teen; I was able to watch her graduate, which was an incredibly proud day for all of us. Language: Spoke English at home but studied every possible foreign language at school (I wanted to travel!).

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

Education: Bachelor’s Degree in English Lit, Bachelor’s and master’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). Still licensed and certified as a speech-language pathologist, because I worked too hard to give that up. I was previously certified in massage therapy not for a career but from a lifelong interest in holistic medicine. I figured that the best way to learn how to be healthy was to learn how bodies work. I put myself through grad school as a costumer for semi-professional theatre in Baltimore, Maryland which is where I truly learned to sew. I learned my craft through apprenticeship rather than from school and I believe that my way of learning was infinitely better for me. Worked as an SLP for 12 years before deciding to start a custom wedding dress design company that would cater to the hard-to-fit bride. Kept the company up for 10 years before deciding to move onto designing baby and household goods.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

While researching sources for my dress design business I became aware of both the horrors of factory conditions and the poisoning of lands & people through use of pesticides and production of petroleum-based fabrics. Until then, I’d had no idea what had gone into the cheap t-shirts I was wearing. I refused to be part of the problem and decided to Be the Change. I shifted my company’s focus to use reclaimed and eco-supportive materials exclusively, with a focus on local production and zero-waste business practices.

What seems like the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

Again, our world has become polluted and depleted due to our squandering of resources. Her people have been exploited and abused, all in the name of ever-new and ever-cheap fashion. We need to be part of the solution and we need to lead the way.

The Brundtland Commission Report described the need for sustainability. In that, we, the human species, need to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” for long-term sustainability. Does this seem correct to you?

It does seem correct, if for no other reason than the world has taken the opposite approach for so long and we see where that has gotten us. There may have been a time when there were so few people taking up so few resources that there was no need to think to the future. That time is long past.

How can ethical and sustainable fashion contribute to the long-term sustainable future for the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment?

There are several ways that come immediately to mind:

- 1) By reclaiming and re-using resources, we limit the consumption of raw materials and thus limit the energy needed to produce and refine them is greatly reduced.
- 2) By reclaiming and re-using resources, landfill space is spared, and less land is required to be cleared to make room for our trash. This protects wildlife and real estate and preserves it for future generations.
- 3) By using ecologically sound practices to grow crops such as hemp and organic cotton, our land in use is spared the pollution of pesticides and herbicides. The surrounding flora and fauna and the people who grow and process these crops have a better chance of healthy lives. In addition, the land is kept viable for those who would come next.
- 4) By keeping production as local as possible, we support our communities and save fossil-fuel consumption by reducing shipping and transportation costs.

What is Conscious Elegance?

Conscious Elegance is a micro-brewed independent design company that creates beautiful and useful things from reclaimed, vintage and sustainable materials.

What inspired the title of the organization?

I wanted to convey the concept that conscious consumption could be beneficial and elegant. At the time I was creating the business (the early 2000's), I was designing high-end wedding dresses, and the pervasive thought was that eco-friendly and sustainable dresses had to be ugly and homespun, like a burlap sack. I wanted to show that Conscious does not equal Austerity.

What are some of its feature products?

Conscious Elegance is in transition at the moment; we had been focusing on sustainable fashion and design for the first 10 years of our journey. We're now developing and designing high-end and useful household items such as infant crib sets and duvet covers using reclaimed and vintage silk, hemp and organic cotton.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

See above. Besides reclaimed silks, our new materials are certified organic cottons and hemp blends. To my knowledge, currently the world's hemp crops are principally grown in Romania and China, though we are hoping to change that with improved legislation.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Conscious Elegance?

Since we use mostly reclaimed and vintage fabrics, our manufacturers come from every time and every place.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes. The hemp and silk blends that we use have a 100 SBP rating, or Sustainable Biodegradable Product rating. This means that it was cultivated in a sustainable fashion and will biodegrade 100%.

As for our reclaimed fabrics, we are not able to predict the biodegradability of each piece of vintage silk, but we focus on sourcing natural fabrics rather than petroleum-based products, with the intent that our fabrics will return to the soil like any other natural/biological substance.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

When we were creating wedding dresses, the demographics of our market were mostly age 20-40, educated and eco-minded, though we did have several clients who were glad to have a beautiful well-made custom gown regardless of the sustainability. We did our best to educate them while we made them look gorgeous on their special day.

What topics most interest you?

Frugal and sustainable living, wholistic health, archaeology, photorealistic drawing/painting.

Did someone mentor you?

No. Sadly it has been very difficult to find gurus in this field who were doing exactly what I'd wanted to do.

Have you mentored others?

Many (countless!) fiber arts students contact me from all over the world to learn more about hemp fabrics and sustainable business practices. I'm glad to give them info and send them swatches, free of charge, for their school projects. I also lecture regularly at local events to help educate the public, even presenting at the American Textile History Museum, where I had a gown on exhibit.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

I get great satisfaction out of making something beautiful, and, even more importantly, something useful out of materials that had been discarded and unused. I believe in making the most of what we have.

Any other work at this time?

Besides working in fiber, I am a portrait artist, largely focusing on graphite as my medium but recently branching out into pastels. I show in local galleries and at sci-fi / fantasy conventions. I have several pieces online at <http://www.afinelikeness.com/gallery/>

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

While he may not be a fashionisto, the author Neil Gaiman is one of my all-time Inspirations. His commencement speech to the University of the Arts 2012 is a piece that every creative

person should take to heart. Google 'Neil Gaiman's Awesome Commencement Speech' and you'll find it.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

Email works best.

What seems like the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Charging a fair wage for my work. My family wasn't wealthy, and money was always a concern when I was growing up. I'm constantly aware of how many people struggle and my heart goes out to them. I want to help.

What seems like the greatest emotional struggle in personal life for you?

Feeling like my reach exceeds my grasp. It feels like there's never enough time or stamina or daylight to do everything I want in a day.

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

Two come to mind. The first is 'Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without'. The second comes from 'Desiderata': 'Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.'

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

I'm extremely grateful for the time you've put into this article and thank you for the chance to speak. I truly believe that together we can change the world into what we want it to be.

Thank you for your time, Lori.

An Interview with Henrik Saetre of Mamahuhu

January 11, 2017

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

A 30-year-old male, born in Oslo, Norway, and grew up in Bergen, Norway, I was exposed to many religions throughout school. However, I am an agnostic, meaning that I do perceive there to be something...bigger...than us out there, and am not convinced by any of the manmade religions. Perceive that there is a bigger chance the religions are talking about the same “thing” but fighting over which name to give it.

I’m bi-lingual+ meaning my Norwegian and English is at native levels, and my Chinese is conversational.

In terms of culture, I’m quite the “mutt” now, after living for 3+ years in both Norway, China, and Ireland, and travelling to over 50 countries. Closest description would be an international citizen with a Norwegian background.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

After doing my year of military service on the border of Russia (an amazing and life changing experience) I decided to study international marketing at the Norwegian School of Business. Choosing this study had a basis in the fact that my younger sister was adopted from China in 2001, and International Marketing offered an exchange year to Shanghai for its third and final year.

Once in Shanghai I absolutely loved it, and upon completing my bachelor I enrolled in a master’s in economics at Fudan University in Shanghai.

While there I met the founders of Mamahuhu, Luis and Carolina. They actually started Mamahuhu while we were studying together, and at the same time I started my venture into the world of mobile apps.

After four years living in China, my fiancé, Effy, who is Chinese, wanted to study her Masters in Europe. So, we moved to Ireland where I continued developing apps for another year, while she studied.

Once Effy graduated, I wanted to take a break from the entrepreneurial life and see what corporate life was like. Dublin, Ireland, is the technological hub of Europe, and there were plenty of choices. Finally, my choice was doing Software as a service sale for the red giant, Oracle.

An amazing company which taught me many valuable lessons, it was early apparent to me that this was not the correct road. So, on the side of work, my fiancé and I started working on a way to get location independence. (Earning a living that is not dependent on going to work at a specific place)

We spent a year setting up a tea company on side of work, that culminated in a great Kickstarter campaign, that unfortunately failed due to a product/market fit that was not good enough.

After that campaign we (Effy and I) got the amazing opportunity to join Luis and Carolina, who had continued to build Mamahuhu over the last 6 years.

Mamahuhu had an amazing growth and road behind it, from selling on Facebook to friends and family then to having 7 shops in Colombia and 2 in Spain.

There were however large untapped areas, specifically online sales.

We were invited to come onboard as partners to bring Mamahuhu's ethical fashion to the rest of the world by setting up and running www.mamahuhu.com and other online sales.

