

The Conscious Closet

THE MODERN STYLE AESTHETIC INCLUDES
BEING KIND TO MOTHER EARTH
BY JEANINE GORDON

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Fast fashion. It's inexpensive, trendy and readily available to buy—but there's a dark side that's garnering attention among shoppers, designers and retailers alike. The environmental impact is one of the biggest issues, as fast-fashion manufacturers are notorious for creating huge amounts of pollution as well as textile and water waste. In response, sustainable brands are blowing up in a big way, putting conscious-chic clothing in the fashion spotlight.

Influencer and entrepreneur Randa Salloum is a passionate eco-friendly fashion advocate. "The current industry hinders the environment through [the] pollution of water, air and soil. Sustainable fashion uses biodegradable materials and conscious manufacturing to serve the planet and its people," she says.

Vancouver-based **Londre Bodywear** targets water pollution, making chic swimwear from recycled plastic water bottles. In addition, all water used in production of its sellout suits is safe for reuse. Founders Ainsley Rose and Hannah Todd cite sustainability as a core value that they refuse to compromise on. "We founded Londre thinking about a problem we wanted to solve, and we created a way to be part of the solution," Rose says.

Obakki, a local luxury fashion brand founded by Treana Peake, also sees a systemic problem in the fashion industry. Says Peake, "Fast fashion is driven by trends, over-consumption and a swinging closet door, with a constant desire to have something new."

For that reason, responsible makers like Todd and Rose view sustainable fashion through a holistic lens. "We offer high-quality, long-lasting pieces that have the lowest possible environmental impact," Rose says.

Peake agrees. "Small-batch production and more-meaningful products are the foundation of what we do," she explains, adding that organic fabrics, natural dyes and working with small-scale global artisans round out Obakki's philosophy. "If I'm in the fashion space, I'm ensuring that my place doesn't harm the environment or the people within it."

If you're passionate about shopping sustainably, there's no shortage of options. Education is everything. "Know your supply chain," Peake says. "Know the hands that touched it and who made it."

Salloum concurs: "The most important thing you can ever do to



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shop sustainably is educate yourself. Who makes your clothes? Where do your clothes come from? What are they made of? If you don't know, ask or research."

You might have to go the extra mile, but Peake believes it's worth it. "Source out brands that are sustainable and do your research online. Find out which companies are making an effort and support them. If they align with your morals, they're a brand worth buying."

Shopping sustainably, she adds, also means choosing quality over quantity. "Save up and buy special pieces that you can keep and wear for years to come. Buy less and stop chasing trends."

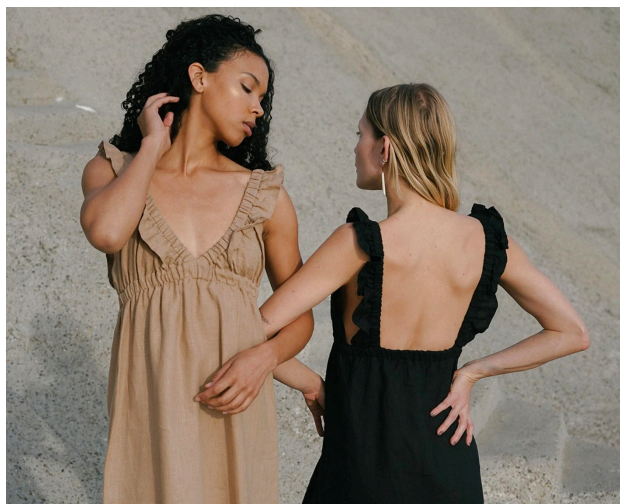
Todd and Rose also make a case for conscious shopping. "Be mindful of your purchases. Buy investment pieces you'll have in your closet for years," says Todd. Rose is a strong advocate for versatility. "All of our swimsuits also double as bodysuits, going from the beach to your day-to-day. We even had a client style one for a black-tie event with a pair of flowy silk pants and a chunky Chanel necklace."

Looking ahead, Peake sees sustainable-chic fashion continuing to thrive. "There are so many beautiful natural fabrics and ways to get vibrant colours naturally. The modern style aesthetic includes being kind to the earth, and it's exciting to contribute to that."

Salloum sums it up perfectly: "Sustainability, luxury and style are not separate from one another. To me, luxury means high-quality pieces that will last a lifetime. This is exactly what you're going to find when you choose to support a sustainable clothing company." ▼

Local Brands to Love

WE'VE GIVEN YOUR SUSTAINABLE STYLE HOMEWORK A HEAD START. WITH RANDA SALLOUM REVEALING A FEW OF HER FAVE B.C.-BASED ECO-FRIENDLY BRANDS—PLUS A FEW OF OUR TOP PICKS, TOO.



Harly Jae. Zero-waste small-batch clothing and accessories created from fabric scraps and natural materials.

Jessica Redditt. Hand-dyed boho-chic clothing made in Vancouver of organic materials and plant-derived colour.



Sonya Lee. Luxe handmade leather bags made with minimal waste and designed to last a lifetime.



M-A by Melissa Araujo. Chic, slow and sustainable women's apparel favoured by A-listers like Chrissy Teigen and Emma Roberts.