

green know ledge

FOR FASHION LOVERS

By J'N'C & TM

No. 1/2023 — 20 EUR — greenknowledge.org

THE COURAGE TO CHANGE

FASHION FORWARD

The essentialists' motto: Less is more. Their approach: focused, reduced, high-quality, timeless. And therefore all the more in tune with the times.

TEXTILES & PRODUCTION

Our behind-the-scenes-report on local denim production in Vietnam. We talked to Johan Van den Heede from Advance Denim.

TRANSFORMATION

Is it really always a good decision to buy second-hand? Not at any price!



For the love of *fashion*



The situation is real: We're at the very beginning of a fundamental transformation that will confront us with inconceivable challenges and can above all be understood as an appeal to reflect on our own lifestyle and habits while adjusting our patterns of consumption. And this applies in particular to one of the most beautiful segments of the economy per se, namely fashion. After all, it has long since been regarded as one of the 'dirtiest' industries. An awful fact that needs to be rectified from the ground up and the major question facing corporations and consumers alike is therefore: How do we get there?

Obviously not by moralizing and obviously only to a limited extent by imposing bans, and most certainly by explaining things, introducing uniform international laws, transparency and of course providing inspiration.

We are all called on to set out down this path even if the change will not happen overnight. Through the joy in fashion, respect for it will also return – and that will impact favorably on 'healthier', less emotion-driven purchasing behavior. For what counts here and in the future: Less is more. Exactly that is what we want to encourage.

By illustrating that sustainable fashion can most definitely count as fashion and has long since shed its woolly eco-look, that second-hand fashion need certainly not be second choice, that clothing need no longer be seen as something to throw-away after a season, and that every reflected purchase clearly emphasizes new 'old' values such as quality and longevity. And that is a good thing.

Because even the most sustainable product is not sustainable in the final instance as its production leaves traces behind, albeit far smaller ones than does conventional manufacturing. That said, deciding to invest in 'slow fashion' in the sense of 'sustainable' or 'second-hand' fashion is definitely a better purchasing than opting for a brief moment of happiness courtesy of one of the usual fast-fashion chain stores.

In this regard I do hope that with this summer issue of GREEN KNOWLEDGE with its new Look & Feel we are offering you a lot of inspiration and information. And are helping motivate you to courageously and confidently embrace change with contemporary concepts.

Your
Silke Bucker,
Head of Content

ANZEIGE

ANZEIGE

ANZEIGE

ANZEIGE



44 Everything is organic

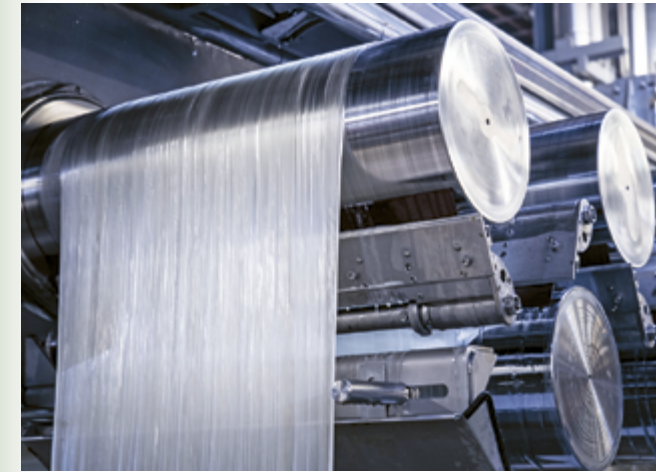
3 Editorial

TEXTILES & PRODUCTION

- 12 **Animal-free alternatives**
Vegan is not necessarily ecologically great.
- 14 **Do vegan sneakers live up to their promise?**
We road-tested them.
- 18 **Leather lookalike**
Looks like leather, feels like leather, but it's... Mirum.
- 20 **Pioneering sustainable denim production in Vietnam**
Our behind-the-scenes report at Advance Denim.
- 28 **From dream to dawn**
Interview with Dawn Denim's Ines Rust and Marian von Rappard.
- 34 **It's all in the loop**
Circularity in the denim business – a snapshot.
- 42 **King of restart**
The GK interview: Sebastian Proft, the new king of Kings of Indigo.

FASHION FORWARD

- 44 **Everything is organic**
- 60 **The essentialists**
Less is best: Presenting brands that focus on the essentials.
- 68 **Made with care**
Bodywear trends in the age of sustainability.
- 78 **Focus on fair fashion**
A closer look at the at the Frankfurt 'Häuser der Mode' order center.
- 80 **Store Guide Europe**
Presenting international store concepts with a difference.
- 102 **Fashion for ever**
Interview with Ivy Oak founder Caroline Gentz.



120 Lenzing teams up with Södra for a milestone in circular fashion.



128 A round-table with Sebastian Klinder and Frank Junker of Munich Fabric Start

CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE

- 104 **Can a certificate trigger system change?**
The B Corp certification hopes to...
- 106 **How to identify fair fashion**
A green response to the hangover.
- 112 **Sustainability is holistic**
The Hohenstein Institute knows why.

TRANSFORMATION

- 114 **Does C2C close the circle?**
The key facts underpinning Michael Braungart's principle of cradle-to-cradle.
- 118 **"Courage and hope move us forward"**
Sophie Griefhahn and Tim Janssen of C2C NGO discuss the forward path.
- 120 **The recycling challenge**
Lenzing teams up with Södra for a milestone in circular fashion.
- 122 **Waste colonialism**
Where our waste really ends up.
- 124 **Second-hand, yes – but not at any price!**
We analyze the mechanisms of a flourishing market.

TRADESHOWS & HUBS

- 128 **Munich Fabric Start**
"German fashion lacks courage"
A round-table with Sebastian Klinder and Frank Junker of Munich Fabric Start.
- 134 **Neonyt**
- 136 **Premium**
- 138 **Denim PV & Première Vision**
- 140 **Pitti Imagine Uomo**
- 141 **Texworld Evolution**
- 142 **Riga Fashion Week**
- 143 **Berlin Fashion Week**
- 144 **Performance Days**
- 145 **Innatex**
- 146 **Imprint**

ANZEIGE

ANZEIGE

Grown Leather

Leather is a cash cow for the global fashion industry. No less than 1.5 billion animal hides are used every year to make handbags, shoes, or belts. The leather industry books annual sales world-wide of US\$ 82 billion.* Unfortunately, there's a commonly held misconception that leather is essentially a sustainable waste product of the meat industry. That view is now changing: Headlines about animal suffering, the dubious origins of leather, and toxic chemicals used in tanning processes have sparked change. We are now seeing the emergence of highly promising plant-based alternatives.

*Source: "Slay" (2022), a documentary film by Rebecca Cappelli and Keegan Kuhn

Animal-free alternatives

Text: Jenni Koutni

Cactus Leather / Desserto by Adriano Di Marti

"Desserto" is free of plastics such as polyurethane (PU) and made purely from the Nopal cactus. The high-grade material by Mexican textile manufacturer Adriano Di Marti has been making inroads into the fashion and auto industries since 2019. The cactus can be continually harvested for about eight years – and you need only three large leaves to produce one linear meter of cactus leather.



Unreal Mycelium
Courtesy of Bolt Threads



Corn Leather / Viridis by Panama Trimmings

"Viridis" by Italian manufacturer Panama Trimmings is made from 69 percent primary plant materials; they are combined with synthetic PU derived from non-GM maize and wheat cultures. Added to this is viscose from sustainably forested wood. The only drawback: Despite organic PU being made from plant-based raw materials, "Viridis" cannot be completely recycled and isn't entirely biodegradable, either.

Mylo Components
Courtesy of Bolt Threads

Wine Leather / Vegea

Since 2016, Milan-based company Vegea has been producing solvent-free leather from grape residues left over from wine-making. Thanks to a special processing method, the skin, stalks, and seeds of the grapes are turned into fibers and oils that are then mixed with PU. Vegea is not completely biodegradable, but it has a high proportion of recycled raw materials and is certified to comply with the Global Recycled Standard. Moreover, it meets the stringent standards for chemical fibers set out in EU REACH Regulation.

Mycelium Leather / Mylo by Bolt Threads

In 2022, US scientists at Bolt Threads developed the biodegradable leather alternative "Mylo", which is made from mycelium, the cells of fungi. Breeding cattle requires immense resources and takes years. By contrast, mycelium can be grown in a vertical plant in just two weeks – and the facility is powered entirely by electricity from renewable resources.

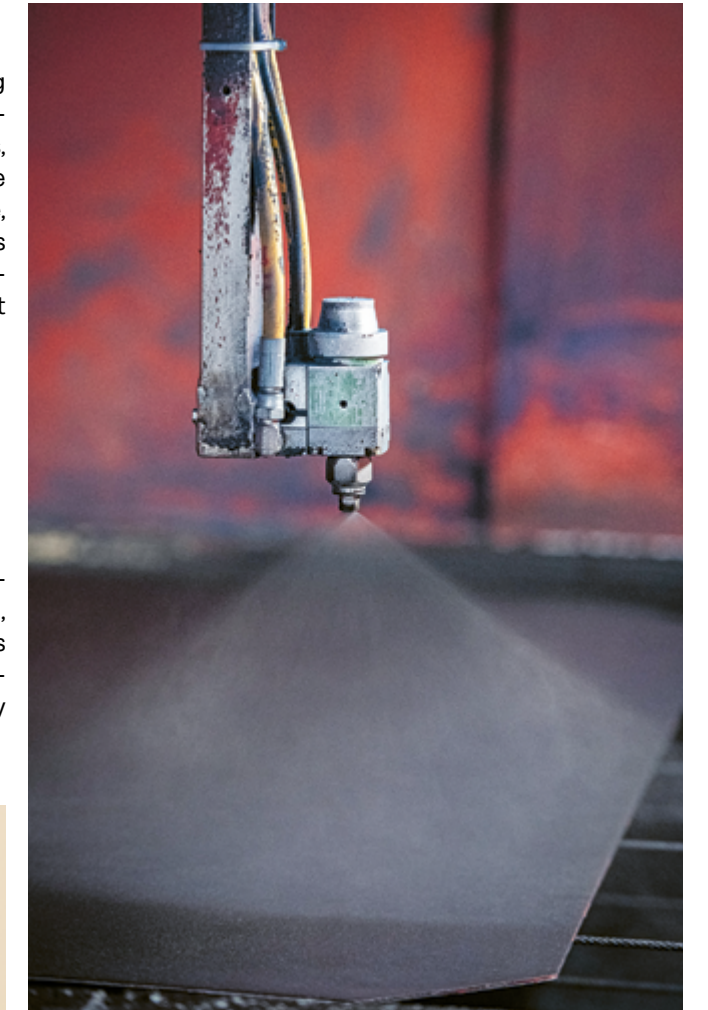


Mylo Finishing
Courtesy of Heller-Leder

Biofabricated Leather / Zoa by Modern Meadow

US corporation Modern Meadow is dedicated to manufacturing textiles through biofabrication; this uses cells, proteins, and other living materials grown in tissue cultures without any need for live animals. In 2022, the company succeeded in making "Zoa", the world's very first fabricated leather. It is manufactured using natural protein collagen and thus biodegradable.

Fungi Pedestal
Courtesy of Bolt Threads



VEGAN SNEAKERS

Can they compete with the classic sneaker brands? We road-tested them.

Corn leather, appleskin, Mirum, Vegea – you name it. There are plenty of vegan alternatives to leather. The key challenge? Not to use synthetic materials because, while they may be free of animal products, making them and disposing of them creates massive ecological problems. Although the same could of course be said of authentic leather. The aura of a biodegradable natural product that leather still has is a complete illusion, especially in the world of sneakers. A glance at the Statista forecasts suggests sales of some 2.6 billion in 2023 – in Germany alone. Meaning it is not merely worth casting a glance at ecologically produced sneakers; it's virtually compulsory with a view to saving the planet.

Anyone who feels naked without a Swoosh at their ankles is hardly likely to switch to a vegan niche label. Switching from your favorite sneaker brand to a fair, vegan sport-shoe is, of course, also a matter of style and brand awareness. Animal-free materials are often persuasive not only in terms of resource savings, a lower carbon footprint (if you'll pardon the pun) and fair production conditions, but also, to go by the product descriptions, because they are comfortable to wear, long-lasting, and perform well. Meaning the proof of the pudding will only be in the eating. Which is why we "road-tested" four sustainable vegan sneaker brands for you: Ethletic, Paul Eys, Allbirds and Flamingos Life.



Ethletic, Carl

Organic cotton, fair traded natural rubber on a recyclable substitute leather, transparent supply chain, and one dollar premium donated to Talon Fairtrade Workers Welfare Society for every pair of shoes sold – those are the hard facts on Ethletic. A surprisingly good feeling of comfort and suppleness: Those are the first impressions when putting on a pair of the Carl hi-top sneakers. I'd already had one pair of vegan sneakers in my wardrobe, but there were unsurmountable problems – pressure points, blisters, and unpleasant olfactory side-effects after I'd worn them a few times – and so it was that our ways parted. Carl, by contrast, has the potential to become my new best buddy. What a cool look. The vegan material genuinely looks like leather, you'll only guess it's not when you feel it. It's smoother, almost a tad velvety to the touch. It's superbly comfortable to wear and offers a good balance between support and flexibility. In the rain my feet stayed dry, and the sole gripped rather than slipped. Plus, there was no unpleasant smell build-up as the sneakers are good active breathers. What they lack is better instructions on how to care for the Carls. All I could find online was that they should be washed.

Another plus: the recyclable, Oeko-tex certified shoelaces, labels, and yarns. The natural rubber soles can be regranulated and (so the theory, at least) used to make new soles. In terms of circularity, the brand has devised its model such that all the components can be recycled. And Ethletic promises it is working hard to make this a reality. All in all, thumbs up. cb

ethletic.com



Paul Eys, Edition One

The Paul Eys label kicked off in 2019 with purist sneakers made of calfskin produced in a Portuguese family-owned operation. In 2023, Timo Reyser presented his complete collection made of vegan wine leather, which includes the Edition One, available in three different colors. Wine leather is made of the plant residues that arise during wine production, which are then combined with natural fibers to make the vegan material. The look of the uppers cannot be distinguished from leather itself, and its texture and marking resemble the grain of calfskin. Haptically, only the absolute experts will no doubt be able to detect the difference. The sneakers have a no-frills design, whereby the wine leather applied to the front cap of the shoes features a piped stitch that gives the sneakers an especially high-end appearance. The shoes are a little stiff to wear, but after only a few steps they adapt to fit the feet. Chapeau! The size is right. And Edition One is light, too, far lighter than comparable leather shoes. Overall, they are superbly comfortable to use. Unfortunately there was no time for a long-running test, but should the Paul Eys sneaker prove itself in terms of longevity, then the brand would definitely be among my top three favorite sneakers. cb

paul-ey.com



Allbirds, Plant Pacers

The Allbirds Plant Pacers are the first model by the Californian brand made of plant leather, a material manufactured from MIRUM® in collaboration with NFW. Plant leather combines natural components such as natural rubber, plant oils, and agricultural byproducts and is thus completely free of plastic – and vegan, too. My first impression on unpacking the box? Cool color ("Dreamy Green"), no unpleasant odor, and light into the bargain. The uppers are soft and resemble conventional leather. The sneakers have a classic-minimalist design, with attention given to the details of the lacing, and a wide white sole. On closer inspection, the plant leather has a grainy look to it. In fashion terms, a good companion to smarten your everyday casual appearance. And they seem comfortable to wear. The shoe size is the same as mine, no pressure points, no unpleasant itching or blisters. The inner sole and inner lining are softly cushioned; the outer sole is both stable and lets your foot roll naturally, although anyone with very sensitive feet might possibly be irritated by the two seams on the inside of the shoe. The Plant Pacers are rainproof and any light dirt can be washed away with normal soap. My only criticism: After walking in them a while, you can clearly see the impressions of some of your toes on the inside of the shoe as if the material was not giving. In conclusion, the Allbirds Plant Pacers won me over as vegan sneakers. The composition of the material is trailblazing, the visual appearance not highly fashionable but they will go with many things. A perfect entry-level vegan shoe. dt

de-de.allbirds.eu
allbirds.eu

Credit: tested & staged by: Cynthia Blasberg, Cheryll Mühlner, Deniz Troisdorff, Kristin Walzel



Flamingos Life, Retro 90s

The Retro 90s White Vanilla Tomato by Flamingos Life is another prime example of a vegan sneaker boasting a contemporary design. The shoes' uppers are 68 percent corn residue and 32 percent cotton, while the inside lining is 80 percent bamboo and 20 percent polyester. Other key components include a removable cork and natural rubber insole. On unpacking the sneakers from the box (made of recycled cardboard of course), you will immediately notice the high-grade finishing of the seams and eyelets.

All in all, the shoe feels light and has no unpleasant odor to it. And it feels just as good to the touch as does leather. First time out with them and the sneakers immediately adapt to my feet. The only disadvantage: The soles are thin, and you certainly feel your feet hitting the ground with no special cushioning. Nevertheless, the shoe scores heavily for its great classic 90s retro design and cool color highlights – red inside lining at the heel and a red F as the logo on the side of the shoe. The perfect allrounder for a casual everyday look or as a stylish companion for your skirt or dress. Owing to the narrow and essentially oval silhouette, the shoe feels as though it is one size too big. You will spot this when walking and when your toes and the ball of your foot come into play. In conclusion: The Retro 90s White Vanilla Tomato is a convincing vegan sneaker in terms of both design and comfort, and thanks to its classic look can just as easily be combined with everything else you wear as can the big boys in the sneaker world. kw

en.flamingoslife.com



Flamingos Life, Leonardo 02

Flamingos Life produces handmade sneakers that are not only easily able to hold their own against the well-known classics but are also eco-friendly. All the materials used in the experienced workshops, all located within a radius of 40 km of the company head office in Elche in Alicante, Spain, are vegan. The company provides full transparency over the entire supply chain. Moreover, each shoe collection is linked to a special environmental project to reduce the ecological footprint and protect endangered species. A prime example is the Leonardo 02 shoe, which we tested. It is made of a unique combination of sustainable materials such as corn residues, recycled polyester, and bamboo. Studies show that the sneaker requires 58 percent less water input than conventional leather ones – and causes 40 percent less CO2 emissions. All pretty impressive facts. And how comfortable is it to wear?

The material feels unusually hard when you first slip the sneaker on, but the shoes are comfortable and caused no pressure points, even after I had worn them for a good while. However, it is clearly harder to roll the foot from heel to ball than it is with conventional sneakers. What catches the eye: This model has a slender cut to it, which gives it a timeless and enduring look. NB: The sneakers are smaller than expected. Although there are no long-running tests available yet, Leonardo 02 has the stuff to emerge as a popular allrounder that can hold its own against the big brands and give you a clear conscience. cm

en.flamingoslife.com

ANZEIGE

Leather lookalike

It looks like leather, it feels like leather, but it's 100 percent plant-based. And it can be entirely recycled. The new material Mirum melds the circular economy with artificial leather – a true game changer.

Text: Jenni Koutni

TEXTILES & PRODUCTION

MIRUM® x TENCEL™ collaboration



The leather industry's main argument against plant-based alternatives is that "artificial leather is plastic". This was in fact true for a long time, because plastics such as polyurethane (PU) were among the main components used to make "vegan leather" or "artificial leather". Unlike the animal-based product, this kind of material is not biologically degradable and can introduce microplastics into the ecosystem.

In reaction to this, from the early Noughties onwards materials made of natural components and utilized for applications typically featuring leather gained in popularity: We saw bags made of pineapple leaves, shoes made of cork, or pocketbooks made of wax-coated paper. For some reason, however, the fashion industry as good as completely ignored what was becoming ever more the rage among environmentally conscious consumers. The industry simply wasn't interested in alternatives and stuck with the look and feel of the original. Because whichever way you looked at it, artificial leather was – simply plastic. Until today, that is: The US corporation Natural Fiber Welding Inc. (NFW) recently launched its new product called Mirum – a true game changer in all the above respects.

So what's it made of?

Mirum consists of a combination of natural materials and recycled agricultural byproducts. Made in California, the material is 100 percent free of plastic and fossil-fuel derivatives. Indeed, instead of PU binders (which you'll find in most leather alternatives), Mirum relies on natural rubber and plant oils. Added to which, every Mirum formula is unique. NFW relies on a variety of natural ingredients, such as charcoal, clay, powdered cork, rice husks, coconut fibers, recycled denim, or seaweed. This results in all manner of colors and visual effects that are certainly on par with animal hides. Another tangible benefit: Manufacturing Mirum requires far fewer resources than does producing animal or artificial leather. It not only has a low carbon footprint, but production and dyeing require no water inputs.

Mirum is the first material of its kind that is 100 percent recyclable and meets the brief for circularity. It contains no petrochemical elements or plastics, and unlike other artificial leathers does not contribute to pollution by microplastics.

The key lies in the combination

All that remains of Mirum are natural components to be recycled – thanks to its backing material. Meaning it sidesteps the Achilles heel of many other leather alternatives. These tend to use chemical adhesives, artificial fibers or coatings that make the respective material stronger. By contrast, NFW chose Tencel-brand biodegradable fibers courtesy of Austria's Lenzing company. These lyocell and modal fibers derived from sustainably forested wood can even be identified, audited, and traced using fiber recognition technology. The combination of MIRUM® x TENCEL™ was first launched at Milan's LINEAPELLE international trade fair in February 2023.

So what happens at the end of the day?

Even the greatest of products at some point comes to the end of its service life. Conventional artificial leather's greatest weakness has always been the problems regarding its disposal. Because plastics or chemical adhesives are used in its production the only way to get rid of it is emission-intensive combustion. In the case of products made of Mirum, by contrast, the cycle simply comes full circle: The material can be recycled or ground up an infinite number of times to create new Mirum or simply dug into the ground. Any off-cuts or wastage during production simply go straight back into manufacturing more Mirum.

Mirum in products: Stella McCartney was one of the angel investors, Allbirds uses it for its 100 percent plastic-free "Plant Pacer" sneakers and Melina Bucher relies on it for her "Bailey" designer handbag – which thanks to Mirum promptly won the "German Sustainability Award 2023". Materials science brand Pangaia's "Air Gilet" is the very first commercially available clothing article using 100 percent biobased Mirum.

Strangely, legally speaking Mirum cannot be referred to as "biodegradable". Why? Because the material does not degrade swiftly enough in order to fulfill the statutory norms – not that a tree, does, either. NFW felt it more important to develop a long-serving material that did not rot away after a few months than to go for swift biodegradability: "Just like a timber house needs to protect you against all weather for decades, a bag or a car interior fit-out needs to be designed to have a very long service life. Our goal is not to comply with the swift legal timeframe for biodegradability as that would mean compromising on quality," comments NFW.

naturalfiberwelding.com

"The discussion on durability is actually about the right compromise between long-serving materials and materials that are easily biodegradable. No one wants a designer handbag to start rotting after only a few months. We want products to endure."

Producer NFW on why Mirum does not count as "biologically degradable" legally speaking.

TEXTILES & PRODUCTION



Pioneering sustainable denim production in Vietnam

Interview: Cheryll Mühlen
Photos: Nicholai Fischer

Advance Denim, the leading manufacturer of sustainable denim, is expanding in Vietnam with Advance Sico. We visited the plant to see the company's commitment to sustainability for ourselves.

“We cannot achieve this alone and need everyone to work together for a sustainable future.”

Johan Van den Heede,
Director Europe Marketing,
Advance Denim

As a pioneer in developing sustainable denim production, Advance Denim has expanded operations to include Nha Trang, Vietnam, and introduced its 'Advance Sico' brand, and has thus made its innovative methods available to a larger market. Advance Denim's choice of production site, which went turnkey in 2019, was informed by the recognition that over 90 percent of the denim material used by local clothing factories in Vietnam had to be imported. Production facilities in the country were at that time only able to roll out very simple jeans fabrics. The Chinese pioneer spotted the opportunity to set up a sustainable and innovative manufacturing plant in Vietnam and thus to create an additional source of high-grade, sustainable, and innovative denim in Southeast Asia.

In conversation with Johan Van den Heede, Advance Denim's European Marketing Director, we discuss the corporation's latest products and how it is busy integrating eco-friendly practices into its manufacturing processes. Van den Heede also explains how the company is communicating its sustainable mindset over and above the production facility proper, what influence it hopes to have on the fashion industry, and what he himself would immediately change.

How will Advance Sico contribute to shaping the future of sustainable production, building on its commitment to incorporating sustainable fibers, through its use of liquid indigo from Archroma, and by operating its own wastewater treatment plant?

There's much more to sustainable production than just wastewater treatment and using sustainable fibers. Saving energy and reducing our carbon footprint are also important factors. At Advance Sico, we are therefore committed to reducing energy use and carbon emissions by updating our equipment, as part of which we plan to install a photovoltaic system to supply green energy for our production line. Water resources are also crucial for the textile industry, and we are upgrading our existing wastewater treatment plant to the same advanced water circulatory system as our mill in China. This system purifies and

filters wastewater from the production process and reuses it in the finishing process. We will also improve our finishing equipment to cut water and chemical consumption levels.

At the same time, we're working closely with machine suppliers, chemical suppliers, and fiber suppliers to develop sustainable methods. We continuously study and seek new sustainable dyeing and finishing techniques, a prime example being our aniline-free indigo technology that we've already introduced in Vietnam. Our ultimate goal is to maintain our position as leaders in sustainable production in the industry.

Denim production is seeing a growing focus on sustainability, with more and more brands adopting environmentally friendly products. Could you quantify how much the demand has increased in the last two years?

The demand for environmentally friendly products has indeed increased a lot in the last two years. Around 80 percent of customers are now looking for sustainable products, or at least some sustainable elements in their clothing. At Advance Sico, we've developed sustainable concepts such as Salvage Denim, which uses recycled cotton, and the feedback from customers who share our commitment to sustainability has been positive. Our dedication to sustainable production has earned us certifications from GRS, GOTS, and OCS, making us the first denim mill in Vietnam to achieve this. It's worth noting that many brands are very strict about mill audits, and our sustainable production plant has passed with flying colors! Our focus on sustainability not only meets the demands of the market, but it also helps us stand out from the competition.

To what extent does the mill influence Vietnam's reputation as a denim production location?

A few years ago, Vietnam's denim mills were known for producing only basic denim products. Since then, Advance Sico has revolutionized denim production in Vietnam by introducing sustainable practices, strong innovation, and superior quality denim fabrics.





Today, many brands have come to realize that our Vietnam site is capable of producing much more than basic denim. In fact, we're able to roll out quality fabrics that even some Chinese fabric mills cannot achieve. Not to forget that our advanced production techniques and commitment to quality are creating new opportunities for local specialized denim garment makers and manufacturers in surrounding countries.

As a result, Advance Sico is helping transform Vietnam's reputation as a denim production location. By prioritizing sustainability and innovation, we're helping to set a new benchmark for denim production – and it is one that's putting Vietnam on the map as a top destination for high-quality denim fabrics. We're proud to be playing a leading role in this shift and shaping the future of denim production in the region.

As Advance Denim continues to push the boundaries of denim production, one question arises: To what extent do pioneers in the industry rely on market forces to drive their success?

We understand that we are all interconnected, and that progress requires collaboration and innovation. That's why we work closely with our customers and suppliers to explore new opportunities and push the frontiers of what's possible in denim production. By constantly seeking out emerging technologies and trends, we aim to inspire our partners and help them achieve their goals.

In addition to our industry collaborations, we also partner with colleges and universities to share our knowledge and support the next generation of innovators. We believe that by investing in the future, we can help create a more sustainable and advanced market that benefits everyone.

Could you please share with us some of Advance Denim's latest products and highlight the key strengths that set your company apart in the competitive denim industry?

Our latest sustainable innovations include Salvage Denim, which uses various sustainable fiber blends with maximum recycled cotton content, as well as Tencel, Refibra, mechanically cottonized hemp, and Naia Renew. Sustainability and comfort go hand in hand in our products.

What's more, we have expanded our Zero Cotton collection, which, as the name reflects, features fabrics made without any cotton – on the back of a successful campaign with Dutch brand Denham by Jason Denham.