Now Effy and I are developing Mamahuhu worldwide, working from wherever we are, and enjoying it thoroughly. So far this year we have spent over one month in Norway, China, Ireland, and Spain, working from wherever we are.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

Growing up in Norway, ethics is something we get both in school and home. It is far from perfect, but I perceive that I've had a very lucky and good start on life in the beliefs and mental patterns that was brought from home.

Additionally, I perceive that my generation has a more sustainable view on how life on earth should be lived. So, my interest has always been there.

However, it was after coming in as a partner in Mamahuhu that it really crystallized. It is a constant challenge for us, how to balance the combination of stylish fashion brand and an ethical company.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

I view myself first and foremost as a businessman, and believe that it is through positive business that we can change the world for the better.

Instead of asking people to give up their car, make one that doesn't pollute.

Instead of asking people to recycle, make bio-degradable items.

Instead of lobbying the government to support ethical companies, make ethical companies that can not only stand on their own, but thrive in the fight with fast fashion.

You might say that some of the naiveté and idealism I perceive is to be found in students all around the world never got drawn out of me, because I had several years as an entrepreneur before stepping into the corporate environment. (And made sure to leave it behind before it changed me.)

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

This is a great question, and it ties in with my answer for the previous one.

Often it is said that to succeed in business you must be ruthless and hard. Too many accidents and horrible events are the result of people compromising on their ethics.

Our vision here at Mamahuhu is that it is possible to make a thriving and profitable business on the basis of treating everyone in our value chain fairly, and with respect. An example is that we pay over 4 times as much for our shoes as most fast fashion brands, yet we are still a strong and profitable company.

How? Through business model innovation. By sending shoes directly from artisans to our stores or to customers, we avoid the middlemen. This means that we sell less shoes, as distributors

regularly buy 10,000-200,000 shoes at once, but the price they need is unsustainable for ethical production.

And this is the importance of ethical fashion designers and companies: Showing people a better way of doing business, that is both ethical and sustainable for our planet.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

My first thought goes to Amyann Cadwell of The Good Trade (<http://www.thegoodtrade.com/>), because of the amazing impact she has. I half-jokingly liken being mentioned by The Good Trade as the ethical fashion world equivalent of a Vogue cover story.

There are many webpages dedicated to ethical and sustainable fashion, yet few who I can say truly thrives. I really respect what she and her team has accomplished by building a business that not only thrives, but they are able to stand by their ethics and beliefs.

What is Mamahuhu?

Mamahuhu is two things:

On the one hand, Mamahuhu is a fashion brand that offers colourful shoes, bags, and accessories to modern men and women.

On the other hand, Mamahuhu is an ethical company whose vision is to keep alive the tradition of family-owned workshop. We do this by empowering and supporting unemployed artisans to become ethical workshop owners and develop into self-sustaining companies. So far, we have set up 15 workshops, and created over 200 jobs in challenges communities.

Every shoe has its own attributes, and deserves to be treated personally to make sure all parts fit perfectly together and all the details are attended carefully. The process is like creating a piece of art. Only those that are handmade by experienced artisans can reach such level of perfection.

What inspired the title of the organization?

It was while studying in China that Mamahuhu was conceived, and the name literally means “HorseHorseTigerTiger” in Chinese. This word is one of the first ones learns as foreigners studying Chinese, because of the easy pronunciation. Meaning of the word is careless and casual.

What are some of its feature products?

We have just launched a new collection of [Riviera shoes on Kickstarter](#), and that is looking very good indeed, as we got funded in only one week! I perceive this as real proof that people care how their clothes were made, by who, and how they were treated.

Besides these, our most popular products are our signature shoe collections of [Colorines](#), [Nevaditas](#), and [Moccasins](#).

What is your customer base – the demographics?

Our core customers are women and men between 21 to 35, who has a fun and colourful style. Additionally, we have many customers who are in their heart still 25, fun, and colourful.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at all levels. Why?

I've never looked into scientific research around this topic, so my thoughts here are just uneducated opinions (unlike most of the rest?).

As a child I was not very interested in fashion. It kept me warm when it was cold. It kept me dry when it was raining. It helped me fit in so I could figure out who I was.

I have a thought that this is a common perception for boys more so than girls who seem to care more about what they wear.

Once into the teenage years it became very quickly apparent that my style is how the world sees me, and so I (and maybe other boys?) started caring more what I wore.

These early experiences might be the small pebbles that changes the road over time. Meaning that interest in fashion from an early age might influence choices made in teenage and young adult years, when deciding which "career" to pursue.

This is however complete speculation.

What might make men more involved in the fashion world in general?

Education about what jobs is available in the fashion world, what they entail, and what can be accomplished through them.

As an aside to previous question, I perceive that the fashion might seem very closed off and unapproachable by many young people (and old for that matter).

Personally, I've sort of "created" my own job in the fashion industry, and before joining I knew little about which jobs were available. Early education for boys into what is possible might have a huge impact.

What might make men more involved in the ethical and sustainable fashion world in general?

I'm not convinced that there are many more women than men involved in the ethical and sustainable fashion world, but I'm willing to speculate

So again, this is pure speculation. But I would not be surprised if more men become involved in ethical and sustainable fashion as the industry continues to increase in recognition and prestige.

Ethical and sustainable fashion is on a sharp upward trend. Many men seem to me to be drawn towards prestigious and high-profile jobs. As ethics become "cool" we might see more men involved.

Will having men in the discussion and on-the-ground improve the implementation of children's and women's rights?

I perceive so, yes. A cause will never have full power if half the population is not involved. Though I personally believe that men ARE involved in the discussions and on-the-ground.

Mamahuhu works with artisans from disadvantage areas in Colombia, and rescue leather workshops that was previously unemployed. Currently we support over 110 artisans, spread over 11 workshops in Bogota, Colombia.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

Two types.

Firstly, this is an extremely challenging job. Nearly every day brings a new challenge that I've never dealt with before, which requires my full faculties, experience, and educational background to solve.

With entrepreneurship we are creating something out of nothing, and that is hard.

It is also extremely giving. As through these struggles I grow every single day. Since joining Mamahuhu I've learned countless new skills and honed those I already had to a new level.

This development is very fulfilling.

Secondly, I get to bring my full force to bear on a project that I believe makes the world a better place. That is extremely motivating, knowing that this work is in line with my own ethics and beliefs.

I would not wish upon my worst enemy to go day in and day out trying to distract themselves from the fact that they are betraying their morals, and what they do is evil. Money can't clean your conscience.

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

At the moment my full focus is on growing Mamahuhu and increase the positive impact that we have.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Too many. Oh so, so, many.

I'd like to share a "hidden" gem of the internet though.

<https://sivers.org/book>

This is the link to Derek Siver's book summaries. A brilliant writer and entrepreneur, this is a huge gift to anyone who wants to develop who they are. Having read many of those books myself, I find that the summaries often give better return on invested time than reading the full book.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, Mamahuhu?

For those who feel like they are in their twenties, and like fun, colourful fashion, the best place is www.mamahuhu.com

We also respond to every (non-spam) email we get at online@mamahuhu.co, whether happy customers who wants to share their happy feelings, other entrepreneurs who are on their own

journeys, or journalists who like good stories

We are also always looking for great shops or boutiques that wants to partner with Mamahuhu.

We are also on:

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/mamahuhu.co/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mamahuhu.co/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MamahuhuOnline>

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

I find that only through conversation, whether with a person or with a blank page, does one sharpen one's thoughts. Thank you for the opportunity to sharpen mine

Thank you for your time, Henrik.

An Interview with Piya Jain of Maha Mala

January 13, 2017

Maha Mala creates beautifully hand crafted 108 bead Necklaces using crystal and Indian Traditional seeds. These 108 bead necklaces are called ‘Malas’ in Sanskrit and are used for chanting. Based out of the heartland of India, New Delhi; each of their crystals are sourced locally and every product is hand made. Read more about Maha Mala in our interview with co-founder Piya Jain.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

It really seemed like the need of the moment. With all the use of chemicals in this fast consumerism world, I felt like we need to go back to the roots and be more organic.

What seems like the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

I feel that for ethical and sustainable fashion companies, it isn't exactly what they are selling but about the numerous people they are benefiting. It could be food, or clothing or accessories, there is always a multitude of people involved in the process and whereas most companies don't care about the efforts made at the grassroots, the more organic companies really do give importance to that.

What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

Mostly workers in today's day and age are exploited. Everyone wants a good product for a cheap price. While the companies make a sizable profit, the workers suffer at the most. Hence it is important to pay the workers well so that together the company can grow with them.

What is Maha Mala?

Maha Mala is a spiritual Jewellery company specializing in making 108 prayer bead necklaces, also known as Malas.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Maha Mala means ‘Grand Necklace’. It is a personal product used for one's own personal growth, so it is a grand aspect of one's own life.

What are some of its feature products?

Semi-precious and precious gemstones and Ahimsa silk (cruelty free silk).

