

M &V

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+
visionaries*

The HOME ISSUE

MARY MCDONALD
ARBITER OF STYLE

INSIDE
JULES REID'S
BEACH HOUSE

JOHN ROBshaw
ROBIN WILSON

+

BLANC EN BLANC
FRESH SPRING FASHION



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a long, flowing dress with a white bodice and a wide purple waistband, stands barefoot on a dark, craggy rock. Her dress is caught in the wind, billowing out to the right. She is looking upwards with a smile. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The overall mood is one of freedom and elegance.

Turning Over the Tapestry

Exciting home textile and apparel companies utilizing FAIR TRADE FABRICS are creating luxurious soft organic linens, innovative fashion and upcycled wearable art for today's high-demand market. The call to action for consumers to support ETHICAL global manufacturing through our voices and collective purchasing power is more urgent than ever.

By Robin Bradley Hansel

The blankets we wrap ourselves in to watch television, the bathrobes we reach for after our showers and the T-shirts that comfort our bodies are more than just functional fabrics. These items serve a unique purpose by connecting us as individuals to a people and planet at large.

There's a global story behind every thread of textile goods in your home. Seeds grow from the ground and are watered, worked and woven into the fibers that surround us; natural and human resources are either both protected or exploited in the process. By becoming more conscientious consumers, we will help offset the negative impact of today's low-cost, 'fast fashion' collections.

In the past decade, more sustainable practices have evolved in response to an environment that needs our protection if it is to support advances in social and economic systems. Some of the most common practices of sustainability include buying locally-grown and organically-farmed produce and shopping for natural, cruelty-free body products that conserve Earth's resources. These choices enhance our own health and ensure that the people within the supply chain are earning fair wages while working in a safe environment.

But do you give as much attention to the 'natural' materials in your bed sheets, blankets and clothing as you do the ingredients in your food and cosmetics? Are you aware of the toxic chemical residue left behind from the manufacturing of your clothing? "The fabrics we place next to our bodies are just as important to our health as the food we eat," said Marci Zaroff, an acclaimed eco-pioneer and chief marketing and sustainability officer of Portico Brand Group, a luxury organic lifestyle

company that owns Under the Canopy and FASE. "The skin is the body's largest organ, comprising more than 90 percent of our body's surface."

Genetically modified seeds, pesticides, and a toxic cocktail of chemical dyes go into the manufacturing of conventional cotton and remain an inherent part of the finished textile product. Many of these substances have hormone-altering properties while others contain known neurotoxins and carcinogens. These poisons never completely wash out of our textiles, and their direct and daily contact with our skin can cause allergic reactions and worse.

These health and environmental threats can be scary, but don't overreact. "Resist the urge to go into your closet and throw out all that you see. The next time you make a purchase try to do so with thought. Ask yourself how you can best make decisions that are lasting and sustainable, not extreme," said Zaroff.

A consumer's best tools for change are education and empowerment. Familiar faces like actress Amber Valletta are doing their part in supporting the need for more sustainable textiles. Valletta is working with Zaroff to present the upcoming *Driving Fashion Forward* series of short films on sustainability and design. The project launches online via Lexus's LStudio in mid-April.

Other well-known designers are lending their voices to The Greenpeace Detox Campaign, which began calling on major brands in 2011 to eliminate hazardous chemicals from their supply chains by the year 2020. Earlier this year Greenpeace Toxic Campaigner John Deans featured the #LittleMonsters, a two-week intensive social media push to stimulate public awareness about the

chemicals lurking in children's clothing that wash into our waterways, pollute the environment and threaten public health. Burberry joined the Greenpeace Detox Catwalk's list of 18 major clothing companies committed to detoxing their textile manufacturing practices as a result of more than 10,000 tweets and Instagram postings in early 2014 from concerned customers. Other companies leading this effort include Benetton, Esprit and H&M.

Zaroff also notes that it is important to support the progress of major brands such as Patagonia, Nike, Adidas and Puma without expecting perfection. "They have brought a lot of credibility to sustainable practices and are working hard to reduce their negative footprint," said Zaroff.

The goal for many sustainable textile companies is the use of logos and key words displayed on clothing labels, similar to the food industry's use of the words organic and all-natural. "In my dreams, I'd love to see a system of garment tagging requirements not dissimilar to food labeling that lists the carbon footprint of the product along with any environmental and human costs that were incurred through production," said Sass Brown, the acting assistant dean for the School of Art and Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and journalist for Eco Fashion Talk. "I don't honestly think that many people would continue buying throwaway fashion if they knew that their \$15 pair of jeans was produced at the cost of another human being's life," said Brown.

Textile Exchange, a nonprofit organization, is creating a more transparent labeling system. Consumers can visit their website for the most up-to-date information on textile certifications used ►