And we are proud to announce our latest partnership with 'Good Earth Cotton', which grows the world's first traceable and third-party verified, carbon-positive cotton. Our products using this innovative fiber have complete supply chain traceability courtesy of FibreTrace. Moreover, we continue to engineer new weaving equipment, such as our patented Air Lock weaving technology, which provides exceptional wear and fit comfort with improved wicking and moisture benefits. Last but not least, in April we showcased our latest multi-color indigo shades with a wide range of washing possibilities at Kingpins Amsterdam.

How do you ensure that your company's sustainability mindset and expertise are communicated effectively beyond the production site, considering that sustainability has become a common marketing buzzword?

Sustainability is more than just a marketing buzzword for our company. We integrate sustainability practices in our marketing as well as in our physical denim production. We believe that

Similar to its parent company, Advance Sico is deeply committed to sustainable manufacturing practices. The company has set a goal to incorporate over 90 percent sustainable fibers into its product line by 2023. Furthermore, Advance Sico is the first mill in Vietnam to exclusively use 100 percent liquid indigo from Archroma, and has established its own wastewater treatment plant with a daily capacity of treating 3,000 cubic meters of wastewater – but this is just the beginning.

“Our dedication to sustainable production has earned us certifications from GRS, GOTS, and OCS, making us the first denim mill in Vietnam to achieve this.”

Johan Van den Heede





sustainability is the future and understand that it is imperative for us to sustain our denim business in this challenging industry. Our aim is not just to comply with marketing needs, but to inspire and encourage our peers and the entire business to join us in this mission. We cannot achieve this alone and need everyone to work together for a sustainable future.

The denim industry, as part of the fashion industry, is constantly examining itself and striving towards greater sustainability. In light of this, it's important to evaluate the extent to which the industry has utilized its sustainable potential and recognize the limitations that production sites face when trying to achieve sustainability on their own. Can you share your thoughts on these issues?

Green energy sources such as wind energy and hydropower, along with other sustainable production methods, cannot be implemented solely by the production site. They require careful planning and cooperation from the local government.

Advance Sico has plans to install photovoltaic systems and increase its use of green energy to achieve net zero carbon emissions. The United Nations has set a target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and as we are already in 2023, it is important for everyone to work together now to achieve this goal.

What do you believe is the most critical issue that needs to be addressed, and if you could change one thing right now, what would that be?

A global denim standard should be established for all denim fabric suppliers and garment manufacturers to ensure that they adhere to the same sustainable and socially responsible practices. As a first step, all denim and jeans suppliers as well as all denim brands should sign the United Nations Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action and publicly disclose their progress towards achieving the Fashion Pact targets on an annual basis. Each denim product should be labeled with a score and an explanation of its sustainability rating. Furthermore, to ensure clarity, each score should be coded with a distinct tag color. Implementing traceability and transparency can benefit our industry and help end consumers make informed and responsible purchasing decisions.

advance-sico.com
advancedenim.com

ANZEIGE

From Dream to Dawn

Dawn Denim designer Ines Rust and producer Marian von Rappard aspire to manufacture women's jeans that are as sustainable as possible. They may not yet have perfected the art, but they're getting better and better. The in-house production facility in Vietnam has already been awarded top marks from the Fair Wear Foundation.

Interview: Wolfgang Altmann
Photos: Nicolai Fischer





Marian von Rappard and Ines Rust

How did you end up opening a factory in Vietnam?

Marian von Rappard: When I moved to Saigon in 2009, I initially started out as a small service agency interfacing between the local factories and German brands, such as Tom Tailor, who wanted to produce apparel in Vietnam. At some point I then opened a specimens studio that turned out very small unit lots. Over the years it simply grew into a factory, and now has a payroll of 303. Sometimes I find myself wondering how on earth my career evolved. It all happened step by step. And now I'm a factory owner, in good times and in bad times.

So Evolution, as your company in Vietnam is called, is also the agenda?

Marian von Rappard: Precisely. It's classified as a foreign direct investment, or FDI in Vietnam, meaning a foreign company, and I built it almost without any equity and mainly simply with bank loans. I still remember how my first employee Tam started out as a seamstress in the specimens studio. She's now team lead at Dawn Denim in Vietnam.

Do you also manufacture for other companies?

Marian von Rappard: Yes, each year the factory produces over 500,000 pieces. About 60,000 of that figure are for our own label. I would actually like to boost the share for Dawn in order to have a more solid basis for forward planning in uncertain times.

So what do things look like inside your factory?

Marian von Rappard: We are located in a small industrial estate outside Saigon. And everyone who visits us says the atmosphere is quite unique. On the inside, my factory resembles more of a loft in New York than a typical production site: The facades and the interiors are glazed. The employees can see one another at work. There's a solar system on the roof. The building is airy and green. We've lots of plants and a herb garden on the roof.

Ines Rust: It's simply a beautiful place where you feel good and like spending time. It makes a real difference psychologically if you sit in a stuffy production hall where the focus is solely on maximizing efficiency or in a place that is visually appealing.

Marian von Rappard: I always term our manufacturing facility a happy factory. We want our staff to be happy and to find meaning in their work. Which is also why we collaborate with Tip me, a Berlin organization that lets you give people tips.

How does that work?

Marian von Rappard: Anyone buying a pair of Dawn jeans can use the QR-Code to pay a small tip, one, two or three euros. Tip me collects the money and once a quarter it gets divided up equally among the staff: So pattern makers get the same tips as the seamstresses or the warehouse workers. They get a text message from Tip me telling them how much money was collected. It can be as much as 35 dollars, which is a real motivator. That way they get the feeling that what they produce really gets worn and liked. Our jeans don't gather dust in anonymity, but their production is held in high regard, as expressed by the tips. And everyone involved benefits.

What salary do you pay your staff?

Marian von Rappard: We calculate our salaries, and they are well above the statutory minimum wage, using the Anker living wage method. Because just like in Germany, in Vietnam you can hardly live on the statutory living wage. So we compute our salaries to make sure people can live on them. That includes good nutrition, an appropriate apartment, and schooling for the kids. And it also means enabling people to save for a rainy day. The Anker living wage method guarantees that wages enable a good life. I believe that should be the rule rather than the exception.

Does that get monitored by the Fair Wear Foundation, which you signed up to in 2018?

Marian von Rappard: Yes, in particular working conditions and social welfare get closely checked: In 2020 and 2021 we got the maximum 100 points in the annual Brand Performance Check. Last year we didn't do quite so well, and only booked 97 points. But then again we audited ourselves and I guess we were a bit too self-critical. (laughs)

Are you disappointed?

Marian von Rappard: Not at all. In my opinion that's exactly the right way to establish fairness and sustainability in our industry. You need to be self-critical at regular intervals. Which is why it's good that each year the Fair Wear Foundation re-assesses your goals, your efforts, and your impact as a brand. However tough that may be, as you always kind of start right back at the beginning. And often it's a detour that gets you on the right track.

What are working conditions like in general in Vietnam?

Marian von Rappard: As in any other country, there are differences in Vietnam, although there are definitely production countries that are worse. Because many foreign companies are investing here on the one hand there has been some progress. And the trade war between China and the USA really played into Vietnam's hands in this regard. On the other, the typical facility is still a neon-lit large factory hall where up to 80 people sit one behind the other at sewing machines. So our factory is most definitely different.

What fabrics do you use?

Ines Rust: We mainly use organic cotton, in part mixed with hemp and a small proportion of spandex. Sadly, that can't be avoided as our clients want that elastic feeling of comfort. And you only get that with flexible artificial fibers. Moreover, we also use Tencel textiles courtesy of Lenzing and its even more sustainable variant, Refibra. Our last Winter collection for the



“In the coming Summer collection, we will start using natural dyes made from earth from different regions. All the products that are not dyed indigo will, so the plan, in future be dyed using natural materials.”

Ines Rust



first time featured knit denim. The current Summer collections include corduroy pants. And next season we want for the first time to use a French terry sweatshirt material.

How do you upgrade the denim?

Ines Rust: We bleach them using a sustainable laser technology. Sadly, we still use chemicals in the dyeing process. But we comply with the standards and try to reduce levels to a minimum. In the coming Summer collection, we will start using natural dyes made from earth from different regions. All the products that are not dyed indigo will, so the plan, in future be dyed using natural materials.



What are you planning for the future?

Ines Rust: One novelty is that we are about to launch a menswear collection, too. And we also want to expand the range of larger sizes. Our community has straightforwardly expressed that wish and we are happy to comply. We now have six different jeans styles running through to a size 50 in the collection. And the idea is to build on that going forwards.

dawndenim.com

What happens to your rejects, meaning the pieces that are found wanting after roll-out?

Marian von Rappard: Together with Swedish artist Sofia Holt we purpose-developed Art on Broken Pieces to that end. For the project, jeans with small production errors are decorated with amusing embroidery patches, such as carrots or rockets. It's a nice way of conveying the issue of sustainability to vendors. Goods that might in the worst case be thrown away thus get given a second lease of life.

What's the production line reject rate like?

Marian von Rappard: With small unit runs, the rejects can swiftly hit as much as ten percent. For example, if pants get stuck in the machine and the fabric tears. Or if a seam does not get sewn accurately. Such errors are always going to happen when making something by hand.

Can customers follow your supply chains?

Marian von Rappard: Yes, they simply have to activate our Re-traced App, which a company in Düsseldorf developed for us. We also use it to map and manage our supply chain. And we then use a QR Code to pass the information on to our clients. You can use the App to track the exact supply chain and check the certification of our fabric suppliers.

Ines Rust: It's amazing just how deeply you can drill down using it.

Marian von Rappard: And anyone taking a careful look will also see where we come a cropper. Because we aren't able to trace many of our denim fabrics right back to the organic cotton farmers. The tracking usually ends with some dealer in-between, and we then have to rely on their certification. For all the transparency we cannot claim that all the way along the supply chain workers get paid wages they can live on. Our mission is to change that. But we've still got a long way to go to achieve that goal.

Berlin-based denim label Dawn is on track for success with its well-made basics. Nationwide, the collection is on sale at about 140 outlets, starting with Deargoods in Munich to Daniels in Cologne through to Pier 14 on the Baltic coast. Sales are also heading north in Austria, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In 2015, designer Ines Rust and producer Marian von Rappard founded their brand in Cologne. Four years later, the head office relocated to Berlin. There, Ines Rust is busy developing the 35-item collection, which boasts pants, jackets, dresses, and overalls. And an NOS program is also on offer, consisting of 36 denim styles – from Skinny to Bootcut. The apparel is made in Vietnam, where partner Marian von Rappard owns a factory. Next trade fair appearance will be at the Seek in Berlin.

ANZEIGE

It's all in the loop

Text: Deniz Trosdorff

Denim is the democratic fabric per se. It has defined how numerous generations have expressed their sense of fashion and has played its part in collections in countless interpretations from streetwear to the catwalk. Jeans are simply icons. But sadly they are also bad for the environment in many instances. Traditionally, producing denim requires an impossible amount of water and power, not to mention the pesticides. Today, however, an ever-greater number of pre-stage companies are finding ways of sustainably manufacturing the blue cult material – and this has been greeted with open arms by the processing industry and designers alike.

Recyclable fibers and materials, eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and innovative technologies are all seeking to do justice to the ever more popular notion of a circular economy. We present some of the most exciting new developments.



RE/J by Calik Denim

CALIK DENIM Revival of denim

The two most important goals of Turkish mill Calik Denim are responsible production and the thoughtful consumption of denim. In the context of its Fall / Winter collection 2024–5 entitled “Reviviscence”, the company is presenting its innovative concepts B210, E-Last, Re/J, and Rawtech. The new collection features various ecological innovations, too. These include raw materials from sustainable sources or that use recycled hemp or organic fibers, as well as such that contain regenerative cotton. As regards circularity, Calik Denim opts for “B210” technology, which was first introduced last season.

The “RE/J” concept also seems very promising. Unlike other 100-percent recycled fabrics that on occasion still exhibit flaws, “RE/J” stands out for its authentic vintage denim look and optimal elasticity. Recycled fibers such as ECOLycra and Reprive PES are utilized in the production. The topic of sustainability is at the very heart of all the product families, and its importance is underscored by the fact that all RE/J products rely on “Dyepro”, a progressive dyeing technology that requires no water and produces no chemical waste.

calikdenim.com

LENZING Tencel presents its Fiber Recycling Initiative

The Lenzing Group, together with its fiber cellulose partners Artistic Milliners (Pakistan), Canatiba (Brazil), and Textil Santanderina (Spain) is presenting the first phase of the “Fiber Recycling Initiative” of Tencel. The intention is to drive the introduction of the circular economy into the global textile industry and as a first step to prioritize manufacturing denim materials from Tencel’s mechanically recycled Lyocell fibers.

“In our continual search for ways of pressing the pedal on circularity in the various segments of the textile industry, our like-minded and longstanding partners in the denim production value chain have taken things to a new and innovative level. This concept is still relatively new for the sector as a whole. However, by developing the “Fiber Recycling Initiative” Tencel has “set itself the goal of also promoting the related advantages and exploiting the entire potential of the new fabrics that favor circularity,” so Tuncay Kılıçkan, Head of Global Business Development Denim at Lenzing. New Tencel Lyocell fibers are also renowned for having an eco-friendly, closed-cycle production process: Sustainably generated fiber cellulose is transformed into cellulosic fibers through the highly efficient use of resources and with a low carbon footprint. In addition, they are driving the sustainability of denim as no water or chemical inputs are required to produce them.

lenzing.com

Fabric material made of mechanically recycled Tencel Lyocell © Santanderina





Isko Ctrl+Z

ISKO
Material innovation: Ctrl+Z awarded Bluesign certification

The computer key combination “Ctrl+Z” is well-known as the fast command to go one step back. And this is also the underlying idea behind the “Ctrl+Z” denim innovation that the specialists at Isko floated on the market last spring. The fabrics contain recycled and regenerative fibers that are themselves recyclable thanks to utilization of an innovative technology. The denim was recently awarded certification with the “Bluesign Approved” label. This sustainability standard guarantees the responsible manufacture of textiles, in particular with a view to safety with chemicals. The Swiss certifying agency only awards the seal to companies that meet stringent safety and environmental requirements. This includes guaranteeing safe production sites, reducing carbon emissions and water consumption, and avoiding the use of dangerous chemicals in production processes. “This is a great achievement for Isko as we have been seriously investing from the very beginning to make our production, and the industry as a whole, more responsible, transparent, and ultimately sustainable. We are looking forward to this new partnership with Bluesign, which keeps raising the bar of what is to be expected to make business better,” comments Ebru Özküçük Güler, Isko’s Head of Sustainability.

iskodenim.com
 bluesign.com

ORTA
70 years of rich denim history

The Turkish denim weaver is celebrating its 70th anniversary with the release of its new Fall/Winter collection 2024/25 entitled “Ortanow”. Ortanow new generation icons include high-performance Tencel Lyocell in the weft to deliver supreme softness and recovery – perfect for the coveted legging and slim-style denim looks, and ideal for that unisex stretch with a clear twill line and raw look. The outcome: performance stretch-engineered with ultimate fiber blends ensuring longevity and power. Marrying recycled materials with the durability of stretch, Orta replicates the sought after salt ‘n’ pepper marble washes with a smooth, Japanese crafts optic. Continuing its regenerative handprint mission, Orta has partnered with Nature Coatings to introduce the world’s first carbon-negative black pigment that is petrol-free and 100-percent derived from wood waste. BioBlack TX is a 100-percent bio-based, certified and carbon-negative black pigment, made with pre-consumer industrial wood waste from FSC-certified sources from the lumber, paper, furniture, and flooring industries – which means the wood waste can be fully traced back to sustainably managed forests.

ortaanadolu.com



Style of Orta’s A/W 2024/25 collection

G-STAR
Potentials – raw design by Johanna Seelemann

Make the best out of what’s left over! Last year, denim brand G-Star Raw launched its art platform “The Art of Raw”, which invites young creatives to make art objects from denim waste. The most recent collaboration is with German designer Johanna Seelemann, who has conjured up contemporary furniture from leftover denim courtesy of G-Star. The up-and-coming talent drew her inspiration from the hidden production processes for the fabric. Other sources stimulating her ideas were the G-Star head office in Amsterdam (designed by Rem Koolhaas’s OMA) and its furnishings (masterminded by Jean Prouvé). In keeping with her working title of “Potentials”, Seelemann leaves the material in its raw state; she twists it, coils or fills, or even marks it by small incisions and seams. The result is a five-part furniture series consisting of a room divider, a floor mat, a bench to lean against, a low stool, and a clothes’ hanger. The use of thin frames made of indigo-died ash is intended to bring constructive co-dependence to mind. In order to emphasize its remarkable stability, the denim is used for various details, such as weights and belts, and in this way keeps the structures in position.

g-star.com
 johannaseelemann.com

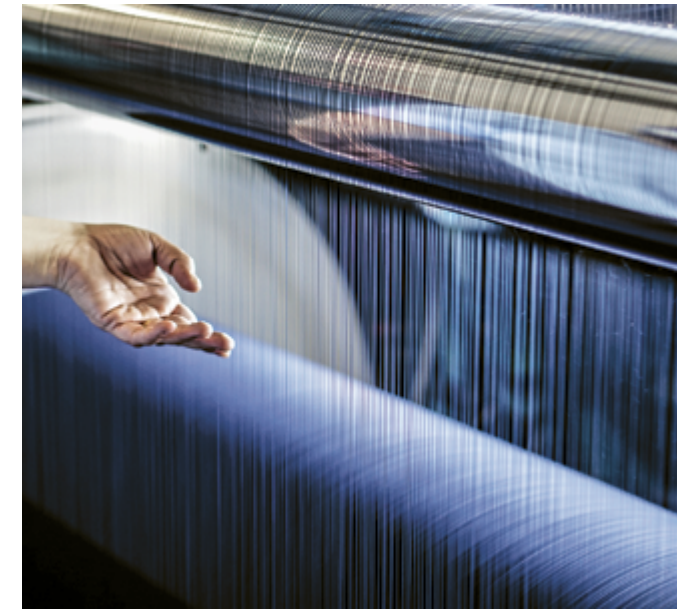


“Potentials” by G-Star x Johanna Seelemann

“We’re trying our best”

Denim, innovation, sustainability. An inseparable trio in the value system promulgated by Turkish denim producer Bossa. Be it in terms of innovations in materials and production technology – Bossa champions a forward-looking, sustainable present day that does not place a burden on future generations. In conversation with Besim Özek, Bossa’s Strategy & Business Development Director, we hear all about the company’s vision on circularity, sustainability, and the future.

Interview: Deniz Trosdorff



‘We care about future’ is one of your guiding principles in your company. You are doing a lot in terms of sustainability, circularity & co. What is the status quo in your developments / material innovations and corporate activities?

Our motivation is to produce eco-friendly denim fabrics. We want to reduce our ecological footprint day by day. In order to achieve our science-based targets we have compiled two key reports: “Towards Zero Waste” and “The Bossa Sustainability Report”. We have also conducted studies on low water usage. Our water consumption has consequently dropped from 68 l/mt to 33 l/mt as a result of our innovations. Our aim is to lower it as far as 15 l/mt. As regards our carbon footprint: We are investing heavily in solar power. We’ve just acquired 58 hectares of land for a solar farm. One of our biggest challenges is to produce the same quality of fabric using recycled fiber. Bossa has devised various solutions for this. Increasing the proportion of recycled fibers used in our collection is our biggest motivation for the future.

In your latest ‘Towards Zero Waste’ report, you set a target for 2022 of using 14 percent recycled fibers and 31 percent sustainable fibers, among other things. Have you achieved all the targets set in the report? Which ones are still to come?

We are still working on it. There are some technological limitations when it comes to the spinning machineries. We are trying our best to spin better yarn with recycled fibers. By way of background cotton fibers are 29–30 mm in length, whereas recycled fiber is only 15–18 mm. Using recycled fiber is a new challenge for the textile industry, but if all those involved – the yarn producers, fabric weavers, garment producers, designers and brands – learn to handle it, the proportion of such fibers will rise for sure.

Circularity and sustainability as a whole are the most important issues of the day. What efforts should we make as consumers and as an industry to ensure tangible results are achieved for a better future?

Without doubt, established sustainable practices are more cost-intensive than the conventional ones. However, if end consumers appreciate eco-friendly products, then demand for such articles will increase by the day. Also, if the industry explains the importance of water usage, recycling or social



Besim Özek

activities during production, I am sure that consumers would be willing to pay more as well. No one wants to buy a pair of denim pants produced with child labor, that wastes water or entails harming humans or the environment in other ways.

You say that the world has suffered a lot because of our careless actions. What is your appeal or, in your opinion, the ultimate solution to save the world?

Now that’s the million-dollar question. There are a lot of solutions, I mentioned some of the basic ones. The world’s natural resources are being abused brutally and I am afraid if we continue to rely on the same methods, most of the resources will be depleted. My proposal to heal the world is simple: If you cut one tree, plant two trees. Soil health is so important! Start regenerative plant growing practices at your homes and buy goods grown organically or regeneratively, use more recycled fibers, emphasize best circularity practices when you are shopping for clothes, and try to purchase articles made according to such principles.

bossa.com.tr

LEFAXX

Focusing on circularity

TEXTILES & PRODUCTION



“We are a German family-owned company – in Turkey,” says Vedat Dogan, Managing Director at LeFaxx Jeans. The showroom and headquarters are located in Istanbul, the production plant in Sivas, a province in central Anatolia. Dogan, the son of an immigrant worker, has lived in Germany since the age of 14. We talked to him about how he is using his technologies to make the denim industry more sustainable, why the Germany-Turkey link is key, and what Albert Einstein has to do with the circular economy.

Interview: Inga Klaassen



Vedat Dogan

TEXTILES & PRODUCTION

Vedat Dogan, your strategy is “Cradle to Cradle”. How so? Circularity is one of the most important issues in textile production because it entails using existing resources. There are very few companies in the world of denim that bring together all steps in the production value-added process under a single roof. In our case, the circle is complete: Basic materials come in through the door, and the finished product goes out the same way onto a truck.

What steps are required for holistic “all in-house” production? “All in-house” is quite literally the case with us, starting with our solar plant on the factory roof. We also have our own water treatment plant where we can scrub our wastewater and re-introduce it into the production process. All we add is evaporated water. Our own dye facilities, the sewing line, and the washing unit dovetail.

What other measures does Lefaxx take in order to ensure manufacturing denim is more sustainable?

We have developed a patented washing process that allows us to forgo using pumice stone and yet delivers that well-known and popular used look. In this regard, we use elements of recycled waste plastic, which saves us energy and water while avoiding tons of toxic garbage. A comparison says it all: We require only 60 kilos of plastic elements compared to the usual 15 tons of pumice. At the same time, because the washing process is so easy on the fibers, we have far fewer rejects.

I firmly believe that Turkey, which is so close to Europe and the cherished German, Austrian, and Swiss markets, is the ideal production partner for sustainable textiles. I’m personally really interested in recycling and repurposing, which is why I am so committed to our “Creative Upcycling by LeFaxx” charity project. For this, we take textile offcuts and our staff with disabilities then fashion them into artworks. The revenues from the artworks are then donated to charities world-wide.

Given its complexity, circularity is a challenge. How can we achieve tangible results as regards greater sustainability?

The fundamental difficulty is that circularity is at present still far more complex and expensive than producing new textiles, which is why I bang the drum for more eco-conscious consumers. There was a time when you wore your favorite jeans for far longer. Today, purchasing patterns are driven by “fast fashion” and short-lived trends, which means that the demand is no longer sustainable. The order of the day for industry must be greater transparency. It is hard to distinguish between what has been produced sustainably and what hasn’t. Who monitors this? How is it proven? Government plays a crucial role here and could make the supply chains comprehensible to everyone through international information flows. It simply can’t be that a garment “made in the Far East” is labeled as sustainable only because it contains a certain amount of organic cotton.

lefaxx.com

King of restart



Sebastian und
Kathrin Proft

When denim label Kings of Indigo filed for bankruptcy in November 2022, the fair fashion community was caught unawares. The Amsterdam-based company was considered a trailblazer of eco-friendly production and avoided all toxic substances – everyone hoped a savior would come who could take it over. And that was precisely what happened on December 21 in the form of entrepreneurial couple Kathrin and Sebastian Proft, who already had in-depth experience of saving floundering fashion firms: After recruiting fashion retailer Dollinger, they took onboard the brands Stapf and Feli & Hans. With the Kings of Indigo denim brand, they're now moving out of the domain of folk costumes for the first time – a brilliant twist of fate, as Sebastian Proft explains in conversation with us.

Interview: Jenni Koutni

Dear Sebastian, how did you decide to take over Kings of Indigo?

From the outset, things were unlike when we bought up Stapf and Feli & Hans, who had been among our suppliers beforehand. We simply did not know Kings of Indigo. I first read in *Textilmitteilungen* that the company had filed for bankruptcy and started googling it. Since the idea of a fashion brand that was sustainable on such a scale had long been buzzing around my head, I felt the news was simply the right twist of fate. It was a pretty complicated process, but when I talked to Mariska Stolwijk, who had headed up the product team until then and also kept everything together during the insolvency, it all became clear. She's now our General Manager, as this time Kathrin did not get involved.

Meaning KOI is just your baby?

We're a married couple, so Kathrin and I each own 50 percent of KOI. But in this instance, she said to me: If you really have to go and start another crazy project, then do so, but not with me this time. (laughs) And yes, that means it's my baby and I am responsible for making certain it grows again and flourishes. With Mariska at my side it's all going to be a great success, I'm sure.

So what exactly do you need to optimize at KOI?

Before I entered the fashion business, I had spent many years in the financial world and in corporate consultancy, which is why I brought a lot of analytical know-how to my new role. The plan includes making the collections more market-centric such that the collection is put on sturdy feet and the pricing points make sense. The product and the brand were always great; it was a matter of tweaking the structure.

In the best KOI manner, in your emails you sign off as "King of Restart". So what is going to change as regards the corporate structure?

In all our projects we insist on continuing with a brand's DNA. At KOI, they're all simply Queens and Kings. (laughs) I spoke a lot to founder Tony Tonnaer, and it was clear to him from the outset that he would not be part of KOI when we rebooted. I can understand that. If you build something from scratch and

then along comes someone who changes everything – I would be the same. But we have to change things so that we don't find ourselves back in the same situation again. The company remains based in Amsterdam, but because the takeover process took so long many of the staff had sadly found new jobs, so we're now 50 percent old hands and 50 percent new blood.

KOI stands for strictly avoiding any toxic and environmentally harmful materials and forms of production. Will you be maintaining that policy?

Yes, nothing will change there. The production facilities are the same as ever, and the cotton remains GOTS certified. Even before it went insolvent, KOI had started shifting increasingly from organic cotton to recycled cotton and we're pushing the pedal there. The company will therefore continue to lead the way when it comes to recycling and transparency.

And are you continuing down the same path as regards styles?

Essentially yes, but a touch softer and more feminine, as that was the main feedback from clients in the German market, namely that those qualities did not receive enough attention. Our customers are denim lovers, ecos, and also fashionistas aged 25 to 45. I would like to see the brand attract all age groups going forward.

What future plans do you have for Kings of Indigo?

Starting with the Pitti Immagine Uomo, we're going to enter the trade-fair cycle, be really confident there, and show everyone concerned just how much we have achieved in these past months. Going forwards, we need to beef up our international reach. At present, Germany is by far our largest market, but at some point we need to address America and Asia. Above all, KOI's link to Japan is already firmly in consumers' minds. And, as stated, we want to protect and preserve precisely that brand DNA.