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

We use Ahimsa silk. It is silk that is farmed without killing the silkworms. We also use organic khadi material for packaging of each mala.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Maha Mala?

I do. I am the owner of Maha Mala.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

The spiritual community of the world. People who meditate and practice yoga.

What topics most interest you?

Gem therapy, Sustainability and natural therapy.

Did someone mentor you?

Yes, over the years I have read many books that touched me deep within and I do have an eternal mentor in life.

Thank you for your time, Piya.

An Interview with Fehmida Shah of Wild Things Toys

January 13, 2017

Wild Thing Toys was founded by Fehmida Ibrahim Shah. She has worked with various social and educational movements and is passionate about supporting a fair-trade business model. She started Wild things toys that inspire imagination and play. This is her story.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

My name is Fehmida Ibrahim Shah, I was born in the UK, of Indian heritage, and live in London with my three children and a selection of pets.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

I have never really stuck to a career path as such and have almost always accidently fell in to various fields, from being a florist, to teaching, and working in the social housing sector.

I have studied floristry, then building construction & social housing at Middlesex University and then have gone on to study design & textiles. I am presently studying Near East Archaeology.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainability?

As far as I can remember, as a family, we were taught the values of having respect for other people, for animals, and for the planet. We were taught that the earth was precious, and we were the guardians of it. Even though the terms ‘ethical’ and ‘ecofriendly’ were not used when I was young, recycling and repurposing was something that was instilled into us. My parents were both keen gardeners and I remember endless days helping them grow flowers, fruits and vegetable, using novel pest free sustainable methods.

The turning point of when I knew I wanted to do something ethical came about when I did some voluntary work with children in the West Bank. I observed the teachers in the summer play camp making toys out of scraps of paper and bits of cloth. I marveled at their ingenuity and their ability to create something wonderful with minimum wastage.

I started a business creating paper goods whereby everything was made by either sustainable paper or completely wood free.

After running my business for a number of years, I wanted to do something else as well. Having admired the fair-trade movement for a long time, it motivated me to start a business that had a completely fair-trade business model.

I wanted to create a product made by someone whose life would have improved because of it. This is where my soft toy business ‘Wild Thing Toys’ came in.

What seems like the importance of fair trade?

Fair Trade has a hugely positive impact on the lives of workers and their families. It raises the standards of living for the workers and also their communities. As well as a living wage, the communities can invest in much needed projects, such as schools and health centres. Fair trade gives people opportunities that give them more control over their lives. Why shouldn’t someone from another country have the opportunities that you and I have?

Fair trade is also empowering for women. Women often face harassment and discrimination within factories and places of work around the world. Working under fair trade standards, they have protection and gender equality. Fair trade can help women to reach their full potential by making available opportunities they did not have before, such as education, leadership roles and entrepreneurship programs. They can also work within their own village and community for a decent wage and under good conditions, without having to travel to the major cities and leave their families behind.

What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

The minimum wage set by some countries fall short of what can be deemed as a living wage. The reality being these workers struggle to survive on these wages whilst making products for us to consume. When a company does not provide a living wage in the poorest countries, it essentially pushes out the weakest people in the supply chain.

These workers may be forced to take on additional low paid jobs under appalling conditions and send their children to work instead of school. This keeps them indefinitely stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty.

All Wild Things soft toys and dolls are made from hand loomed cotton and environmentally friendly and child safe dyes. All products are also CE tested to EN71 and are safe for children.

A living wage, on the other hand should be enough to meet the basic needs such as food, water, housing, health care, education, clothing, transportation and childcare, consequently giving the workers a chance to live a decent life, which we would all agree, is a human right.

A business who manufactures and uses a workforce would expect a high quality of goods being produced. The workers should also expect a good wage for the work they have done.

Workers that are happy and motivated are more likely to be more productive and take less time off due to sickness, which would be beneficial for the business too.

What are Wild Things Toys?

At Wild Thing toys we create heirloom quality soft toys which are all fair trade certified. Our soft toys are made from handloomed cotton made in a traditional way which is centuries old.

All the workers are paid a decent wage, work in safe and healthy working conditions, and have access to other benefits such as health checks and education projects. Employment takes place in rural villages, so the artisans do not need to travel miles leaving their families behind to work in large factories, therefore benefiting the whole community.

Our soft toys and dolls are certified by the World Fair Trade Organisation.

What are some of its feature products?

Simple natural toys with minimum features that inspire a child to imagine the countless possibilities, as opposed to the toy thinking for the child. Wild Thing Toys are made to last and to be passed on for many years to come.

Handmade and eco-friendly Fox doll by Wild Things Toys. All dolls are made without beaded eyes, everything is made from fabric and stitched or embroidered on. Therefore, you can be rest assured that all our toys are not only super adorable but made to the highest safety standard.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Wild Things Toys?

The products are designed by me and from then on, I work closely with the handloom organisation Selyn, who make the toys for me. The fabric is woven using yarn which is dyed with AZO-free, ecofriendly dyes. A wastewater plant treatment ensures that the environment is protected at the same time. This wastewater is treated and re used in the gardens to grow vegetables. We work closely with our partners, who are the only certified fair trade hand loom organisation in Sri Lanka. Most of the work is done in rural areas, where jobs for women are limited. The working mothers here also have the benefit of a day care facility while they work.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

Currently my fair-trade soft toys are sold in the UK and worldwide via online shops.

What topics most interest you?

Surface textile design, historical textiles and archaeology. I have a keen interest in the lifestyle of past cultures and civilizations, and what we can learn from them. I am also interested in current ethical Issues.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

I feel blessed to be able to do a job that I love. The gratification comes from being able to create a design and see it made into a product with the knowledge that the person who has made the product for me, also has a decent job with good wages.

Any other work at this time?

I am still running my paper goods business; I like to get involved with book donation projects for children. I am also presently studying Archaeology.

Any recommended means of contacting you?

You can contact me via my website www.wildthingtoys.com.

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

Real success is not about the attainment of wealth; rather it is about the quality of life you create for others and the peace of mind you attain for yourself.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

I feel delighted that my business was included amongst all the other likeminded ethical businesses. I hope your interviews will encourage others in to taking their first step in to fair trade and sustainability.

Thank you for your time, Fehmida.

Thank you, Scott.

An Interview with Julia Eden of JuliaEden Designs (Part One)

January 14, 2017

Julia Eden started making custom macrame hemp necklaces for friends when she was in high school. Twenty years later, she now has an ethical and jewelry brand of JuliaEden designs. A lifelong environmentalist, she is passionate about sustainability in the fashion supply chain and consciously applies this to her own jewelry brand. Read her story below.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I grew up in a fairly average, suburban, American household. My parents are recovering monotheists, and my brother and I were always encouraged to forge our own paths. With such a casual family atmosphere, I was ripe for the discoveries of liberal ideas like environmentalism, and authors like Tom Robbins.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

I grew up as a performer – mainly as an actor and dancer. Coming of age in the Seattle-adjacent Tacoma during the grunge era was incredibly liberating. I never felt pressured to be a “girly-girl”, instead opting for oversized pants and t-shirts. When I discovered fashion design in my early 20’s, I was surprised to find I have a knack and a passion for it. It took me a long time to accept that fashion designers are not necessarily fashionistas.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

It was while I was completing a degree in design (clothing production), that I learned about the supply chain. I have been a self-proclaimed environmentalist since the age of 12, but it wasn’t until this education that I came to understand how grossly uninformed I was. I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention the internet at this point – this kind of information used to be difficult to obtain, but the internet made it easier than ever to be an educated consumer.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

I’ve had a lot of jobs in a bunch of different fields over the years, but one role I can pinpoint as inspiration was my job as a bicycle messenger. The day-to-day toll that riding takes on your clothes are phenomenal. It made me much more aware of the need for quality, well-made pieces, but it also influenced my aesthetic. I find my style now is very industrial x Japanese simplicity.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

We are at a point where we no longer have the luxury of being wasteful. All companies, not just fashion ones, need to look at the bigger picture in relation to supply and operations. The idea that corporations are somehow people but are only responsible for the financial bottom line is outdated. Entities like B Corps are helping to create a more holistic standard of measurement, opening consumers’ eyes to the ills committed by companies in quest of higher profits. If we are going to continue as a species, we have to find a way to treat the earth better!

What is the importance of fair trade?

One my little quips, or mantras, is, “if you’re only paying \$20 for that sweater, someone else is paying the difference”. That difference can be paid in many ways, but one of the most

devastating is in the cost to the people who work the supply chain. From toxic chemical exposure causing disease and birth defects, to innocent lives cut short in factory disasters (think Rana Plaza), real people with real lives and names and hopes and dreams are being exploited and tortured so that you can pay \$1 less for your shirt. Make no mistake – prices never go down because the company has cut its profits!