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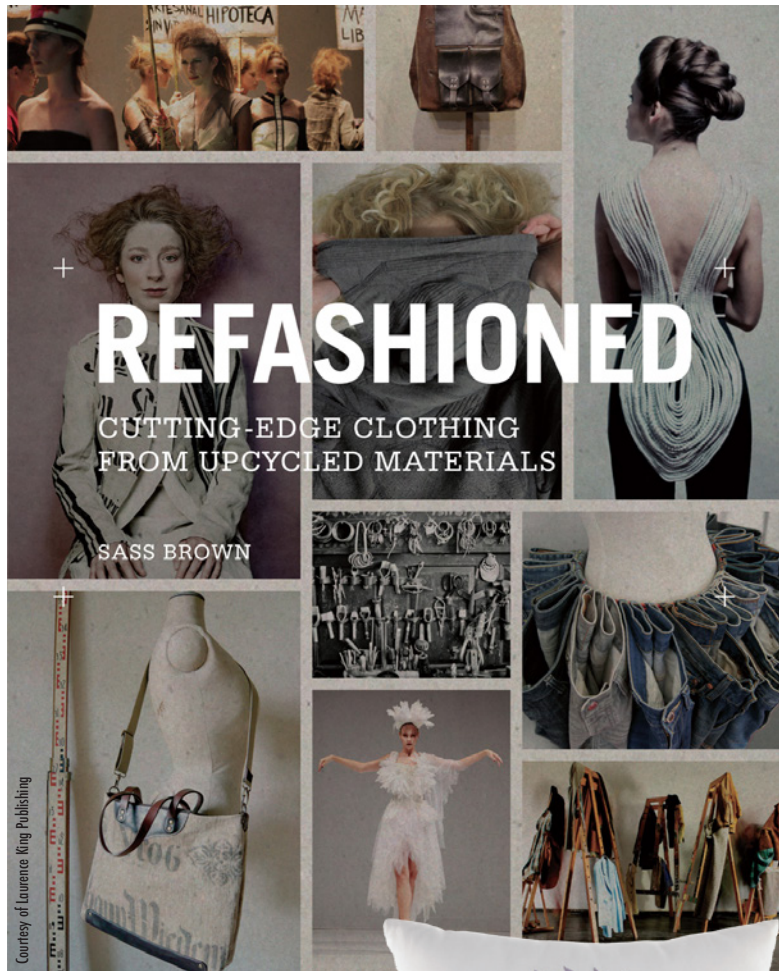
HENRY LOW PROFILE DECK MOUNTED LAVATORY FAUCET WITH LEVER HANDLES AND GROVE BRICKWORKS IN SUGAR WHITE



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Spark the discussion. Fashion Revolution Day USA encourages consumers to wear clothes inside out on April 24. This year's observance commemorates the first anniversary of The Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh where 1,129 factory workers lost their lives in the deadliest disaster in the garment industry. Be part of the movement with hashtags 'fashion revolution' and 'insideout' on social media.

by retailers such as Target and Nordstrom. Universal certifications like Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), OEKO-TEX 100 and the newly revised Global Recycle Standard (GRS) will help consumers better understand the fiber content of textiles prior to purchase.

Reworking and recycling existing garments is another effective way to reduce the environmental stresses of new manufacturing. One million tons of textiles are thrown out every year. Textile waste alone occupies nearly 5 percent of all landfill space. FIT professor Brown's latest book, *ReFashioned*, highlights the practice of 'upcycling,' whereby textile remnants and recycled fabrics are repurposed into exciting, unique works of functional, wearable art. Brown is encouraged by the amount of shared spaces, creative support and cooperative incubators among green designers in New York City. However, additional collaboration, particularly in the arena of global human rights, is needed to bring more attention to dangerous textile working conditions.

The Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) is a labor and women's rights organization, which supports the efforts of workers in global supply chains to win improved wages and working conditions. According to MSN cofounder Lynda Yanz, major brands and retailers seek products from countries and suppliers willing to produce for the lowest price. "The trend toward fast fashion increases pressure on suppliers to meet tight order deadlines, which results in long hours of forced overtime and/or subcontracting to smaller factories where conditions are usually worse," said Yanz.

Some leading apparel brands are taking a stronger stand on issues like forced pregnancy testing and child labor, but dangers still exist that require MSN's direct support. MSN helped obtain the signatures of 30 major brands and three global unions for a letter to Cambodia's prime minister in response to violence against workers. More than 130 brands and suppliers, including Abercrombie & Fitch, Fruit of the Loom and American Eagle Outfitters, have now signed the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh.

In the end, the future for more eco-friendly fabrics shows great promise. Consumers hold the power by building awareness about working conditions and influencing companies to take more responsibility. "The very best lasting efforts are authentic, transparent, mindful, and conscious. This year will be a game-changer for the eco-fashion movement thanks to the collaboration and co-creation we are seeing now," concluded Zaroff. ■

QUICK TIPS TO LESSEN YOUR TEXTILE FOOTPRINT

- 1 "If you have things you don't want anymore, but they're still cool and in good condition, use one of the swap websites like 'Bib + Tuck' so someone else can love it. You can find something new to you – without it actually being new – to get excited about." *Sass Brown, acting assistant dean for the School of Art and Design, Fashion Institute of Technology*
- 2 "Use your voice online to be active in educating friends and family on the toxic textile industry and the solutions that are available." *John Deans, Greenpeace Toxic Campaigner*
- 3 "Read the 'made by' labels in your products and [visit their websites] to learn what companies are doing to help improve workers' wages and safety in those countries." *Lynda Yanz, Maquila Solidarity Network cofounder*
- 4 "Try to be mindful of not running the dishwasher half-filled." *Marci Zaroff, chief marketing and sustainability officer of Portico Brand Group*
- 5 "Being accustomed to cut prices and deep discounts can be unlearned, just as it was learned. Instead of buying fast fashion, take ideas from 'The Tailor Project' on how to refit, restyle and repair your existing wardrobe." *Sass Brown*
- 6 "If your favorite brand is one that has made a Detox commitment, call or email them and thank them for taking a positive step, then tell them you are watching them and want to see real change." *John Deans*
- 7 "Always shop first for organic Fair Trade certified food, beauty, and personal care items." *Marci Zaroff*

GREEN THREADS FOR THE HOME



Designtex
environmental design, recycling
designtex.com

Oliveira Textiles
organic fibers, textiles
oliveiratextiles.com

Kravet
100% recycled polyester
kravet.com

Maharam
ISO 14001 certification for all its facilities
maharam.com

Amenity Home
certified organic fabrics
amenityhome.com

All textiles shown are by Maharam.