Many thanks for your time!

kingsofindigo.de

Bag: Agneel
Corsage: Jacquemus

Everything is organic



Photography: Claudia Grassl
Styling / Art Direction: Katharina Gruszczynski
Hair / Make-up: Arzu Küçük
Digital Assistant: Philipp Thurmaier
Model: Merle Gerhardy @Tune Models
Creative Direction & Production: Silke Bucker

Thanks to Greenlight Studios, Munich

Bag: Agneel
Glove: Dries van Noten



Dress: Miomartha

Jacket: Armedangels
Top: Ecoalf
Shorts: Jan N June



Jacket: Humanoid



Dress: Marine Serre



Top: FTC Cashmere
Pants: Rossi Pants
Mules: Scholl

Bathing suit: Blanche
Underprotection
Jacket: Filippa K





Lingerie: Opaak
Cardigan: Humanoid



T-Shirt: Merz b. Schwanen
Jeans: Dawn Denim

“When we woke up that morning
we had no way of knowing
That in a matter of hours we’d
change the way we were going
Where would I be now, where
would I be now if we’d never met?”

Pulp, Something changed





Top: Miomarta
Shorts: FTC Cashmere

Dress: Wolford
Sneakers: stylist's own



Dress: Stapf
Earrings: Jane König



Top: jan N June
 Pants: Gstuz
 Shoes: Inuikii
 Earrings: Johanna Gauder

Body: Opaak
 Earrings: Johanna Gauder



The essentialists



SEIDENSTICKER

Beyond the button-down

Text: Inga Klaassen

Long-standing Bielefeld-based shirtmakers Seidensticker offer far more than just traditional business threads. The shirts specialist demonstrates this not just by teaming up with titans of style like Annette Weber but also with its progressive Studio Seidensticker line: The Capsule bids farewell to short-lived trends and special-occasion cuts, not to mention prescribed gender classifications, and in this way delivers fully on a contemporary unisex assortment. Studio Seidensticker not only blends authentic and perfectly coordinated staples but also offers inclusivity, apparel for the eco-conscious consumer, and circular fashion. Key items are one-offs that can be combined at will, can be flexibly styled, and function “from day to night”. Inspired by the current street-style movements, clear cuts and authentic looks forge a highly expressive urban identity.

seidensticker.com

Addressing existing needs instead of creating them



August Bard Bringéus, co-founder of Asket

Interview: Cheryl Mühlen

Asket's core principle is that knowledge is power, which is why it not only gathers as much information as possible but also makes it transparently available for everyone. One characteristic feature of the Swedish brand is the 'impact receipt' issued for all wardrobe essentials such as jeans, T-shirts, outerwear and underwear. And it ignores trends and thus the core-DNA of the industry. We spoke to August Bard Bringéus, co-founder of Asket, about the value of clothing, transparency, and the brand's ambition to go beyond what the industry currently has to offer.

At Asket, every step of the production process is traceable. How does that promote sustainability in the fashion industry?

Fashion is notoriously opaque and non-transparent because the supply chain has become increasingly complex, making it difficult for brands to understand where their garments come from. Even tier 1 suppliers may not know who their subcontractors are or where their raw materials come from. This is a result of specialization and fragmentation within the industry, but also stems from the fact that some brands may be unwilling or uninterested in knowing the conditions under which their low-cost garments are made. If they did, it would be difficult to continue making those garments.

What motivated the company to launch a full traceability standard in 2018, and what are the benefits of having full traceability in terms of understanding the garment supply chain and operating more responsibly?

To ensure transparency and enhance pride in our products, we launched a full traceability standard in 2018. This standard breaks every garment down into its components and traces them through all upstream processes. Full traceability enables better behavior and supplier relationships, educates our customers about the complexity of our garments, and allows us to operate more responsibly. That said, traceability must not be confused with sustainability, but it is a prerequisite for being more responsible and exploring impact. If you don't know where it's made, you can't know how it's made.

The brand focuses on a consistent collection, breaking with the seasonal cycles of the fashion industry. How does this affect overproduction and overconsumption in the industry and what essentials constitute a core wardrobe?

The fashion industry is responsible for 4-10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, making it the second most polluting industry after energy and oil. Fast-fashion companies, with 27,000 new styles per week, have been the cause of overconsumption and dissatisfaction with clothes per se. Asket's focus on producing garments that are both aesthetically and physically durable helps to reduce waste and make better use of resources. We work with a permanent collection where we don't create needs, we simply seek to address existing needs. Our garments are aesthetically and permanently relevant, with a very small collection of carry-over garments designed to last. This approach aims to address the industry's core problem of creating fashion apparel with short life spans that contribute to unnecessary consumption and waste. By contrast, we reduce waste and make efficient use of resources by creating a permanent collection where all garments are 100 percent carryover. If we overproduce, we simply adjust our output.

I assume you don't offer sales then.

As our garments are 100 percent carry-over, we never hold sales. There is no need for discounts or seasonal sales, because even if a certain style sells a bit slower in one season, or we have shorts and linen shirts that sell more in spring and then knitwear that sells more in autumn, they remain in the permanent collection and become relevant for the next season. What's more, by operating this way, Asket only develops two to three, maybe four styles at a time. It's a very focused approach to developing these garments, where there's literally, because they're going to be on the shelves forever, no limit to the

amount of time or money that we can invest in perfecting these garments. Meaning it takes us a lot longer to create and develop a garment.

The introduction of the Impact Receipt is also an important step in giving customers insight into the environmental footprint of their purchasing decisions. How will Asket ensure that this information is transparent and understandable?

The impact receipt means different things to different customers. We know today that consumers are increasingly interested in making better choices, in understanding what they're buying, where it comes from and what impact it has. At the initial level, introducing an environmental receipt and showing the environmental cost along with the monetary cost of consumption is simply about confronting the customer with the fact that everything we buy has an impact. It doesn't matter how well it's made. It doesn't matter if it's organic or conventional cotton, if it's recycled or virgin polyester. Everything has an impact. There's no avoiding that when you buy something. Despite all the greenwashing and messaging out there today, we need to acknowledge that everything we consume has an impact on people and the planet. Secondly, of course, we want customers to engage with information, to try to understand it and make informed choices, perhaps choosing one material over another based on your environmental concerns, or perhaps putting the impact of your clothing consumption in relation to the rest of your impact. So for a very concerned or interested consumer who wants to reduce their annual carbon footprint, you might know that you want to spend w amount of your CO2 quota on travel, x amount on eating meat, y amount on buying furniture, and then z amount on buying clothes. It's important to know what your clothing consumption actually represents in terms of environmental impact and to try to make that information more relatable.

How can Asket encourage not only the customers but also other companies in the fashion industry to make similar changes in their business model and become more transparent and sustainable?

Our company aims to inspire a shift in the fashion industry away from seasonal collections and planned obsolescence towards a business model that prioritizes the creation of high-quality, long-lasting garments with producer responsibility. Despite operating with fewer collections and garments, we have thrived over the past few years and achieved a slim profitability, proving that sustainability and success can co-exist. Ultimately, we believe that operating with a greater sense of responsibility transcends financial gain and becomes an important part of our lives. Sure, there may be short-term costs and lost sales in the transition to this model, but the long-term benefits are worth it. We hope to inspire others to prioritize sustainability and find fulfilment in making a positive impact.

asket.com

WOTE

#It's your WOTE

Text: Deniz Trosdorff

“Anyone really wanting to avoid wastage needs to see the ‘better’ in less,” says Britta Doppelfeld, who in 2020 teamed up with Matthias Jobst to launch Wote, a unisex brand. Prior to that, they had held various product management positions in the fashion industry, followed by an involuntary sabbatical at the beginning of the pandemic that prompted them to realize “we no longer wanted to go on that way”. Doppelfeld’s words lay down the gauntlet to the typical structures of an industry that has reached its limits and clearly champion sustainable business instead. It seems only logical that Wote stands for “Water, Ocean, Trees & Earth”, buzzwords that describe everything close to the hearts of the two founders. Inspired by the motto of “fair, transparent, sustainable and authentic”, they prioritize items for the collection that are long-running essentials and can be combined at will down through the years. High-grade, eco-certified materials form lay the foundations for timeless and beautifully unspectacular designs. It goes without saying that Wote opts for partnerships with family-owned companies and workshops that are paid a fair price.

the-wote.com

Photo: © Katrine Mobius



AIAYU

Out of love for the material

Text: Inga Klaassen

Aiayu stands for fairly produced knitwear, high-grade loungewear, and luxurious home textiles. The label, founded back in 2005, fuses a timeless Nordic aesthetic with natural materials and a materials-first philosophy. The fabrics get made from Bolivia to Mongolia – in collaboration with traditional farmers, artisans, and sustainable manufacturers. The line’s great beauty derives from its naturalness, simplicity, and elegance, backed up by refined fabrics such as washed linen, Merino wool, Turkish cotton, or recycled cashmere with consciously muted color tones. There is no place in the collections for any exaggeratedly flashy colors or patterns.

aiayu.com



ROSSI

“Most do some form of sweatpants”

Interview: Silke Bucker

Sustainability has many faces. In addition to certifications, quality seals, a transparent supply chain, and fair wages, it also includes a commitment to human beings in the sense of established business relationships based on trust or the appreciation of employees and their efforts. In addition, careful material sourcing and attention to excellent quality and durability in the manufactured products foster a prudent use of resources. These and other values have always been a matter of course at Schellenberger in Grosswallstadt, not far from Frankfurt. The family-run company boasts the Raffaello Rossi and Seductive brands and most recently has welcomed new offspring in the shape of ROSSI, a limited-edition unisex brand, which got off to a flying start with its launch in February 2023. We spoke to Tobias Schellenberger, one of the two scions of the family – ROSSI is his brainchild.

Tobias, first of all, congratulations on the launch of your ROSSI brand – you have obviously found a gap in the market with this idea. How did it come about?

Thank you! Unisex is not a new concept in itself, but it mainly takes the form of combi-collections, and these largely consist of tops. The selection of pants, meanwhile, is comparatively boring. Most do some form of sweatpants.

I have to agree with you: I have a really hard time finding good pants.

That's exactly it! But let me start from the beginning: I've been with my parents' company for five years now, my brother David for a bit longer. David works in management, while I take care of product management, sales, and marketing. Right away when I started, I knew that sooner or later I wanted to do something of my own. Often a change in the generation at the helm does not affect a brand, which simply continues as it is; creating something completely independent is quite different. For a while I had the idea of doing a men's pants collection, because it was the most obvious thing to do, given the company's history. But during the pandemic in particular I observed the changes in society and realized that unisex is becoming ever stronger. So I ventured further into that terrain, did a lot of research and so on. My parents were pretty reluctant at first when I presented the idea to them.

In the end, you obviously convinced them. Where did it go from there with the Rossi launch?

As a next step, I contacted my good friend Julian Daynov and shared my ideas with him. There is hardly anyone I know who embodies the unisex theme more authentically than does he. He was immediately hugely enthusiastic about the concept and also gave me great back-up in the conversation with my

parents, so that we could really get them excited. Afterwards, I asked him quite spontaneously if he would like to take over the creative direction, to which he replied: "I don't have the time but I'll do it anyway."

What was the specific vision, the core values, with which you then got started?

The overriding concept is of course "unisex". We want to create pants for everyone.

What about in a broader sense, because as everyone knows, we are in a transformation that makes it necessary to rethink business models, principles, and structures. If we take the term "sustainability", for example, it refers not only to values like fairness and ecology, but also to things like quality and durability. It's about creating things that last a long time.

ROSSI creations are "timeless pieces" in all aspects, so we don't compromise on quality and workmanship. I always say: Our pants have no expiry date. Thanks to Raffaello Rossi and Seductive, we can of course create wonderful synergies. We use identical materials, for example – about 85 percent from Italy, and the rest we get from Portugal, Spain, and Japan. We produce exclusively in Romania with long-standing production partners; these are business relationships that have already been in existence for more than 15 years in some cases. In addition to certified natural materials, we also use synthetic materials for certain flowing silhouettes, and here we are increasingly focusing on recyclability. By 2025, we want 80 to 90 percent of our products to be certified "Made in Green" by OekoTex. Our headquarters, which is still very new, is also certified as climate-neutral.



Tobias Schellenberger



How does a focus on sustainability manifest itself beyond that?

Along with appreciation, sustainability is one of the core values of our corporate philosophy. It's not only a matter of which quality seals and certificates you can present, but also about cooperation and partnership, about sustainability that is lived and applied. We certainly don't part with a partner just because they raise their prices for understandable reasons, for example. That sense of loyalty is also to be found here in Grosswallstadt – the employees stay with us, no one actually quits. Sustainability is firmly anchored in people's minds here. One member of the quality assurance team, for example, has taken up an issue that has been bothering all of us for a long time: Previously, when the finished pants were delivered to us, they were always packed with ten pieces in a plastic dirt cover. The employee turned this into a project, having cloth bags sewn from existing leftovers and, in cooperation with our production facilities, developed a recycling system. Now, these reusable covers go along on the journey with every shipment from Romania to Grosswallstadt and back. This saves us about 70,000 plastic bags every year.

What would you say are the most important values your parents taught you?

First of all, they taught me to treat everybody as equals. Another value is proactivity, by which I mean a hands-on mentality, without which I probably would never have started ROSSI. Instead, I could have chosen to manage and develop what my parents built. But I want to go further, beyond the obvious.

On that note, how do you continue to promote the brand?

For a progressive brand like ours, Instagram of course plays a particularly important role. But we also focus on events with our partners, like the one with Ludwig Beck in Munich at the end of March. The event was sensational, reaching over one million people. Creating limited editions, of course, creates a

special kind of desire for products. Our plan is to initiate a big-bang event at a different location every season.

ROSSI currently offers six different styles in different qualities. To what extent will the range be expanded in future?

For the coming Fall/Winter collection, we have doubled the selection, although we have still kept it small but perfectly formed.

Ultimately, you can increase the range through colors and materials.

Exactly. Our bestseller "Noa", for example, has been transformed into a cashmere touch quality for the upcoming Fall/Winter collection, and there is also a version with pinstripes. I am particularly proud of how well the collection is received by leading retailers such as Anita Hass (Hamburg), Pantha Rei (Zurich), Breuninger (Düsseldorf), and Ludwig Beck (Munich). Buyers in this league see so many great international collections! I myself am in charge of sales and select potential partners very carefully. At the same time though, I think that ROSSI has to be discovered to some extent.

The ROSSI premiere at the Pitti Uomo in Florence is fast approaching in June. What are you expecting from it?

First of all, we are very well placed with our spot among the most progressive exhibitors. We have a booth of around 15 square meters, which we plan to use in a very cool and arty way. We are really hoping to take the next step there in terms of expanding our international reach. When you look around, the world outside Germany certainly tends to be a bit more fashionable. I could imagine that our product would perform very well in Scandinavia or South Korea, for example.

Thank you for talking to us!

rossi-fashion.com

FASHION FORWARD

FASHION FORWARD

Made with care

The Spring/Summer 2024 and Fall/Winter 2023/24 lingerie collections feature great material innovations and a broad variety of different trends. We spoke to selected lingerie makers who are spearheading developments.

Trends & text: Deniz Trosdorff

An increasing number of lingerie brands are starting to prioritize eco-friendly qualities and manufacturing processes, a trend Janine Weiz-Bühler, Director of Brand & Product at Calida confirms: "In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our goal is to consistently expand the proportion of our underwear bearing the Oeko-Tex® Made in Green and the Cradle to Cradle Certified® seals and to reduce to a minimum the impact our processes and products have along the entire value chain on natural and human resources. The complete supply chain, all materials used, and the entire lifecycle of each and every product are being constantly reviewed and optimized in keeping with our guidelines, which are themselves based on strict criteria."

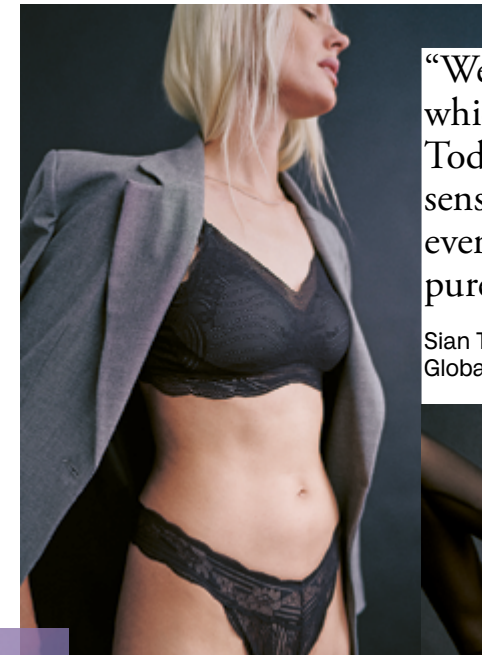
Authenticity, transparency, innovation, and an awareness of one's own heritage lay the foundations for more sustainable corporate governance. Hanro Managing Director Stephan Hohmann emphasizes this when he says that "at Hanro we've been living sustainability since 1884. In addition to our inhouse textile production, including our own plant for dyeing fabrics and our own equipment, local suppliers, and our own sewing line in Portugal, we are constantly endeavoring to design more sustainable collections. Thanks to the efforts of our textile development section at our main hub in Vorarlberg, Austria, we

are able to support innovations from day one and move them forward swiftly. The Opaak bodywear brand also relies on selected and above all certified partners from within the EU, and Agathe D. Dzialocha, Founder & Creative Director at Opaak, also points out that the brand has its styles exclusively manufactured in a production facility in northern Romania that is managed by women and insists on fair pay as well as high work quality and HSE standards.

Trustworthy partners, ongoing advances, and the implementation of ecological standards all combine to successively pave the way to a greener future. This is also the case at Schiesser Group, as Andreas Lindemann, the brand's CEO, outlines: "We're busy building our third solar farm, and the fourth is already on the drawing board. We rely on CSR-compliant suppliers and ensure our own production is transparent in the form of OEKO-TEX® MADE IN GREEN or OEKO-TEX® STeP certification, for example; and of course we hire DHL Go Green as our forwarding agent." These individual concepts all have one shared vision: to make a long-term favorable contribution to a better future for all. Over the next few pages, Green Knowledge focuses on new currents in sustainable material innovations and highlights the most important trends in the present season.

TREND

Dark seduction



"We can look back now on an era in which homewear defined everyday life. Today, we women are rediscovering our sensuality. A sensuality that more than ever goes hand in hand with a feeling of pure comfort."

Sian Thomas,
Global Head of Design at Triumph



Credits: Triumph, Opaak, Catwalk Photo: Imaxtree; Victoria Beckham

"We make use of recycled power mesh that originates from our certified Italian supplier. The latter's operations require low water inputs, and the production facility is solar-powered in order to reduce its carbon footprint. The new product range is clean and minimalist, and avoids any opulent details or accessories."

Agathe D. Dzialocha,
Founder & Creative Director of Opaak

TREND

Smooth innovation



“With our F/W 2023 Collection, we’re launching our new basic sleep range: ‘Deepsleepwear’. Calida Deepsleepwear supports the body’s natural thermoregulation – with its revolutionary combination of functional high-tech natural fibers and ultra-modern processing technology. Moreover, we’re introducing a new, warming Cradle to Cradle Certified® fabric.”

Janine Weiz-Bühler,
Director of Brand & Product Calida



“In time for fall/winter 2023, we’ve succeeded in expanding our range of sustainable materials in our loungewear and nightwear lines. We’re busy, among other things, making greater use of organic cotton as well as more eco-friendly and GRS-certified, recycled cotton fibers such as Tencel™ Lyocell and Modal. What is more, additional series are now gaining OEKO-TEX® Made in Green certification.”

Stephan Hohmann,
Managing Director of Hanro



FASHION FORWARD

FASHION FORWARD

Credits: Mey, Calida, Hanro, Catwalk Photos: Imaxtree: Miu Miu, SFIOG, Holzweiler, Rabens Saloner

TREND

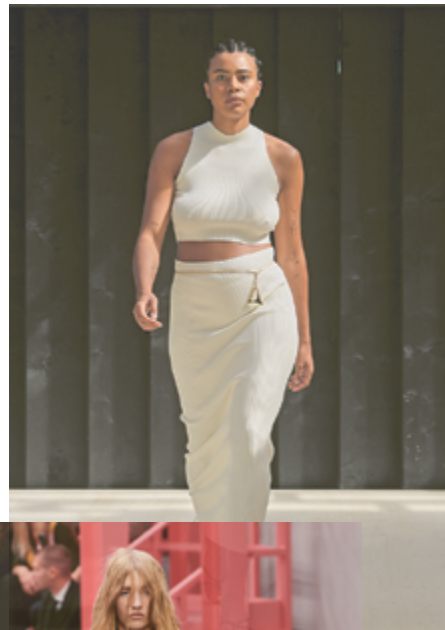
Pure nature



Credits: Triumph, Calida, Sloggi, Catwalk Photos: Imaxtree, Aeron, Fendi

“We at Mey view sustainability as a pillar that can help buttress successful business in the long term. By steadily improving our standards, production processes, and objectives, we will in future continue to be able to make long-serving and high-grade products.”

Matthias Mey,
Managing Director of Mey



ANZEIGE

The green way of life

Based in Balingen, which is located south of Stuttgart, the Ceceba Group is a long-standing company dating back to 1893 and currently managed by members of the fifth generation of the founding family. With its strong roots in history and a wealth of experience, the Group now sees itself as a contemporary underwear manufacturer that is boldly and progressively positioning itself for the future. The role played by the company motto “It’s not just bodywear, it’s a green way of life” in this context is highlighted by Co-Managing Director Kim Maike Schäfer.

Text: Deniz Trosdorff



Kim Maike Schäfer



Without a doubt, Ceceba is one of the most important players in the German underwear market. The medium-sized family business from southwest Germany sets the tone internationally with its heterogeneous brand portfolio, which comprises not only the main Ceceba brand of the same name, but also the Götzburg and Maskador brands, as well as Dragon Far East Trading Ltd, a subsidiary responsible for all sales activities in the Far East. In addition, Ceceba Bodywear GmbH holds the underwear licenses for the Tom Tailor, A Fish Named Fred, Baldessarini, and Bugatti brands and is thus responsible for the manufacture and distribution of the respective underwear collections. The choice of the ram as the company logo appears to have been a very deliberate one, as it aptly symbolizes the company’s values and goals: a visionary mindset, an appreciation of quality, and a passionately entrepreneurial approach.

Open to change

With its multi-label strategy, Ceceba offers its retail partners worldwide a broad range of products and thus the possibility of very individual orders – it is not without reason that the company dubs itself the “problem-solver in the world of bodywear”. “The major challenge in the coming years is to make the bodywear trade contemporary. As a company, we have to be open to change and continuously improve,” said Kim Maike Schäfer, summing up her vision for the future of Ceceba when she joined the management team alongside her father Jürgen Schäfer at the end of last year.

In fact, Ceceba repeatedly pushes the pedal on its own entrepreneurial superlatives; this includes ambitious efforts in the direction of sustainability, as emphasized by the company motto: “It’s not just bodywear, it’s a green way of life”. Since 2019, the company has been considered the first climate-neutral bodywear manufacturer, as Kim Schäfer explains: “In addition to climate projects that reduce global emissions,

we have decided to launch on-site initiatives. These include our own efficient combined-heat-and-power plant as well as the large solar system we have installed at our headquarters. In addition to investing in reducing our eco-footprint, we’re also emphasizing raising an awareness of sustainability among our employees through local projects. Hence, for example, we have the ‘Ceceba fawn rescue’ initiative, then there’s the ‘Cecebees’ on the roofs of our site, a ‘second life for cardboard boxes’ and much more. Our goal is to create long-term added value for the environment. Compliance with human-centric and ecological standards is a top priority for our company, in line with the motto ‘becoming sustainable sustainably.’”

Material is key

Reducing the carbon footprint also takes place when it comes to the materials. Ceceba GmbH has an extremely extensive NOS range that makes up around 80 percent of the entire collection. There is a particular focus on high quality, naturalness, and wearer comfort in order to keep demand for these long-running items high among customers. Kim Maike Schäfer comments that it is quite a tightrope act producing fashionable and attractive products that also never go out of fashion. And here the company is gradually turning to sustainable materials. She explains in this context that “Tencel, Modal, or the new Ceceba bamboo goods are increasingly in vogue with our buyers and end customers – which makes us very happy. Not only is the fabric sustainable, but these qualities also offer a really great, super-soft feel for the wearer. Bamboo is also antibacterial, more breathable than conventional cotton, and its dimensions very stable.”

ceceba.com

“Sustainability is more than just a trend!”



Swenja Speidel

Sustainability across all levels of the company: This is the philosophy lingerie specialist Speidel has been following for more than 70 years. With its lines Speidel, Sylvia Speidel, and myCloset, the longstanding brand focuses on the characteristic “Quality made in Europe”, which is accounted for by the company’s own knitting mill, tailoring shop, and pattern studio at its main site in Bodelshausen-outside Tübingen in southern Germany as well as the two factories it owns in Hungary and Romania. Swenja Speidel, Managing Director of Speidel GmbH, gives insights.

Interview: Deniz Trosdorff

“Conscious since 1952” is the name of your corporate philosophy. What bearing does this have on the company’s activities in the past and present?

For us, “conscious” means acting conscientiously across all areas of our fully integrated production chain and using resources responsibly – as has been the case since the company was founded in 1952. More specifically, this means consistently monitoring all production steps in order to subsequently optimize technologies, improve processes, and thus protect the environment in the long term. Our innovative fabrics, all of which we manufacture ourselves at our headquarters in Bodelshausen, feed into this approach.

All fabrics are manufactured in Germany according to the Oeko-Tex® Standard 100. What criteria do you apply to the materials aside from this?

We are increasingly relying on raw materials that are kind to the skin and regenerate rapidly, such as bamboo, SeaCell, or Tencel. Pre-consumer recycling is also playing an increasingly important role in our work, whereby discarded nylon material is recycled and processed into new products. In addition, we source all raw materials exclusively from Europe, which also guarantees comparatively short transport distances.

What does sustainability mean to you on a meta level?

For us, sustainability means living and consuming in such a way that subsequent generations are not restricted. This includes a conscientious approach to nature and the environment in each step in the workflow, but also social sustainability, which is why we have been a member of the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) for many years.

The demand for sustainability is currently posing huge challenges for the industry, but how serious and consistent are the ambitions really, so that a sustainable industry can actually become a reality?

The topic of sustainability should no longer be a “trend”, and for us it has never been that. Sustainability is not something that goes out of fashion, and I think the continuing hype around it is most definitely an opportunity to raise awareness among end consumers so they critically question where and, above all, how an item of clothing was produced. Only this way can we change people’s outlook in and for the long term.

How can Speidel become even more sustainable in the future?

We did a lot in recent years, but there are still some things we would like to achieve. As regards our online sales, we have completely dispensed with polybags and have introduced cardboard made from grass paper. What’s more, our shipping is carbon-neutral, while hangtags, catalogs, flyers, bags, and all office equipment have been completely switched to recycled paper. For two years now, we have relied on our Speidel recycling hangers; they are made of 40 percent WPC (wood plastic composites), equating to a plastic saving of 40 percent for each individual hanger. We get 100 percent of our electricity from renewable sources, generating about 35 percent of it ourselves. In addition, our headquarters in Bodelshausen has been certified climate-neutral since 2021.

speidelshop.com

ANZEIGE

Focus on fair fashion

In the form of Häuser der Mode, Germany's third largest fashion center, Frankfurt offers the national and international trade public an opportunity all year round to be inspired by a portfolio that features a vast array of different brands. The growing interest in fair fashion is also influencing the sustainable assortment of lines at the order center – and the trend is upwards.

Text: Inga Klaassen

A growing interest in fair fashion

"At Häuser der Mode, the range of fair fashion is greater than ever before – and with it the demand," proclaims Chrisula Karras, HdM Marketing Manager and trade-fair organizer. "There are several fair-fashion labels already represented on the premises, and we're convinced that purchasing managers are ever more interested in this segment. Which is why we intend to expand our sustainable lines going forward, and we're setting a positive example because, after all, you really need to commit to something for it to pay off," Karras continues. Calida, Blutschwister, SKFK, Alma & Lovis, Grand Step Shoes, The Surfcar, Hirsch Natur, and Feuervogel are already listed in Häuser der Mode. And alongside the thoroughbred fair-fashion brands, there is an increasing number of labels at HdM that are showcasing sustainable capsules alongside their regular collections. Karras comments that "we can clearly sense the trend among

an increasing number of commercial brands at Häuser der Mode towards boosting their share of sustainably produced models." Among them are renowned names like Olymp, Olsen, and Atelier Gardeur. And in the kids' segment, both Steiff and Sanetta are likewise fielding GOTS-certified collections.