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

Honestly, while I am impressed by a lot of the people who are fighting the good fight, I would say the people I hold in highest regards are those that I get to watch change their minds. Sometimes it happens during a conversation about sustainability that I have with someone; that moment when their face scrunches just a little and you see them start to get it. Other times it's in the comments you see on the internet. Basically, any time I observe that moment when someone receives new information and assimilates it into their views.

What is JuliaEden Designs?

JuliaEden Designs is a little brand with big ideas. I have many plans for the future, but right now I've started with 2 lines: you can find Protosaurus on Etsy, which is my shop for the samples I create during the design process, as well as handmade accessories like macrame boards and jewelry displays; River's Walk is my first jewelry collection and features sustainably sourced, natural materials. While I have plans to expand the line, my range of bracelets, headbands, and necklaces are all custom, handmade, and feature traditional macrame techniques.

What are some of its feature products?

I think my favorite piece is The Snoose – a nine-layer wrap bracelet that incorporates macrame, leather, and Argentium Silver.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

I use only 3 materials:

- Argentium Silver: this alloy is 93.5% silver with only a touch of germanium to inhibit tarnishing. It is sustainably produced in the USA using recycled content.
- Leather Cord: my leather is deer hide sourced from herds culled annually via the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A woman in California naturally tans and dyes the leather. I love love love this cord, and it's the strongest leather I've ever worked with!
- Pima Cotton: this is the only hole in my supply chain as it comes from Peru, and I am unsure about its production. Due to the requirements of macrame, I have been unable thus far to find a suitable product that is both local and sustainably produced. But good news! I have found a company that is working on recycling natural fibres, and I am hoping to work with them on my next order.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of JuliaEden Designs?

Once I receive my supplies, I am the only person to touch them until they get to you! I design and hand-make all of my pieces to the highest possible standards. Wire is turned into jump rings which are soldered closed. Cotton becomes macrame focal points. Leather ties it all together.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes – I do not believe synthetics should be used in fashion, ever (another mantra: There is never a good excuse for polyester!!!). Using only natural fibres ensures that my pieces do not add to the mountains of waste that will never break down!

What is your customer base – the demographics?

My pieces are unique, and as such, so is my customer base. They are mostly women, though I have male pieces available as well, and their ages range from 20's to 70's. They have variable incomes, lifestyles, and even environmental attitudes. What links them is a desire for jewelry that is

An Interview with Robert Bergmann of Responsibility in Fashion

January 17, 2017

Thanks for inviting me to talk with you... and thanks for the great work you're doing up in Canada.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I come to this work in a bit of a non-traditional way— from fashion creative, advertising, and marketing. After 24 years in the industry, as creative director of *Vogue Brazil Magazine*, years designing the graphic look of New York's fashion week, and almost 20 years working for the CFDA on Fashion Targets Breast Cancer, the CFDA fashion awards, etc.— I was invited to work with CFDA's Sustainability Committee to brand, message, market and basically help evolve the program.

Several meetings and a few dozen *sustainable fashion events* later, I was in Bangladesh at the Rana Plaza disaster site, meeting with and photographing the victims and families. As a Tibetan Buddhist, this was my defining moment— the experience that convinced me that I had to do something about the inhumanity I saw firsthand. Nothing compares with the experience of being face to face with the profound suffering created by the industry I've worked in for over two decades. That's when I realized the magnitude of the crises that the industry faces and that I needed to do something.

After returning home, I started to see that the industry lacked motivation to make broad and sweeping changes. From the questions asked at panel discussions, lectures and talks, I started to recognize that the industry lacked basic information. I started to see profound confusion around the issues. I started to see the proliferation of greenwashing and manipulation, of denial and indifference— and after meeting and getting to know the amazing people and organizations at the forefront of the valuable work across the industry, I started to see that what was needed was motivation, marketing, information and clarity— and I started to see that this was much more than an American crisis, it was a global crisis. So I started working with Loomstate's owner and CFDA member Scott Hahn and the CFDA's Executive VP Lisa Smilor, and with the financial support of the CFDA, I began the process of founding *Responsibility in Fashion*, an organization that— rather than focusing on one issue, on measurement or on certification— focuses on the big picture with the goal of motivating the industry to get together and raise the collective '*standard of responsibility*.'

What is Responsibility in Fashion?

Responsibility in Fashion is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to raising the standard of responsibility in the global fashion industry through collaboration, innovation, inspiration and open-source information.

What inspired the title of the organization?

We spent a lot of time in the naming process. After taking a long look at the existing "*ethical fashion/sustainable fashion/eco-fashion community*," we saw that over the years that the sector grew, its naming and terminology had grown into a bit of a monster. Sustainable fashion, ethical fashion and eco-fashion compose 3 different parts of one very big and complex crisis facing

today's global fashion industry. We needed a word that can do more than embrace all 3 parts of the crisis (sustainability, ethics and ecology), but one that goes far beyond just talking about the problems— a word that inspires a call-to-action— a word that people immediately (and emotionally) understand that they have a part to play in the solution— and that word is *Responsibility*.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire \(1911\)](#) and the [Pakistan Garment Factory Fires \(2012\)](#). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

Unfortunately, it took Rana Plaza to draw our collective attention to the problem of unsafe working conditions, and that attention then exposed several of the industry's other problems. But in the 3 years since the disaster, press coverage has slowed to a trickle, only 7 of the estimated 3500 factories in Bangladesh have actually completed necessary their corrective action plans, more than 40% of Bangladesh's 3500 garment factories have seen no reform in any form— and the minimum wage, which the vast majority of Bangladeshi garment workers receive, is still only at one-fifth of a *living wage*. So, you can't help asking yourself, "How many Rana Plasas would we have to see before the industry really takes action?" That's exactly why we started *Responsibility in Fashion*.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations, women and children, in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

Regarding brands and the industry: We know that nothing is going to change in the industry until people start doing something... and they can't do anything unless they know what to do. So, addressing that issue became our first program. We heard the same question asked at every lecture, talk, and panel discussion we went to— "Where do we go for basic information on how to start?" And every time, at every event, the question was answered with basically a shoulder-shrug. So that became our first initiative— to create our [Responsibility Toolkit](#), with essential information, resources and steps. Now, there's a place on the internet where the entire industry can get the basic information they need, links to resources, organizations and consultants and steps, free of charge, no matter their financial means.

Next, we're working on several programs— one with the *CFDA/Lexus Fashion Initiative* to reduce the waste and improve the responsibility of retail packaging, and we're starting a collaboration program with the *NYU Stern School of Business* on a press and outreach program.

Regarding consumers: we're on that— We have the beginnings of a great solution for helping to empower responsible brands that want to connect with consumers.

The sister of the one of the many victims of the Rana Plaza disaster whose bodies were never recovered, who still frequent the site hoping to get information — and one of the thousands of fashion labels that still litter the site. Rana Plaza Disaster Site, Savar, Bangladesh. Photo: Robert Bergmann

Any other work at this time?

I'm the creative director of my design firm *MPAKT* and I'm also in the process of starting a home and personal care brand.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Check out our [Network of Industry Thought Leaders](#). Basically, leaders in the sector.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

Through our [website](#).

What seems like the greatest struggle in business for you?

Finding enough time in a day to get everything done.

An Interview Thomas Geissman and Marion Poirier of TSHU

January 18, 2017

Thomas and Marion founded and own TSHU, an elegant and committed handkerchief. Ethically made in Montreal (Canada), the TSHU handkerchiefs boast unique, bold, colourful designs and a distinctive shape, to make a gesture for the environment – in style! Each hanky is handprinted with silkscreen and hand sown by our skilled seamstresses before being embroidered with our brand – a seal of elegance and commitment – and having its corner neatly folded and sown into place.

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

Marion: born in Montreal (Canada) from a French-Canadian family, with roots in Quebec, France and Nova Scotia! Raised in a musical environment, by early music *aficionados*, with a sister and a few goldfish. Initially French speaking, disciplined in English (learned fast).

Thomas: born France from a French-Canadian mother and a father born in Argentina in a French family. Raised in the South of France away from everything and moved to Montreal at 11.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

Marion: Creative, passionate and determined, whenever Marion has a new mission, she immediately dives into that new universe and makes it her own. No matter how unlikely the project or ambitious the strategy, no task is too daunting, and she tackles everything she handles with contagious enthusiasm. In the past, Marion has managed cultural organizations, worked in communications, has coordinated big and small events as well as been part of teams which have launched large-scale projects. Now, she dreams of changing the world, one handkerchief at a time!

Thomas: Father, stepfather, lover, “retired” lawyer and entrepreneur. I’m currently Vice President Revenue and leader in all commercial missions relating to marketing, customer experience and partnerships for Busbud. I’m also co-founder of TSHU, the company that has put handkerchiefs back on the map. I love winning equally as I hate losing. I’ve built powerful teams, generated financing rounds of over \$10 million and secured important partnerships on almost all continents.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

Summer 2013, Marion and Thomas travel to Europe to introduce their son to the family abroad and come home with an unusual legacy: Uncle Robert’s old, embroidered hankies.

Back in Montreal, Marion and Thomas rediscover the pleasure of cotton handkerchiefs: yes, to relieve their noses, but also to wipe their baby’s cheeks, the water on a bench park for her, the milk froth in the moustache for him.

They start dreaming... Of handkerchiefs, of consumption, of the environment, of the desire to create new with the old. Finally, a vision takes form.

What would happen if the handkerchief had a unique shape? If it was modern, distinctive, even funky? What if a tree could be planted for each handkerchief sold? What if the handkerchief could become a fashion accessory capable of making a difference?

TSHU was born.

What seems like the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

Future generations need a lot more than that but it's a start. In order for us to build a better world, every step of the value chain needs to be more sustainable. Given the modern importance of how we look, the fashion industry is clearly a huge driver of consumption. The increasing multiplicity of ethical and sustainable companies has to lead the way of the industry. The signs that he cannot go on for long are there.

What seems like the importance of fair trade?

Same thinking – if we want to build a strong tomorrow, our people and our planet have to be taken into consideration, every step of the way! Consumers need to be more exposed to the real value of things.

What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

Egaloty of chance brings peace to nations.

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

It's a way of life! Make better choices, invest in quality, not quantity, invest in our people and our planet. It's not only better, but also the only way to go if we want to create a better world!

What seems like the responsibilities of ethical and sustainable fashion companies in the prevention of climate catastrophe?

This is a collective responsibility. Among clients, vendors of any industry.

The Brundtland Commission Report described the need for sustainability. In that, we, the human species, need to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” for long-term sustainability. Does this seem correct to you?

Perfect definition.

The Sustainable Apparel Coalition invented **The Higg Index**. It assesses some products' sustainability throughout the products' lifecycle. **The European Outdoor Group** and the **Outdoor Industry Association** developed an index of products' impacts on the environment throughout their lifecycle, the **Eco Index**. Large regions with serious attempts to implement standards and quantitative analysis of sustainability of products throughout their lifecycle. **What seem like the importance of quality tests, or metrics, such as these and others?**

In our case, it is rather simple given that our products are by design meant to reduce consumption. There's a need for fewer standards that are more easily understood by the public. This always needs to be accompanied by great quality of products.

What is TSHU?

Leading the handkerchief's great comeback. Helping people consume less – and better. Selling high quality stylish and useful hankies. Ethically made in Montreal. Our TSHUs have travelled to some 200 cities in 20 countries and counting. What's more, for each adopted TSHU, we plant a tree.

What inspired the title of the organization?

Contraction of atchou in French and tissue in English.

What are some of its feature products?

High quality organic hankies with modern designs both for adults and for kids.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

Cotton sateen and lawn.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of TSHU?

Our hankies are made locally in Montreal Canada, for us to ensure of the working conditions.

Water use in production is an issue. What is the importance of reducing excess water use in the production of fashion?

Crucial.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

30-50 years old men and women from North America and Europe. They are eco conscious and are looking for ways to contribute to the environment in style.

Did someone mentor you?

We had a few mentors – yes.

Have you mentored others?

We're always ready to help others and offer advice from time to time.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

It's a feel-good business. We bring quality products made with love and pride in our city to households. Doing so, we know that our clients' consumption habits will be changed for the best. What else to ask for? We also decided to not raise any funding for this business in order to remain free. Free of our decisions and free to grow at our own pace.

Any other work at this time?

Yes, we both work for other startups.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

Of course! info@1tshu1tree.com

What seems like the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Fear of failure.

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

Thomas: time runs, and we walk.

Thank you for your time, Marion and Thomas.

You can visit TSHU online at their [website](#).

An Interview with Fredrik Stenvinkel of 15:21

January 19, 2017

15:21 is a Stockholm-based brand with a love for functional minimalist design. We make everyday essentials – the things you touch and hold the most (lovers aside) – in natural cork.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

I have no prior experience working with fashion. My past working places we're rectangular and the work monotonous which inspired me to create the creative space which is 15:21.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I've always have had a strong passion for creating a sustainable future and fashion. Starting an accessory brand creating cork accessories just seemed like the natural way of integrating my two greatest interests.

What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

I personally believe that sewing clothes is a great first step for people to get out of poverty. For this to be possible, living wages is a necessity. All companies working in the field of fashion must start to take their responsibility to ensure that their suppliers are paying the workers enough.

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

You know how you begin to form an emotional connection to a clothing item you've had for ages? That's slow fashion. Fast fashion clothes just don't have that kind of durability to survive long enough for you to gain any kind of relation with it, and that's a deal breaker, at least for me.

The Pythagoreans, the Neoplatonists, Aristotle, and the Stoics, William Wilberforce, Baron Erskine created the ancient thought about animal rights. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, discussed the suffering of non-human animals. Peter Singer argues for non-human animal rights too. The Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and others work to support animals and work to enforce their rights. Some fashion manufacture processes violate animals' rights. What is the importance of animal rights, especially in an ethical and sustainable fashion context?

The thought of animals being treated badly just for the cause of creating as cheap as possible leather is horrible. I believe that ultimately, it's up to the consumers to change their behaviour and take a stand for animals' right by purchasing goods produced responsibly. So, if you're considering buying a cheap leather wallet, you should probably just go for cork instead. Nobody want's bad karma in their pocket.

Climate change represents one of the biggest medium- to long-term threats to human survival in reasonable forms. The Government of Canada, NASA, the David Suzuki Foundation, The Royal Society, The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and numerous others discuss this. Ethical and sustainable fashion relates to it. The reductions in hydrocarbon production from sustainable materials seem imperative sustain the further

deterioration of the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment. What seems like the responsibilities of ethical and sustainable fashion companies in the prevention of climate catastrophe?

I'm a big supporter of H&M's initiative to recycle worn clothes in all of their stores! Since 2013 they have collected enough garments from consumers to produce 150 million million t-shirts. I hope and encourage more companies to involve their customers in creating a more sustainable fashion industry in the near future.

It's also very important that all companies working with fashion take responsibility of the impacts caused by the value chain. Materials, Working conditions, fair Wages, Fire & building safety, Animal welfare, chemicals, climate & emissions and use of Water are all crucial areas within fashion that generally needs improvement.

The Ethical Fashion Forum developed the Ethical Policy Framework. An ethical policy framework tool for those devoted to enactment of ethical and sustainable purchases, production, and business decisions. What do services such as these perform for the public, consumers, producers, and businesspeople?

These types of initiatives are just great as they connect sustainable brands with consumers wishing to contribute to a better world. They also help businesses like us to find responsible producers.

What is 15:21?

We are a Stockholm-based brand with a love for functional minimalist design. We make everyday essentials – the things you touch and hold the most (lovers aside) – in natural cork.

The concept behind 15:21 is to blend Scandinavian simplicity with nature's own aesthetics. All our products are made in fine quality Portuguese cork. It's our belief that nature should be nourished, not exploited. By working with cork, we do exactly that.

What inspired the title of the organization?

It all started with a missed train to work.

Arriving at the train station at 15:21, I was a few seconds late but just in time to watch my train to work close its doors and slowly roll away. Instead of feeling frustrated, I had a moment of lucidity where I came to realize how my life was built around routines and my soul-less work. I began to pick up on an old project and started sketching on new ideas.

That's how 15:21 came about.

What are some of its feature products?

Our collection is currently slim. We're offering wallets, card holder, passport holder and iPhone cases all made in cork. Keep an eye on us because exciting products are soon to be unveiled.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of 15:21?

The cork we use for our carrying collection is sourced in Braga, Portugal where they also are made. The products are designed in Stockholm.

What is the customer base – the demographics?

We like to describe our customers with one word – conscious.

Child labor and slavery are problems, major ones. These include children throughout the world. Tens of millions of children in the case of child labor. A few million children in the case of child slavery. According to the Minimum Age Convention (1973), labor before the age of 14, 15, or 16, dependent upon the country, is child labor. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) in Article 7, Article 24(1), Article 24(2), and Article 24(3), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) in Article 10(3), The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in Article 2(2), Article 3(1), Article 3(2), and Article 19, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) in Section II (Paragraph 45-48 and 50), and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2000) delineate children's rights. These stipulations about equality remain violated in the fashion industry, especially the manufacturing sector or the garment industry. How can individuals get the word out about these extreme children's rights violations?