Summer highlights

Summer orders will have the character of a real event at Häuser der Mode – with the "Women & Men Fashion Days" on July 18–20, 2023. The sector meet will be an ideal occasion for casual networking and sets the tone for the "HdM Kids World" on July 22–24, 2023, and the "HdM Body Dreams" on August 12–14, 2023 – numerous exhibitors have already registered.

hdm-frankfurt.de

ANZEIGE



Store Guide Europe

FASHION FORWARD



Blackhorse Lane Atelier

GREEN JEAN

Blackhorse Lane Atelier's London shop is a community-driven space centered on craft denim – and the determination to teach consumers how to make their own clothes.

Text: Emma Holmqvist Deacon

Established in 2016 by Bilgehan “Han” Ates, London craft jean maker Blackhorse Lane Atelier is celebrated for its wear-forever pieces. The first store opened in August 2019 in North London's Coal Drops Yard, prior to which consumers were invited into the company's factory in North-East London. Here, they were treated to freshly made jeans and the opportunity to attend denim-making workshops. A few years in, how is the transition from buzzy factory-floor to retail space going? “It was a bit challenging at first,” Ates admits. “When customers visited the factory, which also houses a new sustainable R&D washing facility, we didn't have to convince anybody that we make our own clothes. To bring the factory-feel into our retail environment, we've consciously added a lineup of sewing machines, rolls of denim and patterns hung from the wall. We want to celebrate the people making clothes and let consumers into our world beyond wearing our jeans,” says Ates, who's very community-based in outlook. “With community comes accountability, one of our most important pillars. Transparency is paramount.” As for the product itself, it's largely unisex. Selvege denim is used predominantly for jeans and every pair comes with free repairs for life. Ates' tailoring background is evident in the high level of craftsmanship – even the one-piece flies are artisan in feel. To show customers how Blackhorse Lane Atelier's jeans are made, a pair is laid out inside-out, allowing you to scrutinize it carefully. Next to it, a non-craft pair is displayed, replete with the type of overlocked two-piece fly associated with the bulk of jeans on the market – even so-called ‘premium’ lines.

As for non-denim offerings, the brand recently launched its own fabric development, resulting in a line of T-shirts and sweatshirts. Chambray shirts and a small linen collection are other new additions.

In the name of sustainability, Ates has a genuine desire to teach the art of clothes-making. “In the factory, we ran workshops creating five-pocket jeans using a range of industrial machines – one for buttonholes, another for hemming and so on,” he recalls. “Over in the shop, we teach on a single machine so that attendees can transfer these skills to their home environment, using any domestic sewing machine. This is an important aspect as we want to inspire people to use their hands and learn how to make their own clothes.”

blackhorselane.com

WALTHAMSTOW FACTORY
114b Blackhorse Lane
Walthamstow
London E17 6AA
United Kingdom

COAL DROPS YARD SHOP
Unit 32, Lower Stable Street
Coal Drops Yard,
London N1C 4DQ
United Kingdom

FASHION FORWARD

Rethink

REVIVE AND THRIVE

A new era retail concept, Rethink shuns simply selling products in favour of services across the three pillars of repair, reuse and remake.

Text: Emma Holmqvist Deacon

Rethink's raison d'être is to rewire consumers' shopping habits – or lay them to rest entirely for that matter. "Rethink sets out to encourage consumers to repair or upcycle garments they already own – or, if something new just has been added, to rent a piece," explains Helena Alcenius, who's been called in to lead up the initiative.

Rethink, in its current physical form, is a government-backed pilot project run by Nordiska Textilakademin, Boråsregionen and Textile Movement. The centrally located space launched in April 2023 and will remain open until the end of June, though it's highly probable it will give rise to other initiatives tackling similar issues. It's no coincidence that the testbed has sprung up in Borås. The Swedish city has a history as a textile hub that goes back centuries, whereby the manufacturing identity of the past has given way to innovation – and Rethink is part of that push. "Borås boasts some of the textile industry's top entrepreneurs and creatives, some of whom have come together to bring Rethink to life," Alcenius narrates. Deadstock textile company Rekotex (it sources leftover fabrics from brands and offers these to designers in need of smaller quantities) is one of those involved, as is online repair service Repamera, through whom Rethink has teamed up with local tailors in Borås.

A small stable of industrial sewing machines are available to rent, costing about €4.50 for 30 minutes. Another permanent feature is the shop-in-shop by occasion-wear rental service Not So Ordinary. And then there's the sneaker-cleaning service, transforming battered pairs to good-as-new footwear.

Workshops, talks and events are constantly held to educate, inspire and keep the space buzzing. Rethink collaborators to date have included artist William Copa Andersson, who went about reviving customers' garments and textiles via his exuberant artworks – priced at about €27 a pop.

The forward-thinking platform targets local consumers, but also the wider fashion ecosystem. "We're trying to figure out how these services can be scaled and turn a profit on behalf of the industry – which is currently grappling with resale and rental models."

The reaction to Rethink's smorgasbord of services has been overwhelmingly positive. But some tendencies are telling of today's consumer habits. "It's disappointing when someone comes in to query the cost of having a new zip fitted by a tailor, only to decide they'll bin the trousers instead since the repair costs as much, or even a little more, than the €20 garment," Alcenius comments, adding that the issue is a delicate one. "After all, some people simply can't afford to buy anything but fast fashion, but we'd consider it a success if we make only one person abandon the idea of throw-away garments."

rethinkboras.se



RETHINK
Åsbogatan 3
503 36 Borås
Sweden



Grandpa

THE FOREVER WARDROBE

Swedish multi-brand retailer Grandpa has a vision that is as clear today as it was two decades ago – namely to offer a quality product you never want to take off. Here, co-founder Jonas Pelz sheds light on the thinking behind the concept and the latest eco-minded initiatives.

Text: Emma Holmqvist Deacon

In the ever-changing retail landscape – where independent fashion stores come and go – Grandpa is something of an institution. Sustainability has been at the forefront from the start and the Swedish multi-brand retailer's take on the complex issue is simple: timeless design combined with quality. Both ensure wear-forever versatility. "We pick out garments most likely to be worn often and for a very long time," explains co-founder Jonas Pelz, adding that ethical production and eco-friendly materials are equally important.

Pelz opened the first store in Stockholm in 2003 – together with his friends Martin Sundberg and Anders Johansson. It was followed by two additional shops in Gothenburg and Malmö. These community-driven spaces, which often hold events, talks and workshops, are complemented by an online shop, laden with product information destined to inform, educate and inspire.

Style-wise, the vibe lands somewhere between urban and outdoor. Key brands that align with Grandpa's philosophy include Patagonia, Nudie Jeans, Brixton Textiles, and Sätilla (purveyors of Swedish-made knitted wool hats). Grandpa Goods, the in-house line, is another main ingredient that keeps growing. The entire line is produced in Europe – to be precise in Lithuania, Portugal, and Italy. All the cotton used is organic and GOTS-certified, and most of the wool is of the recycled kind. In a bid to challenge the flawed fashion system, Grandpa has launched a made-to-order collection entirely crafted in the Swedish textile hub of Borås. The line consists of an overshirt in two colors and two trouser styles, each likewise available in two colors. "The fact that these pieces are made on demand allows us to produce very small quantities based on actual orders and thus avoid overproduction," says Pelz. "We strongly believe this is the way forward from a sustainability point of view, and what's more it makes sense financially, too."

In a bid to assume further responsibility as a retailer, all Grandpa stores will be fitted with 'repair shops' by autumn 2023. "This initiative will allow customers to prolong the life of products they've bought from us," says Pelz. "We'll likewise be offering alterations such as a hemming service – anything to make the clothes we sell work harder and fit better!"

grandpastore.com

GRANDPA
Södermannagatan 21
116 40 Stockholm
Sweden



FASHION FORWARD

**“Our idea is slow fashion,
not fast fashion.”**

ASAP
99, Rue du Bac
75007 Paris
France

ASAP

RETHINKING FASHION

The moment you step into the ASAP store on the busy Rue de Bac shopping street in Paris’ upmarket 7th arrondissement, you’ll be struck by the fact that here, much is different.

Text: Barbara Markert

Instead of decorative images that could emphasize the boutique atmosphere, the walls are graced by information posts. They explain such things as what naturally dyed cashmere is, what organic cotton is all about, the functions of a reversible trench coat, or the advantages of short supply chains. Instead of pretty flowers or sculptures, the shelves boast huge glass jars filled with species such as turmeric, grasses, or even ivy.

The feisty Italian is the boss and co-founder of the boutique, which first opened its doors back in August 2013. While she’s the manager, her husband Alberto Zanone handles the design. With very few exceptions, the assortment bears his creative hallmark. The boutique’s name embodies the concept: No, ASAP doesn’t mean “as soon as possible” here, it means “as sustainable as possible”. For Carla and Alberto, it’s all about slow wear, upcycling, and using offcuts, but doing so while keeping quality as high as possible.

The duo offers two brands in their Parisian store: NON and ASAP. The NON brand features high-grade basics that have been being issued and re-issued unchanged for decades now. ASAP is made up of more fashionable or limited editions. The prices of the latter only may plummet on occasion if warehouse stocks run low, even if the store does not otherwise go for sales periods. That said, the Italian couple aren’t interested in selling for selling’s sake or high margins anyway. What interests them is the material: Only the finest and best natural yarns make it into their range. And with the justifiable price, the composition of the respective fabric is communicated to clients in the form of small tags on each item of clothing: “100 percent silk” or “100 percent cashmere” being two such examples. At ASAP, mixed fabrics are composed exclusively of silk and linen or wool and silk.

Carla Lasorte guides us round the store and explains her assortment: “See this cardigan: Now that’s combed cashmere! That’s key and about five times more expensive than normal cashmere. Or take the polo shirt here: Prior to weaving, the organic cotton gets twisted in on itself, which makes for a super-smooth surface, soft and long-lasting.” All the products are made from leftover pieces of fabric. The duo buys up remaining yarn stock or leftover panels of fabric, which is why most of the products are only available in very limited editions. “We only have five of these coats. The fabric is an original left over from the 1950s.” Since it is difficult to find producers for small unit lots, ASAP has to do its planning independent of the season. “Our manufacturers use us to fill their production gaps. The summer pieces thus get made later. But we’re happy to wait. Our products are timeless anyway and can be worn at any time of the year.”

Measured in terms of the materials, which are often the product of renowned Italian luxury makers such as Loro Piana or Marni, the prices are more than fair. And clients know this, too, and tend to drop by regularly or buy the one or other NON and ASAP classic for a second time. “Our clientele in this district is superb. We once had stores in Milan, too, but now we’re concentrating solely on this boutique in Paris.” The two Italians, who shuttle back and forth between their home on the other side of the Alps and the French capital, aspire to get even further with their search for materials. “We must always remember that when you consume fashion you always place a strain on the environment. Always! Meaning we should do so as little as possible.”

asaplalab.it

FASHION FORWARD



SUPERGOODS

NOTHING BUT GOOD

Anne Hildén and Tonny Van Bavel opened their first store in Belgium, and specifically in Mechelen, halfway between Brussels and Antwerp, back in 2012 when both of them had already had a successful career: Van Bavel had been a teacher, and Hildén had worked for her native Finland at the European parliament. The couple had no experience in retailing, but really wanted to set something new in motion. In their store, which was called “Eco-Design” back then, the focus was mainly on interior design and furniture initially, but when in 2013 the Rana Plaza disaster happened in Bangladesh, the pair switched over to sustainable fashion and rechristened the store “Supergoods”. Since then, two more stores have been established alongside the original one in Mechelen; in 2016, a franchise shop opened in Ghent; and in 2019, a boutique was founded in the very epicenter of Belgian fashion, in Antwerp.

Text: Barbara Markert

The name “Supergoods” remains as programmatic as ever: Each of the three stores has approx. 100 square meters of floor space devoted to products that do as little harm to the planet as possible. Tonny Van Bavel explains that “when choosing our fashion products, we focus above all on natural and recycled materials such as organic cotton, Tencel, Ecovero, or linen. Our second criterion is fair and socially equitable manufacturing. Today, most of our goods are made in Europe, many of them actually here in Belgium.” The range of menswear and womenswear is complemented by cosmetics and make-up (as far as possible without parabens and made by small local producers) and lifestyle products, such as scented candles, soaps, and stationery, as well as brushes and steamers for cleaning textiles.

The duo, now in their mid-fifties, like to collaborate long-term with their selective choice of brands. These include Parisian shoe brand Veja as well as Armedangels, Knowledge Cotton Apparel, Mud Jeans, and SKFK. The assortment features about 30 brands, but new and above all local brands are always welcome all the same. “Our mailbox tends to be stuffed with offers. We take a very close look at how a brand presents itself and whether it meets our criteria. And that’s also true of brands that have already been with us for a while. If we notice that they are no longer concentrating on sustainability quite as strongly, then that’s them out the window.”

Today’s clientele is highly discerning and usually thinks at least twice before buying something new. “Which is precisely why we have to offer that extra bit of service, friendliness, and good advice.” In this context, Supergoods provides a veritable trove of information on its extensive website. That said, the homepage is more of a calling card for the stores than an e-commerce platform. Added to which, Tonny and Anne are forever hosting special events, such as the “Green Beauty Days” currently taking place or their “Denim Days” in November. There’s also a reward program where clients garner points that they can either redeem when shopping or donate for a good cause. “Last year, we collected 11,000 euros that way, which we used to plant trees and to support women’s empowerment projects.” Supergoods also emphasizes circularity in fashion: Thanks to its “take-back” program, clients can drop old garments off in the store, which are then sorted by co-operation partner Be The Fibre and reused. In fact, some of the old clothes turn back up at Supergoods, having been made into fabric bags.

supergoods.be



SUPERGOODS ANTWERP
Kloosterstraat 38,
2000 Antwerp
Belgium

SUPERGOODS GENT
Brabantdam 56 B
9000 Gent
Belgium

SUPERGOODS MECHELEN
Onze-Lieve-Vrouwestraat 116
2800 Mechelen
Belgium

Photos: Edith Oyen, Britt Guns, Ellen van Bouwerhuyzen

La Caserne

THE GIANT BETTER-FASHION ACCELERATOR

At a far remove from Paris's renowned shopping streets, La Caserne opened its doors in fall 2021. The former 1877 fire department building had stood vacant for years before being converted into nothing less than an incubation center for sustainable fashion, slap bang in the middle of a residential area to the north of the Gare de l'Est railway station.

Text: Barbara Markert

The self-proclaimed "largest hub for ecological transformation of the fashion and luxury goods industry in Europe" boasts some 300 square meters of store space and about six times that in office and studio space; added to which, the premises include a photo studio, event areas, a lab for textile research, a dance studio, and hospitality outlets.

The massive project is the brainchild of the founder of committed fashion house L'Exception, Régis Pennel, and in particular of Maeva Bessis, who is today the Managing Director of La Caserne. The project was obviously not something the two fashion sellers could shoulder on their own, given the dilapidated state and sheer size of the building with its total of 4,000 square meters, not to mention an inner courtyard sized 800 square meters. So from the very outset they onboarded prestigious investors: the IFTH (Institut Français du Textile et de l'Habillement), as well as luxury goods corporations Kering, LVMH, and Aigle. That said, the single largest slice of funding came from investment company Impala.

Today, roughly one and a half years after first opening, La Caserne has made a name for itself not just in Paris but has also evolved into a meeting point relating to sustainability. This was possible thanks to the management driving an ambitious events program and attracting various players from the Parisian sustainable fashion scene. LVMH's "Nona Source" digital platform, which offers remaining fabric stocks from the luxury corporation, has located its showroom here – designers can quite literally get their hands on the textiles and inspect them. Trade-fair organizer Who's Next has relocated its offices to the complex, and the Fédération de la Mode Circulaire, the Federation for Circular Fashion, celebrated its foundation here. Maeva Bessis suggests that "France has a huge reserve of extraordinary talent in the fields of fashion and creation. With this project, we seek to give those talents a working environment where they can interact and grow."

A nightclub that opened in September 2022, a rooftop chill-out space, a venue for concerts and flea markets alike – all good reasons to flock to the location slightly away from the center of town. The idea is to entertain and to sensitize visitors to changing consumerist approaches (to fashion). Aïssé Diarra, Head of Marketing at La Caserne, is very positive: "The vegetarian restaurant, the local flower seller and the great terrace in the inner courtyard are really pulling the crowds. And our conferences, yoga, and rugby courses are exceptionally well received, too. That said, many people come because of the sustainable shopping."

In the free store areas on the ground floor, start-ups that have managed to grab a studio slot at La Caserne can then install pop-ups for private and archive sales or showrooms. French shoe brand Caval availed itself of the opportunity to host an event for clients and supporters. A permanent presence is the L'Exception boutique by La-Caserne co-founder Régis Pennel. The store specializes in national (as in French) and sustainable brands and used to be located in the high-traffic shopping center of Les Halles downtown but moved here after a pause during COVID. Relocating somewhere off the beaten shopping track was a risk, but one that today ideally rounds out the company's flourishing online trade. Pennel's core clientele now love taking the slight detour to the store to inspect his latest discoveries in the field of sustainable fashion products – no doubt also because there is so much more to enjoy and discover at La Caserne.

lacaserneparis.com

LA CASERNE
12, rue Philippe de Girard
75010 Paris
France





CABINET STORE

UNDER-AN-ARCH ECO-EXCELLENCE

“We’re trying to decelerate in a hyper-nervous world and identify the beauty in small things.” This sentence forms part of the mission statement of the Cabinet Store in Zurich, Switzerland, a concept boutique “for sustainable and luxurious clothing and the important things in life”. The language gives the game away: These retailers have evidently devoted a lot of thought to their concept. The founding couple, Nina and Jeroen van Rooijen, both trained in fashion design and have been active in the sector for quite a while now. Jeroen in particular is sought out by many for interviews – after all, he spent decades working as a style journalist for the daily “Neue Züricher Zeitung”, among others. In 2015, the couple took the plunge and went into retailing, first with a pop-up in the then brand-new lifestyle and shopping mile formed by the Wipkinger and Letten Viaduct, a railway highline that had been converted into a row of studios, stores, and restaurants. Jeroen van Rooijen recollects that “actually we just wanted to have fun for two months selling our things and then suddenly it had turned into eight years.”

Text: Barbara Markert

During that period, the former industrial district in the west of Zurich has evolved into a highly popular living and entertainment quarter. Today it is considered one of the most expensive parts of town. Moreover, in 2020, the Cabinet Store relocated from the very outer edge of the viaduct right to the center, a move that has proven to be a real advantage for the store’s trade in “handmade products that are environmentally friendly and good for the soul”. The assortment meanwhile features a total of 75 brands – spanning the worlds of fashion, jewelry, interior design, and home textiles – and the boutique now employs six people. It has from the outset also been producing its own line of womenswear.

The van Rooijens felt it really important to offer a collection they had themselves designed and that was entirely produced in Switzerland. “The Swiss whip out their phones at any price and check whether rivals are offering it for less, whereas we wanted to set our own prices. Our line is not available anywhere else and only from us here in the store.” The prototypes are created in the studio section of the store on the upper story, below which is the sales room with its approx. 90 square meters of floor space beneath the picturesque railway arch.

When searching for new brands, the couple mainly relies on recommendations from people they trust, on surfing the Internet, and only secondarily on visiting trade fairs because “anyone can order what is on offer there”. Their latest discovery is the Matka label. The Spaniards make their fashion without using any chemicals or producing any waste. Likewise from Spain, Cordera is a brand that only offers one-size pieces. The slow-wear hat label Lola Hats comes from New York, while Hulahan, which transforms old military garb and centuries-old fabrics into new models to order, is based in Birmingham, UK. And then there are the beautiful ceramics made by Claymen from New Delhi.

Although the duo carefully curates the selection of outside pieces on offer, the intention is for the Cabinet Store to be even stricter in the choices going forwards. Jeroen comments that “we want to bid farewell to all brands that are not really and truly sustainable. And we will be offering our Secondhand project, which has hitherto been seasonal, on a permanent basis henceforth, as it gives rise to bags and bags of new ideas.” The assortment already avoids any articles from China; instead, there is knitwear from Nepal that is procured there directly. The two 53-year-olds are convinced that given the current crises, clients’ budgets will contract, and the store’s present structure will be very viable. “The market looks set to change, which is why it is crucial to ensure the assortment is firmly focused on sustainability.”

cabinet-store.ch

CABINET STORE
Im Viadukt, Bogen 23
Viaduktstrasse 41
CH-8005 Zurich
Switzerland

TOMO

FULL CIRCLE

Tomo has brought circular fashion to a wider audience via its new department store at the Westfield Mall of the Netherlands. We take a look at the concept and its many strands, bringing together eco-minded brands and a number of re-commerce services.

Text: Emma Holmqvist Deacon

Circular department store Tomo has taken the high-traffic shopping mall in a new direction. Spread across some 1000 square meters, its doors opened at the Westfield Mall of the Netherlands in Leidschendam, a few months ago, in March 2023. The first of its kind, Tomo offers over 100 sustainable fashion, beauty and lifestyle brands along with a range of ReCommerce services – as in resell, rent, refill and repair.

Founded by Marjan Haselhoff, the concept is rooted in her desire to create a hub in which a wealth of brands and experiences come together to give sustainability 'a more fashionable feel'. The fashion brand assortment includes names from near and far, such as Dedicated, Lanius, Ivy & Oak, Mud Jeans and accessories brand UAU Project. Alongside the established roster of fashion brands, Tomo also boasts a growing cluster of emerging, mission-driven labels. These names include Sheltersuit, Faace, Dopper, Moyee Coffee, Parafina and Return to Sender – all of which have built their businesses on ethical and eco-friendly foundations. As for non-fashion products, 3D printed homeware and homecare items by Kinfill are available.

To cast a glance at the ReCommerce section of the concept, the Resell department offers high-end vintage clothing courtesy of The Next Closet; Rent, meanwhile, makes available items for special occasions on a rental-subscription basis via &-Onwards. Tomo's repair service is available free of charge for five years for any fashion item bought in the store. And you're also gladly invited to recycle unwanted pieces via a machine operated by Drop & Loop, who dispense loyalty points in exchange for each item. The clothing is then transformed into new materials and products by Wolkat.

No department store claiming to be sustainable would turn a blind eye to the problem of single-use plastics. To address the issue, Tomo has a dedicated space for its Refill department, which concentrates entirely on refilling of empty beauty packaging. Also in residence, the Dopper Water Tap has made its first appearance in a fashion retail environment, encouraging customers to refill a reusable water bottle.

The circular approach is reflected in the bright and contemporary shop interior, too. Over 95 percent of the store interior is crafted from sustainable and circular materials, some of which are made from food industry by-products – eggshells and fish scales included. The circular, zero waste lighting fixtures – produced in collaboration with Signify – are 3D printed using 65 percent recycled materials.

Tomo's overarching approach to sustainability will no doubt inspire and educate consumers of all persuasions, making circular fashion and ReCommerce accessible and desirable to a broader customer base in the process.

tomo.nl

TOMO
Kamperfoelie 9
2262 AC Leidschendam
The Netherlands





roberta organic fashion

A HUMAN TOUCH

Daniela Perak has owned a concept store for sustainable fashion since 2016: roberta organic fashion, at the heart of Düsseldorf's Pempelfort district. After ten years in the art trade she was simply “fed up with empty phrases and upper-class attitudes and always hearing the same things at the private views.”

Text: Inga Klaassen

Back then it may have still led a niche existence, but fair fashion was already her true passion. Fashion with no toxic additives, no child labor, but with a whole lot of style: That was the recipe she came up with one summer on holiday when thinking about a business plan for roberta. She felt a straightforward fashion boutique simply had no real future, because she wanted the new store concept to rest firmly on the values of fairness and sustainability. Success has proved her right: In January 2023, Perak opened a second branch in the Unterbilk district.

roberta prioritizes less being more at all levels. Less bulk sales, less superficiality, good basics, honest recommendations, and the courage to say so when a piece is not ideally suited for a client – this is crucial, Perak says. “Only if apparel is utterly convincing does it get worn often and it therefore truly sustainable.”

One thing is for sure: She wants to put paid to prejudices about fair fashion. “All too often, you read that sustainably made clothing is very expensive and not up-to-date. Statements like that not only damage the entire segment as they frighten off customers, but they are also quite simply wrong,” she insists. When selecting the precious pieces she sells, she focuses not only on longevity, timelessness, and style, but also on “clean materials” and transparency across the entire supply chain. “Every single piece I sell is made of pure natural fibers from controlled organic farms. You’ll only find synthetic fibers at roberta in exceptional instances, for example for bags or jackets. And they’ll have been recycled, in any case,” Perak continues. Alongside renowned brands such as Armedangels, Jan’n June, Suite13Lab, Elementum, SKFK, Genesis, Embassy, Givn or Shipsheip, roberta also features a curated assortment of apparel by local designers from Düsseldorf and the region.

roberta-thestore.com

**ROBERTA ORGANIC
FASHION PEMPELFORT**
Nordstr. 71
40477 Düsseldorf
Germany

**ROBERTA ORGANIC
FASHION UNTERBILK**
Bilker Allee 55
40219 Düsseldorf
Germany

Glore

BE GREEN IN ANY COLOR YOU LIKE

Glore Hamburg is a pioneer of the sustainable fashion industry. Since as long ago as 2010, the company has prioritized “globally responsible fashion” and has been providing retailers with sustainable fashion on a large scale. The company goes out of its way to make certain the portfolio is not only produced in an eco-friendly and fair manner but is also visually appealing and decidedly modern.

Text: Cheryl Mühlen

GLORE
Marktstr. 31
20357 Hamburg
Germany

This is only logical, as Glore Hamburg firmly believes that sustainability and style need not be mutually exclusive. Clothing is not only something you wear but expresses personality and individuality. The unique shopping experience is rounded out by the care taken in designing the stores in a way that imbues them with an inspiring mood in which clients can live their passion for fashion and sustainability.

Today, Glore operates no fewer than 14 concept stores in Austria and Germany, with each of them managed by an independent owner. As a result, each store has a face of its own and plenty of personal flair.

“Looking back, in recent years I have seen a change for the better in the fashion industry. It’s brilliant to witness how fair fashion is at long last shaking off its homemade-wool feel and is getting more of the attention it deserves,” comments Wiebke Clef, owner of the Glore Hamburg store. “On the other hand, the sector is still really tiny. Although for some years now our stores have been able to field proper assortments and buy selectively, there are still far too few new brands popping up that are completely sustainable and fashionable, meaning it remains hard to persuade highly fashion-conscious customers to buy such apparel.”

An important element of what Glore Hamburg offers is the wide-ranging assortment of jeans, which extend from basics to fashionable denims. In the selection of products, there is a strong emphasis on offering a great choice of sizes and diversity. Among the top brands at Glore Hamburg are Nudie Jeans, Armedangels, and Veja. Wiebke Clef is also delighted that an ever-greater number of smaller brands that have been part of the assortment for some time are now starting to truly blossom.

glore-hamburg.de
glore.de



Loveco

GROW SLOW AND STAY FOREVER

Love and ecology – two values that are firmly anchored in the very name of Berlin's Loveco sustainable store and capture the philosophy behind the concept in a nutshell. We talked to co-founder Christina Wille about the background to the concept.

Interview: Deniz Trosdorff



Loveco founders Christina Wille and Moritz Marker

Why a fair fashion store, and why four (in Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg, and Schöneberg)?

We want Loveco to form a counterbalance to the conventional fashion world in order to change the textile industry long-term into a socially viable and ecological sector. Until such a time as there are no more major fast fashion giants, we think there's a need for stores that sell sustainable fashion.

What is the perception / acceptance of sustainable fashion like in Germany?

In the first few years we really had to combat a perception many people had that sustainable fashion translated into unfashionable colors, wide cuts, and scratchy, itchy materials. Slowly, perceptions are changing, and sustainable fashion is becoming ever more important to consumers. Germany is the single largest sales market for many of the brands. In other words, the demand and interest in Germany seems to be higher than in other countries. Nevertheless, we need to convince a whole lot more people to buy sustainable apparel.

What's your concept?

Our concept hinges on three key criteria: eco, fair, and vegan. Our fashion must not harm people, animals, or the environment and must have a sustainable impact on the value chain. And needless to say, we try to make certain our company is

itself as sustainable as the fashion items we sell. We work with a green bank, rely on eco-electricity, buy organic foods, use public transport, recycle the packaging materials, do not trash product overhangs but go on selling them, etc.

Do you offer special services / have a special USP?

We offer very intense sales advice in the stores and online, something I find is now ever more lacking in other retail segments. Moreover, it seems to me a matter of course that we also take clothing to a tailor if something is defective. On request, we order articles from other outlets to our own store and also try to offer good all-round service.

What brands are in your portfolio at the moment?

Renowned ones like Armedangels, Knowledge Cotton Apparel, Nudie Jeans, JAN 'N JUNE, and Kings of Indigo, but also smaller ones such as Jyoti or Oy Surf.

What's your vision of the future?

We'd like to grow a tiny bit more. However, the current crises make the going tough and we first need to exit the crisis mode.

Many thanks for your time!

loveco-shop.de

LOVECO SCHÖNEBERG
Eisenacher Str. 36/37
10781 Berlin
Germany

LOVECO KREUZBERG
im Körtekiez
Körtestraße 14
10967 Berlin
Germany

LOVECO FRIEDRICHSHAIN
Sonntagstr. 29
10245 Berlin
Germany

LOVECO KREUZBERG
am Görlitzer Bahnhof
(Schuhe & Accessoires)
Manteuffelstr. 77
10999 Berlin
Germany



HIER

... & A STORY

Slowed-down and local, high-quality and timeless, fair and personal – these and other attributes characterize the profile of Munich-based store HIER. We talked to owner and designer Stephanie Kanau.

Interview: Silke Bucker

Stephanie, what is the concept of the HIER store in a nutshell?

The HIER store is truly personal, combining a studio and retail space, staged in a kind of old apartment with several rooms that I share with opticians Jules&Mel, textile designer Eva Schlechte, and my assistant. My STEPHANIE KANAU collection consists of one-off pieces that do not follow any particular trend, season, or other specifications. In terms of style, I oscillate between art and design, with an emphasis on finishes, undoubtedly conditioned by my textile design studies. By producing in-house, I remain completely independent of supply chains, can respond much faster, avoid overproduction, and never go on sale.

Which brands are featured and why?

We prefer to carry labels from Munich and the surrounding area – with around 35 now, we see ourselves as a collective. For me, the important things are the personal relationship with the designers, a suitable philosophy, and transparency with regard to production. Our products are not anonymous; we can tell a story about all of them.

How do you rate the perception and acceptance of "sustainable fashion" in Germany?

Certainly, people are increasingly looking for sustainable labels, but unfortunately they still buy too much fast fashion, or consumers are quickly blinded by labels that merely appear sustainable. There is definitely a lack of transparency here. To a certain extent, I see the danger that wearing sustainable fashion is currently a trend – which of course is not the point. What we need is a fundamental change in our approach.

What is your vision of a healthy fashion market?

Ultimately, it is inevitable that we will have to buy less and more conscientiously – and that applies to all areas. We need to draw on existing resources, to promote and preserve regional crafts. I hope that at some point the term "fashion" loses its negative connotation, because fashion in itself is actually something very beautiful.

hier.studio



HIER
Innere Wiener Strasse 24,
81667 Munich
Germany

Photo: @Maya Saric

ABOUT GIVEN

DISCOVER SLOWNESS

Brigitte von Puttkamer started her career in fashion with a high-end womenswear brand. There, she got an in-depth, behind-the-scenes view of things and realized just how “bad and wasteful” the operations of the conventional industry are. The insights she gained paved the way for her to opt for “slow fashion”. Her ABOUT GIVEN store on Munich’s Baaderstrasse comes straight from her heart, and with its emphasis on quality, longevity, and aesthetics is a veritable biotope for fashion connoisseurs who, out of conviction, wish to make better buying decisions.

Interview: Silke Bücken



Brigitte, what’s the basic concept of ABOUT GIVEN?

When I opened ABOUT GIVEN back in 2008, we were trailblazers of eco-fashion. I wanted no compromises as regards quality, ethics, sustainability, and style, which is why I kept earning my money freelancing for many years. That way, I was able to develop and grow my store slowly. My goal is to thrill people with the beauty and appeal of sustainable products, and we invested a lot of time at ABOUT GIVEN in a coherent selection of garments for our range. We prioritize providing professional advice, know-how, and service, and we’re a team of genuine, positive people who wish to offer our clientele a great in-store experience.

How would you rate the perception and acceptance of “sustainable fashion” by consumers in Germany?

“Sustainable” fashion is now here to stay. Many people are willing to buy sustainable products, albeit only if they don’t have to do something extra. Of course, eco-fashion can be produced cost-effectively, but that tends to involve compromising on quality, which in turn impacts on durability. Or artificial fibers (admittedly recycled ones) get added to the weave, which impairs circularity. Not for me and not with me. I feel part of my mission is to make it clear to people why it is worth investing in high-grade products, even if they cost more. It’s great to see how customers who go down this path end up being so enthusiastic and exude a different feel for quality.

What’s your vision of a healthy fashion market?

Since any production process, irrespective of how sustainable it is, always leaves traces, we’ve simply got to go for ‘less and better’. It would be great if a change in society and the requirements of new ideas of how we should live would get us there, rather than having to proclaim bans on things. There’s a clear trend toward a slow culture. People are increasingly yearning for a slower life, for simplicity, for a more aware lifestyle – something that leads to more mindful consumers. That gives good grounds for hope.

aboutgiven.de

ABOUT GIVEN
Baaderstrasse 55
80469 Munich
Germany

ERBE
Königstrasse 147
90762 Fürth
Germany



A thoroughbred retailer:
As co-founder of the successful Bube und König store in Nuremberg, since 2021 Raimar Bradt has been specially committed to products ‘Made in Germany’ at his eRBe store.

eRBe – Raimar Bradt

COOL SHIT

Raimar Bradt opened his store eRBe in the old town of Fürth in February 2021 taking as his slogan ‘Fashion, sustainability, and cool shit’. His aim: to raise awareness for greater quality, appreciation, and sustainability.

Text: Cheryl Mühlen

In February 2021, Raimar Bradt fulfilled his long-held dream and opened eRBe in the old town of Fürth in Germany. The company boasts his initials – and in German aptly spells “heritage”. With almost 20 years of experience in retail under his belt, Bradt’s mission is to offer ‘really cool shit’ that sets his customers’ pulses racing.

To fulfill his vision, Bradt has put together a portfolio of renowned brands that reflects more than just good taste. The select assortment includes A Kind of Guise, Blaumann, Merz b Schwanen, Yar, Beyers Oil, Seldom, Micky Oye, NP Keramik, Brütting, and newcomer Susumu Ai. When choosing the products and brands, moreover, Bradt places special emphasis on their being “Made in Germany”.

This focus on German brands and producers allows Bradt to maintain short supply chains and always be in direct contact with his partners. In this way, he emphasizes the importance of

personal relationships with manufacturers who are just as passionate as is he. While the search for the right partners can be time-consuming, he particularly enjoys working with companies with famous traditions and a name for quality, as this ultimately leads to a win-win situation for everyone involved.

While not all brands curated by eRBe are fair-fashion or sustainable, you’ll look in vain to find fast fashion here. Bradt is critical of the ‘double standards’ of many consumers, who buy cheaply produced clothing on the one hand, while at the same time expecting fairness and sustainability. Yet he also knows that sustainability will remain a challenge for many companies for the time being. With his focus on “Made in Germany”, Raimar Bradt hopes to raise awareness for sustainable consumption and German brands and thus to do his little bit toward creating a more sustainable future.

raimarbradt.de

P&C – Conscious Fashion Store

TO NEW BEGINNINGS

Despite the ongoing insolvency protection proceedings Peek & Cloppenburg Düsseldorf has persevered with its plans and on May 19, 2023, opened its Conscious Fashion Store on Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. General Sales Manager Thimo Schwenzfeier is delighted with the successful start.

Interview: Wolfgang Altmann



**PEEK & CLOPPENBURG
CONSCIOUS FASHION
STORE**
The Playce
Alte Postdamer Straße 7
Berlin
Germany

Your new store boasts some 3,000 square meters. How many brands are you offering there?

About 60, and they include Ecoalf and Armedangels. Some 30 percent, such as Lanius, Vaude and Knowledge Cotton Apparel, are new to our range. Then there is our deliberately exclusive brand Jake's Studio. On the second basement level there is an area with second-hand fashion courtesy of Vintage & Rags – an absolute first for P&C. We also stock more sustainable collections from the existing P&C assortment such as Drykorn and Hugo Boss.

What do you mean by more sustainable collections?

For us this means brands whose individual lines or capsules fulfill more sustainable aspects than do their main collections.

What criteria do you apply when selecting your brands?

We rely on a list of certification seals that our Sustainability Department established two years ago; since December we have tightened the criteria further. Products are assigned to one of our three sustainability categories: Organic, Responsible, Recycled. Our procurement staff use this list when making their purchases.

Exactly which quality seals are we talking about?

We work with some 20 certification seals, such as GOTS, OCS and RCS, Made in Green by Oeko-Tex or Grüner Knopf.

Does the store design also reflect your conscious fashion concept?

Yes, our concept is an 'architecture of reduction'. We manage without those elements that are not strictly necessary like paneling for the ceilings and walls. Everything is pared back and that includes the unsealed concrete floor. Our furniture comprises versatile modules that can be freely configured and a shelving system made of wood from sustainable forestry. What's more, our LED-spotlights are extremely energy-efficient.

Your manifesto 'We Care Together' is a real attention grabber. Can you explain what's behind it?

It's the title of the initiative we have launched for a transparent and credible sustainability. The manifesto symbolizes our responsibility and our goals. The final sentence 'Not perfect, but with the aspiration to become better' is particularly important to me.

What steps have you already taken?

One step is the opening of our Conscious Fashion Store. Here, for example, we have an open studio where customers can get their faulty garments repaired. Or apparel can be customized – and we offer DIY courses on the topic. There are workshops on things like 'proper textile care'. Our centerpiece is the Talk Area on the second basement level. It will be a venue for regular panel discussions, for example in cooperation with the Fashion Council. You could say the Conscious Fashion Store will operate something like a lab where we try out concepts that we might later launch at other stores in order to further raise the awareness of P&C customers for more sustainable fashion.

peek-cloppenburg.de

ANZEIGE

Fashion for ever

Interview: Kristin Walzel

Ivy Oak was founded in 2016 in Berlin with the intention of consciously producing fashion more sustainably – and encouraging its consumption in a similar vein. Founder and designer Caroline Gentz seeks to create clothing that adapts to everyday life – and its special moments. Clothing that wears well in both senses – possibly lasting your entire life. In the process, she prioritizes transparency, with around 80 percent of her collections made in Europe. Ivy Oak offsets all its carbon emissions, and the brand even invests in climate protection. In conversation with us, Caroline describes her vision of what a contemporary fashion market should look like and why you actually already own the most sustainable of products.



FASHION FORWARD

FASHION FORWARD

From the word go, Ivy Oak has focused exclusively on eco-conscious designs and fair production. Where has the brand currently got to in that transformation process?

Sustainability is a constant process, especially as we want to constantly improve in order to reduce our eco-footprint. Key here is the right choice of materials. We are always searching for more ecological variants and keep abreast of the latest developments in the market. We want to move ever more effectively toward a circular economy and are therefore increasingly relying on recycled materials such as wool or, most recently, down. Moreover, we focus on recyclability when we first develop a product. Our classic double-face coats, for example, are made wholly of wool and dispense with a lining. That said, what comes top of the list is to create products that can be used for as long as possible, which is why quality and longevity are so crucial. Only then can you think of passing your clothes on to the next generation or at the very least wearing your favorite coat regularly – for years and years and years. The most sustainable product is the one you already own.

Ivy Oak makes use of deadstocks. How exactly do you manage that since you are still a comparatively small label?

Using deadstock fabrics is a great way to produce fashion that spares resources and avoids waste. As a matter of fact, for us as a start-up it was extremely helpful in our infancy, as it meant we were sewing high-grade fabrics which, given the minimum order sizes, would have simply been out of our reach. Deadstock materials are therefore ideal if you're only producing in small lots.

Has Ivy Oak already been certified, for example for use of organic cotton?

When we first set up shop, we were already using more eco-friendly materials for our creations. We've been trying to boost the share of such materials ever since in order to minimize the impact on the environment. In our 2022 Fall / Winter Collection, 99 percent of the cotton came from ecological farms, where it was produced to a high social and environmental standard. To make certain our organic cotton meets the most stringent requirements, we only procure materials that have been awarded recognized certification in a stringent process – one example would be the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). While we ourselves are not yet certified, we consciously collaborate with our suppliers to ensure our materials are. Certification proper is a major challenge for small brands such as ours because of the great administrative effort and high costs involved. At present, we're in the process of getting certification for another natural material, which is why we are confident that our next Fall / Winter collection will be the first to feature products certified as complying with the Responsible Wool standard. We firmly believe that independent certification gives you the transparency required and offers our clientele certainty that they are buying fashion made with materials that are produced in line with the right social and ecological standards.

Transparency plays an important role at Ivy Oak. How transparent is your supply chain?

Transparency is not just for us but is also important for our clients. They form the knowledge basis for an ecological and social form of production, and this strengthens confidence in our brand. We know all our sewing companies and fabric manufacturers, as we procure the lion's share of our textiles ourselves. For some

articles, we can trace the entire supply chain, for example for our leather products that are produced entirely in Turkey. However, there are still supply chains where we don't have all the information at our fingertips. We're doing our level best to improve the visibility of all deliveries and gather as much data as possible. The overall objective is to be able to post the origin of each product on our product pages – as well as the route it has taken from the first fiber through to the final result. That way, our clients will have a complete overview.

How is your fashionwear made, and where?

Over 80 percent of our collections are made in Europe; we work with production partners and textile suppliers in Bulgaria, Italy, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, and Turkey. We also collaborate with selected partners and specialists in China. In fact, some of them were part of the team that made our very first collection. A strong partnership with our suppliers is crucial to us, and we remain in close contact with them accordingly. Our partners share our vision and by signing our code of conduct commit to realizing our ESG guidelines for manufacturing.

What materials do you use? And where do they come from?

For our current Spring / Summer collection, we've gone for a lot of Naia™, a cellulose acetate that is highly versatile. Like Tencel Lyocell, the fibers are made in a closed loop process, meaning that the chemicals involved are reinjected into the production cycle. At the moment we use viscose and wool most, whereby we believe it is key that the viscose used comes exclusively from manufacturers who have a "Green Shirt" rating in the Canopy Hot Button rankings. That means that they have been audited by independent assessors and then rated by the non-profit forest protection group Canopy as best-in-class in raw materials procurement. Wool is a wonderful material that we use for our all-time favorites, our classic coats. Wool may be resource-intensive to make, but its natural consistency means it has a very long service life. If cared for correctly, woolen clothes can last forever. Added to which, wool is super-easy to recycle.

In the current Spring / Summer collection, Ivy Oak is offering styles in outsizes for the first time. What prompted this?

We really want our clientele to feel good and self-confident in our apparel. We advocate diversity in fashion and therefore want to offer a broad spectrum of sizes. We've had a comparatively wide range from day one, extending from 32 to 46, but we felt this didn't go far enough. In the contemporary segment there is still too little fashion in the +46 range. So last year our pattern-makers and product developers devoted themselves to expanding the lines, and we're now so proud to be launching our first styles in sizes up to 52. It's a huge step for us as a young brand and entails hefty investments. But our goal is to exclude no one and to offer timeless, ageless designs that appeal to clients from different age groups. And behind this idea is the overarching wish that a piece of clothing gets passed on from one generation to the next and loses nothing of its high quality.

ivy oak.de

B Corp: Can a certificate trigger system change?

Text: Nina Lorenzen

Social business, purpose, impact, or common-good corporations – these are just a few of the terms that increasingly crop up in connection with social entrepreneurship. The B Corp seal certifies responsible corporate governance. Moreover, the movement aspires to change the future of business. How does it intend to achieve that?



Certification beyond the product – that's B Corp's mission

Photo: Mel Poole/ Unsplash

Given the permanent crises dogging the world today, it is only logical that companies are becoming aware of their social responsibilities and adjusting their business model accordingly. But what distinguishes a social corporation? Based on the European Commission's definition, the SEND network (Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland e.V.) states that the purpose of social corporations is to identify solutions for social challenges by entrepreneurial and innovative means that prioritize meaningful impact over profits.

B Corp, as in "Benefit Corporation", is what the NGO B Lab (founded in 2006) terms a company that delivers added value for society and the environment. There are meanwhile around 6,100 certificated B Corps in 89 countries. In accordance with legal standards, corporate process and strategies are assessed as regards governance, workers, society, the environment, and customers. B Corp eschews the typical shareholder value approach and instead insists on a stakeholder approach that includes all groups whose interests are directly or indirectly impacted by a company's activities in its assessment. In this way, B Corp differs significantly from seals that only certify products.

We are family: from Patagonia to Nespresso

At the beginning of the so-called "B Corp movement" it was primarily small businesses that assessed the impact of their activities. Today, alongside brands such as Patagonia, Sympatex, Ecoalf, Vinokilo, or Wildling Shoes the B Corp family also includes multinationals, a prime example being Nestlé subsidiary Nespresso. A decision that also drew a lot of criticism within the movement: Can corporate groups in a capitalist economy be socially beneficial? Yes, says Annika Wohlert, Community and Communications Manager at B Lab Germany. Real systems change, meaning the creation of a more integrative, regenerative, and just economic system such as the one B Lab itself describes can only function if you also welcome large corporates into the fold. Wohlert emphasizes that B Corps embark on a journey and make a firm commitment to work on themselves by updating their articles of association to reflect the overall mission: "Unlike other certification systems perhaps, we want not just to address the current state of things but also to design a better future and change the system." Nespresso itself worked for eight whole years on the impact assessment process, at the end of which the company had scored 84.3 points and thus exceeded the minimum of 80 out of 200 points. In 2024, B Corp will be upping its standards. At that moment "We'll be able to see whether the change we want to see is actually materializing," Wohlert says. "A corporation like Nespresso cannot afford not to achieve recertification – if only for brand and image reasons."

Treading the thin line between CSR and marketing

Seals are not a must, but rate and validate existing business models – marketing divisions often use them to bolster a 'green' image and corporate communications. What is striking about the B Corps' publicly visible impact performance is that the multinationals score about the same points as small sustainable firms, despite the vast differences in the scale of the respective impact. This creates a problematic public perception and undermines the extensive assessment requirements. B Corp is responding to the ongoing criticism that certification makes some companies look better than they are by making all applicants as of 2024 meet minimum standards in all areas

covered by the impact assessment. It would also be desirable if it insisted that companies, in particular large corporates, pledge when seeking recertification to not only improve if they don't score the minimum 80 points – something not envisaged to date as part of the new standard.

Pushing for system change

To date, there's no proof that a certificate can bring about systems change, probably because most seals of approval are issued to specific products. By contrast, in its "Theory of Change" the B Global Network states that its very mission is to transform the economic system: B Corps are expected to influence political decision-making. This is not, however, mandatory. In the form of the Interdependence Coalition (IC) of B Lab Europe and The Good Lobby, more than 100 companies are pushing at the European level for it to become mandatory within the EU for corporate decisions to consider the interests of all stakeholders, including society and the environment. The coalition also champions the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. IC members include several certified B Corps who are thus voluntarily advocating a more equitable economic system beyond their own individual transformation processes and live the B Corp vision over and above certification proper. Nespresso is not among them.

bcorporation.de



Annika Wohlert is the Community Manager busy driving expansion of the B Corp movement in Germany. To date, there are 71 certified B Corps domiciled in Germany, of which only a very few are active in fashion.

How to identify fair fashion

A green response to the hangover

Text: Yvonne Egberink

The United Nations calls it an “emergency for the environment and society”. In fashion, excess production and consumption are in evidence wherever you look, and the impacts of the textile industry on health, the environment, and resources are huge. Recycling and the circular economy are expected to provide a way out of the problem, along with quality seals and certificates, but is it really possible to consume sustainably today? And how can you identify “sustainable” fashion?

German consumers purchase about 60 new articles of clothing a year. The German textiles and clothing industry is one of the key consumer sectors, posting sales of 40 billion euros annually. And the cost? Astronomical.

A few facts to start

Three fifths of all pants, shirts, and dresses land on garbage dumps or in incinerators within a year of being made – which translates into one truckload every second. In Germany alone, about 1.6 million tons of clothing gets trashed each year. EU-wide, purchases of personal clothing are fourth in the league table for causing environmental damage – after food, housing, and transport. In fact, almost 85 percent of that eco-damage is done outside the EU, quite apart from wage and working conditions in the so-called low-wage countries. Chemical fibers made from fossil fuel sources also constitute a massive problem, as does conventionally farmed cotton: Taking up 2.4 percent of farmland worldwide, cotton accounts for about 25 percent of insecticides used and about 10 percent of the pesticide market. Moreover, textile finishing is one of the industries with the highest, in part very polluted wastewater volumes. It’s a pretty sobering picture, as is the fact that the majority of textiles on the market are not suitable for skin contact – either during production or later when worn. Also not to be forgotten is the fact that the system is not circular: Although about one quarter of secondhand clothing collected in Germany gets recycled, this does not mean the fibers are used to manufacture new apparel. Rather, the textiles get “down-cycled” as in “shredded” and turned into cleaning cloths or insulation and filler materials.

SIX FACTS ON FASHION

3500 chemicals are used in textile production 10% are harmful to health and 5% are dangerous for the environment.

35% of primary microplastics in the oceans come from washing synthetic textiles Every year, 0.5 million tons of microplastic fibers enter the oceans from washing synthetic textiles, accounting for 35% of the total microplastics release.

1000 m³ water each person uses every year for textiles In the EU, private consumption of textiles is the fourth largest contributor to environmental damage, using 1.3 tons of raw material and over 100 m³ of water per person per year – almost 85% of this environmental damage occurs outside the EU.

25% of new textiles are not sold directly During production, around 12% of textile fabrics remain as offcuts. 25% of the finished textiles remain unsold.

Less than 1% of textiles are recycled into new textiles. The myth of the ability to circulate. Textile production grows by 2.7% annually, while only 1% of textiles are recycled back into new garments.

1 second Every second, a truckload of textiles is burned or ends up in a landfill.

Combatting the consumerist hangover with circular design?

Excess production and textile garbage continue to rise, and with them greenhouse gases, pushing critical environmental limits in the Global South to tipping point – it’s a vicious circle and an increasing number of consumers feel overwhelmed by it. The fashion party is no longer raging. It’s hangover time. Greenpeace’s “After the Binge – the Hangover” report, for example, concerns itself with the psychological impacts of shopping and identifies the real hangover in society as a consequence. All those polled in the report already own far too much and are indeed aware of the fact. At the same time, people go on consuming, although for half of them the joy of having bought something new tends to dissipate within a day. One third of them then feels even more empty and less fulfilled than before the shopping spree. Short-lived fashion and excessive consumerism are thus not just bad for the climate, the environment, and the body, but our purchasing habits also directly impair our mental wellbeing. And that’s aside from the frustration and confusion given the lack of transparency and the fact that companies rarely implement sustainable strategies, make an effort, or make commitments.

One example is whether materials and products are viable for circularity, something that is increasingly emerging as the technical solution to the environmental problems of today’s throw-away society. Politicians and the fashion industry propagate circular design, recycling, and returns systems, and publicly declared promises such as “Made of PET” and “We can close the circle together” are now broadly accepted. The goal is to use materials and resources efficiently and for as long as possible, and to continue to use them after they have been used the first time around. It’s an exciting approach with a lot of potential, but various studies suggest that it is a far cry from reality: There’s almost no textile-to-textile recycling, let alone transparent data on returns systems, and designs have accorded repair or recycling a negligible role to date – throughout the sector. If circularity is not to become just one more buzzword among many, then the major challenges have to be overcome.

“Only three percent of clothing is made from recycled material; less than half of used clothes are collected for re-use, and less than one percent really gets recycled and turned into new clothing.”

Greenpeace

The Alka Seltzer: assuming personal responsibility

Even if, in the Greenpeace detox report entitled “A Fashion Myth on Green Fast Fashion”, textile corporations are the ones declared primarily responsible for the status quo – and cited as the reason for limiting consumers’ opportunities for alternatives like sharing, repair, lending, and secondhand – individuals’ purchasing behavior also has a major impact. To give just one example: The fashion industry is one of the main sources of greenhouse gases. If every person in Germany were to purchase two fewer items every year, then on average we would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the amount currently caused by domestic flights.

Is self-responsibility the panacea? The pill against the consumerist hangover? Well, says Nora Griefahn of NGO Cradle to Cradle says, by taking action ourselves we would at least experience the impact we can personally have: “I can change the world through my own actions.” Which does not mean that responsibility for the challenges of today can only be borne at the personal level. Sustainable consumerism means taking a stance and having some backbone – a stance to be adopted by everyone involved, the producing companies, retailers, and consumers. One first step has been taken in this regard; most recently, there were cheers when the long-called-for German law on corporate diligence in adhering to human rights in supply chains was enacted on January 1, 2023 – the so-called Supply Chain Act (LkSG). The slogan: produce more fairly, consume more fairly.

Greenwashed or really “green” – so what does fair mean?

If taking a clear stance drives production and consumption, then buzzwords such as “organic”, “made from recycled materials”, and textile certifications should inform sustainable purchasing decisions. Renowned certifying agencies such as Oeko-Tex and GOTS are seeing increasing demand in the market, but many fashion producers and consumers still find it hard to label and identify fair fashion. One reason for this is that there is no one quality seal that guarantees the complete sustainable production of an item of clothing and certifies the entire value chain. Supply chains are simply too complex for that. The focus can only ever be on individual aspects such as ecological and social standards, fair wages and working conditions, environmental protection or non-toxic materials farmed sustainably. There are, however, official certificates that at least prove compliance with defined standards, which is a precondition for a transparent supply chain. Since there is only a narrow line between this and greenwashing, the following list only includes those quality seals and certificates that demonstrably fulfil most of these nine quality criteria.