There are several ways to force manufacturers to do the production in the light of day. I personally believe that short interviews with children working in production of fast fashion clothes on social medias will in the long run have the biggest impact on the consumers.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations, women and children, in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

Companies working fashion obviously have the biggest responsibility, but anyone can support a better quality of life for workers in the manufacturing sector. By simply demanding slow fashion companies will have to adjust their strategies to stay in demand. I personally believe that companies that take social and environmental aspects into consideration will be most successful in the end.

From personal observations, more women than men involve themselves in the fashion industry by a vast margin of difference at most levels. Why?

I believe that we're slowly going towards a gender equilibrium in fashion as men becomes more interested in fashion and style.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

The reason for choosing to work with cork besides it being aesthetically pleasing is by using the material incredible direct and indirect effects are made on the environment. For example, trees are never cut down or harmed in the process of sourcing cork. Rather, more trees are planted, and the cork forests nourished with increased production and becomes protected as it acquires an economic value. A harvested oak is by law left for 9 years to regrow its bark. During this time the tree absorbs up to five times more co2 which has led to Portugal's cork forests absorbing more than 10 million tons of carbon dioxides annually.

A great personal fulfillment for me would be to play a part in making the fashion industry more conscious.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

I encourage all curious about what we do to contact me at fredrik@1521store.com.

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

Consumer awareness is definitely the key in my opinion to solve the social and environmental issues of today's fashion industry. Therefore, it makes me really excited to find organizations like trusted clothes raising awareness and educating people of the effects caused by fast fashion. I believe that the future is bright for slow fashion as an increasingly amount of people are enlightened of the true cost of suspiciously cheap clothes.

Thank you for your time, Fredrik.

Interview with Prama Bhardwaj, CEO and Founder of Mantis World

January 20, 2017

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion.

I was born in Kenya to a family of Indian origin. My great grandfather moved from India to Kenya during British colonial times to work on the railways. My grandfather went back to India to study to become a Hindu pundit. He decided then with his best friend at school that when they grew up, their children would get married so that then they could be family. That's how my parents got married. However, in spite of his spiritual training my grandfather decided that commerce was his interest and started a textile business which my father then expanded across Africa. My family lived between Kenya and India but moved to the UK when I was 8 years old. I've spent most of my life since then in the UK – apart from a few periods of living in Switzerland and Zanzibar. So, my culture and heritage has always been a mix – I feel Indian, Kenyan and British.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on?

As a teenager I became vegetarian and became passionate about animal rights – leafleting my school for “Chickens Lib” was a particularly memorable campaign.

At university I studied Economics & Government and went back to do a master's degree in development economics with a focus on Africa. My dream was to work in a large development organization such as the World Bank or the UN. I realized that dream with a short stint at UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) in Geneva. Very quickly I became disillusioned with the waste and bureaucracy and returned to the UK.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

After my time in Geneva, my father asked me to join him in his business selling t-shirts that were made in his factory in Tanzania. I decided to give it a try and very quickly I was hooked. I saw myself the difference we made to the lives of thousands of people working in the Tanzanian factory and I realized that business was a much more powerful tool to help realize my goals than NGOs or public organization.

After two years I started my own company Mantis World. We never considered ourselves an ethical company as we took decent values for granted given my experience of our factory in Tanzania. It was only when I visited other factories that I realized decent values were not normal in this industry. That was when we realized the importance of talking about ethics and sustainability in textile manufacture.

What seems like the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

I think it's the only way to do long term business.

What is the importance of fair trade?

To me this is a confusing term as it is used in many ways – as a description of how businesses work but also as a sort of “brand” of the FairTrade foundation. It's very difficult to measure exactly what the impact is as a loose description. As a concept – of course it's very important.

We cannot be so desperate to get a good deal that we would be happy with exploitation of others to get it. We have to value people and the planet too.

What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

It's important because it allows us to measure. It's not easy to pay the living wage, but at least if you know what it is you can work towards it. As a company we make sure we are paying the London Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation, which is higher than the Government-set living wage.

Recently our factory calculated the cost of living in Tanzania and by actually measuring the daily costs, the factory immediately increased wages. You can only manage what you measure!

What makes slow fashion better than fast fashion?

The price and delivery pressures of fast fashion can lead to abuses of human rights in factories and takes a huge environmental toll on resources. We need to value our resources – buy less, choose well, make it last (in the words of Vivienne Westwood)

The Pythagoreans, the Neoplatonists, Aristotle, and the Stoics, William Wilberforce, Baron Erskine created the ancient thought about animal rights. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, discussed the suffering of non-human animals. Peter Singer argues for non-human animal rights too. The Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and others work to support animals and work to enforce their rights. Some fashion manufacture processes violate animals' rights. What is the importance of animal rights, especially in an ethical and sustainable fashion context?

Personally, it's a big issue for me. For this reason, my company will not work with leather or animal products. From a broader perspective, as an industry we need to do a lot more to ensure animal rights. The Textile Exchange has created a Responsible Down Standard, Responsible Wool Standard and is working on a much-needed Responsible Leather Standard. I hope these standards will help change how the fashion industry treats animals.

Climate change represents one of the biggest medium- to long-term threats to human survival in reasonable forms. The Government of Canada, NASA, the David Suzuki Foundation, The Royal Society, The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and numerous others discuss this. Ethical and sustainable fashion relates to it. The reductions in hydrocarbon production from sustainable materials seem imperative sustain the further deterioration of the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment. What seems like the responsibilities of ethical and sustainable fashion companies in the prevention of climate catastrophe?

It's not the responsibility of just ethical and sustainable fashion companies. It's everyone's responsibility!! What I found extremely interesting recently is that organic farming (not just of cotton, but all agriculture) can help reverse climate change by trapping carbon in the soil. So, we might have our solutions already, we just need to implement them.

The Brundtland Commission Report described the need for sustainability. In that, we, the human species, need to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” for long-term sustainability. Does this seem correct to you?

I completely agree. At the moment it feels like we are stealing from our children.

How can ethical and sustainable fashion contribute to the long-term sustainable future for the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment?

The Sustainable Apparel Coalition invented The Higg Index. It assesses some products' sustainability throughout the products' lifecycle. The European Outdoor Group and the Outdoor Industry Association developed an index of products' impacts on the environment throughout their lifecycle, the Eco Index. Large regions with serious attempts to implement standards and quantitative analysis of sustainability of products throughout their lifecycle. What seem like the importance of quality tests, or metrics, such as these and others?

Metrics are really important. None of them are perfect, but we have to start somewhere. Again, we can only manage what we measure.

The Ethical Fashion Forum developed the Ethical Policy Framework. An ethical policy framework tool for those devoted to enactment of ethical and sustainable purchases, production, and business decisions. What do services such as these perform for the public, consumers, producers, and businesspeople?

There is never one answer or one way to conduct business more ethically. So, it's not the only way, but I do love the work of the Ethical Fashion Forum. We have been supporters and partners for a long time, and they are usually the first port of call for fashion companies and start-ups wanting to know how to be more sustainable. They have a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

Who are personal heroes, or heroines, within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

Katharine Hamnett, Vivienne Westwood, the team at Patagonia.

What is Mantis World?

A supplier of "blank" apparel to the imprintables industry. We manufacture ethically made fashion basics for men, women, children and babies. Holding stock in the UK, we are able to offer fast delivery of our garments across Europe, ready for other companies to personalize with their logos or designs – all with no minimum order quantity. We hope this allows other companies to buy sustainable garments easily.

What inspired the title of the organization?

I was trying to find an African creature that was not yet trademarked. I accidentally mixed up a praying mantis (nasty creature) with a stick insect (harmless creature). Oops!

What are some of its feature products?

In general, our customers love our "Well Made" clothing; using the best quality fabrics and cuts, made responsibly with more sustainable fibres than ever. We're well-known for our brand Babybugz, the biggest range of babywear within our industry. Our premium, retail-style Superstar collection has been a success story since its introduction in 2011. And this year, we're very excited about the launch of ONE, our new gender-neutral range.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

Cotton mostly, some cotton/polyester blends and Tencel®.

Water use in production is an issue. What is the importance of reducing excess water use in the production of fashion?

Water consumption is a big issue in fashion. The highest uses of water come in growing fibre, manufacturing process and post-consumer laundry. Using rain-fed instead of irrigated cotton, using better dyeing processes and minimizing dyeing, washing less are all ways of reducing water consumption. Biggest effect would come from just buying less stuff!

The Triple Bottom Line defines three performance dimensions: the social, environmental, and commercial/financial. In contradistinction to the standard commercial/financial analysis alone, the Triple Bottom Line incorporates environmental and social performance too. Why should ethical and sustainable (and other) fashion designers and companies include the Triple Bottom Line analysis in individual and business performance?