NINE RELEVANT CRITERIA FOR “FAIR FASHION”

- 1. GOES BEYOND THE STATUTORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND THERE IS NO RECORD OF ANY VIOLATION OF THEM**
- 2. REGULARLY REVISES ITS APPROVAL CRITERIA**
- 3. ONLY APPROVES CERTIFICATION AFTER AN AUDIT**
- 4. INDEPENDENT AND COMPETENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPROVAL CRITERIA**
- 5. QUALITY SEAL AGENCY, RECIPIENT, AND CERTIFICATION OFFICE ARE INDEPENDENT OF ONE ANOTHER**
- 6. OBJECTIVE, SPONSORS, AND CRITERIA ARE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE**
- 7. REGULAR AND COMPREHENSIVE CONTROL OF COMPLIANCE WITH APPROVAL CRITERIA**
- 8. OUTSIDE THIRD PARTIES CONTROL COMPLIANCE WITH THE APPROVAL CRITERIA**
- 9. RECTIFICATIONS AND SANCTIONS IF APPROVAL CRITERIA ARE NOT COMPLIED WITH**

THE MORE THE MERRIER

TEXTILE LABELS AND MATERIALS AT A GLANCE



GLOBAL ORGANIC TEXTILE STANDARD (GOTS) – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

Environmental and social label in the textile industry that uses independent certifying offices to ensure that textiles contain at least 70% certified organic fibers, and social standards such as prohibiting child labor or paying just wages are adhered to. global-standard.org



FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED COTTON – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

The label stands for sustainable cotton production. It secures FAIRTRADE minimum prices and premiums, prohibits child labor, promotes safe and healthy jobs, and also meets a few ecological standards such as the prohibition of dangerous pesticides. fairtrade.net



GRÜNER KNOPF – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

The label is given to apparel that is made using better social and ecological standards than is customary. It is based on other seals like GOTS, adherence to which is monitored by agencies such as TÜV. gruener-knopf.de



BLAUER ENGEL – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

This government quality seal in Germany sets strict requirements and is awarded for environmentally friendly characteristics (e.g., resource-saving production, lower emissions, lower energy consumption levels) for various products, and thus also for electrical appliances or hygiene products, for example, alongside textiles. blauer-engel.de



BLUESIGN PRODUCT – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

The label seeks to reduce the ecological footprint of textile products along the entire value chain, for example through efficient use of energy and raw materials. It stands for safe production and distribution of artificial and natural fibers and also guarantees social aspects such as safety at work or employee health. bluesign.com



RESPONSIBLE WOOL STANDARD – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

The label is awarded to textile products made with sheep's wool. It ensures that the sheep can lead more natural lives by prohibiting mulesing or branding, along with other standards. responsibledown.org



NATURTEXTIL IVN ZERTIFIZIERT BEST – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

Eco- and social label issued by the natural textiles industry for ecological and socially compatible fabrics. The criteria cover all steps in clothing production, from the cotton field to retail sales. naturtextil.de



NATURLEDER IVN ZERTIFIZIERT – MEETS 9 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

Eco- and social label issued by the natural textiles industry securing more responsible use of resources and a limited use of substances harmful to health in leather production. It also sets social standards and guidelines for animal husbandry. naturtextil.de



FAIRWEAR FOUNDATION – MEETS 8 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

The fashion industry social label prescribes a set of social criteria (such as wages that give people a secure livelihood). Those who use it to certify their products commit to working towards achieving these criteria, but do not yet have to do so completely. fairwear.org



NEW MERINO – MEETS 7 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

Australian label that promises more sustainable and animal-friendly production of Merino wool by forbidding methods such as mulesing and insisting on compliance with other criteria for animal wellbeing. new-merino.com.au



COTTON MADE IN AFRICA – MEETS 7 OUT OF 9 QUALITY CRITERIA:

The label is awarded for cotton from non-GM farming but does not impose organic farming standards. Moreover, consumers cannot see whether the entire value chain is sustainable or “only” the cotton. cottonmadeinafrica.org

MATERIALS: A MIX DOESN'T HELP

There is a direct correlation between the raw materials used for textiles and their environmental impact; moreover, the choice of materials also strongly influences how fairly an item of clothing is produced. Essentially, the less the proportion of added fibers, the better the recyclability of the item. Separating mixed fibers is as good as impossible.

While functional clothing or products such as socks require a certain share of artificial fibers or spandex to ensure their functions and fit, a top made of 50 percent polyester and 50 percent cotton is basically geared to profit and is not sustainable: Wear-and-tear and washing give rise to microplastics that enter the environment. Unlike large pieces of plastic, these ‘rinsed’ items can no longer be “collected” and remain in the water system. One exception is cradle-to-cradle mixed fabrics or organic cotton products that are combined with at most 5-10 percent spandex. Recycled fibers should be preferred, gained from either regenerated ocean plastic or from recycled plastic that would otherwise end up in the incinerator. While this may not solve the problem of microplastics, it does create economic incentives to re-use plastic from the environment. This should not be misunderstood as carte blanche to go on tipping garbage in the oceans. “Made from 100 percent PET” might sound good, but there are two sides to every coin. For example, Tim Janssen and Nora Sophie Griefahn, managing directors of NGO C2C e.V., find nothing innovative, let alone eco-friendly, about the new PET trend in the textile industry. PET recycling has been in existence for 20 years now and has recently started removing invaluable materials from specific technical cycles so that primary raw materials have to be injected into them. In other words, a PET T-shirt cannot be turned into a bottle for cold drinks.

ON GREENWASHING

This is by no means an exhaustive list of quality seals. In the textile sector the widely-used BCI Standard (Better Cotton Initiative) is likewise often found. BCI champions sustainable cotton farming with fewer pesticides and trains cotton farmers who then get the corresponding licenses. BCI does not distinguish, however, between organic, conventional, or GM cotton, although the three types of farming have extremely different impacts on people and the environment. In fact, 70 percent of cotton produced globally is GM cotton yet corporations can designate and advertise it as “sustainable cotton” by using the BCI seal. Critics complain that customers cannot discern the differences and have therefore called it a greenwashing campaign.

KEY SUSTAINABILITY TIPS:

- USE NATURAL RAW MATERIALS RATHER THAN OIL-BASED ARTIFICIAL FIBERS.
- 100-PERCENT OR MONO-MATERIALS ARE MORE SUSTAINABLE THAN MIXED FIBERS; IT'S EASIER TO RECYCLE THEM.
- RECYCLED AND UPCYCLED MATERIALS MAKE ECOLOGICAL SENSE AS THEY USE RESOURCES THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN PROCESSED.
- COTTON FARMING IS RESOURCE-INTENSIVE. ALTERNATIVES, SOME OF THEM PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN, INCLUDE LINEN, TENCEL, CORK LEATHER, AND MIRUM.

THE ABC OF SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

- ALL UPCYCLING MATERIALS
- ALPACA
- PINEAPPLE-BASED LEATHER (PINATEX)
- ORGANIC COTTON, LINEN, FLAX, OR HEMP
- CHIENGORA™ / CIENMERE (UNDERCOAT COMBED OUT OF PETS' FUR)
- COTTON MADE IN AFRICA
- ECONYL
- FISH-BASED LEATHER SUCH AS YUPITAZE
- KAPOK
- CORK
- MIRUM
- MULESING-FREE (ORGANIC) WOOL
- NATURAL RUBBER
- PEACE SILK (AHIMSA SILK)
- PLANT OR VEGETABLE-TANNED LEATHER SUCH AS OLIVE LEATHER
- MYCELIUM-BASED LEATHER
- RECYCLED NATURAL FIBERS (COTTON, WOOL)
- CHAMOIS
- SEACELL
- SOY-SILK
- TENCEL (TM FIBERS SUCH AS MODAL, LYOCELL, ECOVERO)
- YAK WOOL

Partially sustainable: mixed fibers made from different ecological natural fibers, recycled PET, cuprammonium ray-on, acetate, hemp, spandex, polyurethane, Tyvek, Sympatex, or certified downs. Also bamboo viscose, organic cashmere, and cactus-based leather are not 100-percent sustainable, but partly so.

NON-SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

- COTTON (INCL. BCI-CERTIFIED COTTON)
- DOWN
- LYCRA
- CASHMERE
- MIXED FIBERS THAT COMBINE NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FIBERS (EXCEPTION: ORGANIC COTTON + 5–10 PERCENT SPANDEX)
- POLYAMIDES
- POLYESTERS
- POLYPROPYLENES
- SILK
- VISCOSE / RAYON

A label for a new economic system

In addition to the aforementioned seals, there is another benchmark awarded with a view to circular processes. Materials and products that meet the Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Standard can get Cradle to Cradle certification. Safety, circularity, and responsibility as regards materials and products are rated across five categories: material health, product circularity, clean air and climate protection, water and soil stewardship, and social fairness. To obtain certification, a company must collaborate with an independent auditor who assesses the performance of its product across the five categories and awards it Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum for each category.

The lowest rating determines the product's overall certification ranking. Approval of the certification on the basis of improving ratings and the obligation to renew the certification every two years mean that the system promotes and rewards ongoing improvement and therefore positive impacts over time. Certified products are posted in the publicly accessible Cradle to Cradle Certified Product Registry at <https://www.c2ccertified.org/products/registry>.

SIEGELKLARHEIT – CLARITY ON QUALITY SEALS

An easy way to make sustainable purchase decisions – that's the objective behind "Siegelklarheit", a German government initiative intended to provide clarity regarding quality. The website provides well-structured and precise information on credible quality seals for all areas of life. The information is based on a transparent, independent, and comprehensive rating system that each quality seal can voluntarily test itself against. [siegelklarheit.de](https://www.siegelklarheit.de)

ANZEIGE

Sustainability is holistic

Testing your textile standards

Interview: Yvonne Egberink

Purchase decisions are increasingly made on the basis of readily comprehensible quality audits and certifications. Hohenstein – a founding member of the OEKO-TEX® community – is a testing lab that examines textile innovations very closely and co-develops new specifications, such as the ORGANIC COTTON OEKO-TEX® label.

Product responsibility is the key to sustainable business today. An increasing number of the players along the textile value chain are fully aware of the responsibility they bear and have their products tested to identify toxins and to ensure product safety, compliance with social standards, and eco-friendly production. In this context, one of the best-known benchmarks is the OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100 Label, which gives brands the certainty that all components of an article (including the outer fabric, coatings, buttons, threads, and zips) have been tested to ensure they are harmless to health. The test criteria are uniform worldwide, factor in various regulated and non-regulated substances, and are updated at least once a year to reflect new scientific insights or statutory requirements. The validity of the respective certification is plain for all to see in the form of the number shown on the label.

The audits and certifications themselves are exclusively conducted by neutral and independent testing establishments that are members of the OEKO-TEX® community – one of which is Hohenstein and the labs attached to it, which have issued the largest number of OEKO-TEX® certificates worldwide. We wanted to find out more about the work of the textile lab...

What exactly does your work involve?

Companies have been applying to us for certification for their products for more than seven decades, and also to have processes audited as regards various quality features and functions, as they want to offer their end clients a reliable, neutral proof of quality. In addition to the OEKO-TEX® label, quality seals include the Grüner Knopf, as well as our own quality labels – meaning independent certificates covering various product features. Among them are certificates that attest not just to functionality but also to sustainability: For example, we test whether a textile is biodegradable. Moreover, we're active members of all manner of bodies and committees, such as the German Industrial Norm body DIN, and are thus constantly helping to develop new norms and standards.

When designing its certification services, what vision does Hohenstein have of the future?

We think in generations – and act on behalf of them. Using resources responsibly is a challenge for all of us, and we are convinced that social change offers the only meaningful path to a future worth living in. With this as our motivation, we set the yardstick, but also aim to inspire others en route to sustainably creating value added. Of course, sustainability is a complex topic. By supporting our clients in breaking that complexity down into digestible steps, we find solutions together to enable products that are eco-compatible from the farming through to the recycling. At present, we're also addressing the question of microplastics in textile production wastewater, which is why, for example, we have developed a new DIN SPEC for it. Essentially, with our work we seek to ensure products are of a high quality, have long service lives, and are safe.

You mentioned the complexity of the topic of product sustainability. Where do you see the greatest challenges lying, both for your clients and for your own work?

Many people ask themselves where to start and what issue they should focus on first. We accompany them along the way. Another hurdle is the entire field of supply chain transparency – the very basis for sustainable business. We need to know where our products are made, need stable supplier relationships, and need to create an awareness that ecological standards must be applied. That requires creating partnerships with suppliers. At the same time, we must find ways of making the requisite knowledge on the eco-impacts of conventional production available and fostering an understanding as regards changing production methods with a view to producing safe raw materials, using sustainable dyes and auxiliaries, and the correct treatment of wastewater. One useful measure in this regard is an array of training sessions for manufacturing companies as well as specific departments, and simple tools and data collection on eco-impacts all help find ways of gaining real leverage.



What do you think is necessary in order to help drive real sustainability in the textile industry, i.e., so that it considers economic, ecological, and social welfare aspects in equal measure?

For many companies, sustainability merely constitutes an add-on, which is not what it should be. It is crucial to integrate sustainable processes into business processes and not address them separately, and this starts as early as the design phase. Which is why it is key to construe sustainability holistically and integrate it into the various processes, for example through clearly defined requirements, corresponding sourcing strategies, choice of materials, and support for and auditing of manufacturing partners – in order, at the end of the day, to be able to sell safe, high-grade products with a long service life that are, wherever possible, recyclable. The issue of transparency within the supply chain is equally a very important factor that helps achieve the sustainability goals set. Without transparency there is no control.

You mentioned you are always busy helping to develop new norms and standards. One outcome is the new OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON certificate.

OEKO-TEX® can now look back on over 30 years of experience in identifying hazardous substances, including pesticides and GMOs (genetically modified organisms). It is our goal to enable textile and leather companies to take responsible decisions on the basis of transparency. In the field of organic cotton, we've developed a quantitative GMO methodology that for the first time allows a distinction between impurities and deliberate additions of conventional cotton. OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON is a certificate that covers not only articles made of 100-percent organic cotton but also mixed fabrics – covering the share of cotton across three levels: 100 percent and more than or less than 70 percent cotton, whereby the cotton share must in all cases be 100-percent organic cotton and any mixture of conventional cotton is absolutely prohibited. Another aspect is to tap synergies with other OEKO-TEX® certificates that make

it easier and more cost-effective for certificate holders to in part save audits that are already covered by other OEKO-TEX® certificates.

Could you give a little more detail?

Thanks to our association's organizational structure, all the testing institutes rely on a central database for their work. This centralized IT system drives confidence and prevents fraud. Moreover, the modular system at OEKO-TEX® offers countless synergies for manufacturers and brands. For example, using chemicals certified by ECO PASSPORT reduces the audit outlays for ORGANIC COTTON certification. An OEKO-TEX® ORGANIC COTTON certificate can, for its part, be used by a brand in order to obtain the MADE IN GREEN product label that essentially guarantees end consumers complete supply chain transparency: Using a QR code, they can jump straight to the OEKO-TEX® label check.

Many thanks for those interesting insights.

hohenstein.de

Does cradle-to-cradle close the circle?

Text: Yvonne Egberink

Consumerism forever, but sustainable? The concept of the circular economy seems to be the perfect solution for breaking out of the vicious circle of habitat destruction and exploitation. So what is it all about? What does it have to do with waste? And what are the key questions involved?

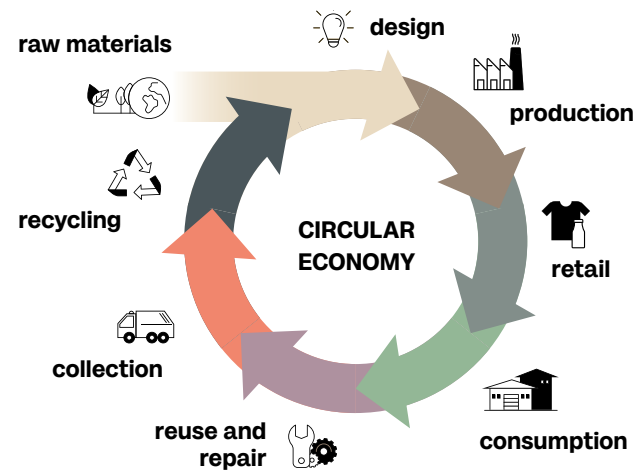
The discussion about the sustainable transformation towards circularity in the textile industry always goes hand in hand with the hope that this will allow “business as usual”. The assumption is that somehow the flood of pre-consumer waste will simply be countered by something sensible. Behind this lies the vision of “eco-effective” waste. It all sounds rather complicated – and indeed it is.

Status quo: Waste equals waste and often remains waste

In order to gain a better understanding of the circular system, especially in the context of the textile industry, it is important to first take a long look at the current economic system, namely the linear or “cradle-to-grave” economy. This waste economy first arose with industrialization and has been taken to extremes by Western consumer standards, is designed for one-time consumption. The idea is you use a product and then it subsequently gets “disposed”, which is in stark contrast to the finite resources of our planet. In contrast, the Circular Economy Act that has been in place in Germany since June 1, 2012, aims to promote a circular economy to protect natural resources, people, and the environment.

Vision: Waste equals nutrients and remains nutrients

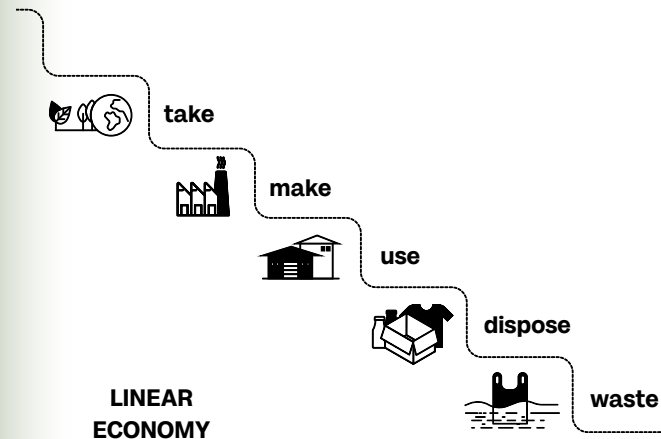
Cradle-to-cradle describes a future-oriented economic system developed at the end of the 1990s by German chemist and process engineer Prof. Michael Braungart and US architect William McDonough. It is based on the closed-loop principle, i.e., it focuses on resources and recycling them. According to this principle, every bit of waste is a nutrient for something new. This is made possible with products that are designed and manufactured according to the C2C concept for ingenious cycles in which all product components and materials are available as raw materials for a new product after use. According to this logic, the concept of waste no longer exists.

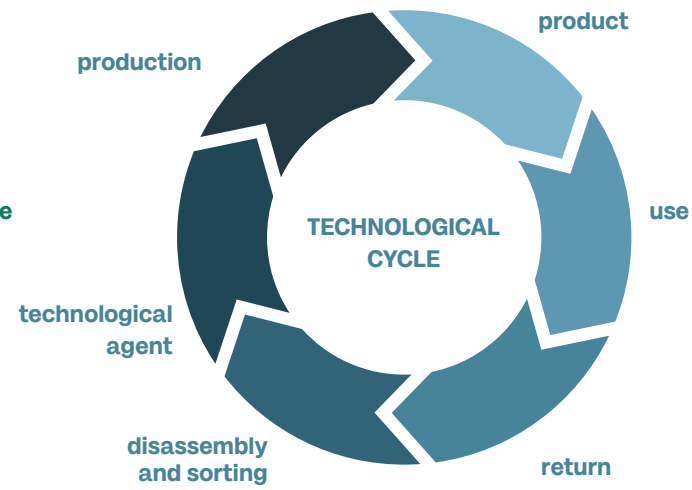
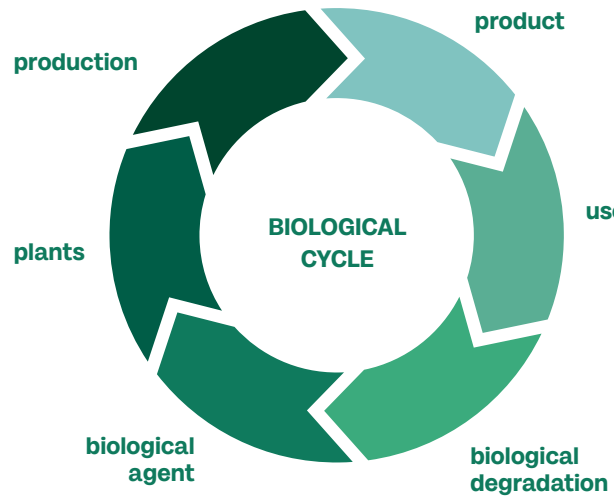


Consumer products that are optimized for biological cycles serve as nutrients for the so-called biosphere. They can be released into the environment without hesitation because any abrasion or loss is 100-percent biodegradable. Used goods, meanwhile, can circulate in the technosphere in continuous technical cycles. The challenge? Since the raw materials for this are finite, they must be preserved at a consistently high quality. Renewable raw materials can also circulate in the technosphere before they become nutrients again. Let's apply this to the textile industry. There, for example, natural fibers could be recycled as a consumer product, while technical nutrients such as zippers or buttons, for example, could be reused or recycled in the technical cycle.

ANZEIGE

TRANSFORMATION





What does that have to do with wasting things?

Common measures against the linear economy – Braungart talks about eco-effective solutions – aim to “reduce and minimize” the negative impacts of production and consumption processes “in quantitative terms”. In other words, they seek to make processes more efficient and less harmful, and to save energy or even to do without it. Compared with these established “principles of sustainability” Braungart presents a different, and decidedly exciting vision: He insists we instead develop products and production processes in such a way that waste per se is not a problem because such products and processes are fundamentally harmless to people and nature. This means that it is not a matter of “doing less” of what is harmful, but of “doing it right” from the ground up. Establishing sustainable production and consumption systems is thus not a question of reducing our ecological footprint. On the contrary, the challenge lies in making that footprint a “never-ending, sustaining source for natural systems.” This is what Braungart means by “eco-effective.”

All beneficial, all good?

It all sounds so natural, and consuming and reusing products indefinitely is a tempting thought. The bottom line is that it’s a concept that needs to be thought about and implemented holistically, and it’s one that requires structures. In order for the vision to become not a utopia but a lived future, all industries must not only completely rethink how they work but also act innovatively. The disposal and recyclability of the material inputs and the corresponding process technologies must be considered and integrated as early as the design process. This also includes companies switching to regenerative energy sources, taking a holistic view of production processes, and adapting resource management. It’s an extremely complex topic and one that has already sparked criticism.

In “Dissolving the Ego of Fashion. Engaging with Human Matters,” for example, Danëlle Bruggeman criticizes the fact that the circular “economy” is also profit- and consumption-oriented, and that circularity is primarily understood as a zeitgeisty slogan for the wasteful lifestyle that is part of our society. Consumer-

ism with a clear conscience, so to speak, since more and more clothing is experienced as infinitely recyclable. Which does not affect the core problem, namely excess consumption. An item should not be bought even if it is biodegradable and labeled accordingly, but rather only when it is needed – to be worn for a long time afterwards, instead of being released into the biosphere as “clean biowaste” when the next trend comes along. On top of this, the processes are Eurocentric and thus characterized by strong power asymmetries and dependencies: Production still takes place in countries of the Global South. However, it remains regulated and controlled by outside capital and investments from the Global North. Here, again, a circle closes that at least merits debate.

Yes to change, but do it right

Cradle-to-cradle offers many starting points to initiate change and a change in values. Numerous good examples show what industries are already capable of today. At the same time, an economic system that has grown for well over a century cannot be turned upside down at the touch of a button. We need a paradigm shift that onboards everyone – businesses and society alike. Then perhaps, at some point, there will follow a system that also considers social and cultural values of equal importance. With regard to consumers, one way forward is broad-based education and the promotion of consumer awareness. Where businesses are concerned, responsibility is required. The German Supply Chain Act, as a uniform statutory regulation, represents a first step in the right direction.

ANZEIGE

“Courage and hope move us forward”

Interview: Yvonne Egberink

Change the mindset, then change things. And above all: do something. Intervene. Get involved. That's the credo of the Berlin-based non-governmental organization C2C, a real force for accelerating a circular economy based on cradle-to-cradle principles. A conversation about courage and fostering hope.

TRANSFORMATION “Courage is the absence of fear in the face of a situation in which one might otherwise be frightened” reads one dictionary definition. Excess production, climate change, a raw materials crisis, resource collapse – while the various crises the world over have led many to become resigned and fear the future, others take them as the crucial prompt to start thinking innovatively, enter into new alliances, and smooth the path for change. Cradle-to-cradle is precisely such a path, and one the eponymous non-profit organization Cradle to Cradle NGO has been tenaciously pursuing for ten years now: By helping shape debates. By taking a clear stance. The goal always being to drive the transformation towards a new economic system that no longer needs to constantly try to reduce its negative impacts, but instead has a positive eco-footprint. I asked Nora Sophie Griefahn and Tim Janssen, the managing directors of Cradle to Cradle NGO, just how much courageous hope we're going to need to reach this goal, and how not to lose courage on the way there.

Ms. Griefahn, Mr. Janssen, how much courage and hope does your job require?

Nora Griefahn: Many of the things that we want to achieve with Cradle to Cradle NGO are not actually a matter of being courageous or hopeful, but are based on normal common sense. Is it not logical that each and every product should only have a healthy impact on humans and the environment? That materials entering the natural cycle surely need to be bio-degradable? All of these are core elements of Cradle to Cradle (C2C). At C2C, we look at people as users and create ecological, economic, and social added value. In order to achieve this, we need healthy products that fit the circular economy designed for the respective usage scenario. Humanity is so bound up in its linear mindset that it may seem courageous to demand these things. Even if they are actually logical and should be considered a matter of course.

Tim Janssen: We at Cradle to Cradle seek to bring about a change in outlook. Away from linear product processes and towards a truly circular economy. As an NGO, we are actively calling for this in our work, in our interactions with the worlds of business, politics, science, and civil society. Now and again, you have to be prepared to get under people's skin in such conversations and have the courage to ask awkward questions. Only if we seek that active dialog with all the stakeholders involved will we ever put a cradle-to-cradle circular economy in place.

What gives you personally hope when you come up against a brick wall, or the acceleration of the shift towards a C2C circular economy does not progress as swiftly as it needs to in light of the status quo?

TJ: Humanity has by now overshot six of the nine planetary boundaries. So it would seem obvious that we urgently need to up the pace if we are to create a broad-based economy that has any sort of future. After all, in the final analysis, our current way of doing business is pulling the existential rug out from under our feet. I personally find it helpful to repeatedly take a step back and look at what we have already achieved as an NGO. Cradle to Cradle NGO has been going for a decade. Quite a lot has happened during that time: As of today, we have a team of 40 staff members, have relocated our office from Lüneburg to Berlin, and in the form of our C2C LAB and Labor Tempelhof have realized two massive transformation projects. Needless to say, there's still a lot to be done. But celebrating successes together helps you look optimistically to the future and tackle new challenges as they arise.

NG: I would of course want to see the transformation to a C2C circular economy progress far faster than has been the case to date. That is pretty frustrating. But I have the good fortune to be working day in day out with countless great, committed

Nora Sophie Griefahn and Tim Janssen, managing directors of Cradle to Cradle NGO



individuals. Be it with our volunteer activists – and there are almost 1,000 of them in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland – with my own team, or with other people who are committed to bringing about a C2C-based world in their own way. Seeing all their hard work and knowing that collectively we have the opportunity to change things gives me hope and motivates me to continue with my own work.

Many people are extremely distraught by the innumerable crises and the related changes. How do you give them hope?

NG: I think it is key to foster enthusiasm for a cause, as it is only then that people will commit to it. Be it cradle-to-cradle or another issue that is close to their hearts. Active commitment gives us a sense of being able to make an impact: I help change something by my own actions. Now, I believe that certainly nurtures hope and courage. This does not of course mean that we should expect only individuals to assume the responsibility for tackling the challenges we currently face: For there to be a true transformation, things must change on a political and structural level and the right parameters be put in place for a C2C circular economy to flourish.

TJ: Initially, change always triggers fears. What is, however, clear is that we need change in order to continue to exist on a planet where life is worth living. However, you have to guide people along this path to change. At Cradle to Cradle we say: We people can be useful creatures who do good as part of the ecosystem. Compared to many other approaches to sustainability this is a very human-friendly approach: it is good that we humans exist. I think this positive mindset at Cradle to Cradle can give a lot of people hope and courage.

Many thanks for your time and stay hopeful!

C2C.ngo

TRANSFORMATION “It's high time to stop all the moaning about ecological destruction, and start doing things the right way! We have the potential to enrich the world instead of strip it of resources. So let's get to work on gifting the world with a great positive eco-footprint in the form of a cradle-to-cradle economy!”

Nora Griefahn

THE C2C LAB IN BERLIN IS THE WORLD'S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE MODERNIZATION OF AN EXISTING BUILDING IN LINE WITH INNOVATIVE C2C PRINCIPLES.

ACROSS 400 SQUARE METERS, YOU CAN EXPERIENCE THE C2C MINDSET AND DESIGN CONCEPT FOR YOURSELF AT THE NGO BILDUNGSZENTRUM, NGO HEAD OFFICE AND THE REALLABOR – AND SEE HOW THEY WORK.

The recycling challenge

As fabric can be very complex in structure, textile waste is seldom recycled. Now fiber manufacturer Lenzing has teamed up with cellulose producer Södra and achieved a milestone in circular fashion recycling.

Text: Barbara Markert



Photos: Lenzing AG, Södra

Hardly any other topic is better suited to marketing a product as sustainable than recycling. By the same token, hardly any other subject is more often at the center of investigative greenwashing scoops. Take the backpack made from ocean plastic that barely contains any plastic salvaged from the sea. Or a T-shirt said to be printed using CO₂ emissions where in actual fact the print is simply a dye produced from a car exhaust filter's soot particles. And to compound matters: It's seldom the case that fashion articles are made from recycled fashion products. Instead, the items utilized tend to be things not even remotely related to fashion, like PET bottles. Only one percent of textile waste is currently being turned into new clothing textiles, whereas almost 90 percent is burned or ends up on waste dumps. According to the EU Commission every year each of us consumes an average of 26 kg of textiles and discards 11 kg: If you tot up the figures that means a staggering five million tons of unused textile waste is churned out each year in the European Union alone.

Naturally, it would make sense to utilize this waste to spare not only new raw materials but also water – a resource that is becoming increasingly scarce. In this context, there are several different reasons why so little of our textile waste is now recycled: As textile recycling is still in its infancy it is presently more expensive to recycle things than simply resort to new raw materials. Moreover, the technology needs further refining and the logistics are complicated. And finally, many blended fabrics either can't be recycled or their recycling would not be worth the effort required. To name but a few of the factors. Despite this raft of obstacles we are seeing some initial successes: Manteco in Italy now offers MWOol, a mechanically recycled wool made from pre-consumer and post-consumer textile waste. Valerius360 in Portugal makes its recycled jersey fabrics from cotton textile production waste, overproduction and deadstock too.

Austrian fiber manufacturer Lenzing has teamed up with Södra, one of the leading Swedish suppliers of cellulose, to tackle the biggest problem posed by blended textiles which not only account for the majority of our clothing but also cause the biggest headaches when it comes to recycling. The two long-standing business partners have joined forces and combined their respective development know-how to create a new textile product: the recycled cellulose "OnceMore" is processed to "Refibra", a Lenzing Lyocell fiber that is similar to Tencel but contains some cotton.

Åsa Degermann, Project Manager of OnceMore explains: "Back 11 years ago our basic idea was to recycle non-cellulose-based textile waste to create a more advanced cellulose. When we started the project, people were just beginning to talk about a circular economy. We were veritable pioneers!" From 2012 onwards, more and more of Lenzing's customers were voicing their desire for solutions to textile waste so the Austrians began to research the topic. Sonja Zak, head of the Initiative for Circularity at the Lenzing Group says: "When we launched Refibra in 2017 we had developed a functioning recycling process using post-consumer waste. Today, we're able to remove the colors, but to date we work exclusively with cotton waste." The two companies therefore ventured to take the next step, namely recycling textiles made from blended fibers, such as polyester, polyamide, Spandex, and other materials.

In the current joint venture between OnceMore and Refibra, old European textiles made from a polyester-cotton blend are processed. Thanks to chemical recycling methods it's now possible to separate these two fabrics really well. While the polyester is burned to generate energy, Södra processes the cotton portion to produce cellulose. Åsa Degermann observes that "at present, the process works best for pale colors, but we are confident that in a few years' time we will be able to process all the colors hanging in our wardrobes. We're also busy looking for a better, circular use for the polyester. And we're determined to press ahead with our research." Currently around 2,000 tons of waste are recycled at Södra. The objective: to process up to 50,000 tons by 2027. This makes the Swedish firm one of the few companies in the world to use chemical textile recycling on an industrial scale.

Although the new OnceMore cellulose can also be used 100 percent as the basis for a new yarn, for Refibra Lenzing currently only processes a blend of 30 percent recycled material including OnceMore and 70 percent normal cellulose made from wood. Sonja Zak explains that "the reason is that there is simply not enough recycled material available to hike the proportion." The quality is fine but the technology needs further refinement. Above all, there is a lack of demand from fashion producers to increase the volume and there is no legal framework in place yet to create the necessary structures explains Åsa Degermann. She expects the new European Waste Regulation, which comes into force in January 2025 and promotes the circular economy, will provide a large push in the right direction. "We've had this eco-system for paper and cardboard running for 30 years, but in the fashion industry we are only just getting started."

Lenzing can only confirm this impression. "When we launched Refibra, the industry was simply not ready for it at all. Only now with the European Union's Green Deal and the new EU textile strategy is there pressure on producers to use more recycled materials." Needless to say, the experts at Lenzing continue, these yarns are more expensive just as recycled polyester is more expensive than new polyester. And then there are the high development costs. Nonetheless both firms see their trailblazing roles as highly positive. Åsa Degermann states that "as the trendsetters we are able to boast the most experience and knowledge. With our know-how we can convey knowledge to others further down the line and answer important questions." Her colleague at Lenzing agrees: "The most important thing is just to get started so that these new recycled fibers can become increasingly established in industry." At present they are only used in small capsule collections like that of Filippa K. The Swedish fashion label will use OnceMore x Refibra for the first time in its Summer collection 2024. But at some point, designers will understand that they get the same quality and need not make any compromises; demand will rise and at the same time the technology will become more sophisticated. Then at the latest, the price structure will also normalize. Sonja Zak concludes: "We have to lead and accompany brands into a more responsible future. But we also need to explain to them what's possible and what's not. Because it's still the case that not every blended fabric can be recycled."

Waste Colonialism

Where our waste really ends up

Buy less, choose well, and make it last – the motto of fashion icon Vivienne Westwood has become a mantra for many. So, what to do if you don't like a garment anymore? Dropping it in a charity bin is an obvious thing to do because your donation keeps it in the cycle. So far, so logical.

Text: Jenni Koutni



Photo: supakornrtv9 / stock.adobe.com

EACH WEEK, 3.4 MILLION KILOS OF CLOTHES ARRIVE AT KANTAMANTO MARKET IN ACCRA, GHANA IN HUGE BALES – WITH 40 PERCENT OF THAT FIGURE EXITING THE MARKETPLACE AGAIN – AS GARBAGE.

EVEN THOUGH GHANA GAINED ITS INDEPENDENCE IN 1957, THIS HASN'T SHAKEN THE COLONIAL POWER RELATIONSHIP: THE GLOBAL NORTH IS THE "SENDER" AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH THE "RECIPIENT" OF SECONDHAND CLOTHING.

THE TRADE IN SECONDHAND CLOTHING HAS DECIMATED THE GHANAIAN TEXTILE SECTOR: FROM AN ALL-TIME HIGH OF 25,000 EMPLOYEES BACK IN 1975 THE INDUSTRY HAD DWINDLED TO ONLY 5,000 JOBS IN 2000.

Then, as part of the global trade in secondhand clothing, it gets shipped around the globe along with millions of tons of old clothes. Chances are high that it will land in Ghana as one of 15 million garments getting here in huge bales from charity bins in North America, China and Europe every week. Here, they call them "Obroni w'awu", literally meaning "dead white man's clothes". Their destination is the Kantamanto market in Accra, one of the world's biggest markets for secondhand clothing. A flourishing center for reselling, repairing, and upcycling – once upon a time. Because there's a problem: While the volume of old clothes keeps growing, their quality gets poorer and poorer. An estimated 40 per cent of the clothing arriving at Kantamanto market is worthless junk.

Retailers are barely able to turn a profit on them; cleaning and repair hardly pays off with fast fashion ware. The mountains of waste are not only a financial killer given the costs of garbage disposal. They also increase the risk of infection. Textile waste flooding garbage dumps and polluting the coastline is a phenomenon witnessed not just in Accra. You'll even find it in the Atacama Desert in Chile. The global trade in secondhand clothing has morphed into a waste disposal strategy for fast fashion.

Modern colonialism

The non-profit Or Foundation works closely with the Kantamanto community. It says the only way out of this toxic vicious cycle is to do two things. We must create incentives to significantly lower production levels of textiles. And we must force brands to shoulder the responsibility for what happens to the clothes they produce once these reach their expiry date. The foundation insists that manufacturers should be charged a tax of at least 50 US cents for every new article of clothing, a fee that would go towards covering the cost of waste disposal. The harder it is to recycle an item, the higher the levy would then be.

In fact, the Or Foundation goes even further: It attacks the current concepts of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), such as exist in France. The latter is the only country at present to have an EPR program in place for textiles, and yet in 2021 it nevertheless exported 80 percent of the clothing collected as part of this program. In the process, millions were shelled out to European sorting plants, but never to those countries in Africa where the articles of clothing ultimately end up.

There's a term for this asymmetrical power relationship: waste colonialism. The concept was coined back in 1989 in the context of the United Nations Environmental Program when African countries pointed their finger at how countries with high GDPs were dumping their toxic waste on low-GDP countries. While most African nations have been independent for several decades now, the old power relationships have sadly survived. Kantamanto Market, for example, sprawls across 20 hectares of land in downtown Accra, land that in pre-colonial times belonged to indigenes. To this day, the disputed land claims make it hard for the retailers to manage the place. And now they face a second problem: The flood of waste fast fashion deported here from the Global North.

According to the European Union's Waste Framework Directive, all member states are obliged to have put an EPR system in place by Jan. 1, 2025, at the latest. However, it is not clear to what extent this applies to the textile industry, so the question remains unanswered: Who is liable for the damage caused by our "dead white man's clothes"?

theor.org

Second-hand, yes – but not at *any* price!



It's always during Fashion Revolution Week that the media dare to briefly cast a glance at the consequences of our clothing consumption. This year, the focus was on the mountains of textile waste in South America and Africa: the massive dump in the Atacama Desert in Chile, the huge garbage mound bang in the middle of Nairobi (Kenya), and the polluted beaches of Accra (Ghana) in West Africa. Every day, another 160 tons of used clothes arrive here. Close to the garbage mountains, sprawling open-air second-hand markets sell some of the clothes we in Europe no longer want to wear. Yet a third of these second-hand goods shipped from industrialized countries are unusable because the quality is too poor or the clothes are stained or torn or both.



Sophie Hersan,
Vestiaire Collective

Sophie Hersan, co-founder and fashion director of the second-hand marketplace Vestiaire Collective, wants as little as possible to do with such poor-quality second-hand goods. In her office in central Paris, functional in fit-out but near the famous department stores Galeries Lafayette and Le Printemps, it's more about used bags by Balenciaga or worn shoes by Chanel than torn T-shirts from Primark or holey jeans from Shein. Vestiaire Collective was one of the few companies to recognize at an early date the sheer market potential of our truly excessive fashion consumption. The Paris-based company with branches in New York, London, and Hong Kong, to name just a few, has used the failed purchases in our closets to make it to a market valuation of more than one billion euros, which makes it a "unicorn" in businesspeak.



Despite these dizzy heights, something of a start-up atmosphere still pervades the premises – as, incidentally, is the case throughout the second-hand fashion market. Sure, there have always been small second-hand boutiques, but it's only been in the last ten years that the local flea-market-scale of the trade has evolved into a real business. According to one current study "State of Fashion 2023", sales of second-hand fashion are expected to increase to around 45 billion euros by 2025 and are thus growing 11 times faster than the market for new goods. And these figures are revised upwards almost by the year. The market is booming and attracting ever more interested parties hoping to cut a good deal and wanting to bag some of the profits.

that's not very environmentally friendly. And the online retailers know that. Which is why Vestiaire Collective is aiming to support more local peer-to-peer business in the future: In countries where there are more buyers than sellers, the Parisians are now deliberately going out in search of goods to satisfy local demand. The intention: to limit the environmental impact of long shipping distances.

It has been above all digital developments such as online marketplaces, algorithms and, more recently, artificial intelligence that have made this spectacular economic performance possible. That's why the digital providers don't see themselves as online fashion retailers, but rather as tech companies, confirms Sophie Hersan, looking back with amusement. "I remember exactly the time when I myself dropped off my worn clothes at the second-hand store around the corner. You had to keep calling and asking, and then you'd end up picking up a ridiculously small check. Who wants that kind of thing anymore? Besides, the cool stuff usually never went anywhere because there wasn't the right clientele."

Whether their efforts pay off remains to be seen. After all, even if the second-hand trade is seen as one of the best solutions in the fight against the mass consumption of clothing and the associated environmental pollution, ecological interests provide only limited buying motivation for consumers. For them, it's still all about the cheap price. And things are no better on the seller side: According to a study by Boston Consulting Group 70 percent of users of second-hand marketplaces sell goods there to fill their wallet ready for a new purchase. So selling used goods soothes our ecological conscience but doesn't necessarily reduce our fashion consumption, even if the two market leaders unanimously claim otherwise: At Vestiaire, they believe that 70 percent of purchases prevent a new purchase. At Vinted it is 40 percent, according to a customer survey.

The search for the perfect lover of a worn piece of clothing is now global. The large digital providers, such as Vestiaire Collective, Vinted, The Real Real, or Rebelle, to name just the best-known marketplaces, bring together millions of members from all over the world and send their goods to almost every corner of the globe – a buyer will be found somewhere. Only

French journalist Nicolas Santolaria, meanwhile, has a completely different opinion, even going so far as to call it a "symbiosis of fast fashion and the second-hand market". This symbiosis works particularly well between Chinese ultra-fashion retailer Shein and Vinted. The low prices at Shein further stimulate mass consumption, failed purchases multiply, and clothes are worn for shorter and shorter periods. Instead of end-

Text: Barbara Markert

The second-hand sector is booming. And rightly so. It is seen as the ideal solution to the mass consumption and environmental pollution of the fashion industry. However, is the concept really that environmentally friendly? We take a closer look.

ing up in the clothes collection bin around the corner, the items later end up on marketplaces like Vinted, which do not apply any selection criteria to what is on offer. There you can get your hands on them for five euros or less. The fact that this resale is not financially worthwhile is irrelevant; the main thing is that it feels good to be part of the trendy second-hand business.

The used goods sold there are also then lacking in other places, particularly charitable clothing collectors such as Caritas or Oxfam, which support socially disadvantaged people with the sales proceeds. No longer willing to tolerate the collapse in donations, France's Oxfam counterpart Emmaüs attacked the users of the Lithuanian marketplace Vinted directly in March 2023 in a media campaign. Their slogan "donate instead of sell" had a powerful effect despite the campaign lasting just a few days. And it got the managers in Vilnius thinking: A month later, Isabel Nazaré, sustainability manager at Vinted, published recommendations on the right way to shop second-hand: "You should definitely pay attention to the quality of the items. High-quality materials, such as linen, wool, cashmere, or cotton, will last longer." Very true. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of cheap polyester merchandise for sale at Vinted. Its competitor in Paris has gone further in this regard and has completely banned the trade in fast fashion from its platform. The same goes for Rebelle, Re-See, and The Real Real. There, strict default criteria and, above all, high fees preventing trading in cheap goods.

A genuine alternative to online shopping is still the bricks and mortar second-hand trade, where you can check the quality and try on the clothes live. But beware, because times have changed here too and globalization has taken hold. Many, especially those selling clothes by the kilo, often purchase their goods from international wholesalers, which may mean that the used blouse or coat has traveled a long way: from a clothes collection container in Europe to Africa or India, where the goods are sorted at rock-bottom wages and then sent back to a wholesaler in Europe, bundled according to color, brand, or other quality criteria.

In order to prevent precisely such a scenario, Lena Schröder, who initiated the Kleiderei, which was founded in 2012, takes the trouble of sorting stock herself. She passes on anything that doesn't fit her own concept to the German Clothing Foundation. "Our claim is to find the best possible form of recycling for every item that ends up with us, whether it's in our stores, for aid projects, or as material for upcycling labels. For us, what is key is that we can claim to keep things local. That's why we don't ship things, but open stores where people can buy and borrow second-hand items."

So, in the search for a genuine solution, are we returning to the roots of the trade, the local second-hand boutique around the corner that buys its goods locally or sells them on commission? Most definitely! After all, these stores are an important building block on the road to greater sustainability in fashion. However, even if the industry is less environmentally friendly than one might think, it's still true that buying a used garment reduces the consumption of new resources by up to 90 percent and slashes the carbon footprint by around 60 percent compared to a new purchase.

Lena Schröder,
Kleiderei



ANZEIGE

Munich Fabric Start

“The German fashion lacks courage”

Interview: Silke Bucker
Photos: Sorin Morar

The Munich Fabric Start has been an established feature in the international business accelerator trade fairs since 1996. With continuity, perfect organization, an outstanding hosting mindset, high-quality content, and expertise in trends in all manner of terrain, the event has long since emerged as a lighthouse. We spoke to Managing Director Sebastian Klinder and Creative Director Frank Junker about how the collective call for sustainability in all its facets impacts on the sector, the perception of fashion, the behavior of recipients, and the habits of the industry. We also discussed what commitment is required by all the actors in order collectively to meet the challenges of the required transformation, and why reliability, courage, and quality are values that need to be nurtured once more.



What can exhibitors and visitors look forward to at the next edition of Munich Fabric Start?

Sebastian Klinder: A whole lot of things. The one ideal date no longer exists given the changed rhythm of collections. So we consulted countless market players and devised a new scheduling concept that distributes two Munich Fabric Starts and two Views optimally across the order year. Using this flexible structure and the different platforms, we seek to offer the industry a perfect opportunity to cherry-pick its themes itself. To summarize: Our guests can look forward to continuity, trade-fair halls that are thumping full, and a Munich Fabric Start with the customary oomph.

We live in an age of transformation; in particular, recent years have revealed shortcomings, meaning that changes of a structural and substantive nature are imperative. So what does that mean for you as trade-fair organizers?

SK: I have often asked myself: “What is not changing?” And that’s what you are getting at, I mean, Frank, what’s still to change?

Frank Junker: I think that the changes in the zeitgeist we are witnessing also mean that the behavior of our exhibitors and visitors has changed. For example, there’s travel intensity, there’s the size of the teams that travel in for the show, there’s the time spent at the trade fair, and the whole way people work. Companies now think twice: Where do I get the most holistic offers and where can I spend my two or three days at a trade fair most effectively and meaningfully? We definitely get the feeling that all the trade-fair hopping is coming to an end. We’re noticing very clearly how our guests are doing more preparatory work, already scheduling hard-and-fast meetings in advance of the fair, and are more structured in their approach.

In other words, on the one hand there’s a new sense of staying down-to-earth and, on the other, the trade fair is meant to offer inspiration. Frank, as a creative director, how do you create the right space – and that includes metaphorically?

FJ: We accord great space to inspiration through the zeitgeist and trends; in fact we consistently nurture those topics, with support from the right experts, of course. We definitely understand that not all designers are able to analyze the themes themselves. So we dish up discerning content in clearly marked trend forums in an easily digestible and yet very concrete and competent manner – with statements you can clearly use.

Two of the values you mention are efficiency and clarity – do they result in certainty?

FJ: Absolutely, absolutely.

SK: I’d call it a good basis for planning in the sense that you get what you expected. Which means for us that we think about exactly what and to whom we present so that there are no surprises. The fact that we’ve managed to keep the Munich Fabric Start at this level bears out our ambitions and the standards we set ourselves. The juxtaposed backdrops that we then stage fittingly in line with the respective thematic focus of the trade fair perfectly complement our concept and our service mindset. Paired with reliability, good organization, and diverse information offerings, not to mention inspiration, this forms our way of remaining successful and meeting the mar-

ket’s needs with great precision. We’ve always had that approach and in this regard don’t let ourselves be influenced by the zeitgeist; to this extent, our emphasis must be on further strengthening these core competences.

I’d like to concentrate for a minute on the notion of “trend” which for a long time tended to refer to the surface of things. What values or aspects constitute the key trends today?

FJ: Apart from aesthetic trends, which of course continue to be of great relevance, it is transparency and comprehensibility that are the defining, innate trends at present. This is the result of two parallel drivers: first, legal obligations such as the German Act on Supply Chain Diligence, and second, the changing moral requirements. For brands, transparency is thus becoming a “hygiene factor” that enables a brand to give the right answers to the question as to how something was manufactured. Another thing I notice is that trends today embody a lot more of the zeitgeist than before. In particular, the way we live, the way everyday life is, the fact that everything is getting faster and more digital... Functionality is the buzzword today. Trends, by contrast, that are influenced by street culture, i.e., that address the classical meaning of the term, are increasingly just becoming bland. In many respects, this is the key to the problem if we talk about sustainability. There is less courage to be individual, even if individuality is paradoxically the order of the day. Put differently, while on the one hand everything is about fashion, many prefer to flee into the purported safety of uniformity, of complete standardization.

“There is less courage to be individual, even if individuality is paradoxically the order of the day. Yet many prefer to flee into the purported safety of uniformity, of complete standardization.”

Frank Junker

Digitization and sustainability are the key leading themes of the coming fair. So how do the two belong together when you consider merely the hefty negative impacts of booming online business on the eco-balance sheet, given the immensely high returns rate? What are the important parameters to turn this into a win-win situation?

SK: Digitization can help the industry solve the greatest problem of all, namely overproduction. On the basis of specific data and using AI, it will be possible to preselect volumes, sizes, and themes with greater precision. We can become much, much faster and in the final instance realize the idea of becoming a kind of Netflix for fashion. If we as an industry succeed in producing close to actual market requirements, then we wouldn’t need to shred new garments because they have to give way for the next season. Moreover, using the new digital technologies we could adjust processes and be far more precise with content and structures. There’s a lot of potential here to be more sustainable.

In the narrower sense, the very production of new things is not sustainable, even under the best possible conditions. I also view quality and longevity as sustainability, because it's about things that are here to stay.

FJ: Exactly! The most sustainable thing you can do is to produce good-quality items.

SK: However, good quality gets us nowhere without good design. What counts is the right product. Take the case of second-hand: If a product is so good, so sexy, that I am able after 15 or 20 years to still take it out of the wardrobe with a look of gratified amazement on my face...

And what is ostensibly "old" is often more progressive and of a better quality than the constantly "new".

SK: Indeed! Not so long ago, it was the quality of the products that defined the brand – today branding is a matter of the right photos, the right campaign, the right people. If only in this regard, I think it a matter of course that a vintage product entails the better article, the better finishing.

And the better story. Especially as the haptic and the analog are increasingly disappearing.

FJ: At the end of the day, it is the consumer who decides. What doesn't get bought doesn't get produced any longer. We can explain that to people, but we can't of course change behavioral patterns. As trade-fair initiators, we consider our task to be highlighting the opportunities there are and which we can tell stories about. It's about enlightening people.

"We don't sell square meterage but concepts and know-how."

Sebastian Klinder

SK: We're not some over-the-counter trade-fair organizer; we're a family business. We organize with a different passion and DNA. We don't sell square meterage but concepts and know-how. And we love bringing people together.

The "Future Fabrics" are a key segment at the Munich Fabric Start: What properties do fabrics have to have for the future?

FJ: Transparency and circularity are decisive parameters in this context. Exciting alternative materials made from natural or regenerative sources crop up with each new season, but it's not as though it's all already possible without a negative footprint...there's a long way to go still, I'm afraid.

SK: However, it's great to see how the innovations and pop-ups that get presented at the fair are welcomed, how there's an attempt to integrate them into the market. Of course, these are often still companies that find it tough to meet market requirements. It's a process of development, naturally. But there's a great need, there's demand, so that, God willing, we'll start thinking deeply about alternatives.

I think that many up-and-coming designers regard achieving sustainability as a given.

SK: Yes, we're seeing an integrative standard evolving. No start-up can sidestep doing justice to the topic.

FJ: And that's a huge step if you think about all the places where sustainability is a matter of course out of tradition, or where it's a start-up. Back in the 1980s, we were still taking to the streets and calling for jute bags instead of plastic bags!

Needless to say, there is now pressure, on the other hand, to implement things faster. Not least, the pandemic showed that. Do you have the feeling that the learning curve we went through then will endure, as regards our industry that is?

SK: I think it definitely won't. Well, OK, that's not true of all market players. There's so much pressure that certain companies now have to act worse than they ever did pre-pandemic. Others have recognized the opportunities, and for them the pandemic may have functioned as a catalyst to invest in innovations, to address new themes, to review existing business models, or to identify niches. Others, however, have an awful lot of catching up to do, have had to write off immense sums. And then pressed "restart" in the belief that "Now we've really got to go for it!"

FJ: Let me take up that point. Because everything we experience as trade-fair organizers is essentially a reflection of social developments. If we're talking about the pandemic, then we should remember that in the first phase there was a strong feeling of all being in it together, and it gave way after a while to the opposite. Now, once we've emerged from the pandemic, we're seeing egomania spread fast. No doubt at the core of it there are economic factors in play here, but I must nevertheless say that what we learned from and during the pandemic has not endured and was not sustainable.



"At the end of the day, it is the consumer who decides. What doesn't get bought doesn't get produced any longer."

Frank Junker



One key demand today is the courage to change. Do you think this value is being brought to bear, in particular in Germany? Or do you also have the feeling that many are simply tending to withdraw into their safe comfort zones instead of moving forwards?

SK: That's an important point, and in terms of the German fashion market you're spot on. I believe that, at this very time, leaving that comfort zone is exactly the right step for the one or other brand to take. I see this, for example, in the Italian market, which is presently far more active. Different. More courageous. And I fear that this has something to do with our underlying German mindset. As long as things somehow function, they stay the way they are. The German market is definitely characterized by not having enough courage.

Does that not also have to do with a feeling of lacking something, i.e., that in Germany fashion has never been treated as a cultural asset?

SK: Most definitely.

FJ: At least not the way it certainly deserves.

SK: Fashion here is simply "clothes"...

FJ: We were saying recently that at the Pitti Uomo in Florence there were pink jackets on display; I don't really see German men wearing them to the office at the moment, while Italians respond by saying: Wow, that looks great!

"If you cast a glance at the brands doing it differently, then their success proves that courage pays off."

Sebastian Klinder

SK: I think opportunities simply get missed; it's a dilemma, it's sad, and German fashion doesn't deserve it. And if you cast a glance at the brands doing it differently, then their success proves that courage pays off.



The denim market is demonstrating a lot of innovative prowess as regards sustainability – and you're dedicating a special zone to it: the Bluezone. What do you feel makes the topic so exciting?

SK: Denim is the most democratic fabric per se; denim has always been a different textile product. But it's also a material that entails enormous production inputs. To this extent, the brands present themselves differently and are perceived much more as ingredient brands. The efforts to make denim better and cleaner aren't new. After all, we all know that the impacts are so severe, making it all the better that from all sides so much effort is going into improving things in this regard. It's amazing how much innovation is to be seen every six months on the different preproduction platforms.

For many years, the jeans industry was inconceivable without Spandex; now, silhouettes are getting wider again, materials less blended, both of which help circularity.

SK: For me, that for example is a phenomenon where the trend results from the wish for sustainability. If I as a manufacturer know that I won't achieve the sustainability goals I have been set, then I need to develop a different product.

FJ: What I have noticed in recent years, and even before the pandemic, is that the denim mills are now tending to position themselves as brands in their own right. For a long time they were simply below the radar, all we saw was G-Star, Diesel, or Replay. And no one was interested in who or what was behind those brands. The market as a whole is benefiting from the fact that now these preproduction manufacturers are clearly and transparently communicating the seriousness of their efforts to create better fabrics. This way, the goods that Diesel, for example, procures have a face of their own.

On the topic of transparency: The jungle of quality seals and certificates is very opaque; in particular, global business relationships mean that only individual stages of what are frequently unbelievably long supply chains get certified. How can we achieve genuine and unequivocal transparency for consumers?

SK: I believe that's only possible with uniform, multinational laws.

FJ: Given all the obligations, problems, difficulties, and tasks that have to be mastered, along with the justifications for things, in Germany fun and joy in fashion all too often fall by the wayside. Of course, the industry needs to be more sustainable, but all the laws, rules, and certificates rob the profession and the recipients of the fun in fashion and instead fuel a bad conscience. Yet fashion really is something marvelous!

Which brings us to the topic of valuing things, of how we consume things.

FJ: And here again, we need to preserve our joy in things! That makes you automatically more independent and reflective in your decision-making, frees you of the feeling you need to have something because others have it. That's what I would call a real feel for style.

SK: So let me ask again: How do we regain our sense of lightness, bring the bad conscience in consumerism to an end? We can only succeed here if we know that there is a way out of



overproduction, that a product is circular, that supply chains are transparent, and certificates internationally standardized. If we find the right answers to these questions, then the joy in fashion will return.