It's the only way to measure a business' performance so that decisions are made not only with financial profit in mind. If we value our planet and humanity (and I think most of us do!) then we have to make at least a start in measuring the Triple Bottom Line.

There have been large tragedies such as the Rana Plaza collapse, which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911) and the Pakistan Garment Factory Fires (2012). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

Big press interest ensures large companies become more committed to improving working conditions. It should not take tragedies like Rana Plaza to make that happen, but I think it acted as a big wakeup call and catalyst for action.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) relates to the empowerment of women, gender equality, and international women's rights. The progress for gender equity is positive. Regressive forces exist in explicit and implicit forms. What seem like some of the explicit and implicit forms observed in personal and professional life to you?

We could write many books about this! Progress on the empowerment of women does continue but not at the rate as I would like to see – certainly not in some cultures. However, the stronger positive female role models there are I would hope to see progress accelerate.

Any women's rights activist or campaigner hero for you?

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Michelle Obama and my aunt.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

Seeing the industry get better. Being inspired by and inspiring others.

Any other work at this time?

Launching a new sustainable fashion brand which I'm very excited about called Re. Sustain

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, you?

Best to email info@mantisworld.com or engage with us on social media.

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

It'll be alright in the end. And if it's not alright, it's not the end.

An Interview with David Rhode of Ingle & Rhode

January 23, 2017

This story began in 2006, when David Rhode was looking for an engagement ring but couldn't find a jeweller who could tell him where their diamonds had come from, or the conditions under which their jewellery was produced. The more he looked into the industry, the more compromises he discovered he was being asked to make. From blood diamonds to dirty gold, to sweatshops and child labour.

Tell us about your story – education, prior work, and so on? How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

I used to work as a television producer, in documentaries. Ten years ago, I wanted to get engaged, and knew that my partner would be interested in the provenance of the diamond (she had worked in Africa, and I was aware of the ethical problems in the diamond industry). I wanted a top-quality engagement ring, but also one where the materials were fully traceable and ethically sourced. I couldn't find what I was looking for and discussed this with my university friend Tim Ingle. Together we decided to tackle this issue.

What seems like the importance of fair trade?

It's five years now since Fairtrade gold arrived on the market, and in that time a significant amount has been done to help small-scale miners in the developing world. According to the Fairtrade Foundation, the Fairtrade mining cooperatives sold 170kg of Fairtrade gold to the global market in 2015, generating a 'Fairtrade premium' of US\$340,000 on top of the selling price to invest in community projects.

What seems like the importance of a (relative to the country) living wage?

The Minimum Wage simply isn't enough to survive – certainly not in London. The Living Wage Foundation calculates the Living Wage based on the basic cost of living across the UK. In London, the Living Wage is £9.15 per hour. At Ingle and Rhode, we are proud to be a Living Wage employer.

Climate change represents one of the biggest medium- to long-term threats to human survival in reasonable forms. The Government of Canada, NASA, the David Suzuki Foundation, The Royal Society, The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and numerous others discuss this. Ethical and sustainable fashion relates to it. The reductions in hydrocarbon production from sustainable materials seem imperative sustain the further deterioration of the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment. What seems like the responsibilities of ethical and sustainable fashion companies in the prevention of climate catastrophe?

It's impossible to offer a fine jewellery product with absolutely zero environmental impact. Mining inevitably impacts the environment, and metals are melted at high temperatures and gemstones are transported around the world. However, we believe we have an obligation to minimize our footprint as far as possible – as long as people require fine jewellery, we'll make it in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

The Brundtland Commission Report described the need for sustainability. In that, we, the human species, need to meet the “needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” for long-term sustainability. Does this seem correct to you?

It seems like common sense, it's just strange that so many people seem to disagree.

How can ethical and sustainable fashion contribute to the long-term sustainable future for the atmosphere, the biosphere, and the environment?

Fashion is clearly a high-profile industry. Anything that raises consumer awareness of these issues must be helpful in the long run.

Certifications, or standards and labelling, remain important, which associate with analysis. These include Fairtrade International, MADE-BY, the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code, the Soil Association label and the EKOlabel, the Oko-Tex standard 100 mark, and the European Eco-Label for Textile Products, and more. There's many. Do these help systematize and clarify, or obfuscate and confuse?

Of these certifications, the only one we've had dealings with is Fairtrade – we've found their involvement in our industry to be very positive. The Fairtrade brand is extremely well recognised and provides consumers with re-assurance that someone has bothered to verify supply chains back to source. If that helps encourage ethical production, that must surely be a good thing.

What is Ingle & Rhode?

An independent luxury jeweller, with a fully traceable and ethical supply chain.

Thank you for your time, David.

An Interview with Jessica of PQNO... Handmade Designs

January 23, 2017

Tell us about family background – geography, culture, language, and religion. What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

Hello, I'm Jessica from Barcelona, Spain. I have been hand sewing since I was 8 years old, and I learnt by watching my mother and grandmother. At that age it was just a hobby, it relaxed me, and I never thought that it became my passion and work. Some years ago, my grandma kept on telling me "leave the work you have and concentrate on sewing! You have talent!" ...and here I am with my own brand "Pqno... Handmade designs".

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion? How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

I have learned by myself, trying, failing, trying again, designing my own patterns and using them first to see if they would work or not. I use 'common sense' and ask and listen friends and family experience.

When I started my brand, I wondered if I could do something "extra", not just sew and create useful and colorful products, but how I could create impact and contribute to the society and welfare, and then I start reading about ethical and sustainable fashion, and it fit to my brand's main idea: buy just the fabrics I need, always 100% cotton, and use them all producing almost none waste.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

It's not just to make eco-sustainable products to sell, but to teach and show the world that another way of making clothes is possible. When I sell in markets, I enjoy explaining how I work and that my pieces have high quality, are useful, are not expensive, are unique and moreover, have no negative impact in the environment.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

I would say the small brands like mine that are willing of carry on their passion for sustainable fashion, no matter the barriers along the way. It's hard to have a small piece of the fashion cake, and if it's sustainable fashion even harder.

What is Pqno... Handmade designs?

#alapqnostyle was born to combine quality cotton fabrics with cheerful and modern pattern, to create useful and unique pieces, and if they can have more than one use, and be combined to create sets, better, always respecting an **eco-sustainable** design and an **affordable and adjusted price throughout the year**.

I buy the fabrics in local shops, selecting one by one, thinking how I can combine them. I buy small amount of each fabric to have a good selection to choose from, and this means that the products created are unique models.

I take care of the design and manufacture by hand or machine, with great care and love, as each piece is special and even more if I know who is going to use it. I use the maximum of the fabrics to generate minimal impact on waste and be as sustainable as possible. Member of

the [Associació Moda Sostenible Barcelona](#) (Barcelona Sustainable Fashion Association) and [Women Creators from Gràcia-Barcelona](#), and it's part of the directory of [The Slow wear project](#) and [Sustainable fashion brands](#).

What inspired the title of the organization?

“Pqno” is abbreviation of “por qué no” in Spanish and “per què no” in Catalan, that means “why not”, and when I was considering of starting the business, I have my doubts, as many of us I think, but I always finished the sentence with “why not?”: “why not to try it? why not to do it? why not to start it?”. I said, “why not” so many times that when I started thinking about the name’s brand, it just came “Pqno” and then I added “handmade designs” to be more specific about the nature of the brand.

What are some of its feature products?

It started as a kid’s accessories brand, but adults also increasingly buy my products to use them themselves or give them to other adults. For kids, the most popular are the bibs, the softies and the pacifier strap (both hands sewed). The backpacks, saquettes, pouches, hair scrunchie are for everybody, no matter the age. Now in 2017 I have 3 new products: -a frame for decoration (a small embroidery frame as I used to use for hand sewed when I was little, and pieces of fabrics I can’t use). -a bag for women (you can adjust the length of the straps so it can be a tote bag or wear it as crossed-body or normal bag. The patterns are more for adults but keeping #alapqnostyle). A mini bag (you can adjust the leght of the straps and it can be used as crossed-body or as a tote bag or belt-bag).

What is your customer base – the demographics?

Basically locals, Barcelona, but as well Spain, and since Barcelona is such an international city, and as well via web, I have sold to many places in Europe, Latin America, USA, Japan, China, Australia & New Zealand.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire](#) (1911) and the [Pakistan Garment Factory Fires](#) (2012). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

It was known that the working conditions were/are really bad, but unfortunately it has to be a tragedy to be on the news. What I am not that sure is that if it has been any improvement or change.

What is the importance of the status of women’s and children’s rights in the ethical and sustainable fashion world too?

I would say its human rights, not just women and children, men too, and in any industry. Any person should work in a good working environment and respecting the rights.

The [Gender Inequality Index](#) (GII) relates to the empowerment of women, gender equality, and international women’s rights. The progress for gender equity is positive. Regressive forces exist in explicit and implicit forms. What seem like some of the explicit and implicit forms observed in personal and professional life to you?

Once a Norwegian woman minister asked, “why we women want to be equal, when in some fields we are better than men?”. I strongly agree. We are born equal and have the same rights, but it’s society, education, family, tradition that makes the ‘gap’ between men and women, and it’s accepted in some way. So there has to be a change of mentality in society starting at school and at home.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations, women and children, in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

Consumers should know where the product they buy comes from and the “who made my clothes” campaign is a good start.

Fashion industry should take care of the work conditions when the hire a company to make the clothes, but here as well, I think that each country should take care of that too, it should be more inspections and verify the quality of the work environment and salaries.

What personal fulfillments comes from this work for you?

A smile that makes me smile. When I’m at a market, I look at people how they move around, they look usually serious, thinking, looking, touching, but when they see my products, they smile! And that makes me smile. It’s a privilege to be able to work on what I like, plus at its sustainable, and if I make people smile, even better!

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, Pqno... Handmade designs?

Mail pqno@pqno.com, social media @pqnohandmade #alapqnostyle, blog/shop www.pqno.com.

love challenges, some of my products are the result of people explaining me a problem they had, so challenges and comments are welcome!

Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion based on the conversation today?

I’m glad I have had the opportunity to be a small part in Trusted Clothes, congratulations for the project! Any chance we have to talk about ethical and sustainable fashion is great. People needs to know more about it and it’s a very good idea to let the designers express themselves.

Thank you for your time, Jessica.

Thanks Scott and we keep in touch.

Brand Feature: Avila

January 24, 2017

Avila is an Australian lifestyle label locally produced in Melbourne, offering luxury clothing you can wear every day. They instill qualities of elegance and naturalness in all their garments by selecting luxurious natural fabrics, ensuring quality fit and an ethical and sustainable conscience. Their philosophy stems from supporting healthy, balanced lifestyles where style and comfort do co-exist. We have a chat with founder and designer, Ashleigh Bingham.

Tell us about family background.

I was born in Melbourne, Australia and grew up in the outer suburbs of Melbourne. I spent a lot of my childhood on our family farm in rural Victoria, where I developed a passion for nature and animals.

What is your personal story – education, prior work, and so on?

I developed an interest in textiles design and construction during school. I gravitated towards using different types of fabrics to create various mixed media artworks. From there I moved into fashion, as I loved the idea that a piece of blank fabric could transform into something wearable.

After school I studied a bachelor's in design specializing in Fashion. I struggled through the majority of this course not really finding my area or where I wanted to take this. It wasn't until my final year where I was given the freedom to truly express my personal style and active wear and casual wear was exactly that.

Out of University I interned for a while and then started my own label.

How did you get interested in ethical and sustainable fashion?

After doing a research study during my university course I really started to see the issues in the fashion industry and the huge negative impact this industry has on people and the environment. I was shocked at the conditions in many factories and sweatshops.

I also saw the importance of quality clothing that would last and not be thrown away after one season. The more I learnt the more I became passionate about doing what I could to make a change. To show people that you can merge, fashion, style, quality, comfort, ethics and sustainability. These are the core values at Avila.

How did your educational/professional experience inform fashion work?

After university I started working for a fashion label as an intern. While working I saw first-hand some of the issues that I had researched during university and I felt more strongly that there was a better way to produce clothing. After interning for a while, I finally got the confidence to start my own label that incorporated all the values that I felt strongly about.

What is the importance of ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies?

Ethical and sustainable fashion designers and companies have a crucial role in educating and making consumers stop and think about what they are purchasing. These companies prove that fashion can be produced ethically and sustainably and hopefully encourage a movement towards accountability within the industry.

What is the importance of fair trade?

Fair-trade is very important, as it is a universal accreditation that products with this certification are produced in decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers. Fair-trade raises standards of living for these farmers and their families and is aimed at encouraging a positive change in the industry.

Who is a personal hero or heroine within the ethical and sustainable fashion world for you?

I would say Emma Watson as she has an amazing influence and uses her large reach to educate people. She is standing up for issues that she truly believes are huge issues within the industry.

What is Avila?

Avila is an emerging Australian lifestyle label locally produced in Melbourne, offering luxury clothing you can wear every day. We instill qualities of elegance of naturalness in all our garments by selecting luxurious natural fabrics, ensuring quality fit and an ethical and sustainable conscience.

What inspired the title of the organization?

The name Avila was inspired by one of the horses I grew up with. Her personality, free spirit and strength are in line with how I see the Avila customer and therefore the perfect name for the label.

What are some of its feature products?

We produce a casual daywear range, with versatile classic styles that don't date. Our other range is an Athleisure range, which includes styles combining elements of active, comfort and leisure.

What are the main fibres and fabrics used in the products?

We use organic cotton, tencel, modal and merino fibers mostly.

Who grows, harvests, designs, and manufactures the products of Avila?

We use accredited suppliers that we research thoroughly before working with. We are able to source the majority of our fabrics here in Melbourne from a local mill and a local company accredited by Ethical Clothing Australia (ECA) produces our products.

Will the fibres and fabrics for the products from the company biodegrade?

Yes, the fibers and fabrics we use are biodegradable.

What is your customer base – the demographics?

The Avila woman strives to create a balanced lifestyle through health and fitness. She is very busy and enjoys being able to transition from a yoga class to coffee with friends, while remaining comfortable and stylish. She has an interest in sustainable fashion and locally produced clothing and values the story behind clothing.

What topics most interest you?

Functional fashion that is eco-friendly. I am also interested in fabric production and developing new ways to produce fabrics with a lower environmental impact.

Did you have a mentor in this work?

I have been lucky enough to have many people in the industry that have offered support and advise. I do have a mentor in the Business and finance area, which has been crucial to the growth of the brand.

Have you mentored others?

At this stage I have not but would love to mentor others in the future.

What is the importance of mentors in the fashion world for professional, and personal, development?

There are so many benefits to having a mentor for professional and personal development. One of the main benefits to me personally has been getting different perspectives, which has enabled me to see my business differently, and learning to keep an open mind.

There have been large tragedies such as the [Rana Plaza collapse](#), which was the largest garment factory accident in history with over 1,000 dead and more than 2,500 injured. Others were the [Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire \(1911\)](#) and the [Pakistan Garment Factory Fires \(2012\)](#). How do tragedies shed light on work conditions in garment factories?

At Avila we take responsibility to educate people as much as possible, so they are able to make an informed decision. Our number one priority is that our makers produce our clothing in an ethical manner and in good working conditions. We work closely with our makers who love making our products and are very passionate about every item they make. The more knowledge that we can share about the issues the more people become aware and hope this can lead to a change.

What educational campaigns and pragmatic initiatives might the fashion industry encourage and support to improve the chances for girls and women?

There are a number of scholarship programs that are being run for women in developing countries. I believe this is a really effective way to educate and support women in communities where equality and education for women is lacking.

How can individuals, designers, fashion industries, and consumers begin to work to implement those rights so that these vulnerable populations, women and children, in many countries of the world have better quality of life?

I think encouraging people to ask questions. All along the supply chain it is the responsibility of everyone in the process to ask questions about where, how and who was involved in the making of this product. For us as designers we need to be asking our suppliers for detailed information about where our fabrics come from, who made them and in what conditions were they made. We need to know everything about all parts of the process.

As consumers we need to be asking the brands about how and where the products are made. If everyone in the process asks more questions, I believe we will begin to move towards an industry that promotes a better quality of life for all involved in the process.

What personal fulfillment comes from this work for you?

Having the knowledge that my label supports local makers working in great conditions and creating jobs for our locally industry is a really great feeling. I also hope that we prompt more

people to ask questions about how and by whom, their garments are made, therefore helping the industry move towards more sustainable and ethical processes.

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

At the moment, I am solely dedicated to my label and the growth of the label.

Any recommended authors or fashionistas (or fashionistos)?

Overdressed by Elizabeth L. Cline.

Any recommended means of contacting, even becoming involved with, Avila?

We can be contacted at info@avila.com.au. You can also follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Pinterest](#).

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in business for you?

Having to put myself out of my comfort zone to enable my business to grow. In the early days of the business, I was not able to hire people to do certain things that I did not have knowledge in. I had to put myself out there to learn about all aspects of the business, which at times was very uncomfortable and emotionally challenging for me.

What has been the greatest emotional struggle in personal life for you?

Committing to starting my own business has been quite an emotional process. No one is telling you what to do or when to do it, so it has really been a learning process for me to stay motivated and persevere through the challenges of running my own business.

What philosophy makes most sense of life to you?

Do what you love!

Thank you for your time, Ashleigh.

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