Let's talk about second-hand and vintage garments, areas that are currently gaining in esteem and acceptance, perhaps also because of some sense of nostalgia in society. How do you gauge the potential for this market, in particular as regards your event, which per se relies on newness?

SK: Of course, at first you think that the offering of a sourcing fair and the second-hand market torpedo each other. But for me, first and foremost, every purchase in a second-hand shop is a very correct one – because it stands for a change in thinking. The actual intention behind it is: I want to do something different. If the next generation acts this way because maybe they have to watch their money and they don't want to buy fast fashion but still want to look good, then second-hand fashion is a perfect alternative. Moreover, this kind of consumer behavior trains people to regain a feeling for quality, a sense of "we are in the midst of a huge change; I should embrace it and

"Second-hand is one opportunity that brands can also use for themselves, and that doesn't mean just the big online players who are already operating in the field."

Sebastian Klinder

"Of course, the industry needs to be more sustainable, but all the laws, rules, and certificates rob the profession and the recipients of the fun in fashion and instead fuel a bad conscience. Yet fashion really is something marvelous!"

Frank Junker

respond to it". Everyone bears responsibility for developing marketable and good products to fit into the circular economy. Second-hand is one opportunity that brands can also use for themselves, and that doesn't mean just the big online players who are already operating in the field.

FJ: Buying vintage and second-hand basically fulfils several needs: It is cheaper and also offers the surprise factor, because you never know beforehand what you will discover. On top of that, it's always a good purchase decision that makes the question of sustainability obsolete, because I'm buying something that already exists. And last but not least, you have the opportunity to craft an individual look, so this market may even rekindle the desire for fashion in general.

SK: The only thing is: When can a product make it into the second-hand shop? When the quality is really good. And it's so great when I can attract customers sustainably through this quality, so that they find pieces they can maybe even pass on to the next generation.

Many thanks for the open and inspiring conversation!

munichfabricstart.com

THE NEXT EDITION OF MUNICH FABRIC START WILL TAKE PLACE FROM JULY 18 –20, 2023, AT THE MOC SITE IN MUNICH.

Neonyt Inspiration and stimuli

Text: Inga Klaassen

At long last, Neonyt Düsseldorf is back again. And, at long last, so is the Prepeek (July 22-24) on the Areal Böhler grounds. The successful January premiere, at which profashionals (yep, that's how it's spelled) and opinionmakers from the worlds of sustainability and fashion gathered to explore potential synergies will be expanded on in the summer: with talks and content, innovations and inspiration.

Ulrike Kähler, Managing Director of Igedo Exhibitions, generates synergies through her successful trio of classical order zone, experience area, and high-profile speaker stage – not only for the Fashn Rooms and for Shoes, but since January 2023 also for Neonyt Düsseldorf, not to mention the Prepeek, which takes place at the same time. It took only four months to develop the concept for the two floors of the Kaltstahlhalle event location on Areal Böhler, and it was ready for operation for the January 2023 premiere. The audacious undertaking certainly paid off: Kähler's plan for the future is to grow the B2B format that so successfully unites fashion and sustainability with the express goal of addressing larger brands and onboarding both start-ups and renowned brands as exhibitors.

Sustainability as a shared narrative

Networking, a meeting of minds, sustainability trends, and zeitgeisty products – all under a single roof. That was the concept with which Neonyt Düsseldorf launched. The organizers intend the platform to feature an even more colorful mix of new kids on the block and established brands in future editions.

Kähler explains that sustainable capsule collections courtesy of the big players will be presented alongside small indie labels as a matter of course because they all share a common narrative: sustainability. The joint communications and presentation are designed to enable purchasing managers to easily connect with the sustainable labels of tomorrow.

Generating synergies

While the Fashn Rooms in the Alten Schmiedehallen on the Areal Böhler grounds are a permanent fixture in the German order calendar, the stimulating ideas showcased at Neonyt and Prepeek provide an additional boost to the fair. The hope is that, in the medium term, the target groups of the Fashn Rooms and Neonyt respectively will benefit from each other's presence, given the increasing awareness of sustainability among fashion creators and purchasing directors also becoming more eco-aware with regards to the orders they place. To further promote the transfer of expertise, this summer will see the two trade fair concepts combined once again. Kähler reports strong signs of exciting interaction occurring within the sector already, such that many exhibitors may well decide to be featured on both platforms.

The sustainability community

At Prepeek, things will again be down-to-earth: In July, the successful format will again combine fashion, entertainment and (advanced) training for those already active in the sector and content creators. As always, the mission statement is to offer visitors a carefully curated fashion preview. Digital natives among the fashionista will jump at the chance to be styled by a pro and photographed in the trend pieces of tomorrow. Talk formats highlighting sustainability, diversity and the zeitgeist will again be hosted on the floors on both days.

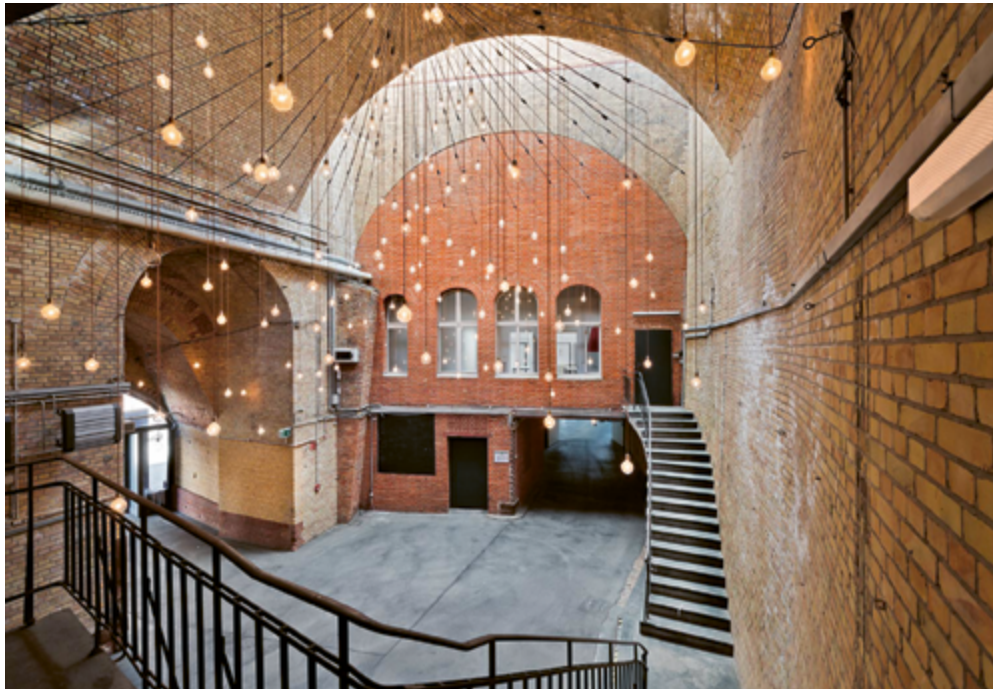
www.neonyt-duesseldorf.com

Photos: © Dita Vollmond



Ulrike Kähler,
Managing Director of
Igedo Exhibitions

Premium Let's come together



Conscious Club Conference, from left to right: Maren Wiebus, Max Gilgenmann (Studio MMO4), Anita Tillmann, Tselot Melesse

Photo: © Dominik Tryba

Home is where the heart is! In line with this insight, Premium Group is returning to Berlin for the coming edition of its trade fair – on July 11-12, 2023. To the place where the two Premium and Seek trade fairs were housed longest: at Station Berlin in the city's Friedrichshain Kreuzberg district. The change of location will be accompanied by a revamped fair concept and a trend and event platform with a progressive thrust – along with optimal visitor services and a more efficient structure. This courageous and consistent step is intended not just to convey a sense of nostalgia and familiarity, but also to offer new angles and nurture hope in a functioning, inspiring, and socially and ecologically sound future for fashion.

Text: Kristin Walzel



Rethinking trade fairs

The summer will focus on re-connection, genuine emotions, and a reliable outlook. "Everything's changing, all the time. Attention is a key asset – and personal encounters that leave a lasting impression are all the more valuable. We're offering a panoply of networking opportunities and an extensive trend overview. Two days simply couldn't be more efficiently spent!" declares Maren Wiebus, Creative Director at the Premium Group. The format will include keynotes, round tables, panel talks, live interviews, and study presentations. And the topics, such as sustainability, tech, fashion, business, lifestyle, and beauty, will take center stage, as will such big-hitting issues as Tik Tok, ChatGPT and virtual clothing.

Sustainability and fashion

Premium and Seek are merging and refocusing firmly on their positioning as the trendsetter among the international trade fairs. "With our new trend and event platform, we're embarking on a new chapter in Premium's history. The community can very much look forward to refreshing, provocative, and surprising collections that reflect today's zeitgeist in all its facets. Berlin stands for creative freedom, and we're very much capturing that feeling with the brand portfolio for the summer," promises

Franziska Diers, Director of Brand Relations at Premium. In the context of the Conscious Club, which is part of Seek the focus will be on issues relating to sustainability. For the July edition, Premium Group has worked together closely with Studio MMO4 experts Magdalena Schaffrin and Max Gilgenmann to create an outstanding program. It will be subdivided into ecological, economic, social, and cultural sustainability across the Retail, Supply Chain, and Diversity segments. Above all, the topic of denim will be taking a front seat. Guidelines, learnings, and transformational approaches will be discussed by experts, exhibitors, and initiators, who will explore how realistically they can be applied in the various segments.

In top form

"We're looking forward to the summer! We're curating a brand portfolio strongly relevant to the modern, high-end trade – more exclusive, pared down, and far more dynamic at all levels. Everyone agrees that the industry meet in Berlin is indispensable. The focus is firmly on personal encounters and a new generation of fashion brands," comments Premium founder Anita Tillmann.

premium-group.com

Denim PV and Première Vision Reviews and previews from Berlin and Paris

Text: Inga Klaassen

While Berlin continues to perfectly play the role of a center of unusual designs, sub-culture, and charming roughness, not to forget the experimental side to fashion, Paris is the epicenter of haute couture and classical elegance. However, it is perhaps precisely because they are so different that the two cities provide the perfect venue for the twin trade fairs Denim Première Vision and Première Vision Paris. Both cities are home to networks and zeitgeist and host a wealth of international trade visitors.



Creative hub for the denim community: the latest Denim PV

Perhaps it's the raw vibe of a city that never seems finished, of a progressive place where freedom and hedonism are on the daily menu along with heavy-bass-beat techno and international flair that brought the Denim Première Vision back to its old, new home from May 31 to June 1, 2023. Back for another dose of those promising constants of life here, its multicultural energy, that were part of the magnetism that first attracted the international denim community to the trade fair premises at Arena Berlin.

"As the organizers, we are firmly convinced that new designers will change the image of denim. The interactions between art, music and fashion in Berlin can be felt all over the city. Berlin influences us and we, too, want to shape Berlin in the space of only two days," comments Fabio Adami Dalla Val, Show Manager at Denim Première Vision. He says that he is forever fascinated by the city's dynamism and aesthetic, which for him, together with its incredible history, epitomizes change and progress. The international public, as well as the 70 exhibitors from over 15 countries could look forward to a creative melting pot that left space for dialog and interaction alongside the typical order business. A diverse range of guided tours, workshops, conferences and talk formats complemented the Summer edition of the trade fair. Val found it marvelous to see what synergies evolved between the partners at Denim PV during the two fair days. While Ukrainian fashionista Ksenia Schnaider fielded inspiring innovative jeans designs, designer Michiko Koshino chatted about club culture in London and Chicago during the 1970s and 1980s.

www.denim.premierevision.com



Photos Denim PV: © Andy Rumball

Makeover time: the new look Première Vision Paris

Première Vision Paris will this summer be presenting a completely new-look for the long-standing trade fair. The platform will take place in Paris on July 4–6 and will have a new focus: on sustainability and transparency in the textile industry. The idea is to use 'quality seals' and readily comprehensible pictograms to shed far more light on materials, supply chains, and production conditions. All exhibitors will accordingly be rated in line with six criteria – each individual category has its own logo, which will be displayed on signs at each trade-fair booth. The concept is driven by the desire to provide a compelling service to international trade visitors. The organizers say they hope the system will contribute to sustainable change in the textile industry. Participation will, however, initially be voluntary.

After reviewing the information offered at the fair, the individual zones were also reconsidered. The Fabrics section will remain in Halls 5 and 6, albeit with new segments: European exhibitors will be concentrated in Hall 5, while all non-European fair booths will now be found in Hall 6, grouped meaningfully by country. "The objective is to connect exhibitors from the same country, which has been a long-standing wish of several of our foreign guests, especially our Japanese exhibitors," comments Gilles Lasbordes, PV Paris Managing Director.

www.premierevision.com



Photos Première Vision : © Alex Gallosi



Pitti Immagine Uomo

Let the games begin!

Text: Deniz Trosdorff

Fashionistas are already feeling the adrenalin surge. Because it's not long until June 13–16, 2023, when the order of the day is "Benvenuti a Firenze per la 104esima edizione di Pitti Uomo!" Meaning that for no less than the 104th time, the venerable walls of Fortezza da Basso will once again be pulsating with life. The menswear trade show marks the kick-off world-wide of the new season, in this case that of Spring / Summer 2024. The organizers will be proudly welcoming about 850 exhibitors to the forthcoming edition of Pitti Uomo – and no doubt many, many more visitors than that.



Upturn driven by returning exhibitors

The organizers are so upbeat, among other things, because Asian buyers and visitors are expected to flock back to the Fortezza. Lapo Cianchi, Communication & Special Events Director Pitti Immagine comments that: "We expect to welcome more Chinese trade visitors not to mention a greater number of tourists to Florence. Not only is that good for the sector – it is also ideal destination marketing for our fashion-driven city." The quality of the exhibitors likewise looks set to be great. The fair has succeeded, for example, in attracting various German companies back, among them the Drykorn brand.

Highlights of the Pitti Games

Special guests, great events, and lots of young talent: The forthcoming Pitti Uomo has taken as its motto the 'Pitti Games' and certainly boasts a highly diverse program. "We were inspired by the notion of victory in sports when dreaming up the slogan – because in sports it's all about the challenges, creative skill, and commitment. Athletes are driven by the wish to win and to prove their abilities. While athletics contests hinge on going 'higher, faster, further', we're concentrating on getting better and better," is how Cianchi explains the slogan. One highlight is the special pageant by Pitti guest designer Eli Russell Linnetz. The fashion show supported by the Pitti Discovery Foundation and arranged by the Californian design talent and his ERL label takes place on June 14. Traditional Italian fashion makers Fendi is part of the coming Pitti Uomo and will be presenting its menswear collection for Spring / Summer 2024 in Florence. The event is scheduled as a special show on June 15 in the recently inaugurated 'Fendi Factory' location.

Sustainable fashion will also be at the forefront of things at the 7th edition of the SIStyle. The project, supported by the Pitti Discovery Foundation, is being curated by Giorgia Cantarini and features an eye-catching selection of eco-conscious and innovative brands – they'll be on display in the Sala delle Nazioni.

pittiimmagine.com

Photo: Imaxtree

Texworld Evolution

Three days + 1,300 exhibitors

Text: Inga Klaassen



Texworld Evolution Paris is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year – at a brand-new location. For three days, from July 3–5, 2023, one of Europe's most renowned fashion fairs will take place at no less a venue than the Porte de Versailles grounds in downtown Paris. And no doubt it's not just the anniversary that will put the organizer at Messe Frankfurt in an upbeat mood. The true significance of the order platform is also reflected in the bookings tally. No fewer than 1,300 exhibitors from about 20 different countries have already confirmed their participation in the Summer edition.

A special reunion for buyers and exhibitors alike

More service offerings, better connections to the very heart of Paris, and the return of international visitors. The list of novelties reads like a combination of optimism and joyful anticipation in equal measure. And rightly so, as this summer the trade fair will once again bring together all the elements of Texworld Evolution Paris with Texworld, Texworld Denim, Apparel Sourcing, Avantex, and Leatherworld Paris. With in excess of 1,300 manufacturers expected to populate Hall 1 at the trade-fair grounds close to the city center, the event will be the largest of its kind since the end of the pandemic. According to Messe Frankfurt, the number of exhibitors who have registered for the Apparel Sourcing segment has actually doubled.

Strategic meeting point for the fashion industry

Texworld Evolution Paris has been bringing fashion-industry exhibitors together for a quarter of a century now. It offers trade buyers from all over the world a steady sourcing platform that builds a bridge between the sector's current sustainability focus and a broad-based product portfolio. Thanks to the new venue and schedule, guests can now enjoy spending two parallel days attending the Curve and the Interfilère Paris (organized by WSN Développement). The latter event concentrates on the Lingerie, Lounge, Swimwear, and Activewear segments and takes place on July 2–4 in Hall 5.

texworld-paris.fr.messefrankfurt.com

Riga Fashion Week

Slow fashion meets the Baltics

Text: Kristin Walzel

New York, London, Milan, Paris, and Copenhagen are widely considered the key international Fashion Week venues. At the same time, new locations around the world are starting to catch the eye. Take the Latvian capital of Riga, for example: To coincide with first the Spring/Summer season and then again with Fall/Winter, it hosts four days crammed with events, highlight displays, and fashion shows by both local and international brands alike. The actual venues include the Hanzas Perons Culture Center, the Zunda Towers, and select designer boutiques all over town.

Riga Fashion Week has been organized by the Baltic Fashion Federation, a member of the European Fashion Alliance (EFA), since 2004. The EFA is a prestigious alliance of international fashion and textile corporations that interact closely with a view to promoting research, training, and HR development. Local up-and-coming brands as well as protagonists from neighboring countries presented their 2024 Spring/Summer collections at the last edition of Riga Fashion Week, which ran from April 18–21, 2023. Among them were designers Mild Power from Lithuania, Szczygiel from Poland, and Moel Bosh from faraway Uzbekistan. Latvia was convincingly represented by Natalija Jansone, for instance, whose work stands out for its casual modernity and timeless-cum-classical style, not to mention Iveta Vecmane and her designs, steeped in fashion history and boasting perfectly cut tailoring. “The slow-fashion approach is one of the most important USPs of Latvian fashion brands. Slow-fashion apparel takes a stand against fast fashionwear by emphasizing sustainability, longevity, and functionality without being any the less stylish for it,” comments Elena Strahova, President of Riga Fashion Week.

“One of our core objectives is therefore to try and persuade Baltic designers and consumers that sustainable business and consumption must be a matter of course, and as soon as possible at that,” Strahova continues. The Baltic Fashion Federation has therefore given the topic pretty much pride of place in the program in order to increase knowledge of the subject within the industry and foster awareness of sustainable initiatives.

She explains that “we are starting to see a new generation of designers emerge who, from the very outset, are building their businesses on ecological and socially compatible principles. And that’s why Riga Fashion Week networks the pros and the consumers, optimally exploiting the occasion to convey and outline the new values.” A prime example of this was the seminar titled “Sustainable Fashion – Stereotypes & Reality #2”, where various speakers presented what they see as a more sustainable future for the textile sector. Among them was none other than Maria Voth Velasco, founder of streetwear brand Turtlehorn, who emphasized that the circular economy must make inroads into fashion and ensure designers adopt a sustainable mindset. Agnieszka Knera, who has now been H&M’s sustainability manager for a decade, discussed what it means to guide a world player through the necessary transformation process, while other speakers included Solveiga Grisle, a director at AJ Power Recycling, Ekaterina Kuzmina, who represented Riga Technical University, and renowned author and scientist Tone Tobiasson.

Since 2015, Riga Fashion Week has been high on the list of Latvia’s major cultural events. The platform receives sterling support from Latvia’s Ministry of Culture, Riga City Council, and the Latvian Investment and Development Agency, not to mention various well-established commercial brands.

r fw.lv
bffederation.com



Berlin Fashion Week

The visionary power of fashion

Text: Inga Klaassen



Unlike other metropolises, in the minds of many, Berlin has an aesthetic that does not sit snugly with the classical definition of luxury and beauty. Here, ideals and norms get shifted, something Berlin has always been good at. Perhaps precisely for that reason, Berlin Fashion Week, which runs from July 10–15 this year, is widely considered to be truly genuine when it comes to re-envisioning fashion.

Alongside innovative concepts for shows, events, and presentations, the other thing closest to the hearts of the initiators (the Berlin Senate administration and Fashion Council Germany) is to consistently support national excellence in design and actively drive fast-emerging newcomer brands. The focus this year will be on the topics of sustainability, inclusion, and innovation, realized in the form of extraordinary fashions, in the designs, production, and presentation. Christiane Arp, CEO of Fashion Council Germany, is really excited about the July 2023 edition: “In recent years, the German fashion industry has undergone massive change, something that I feel is especially tangible during Berlin Fashion Week. I find it thrilling the way young designers are shaping the face of the industry, triggering a rethink in business and society, and thus strengthening the visionary power of German fashion in Berlin,” Arp comments.

Next Gen: The future belongs to creativity
Encouraging innovations, (re-)discovering traditions, highlighting new horizons – these are the key objectives of Fashion Council Germany in association with the Swarovski Foundation and the “Fashion-Craft” project initiated by The Prince’s Foundation, which premiered last year. Funding includes, for example, supporting bespoke workshops and seminars where talented designers demonstrate their prowess in the fields of sustainability, craftsmanship, and innovation – and can lend it even greater depth. “Made & Designed in Berlin and Germany”: As part of the “Berlin Contemporary” competition, back in the spring 18 new concepts won awards. The competition is destined to ensure Berlin attracts the attention of the international trade public as a key fashion center while also offering up-and-coming designers an ideal platform. The winning concepts at “Berlin Contemporary” were impressively innovative and embodied outstanding designs that convincingly present German fashion today.

fashion-council-germany.org

Performance Days

Masterful performance

Text: Inga Klaassen

Ever since 2019, the Performance Days team has been emphasizing environmental awareness – meaning that only exhibitors with sustainable materials and fabrics meeting the initiators' stringent criteria are admitted to the event halls. The trade fair's Fall edition is scheduled for October 4–5, 2023, and will for the first time also include a footwear section.



Assuming responsibility

"With our firm sustainability focus, the Performance Days may not be about to save the world, but at least we're acting responsibly," suggests Lena Weimer, the Performance Days Senior Marketing Manager. "Our holistic trade-fair program not only lends the topic of sustainability a voice, but also a framework that reflects all parts of the industry: from consciousness-raising for entire supply chains, to our support for the development of sustainable materials, through to defining contemporary sustainability standards," she continues. Moreover, the trade fair will straddle two whole halls for the first time and will also be enhanced by the new footwear floor.

Holistic for greater environmental awareness

According to the organizers, all exhibited products must consist of at least 50 percent recycled materials, comply with certified standards, or be fairly and organically made. Renowned experts in the field of environmental and social awareness will be highlighting exciting developments in the industry at the "sustain & innovate" conference which is being held at the same time.

The organizers have also been active in reducing waste during the trade fair, for example by installing a drinking fountain and fitting recycled carpeting on the grounds. Another step towards sustainability is the introduction of an app that replaces the customary printed events program. At the trade fair itself, there'll be a "Sustainability Lounge", and a climate quiz will offer a swift and enjoyable overview of the most important aspects of climate policies today.

performancedays.com

Innatex

Now is Now

Text: Kristin Walzel

Ever since its foundation in 1997, the Innatex has taken place twice a year in Hofheim-Wallau, just outside Frankfurt. The pioneer among sustainable trade fairs presents fashion, accessories, shoes, and home textiles twice a year. Already in fall 2014, trade-fair organizer Muveo GmbH expanded its portfolio to include the Innatex Showrooms in Bern and Salzburg. Today, when the green fashion industry meets in Wallau to present its latest collections to specialist dealers, there are invariably more than 300 labels from some 20 different countries on show.

Fostering synergies

In January 2023 the most recent edition of the fair placed the emphasis on innovative materials in the bags and shoes segments. New developments such as plant-based regenerative raw materials are not only gradually replacing leather, but also putting paid to oil-based plastics. This fits in with the motto for the forthcoming 52nd Innatex running from July 29–31, 2023, which is simply "Now". In this way, the trade fair is breathing fresh air into the summer season and has for the first time teamed up with Nina Lorenzen and Vreni Jäckle from Berlin's Fashion Changers. The activists founded the fashion blog in 2018: Its primary focus is on sustainable fashion, politics, and business. Moreover, the duo lecture and organize panel discussions at the relevant trade fairs. "We're truly delighted about the new cooperation with Fashion Changers – they're already providing stimulating ideas. We're discussing numerous topics, ranging from size inclusion or branding strategies in the digital age to juxtaposing small labels with the fashion giants. The concept of the 30-minute Lounge Talks was already well received at the last trade fair. Essentially, we remain an order fair, where participants can concentrate on their work," affirms Alexander Hitzel, Innatex project manager.

New verve

As in earlier versions of the fair, there'll again be a Community Lounge where alongside the 'Design Discoveries' several sector experts will take to the stage and field visitors' questions. For the first time, the next Innatex newcomers can apply to take part in the 'Design Discoveries'. It's a great opportunity to be positioned in the special zone, and a promotion drive will also seek to include the protagonists in the Lounge Talks.

Alexander Hitzel is very upbeat with regard to the coming event: "More than 100 brands have already signed up. Some are expanding or even doubling the size of their booths. Some labels have registered new lines that they hope will conquer the market. At any rate, there are no signs of anyone being frozen in shock owing to past or ongoing crises; on the contrary, I sense creativity and dynamism wherever I look."

innatex.muveo.de



Publisher

EPP Professional Publishing Group GmbH
Liesegangstraße 17
40211 Düsseldorf
Germany
Tel. +49 (0)211 830 30
Fax +49 (0)211 830 32 00
greenknowledge.org
info@greenknowledge.org
jnc-net.de
info@jnc-net.de
textilmitteilungen.de
info@textilmitteilungen.de

Publishing Management

Nikola Köster, Kathrin Wimber

Associate Publisher

Pierre D'Aveta

Head of Division JNC & TM

Cheryll Mühlen

Head of Content

Silke Buecker
s.buecker@greenknowledge.org

Art Direction

Antonia Henschel
sign.de

Editors

Cheryll Mühlen (cm)
c.muehlen@jnc-net.de
Deniz Troisdorff (dt)
d.troisdorff@textilmitteilungen.de
Kristin Walzel (kw)
k.walzel@textilmitteilungen.de
Inga Klaassen (ik)
i.klaassen@textilmitteilungen.de

Authors

Barbara Markert
Yvonne Egberink
Jenni Koutni
Nina Lorenzen
Wolfgang Altmann

Translation

Jeremy Gaines

Advertising

Pierre D'Aveta
Tel. +49 (0)211 830 31 51
p.daveta@jnc-net.de
Annegret Lucks
Tel. +49 (0)211 830 32 54
a.lucks@textilmitteilungen.de

Bank details

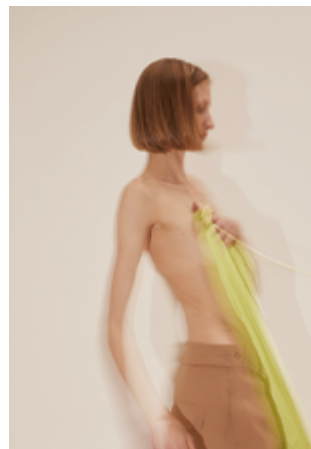
Commerzbank AG
IBAN: DE70300800000212782900
BIC: DRESDEFF300
Price: 20 EUR

Print

Schaffrath GmbH & Co.KG, Geldern

Data protection notice

In the event that delivery is not possible under the address provided, Deutsche Post DHL has the right to pass the correct address on to the publishers. The subscriber can appeal against this guideline. We assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, contents, clothing or products. The book and all its contents and images are protected by copyright. The place of business is Düsseldorf and the place of jurisdiction is Munich in all cases.



Dress by Ecoalf, Pants by Rossi,
Photo: Claudia Grassl



FSC Mix Paper from responsible sources