



THE CHANGING

SHEEN: KATRINE HANNA

Nosheen Bakhsh designs delicate jewellery in 18-carat gold and diamonds for her brand Sheen

FACE OF FASHION

A new wave of regional design talent is bringing a fresh approach to the business of style, writes Sarah Maisey

So many things have changed as a result of Covid-19 – how we work, how we engage with others, how we fill our free time and, in many instances, how we shop. The pandemic has encouraged us to collectively re-evaluate our habits as consumers, and to question the values of the brands we support. Enter a new wave of talent that prizes social responsibility over profits, and seeks to have a positive impact on both people and the planet. Here are some regional brands that are adopting new business models that weave ethics into every fibre of their designs.

SHEEN: JEWELLERY FOR A CAUSE



Saudi-Kashmiri designer Nosheen Bakhsh didn't intend to go into jewellery. As part of a university project, she had to invent a fictional company and create the branding for it. "I came up with the concept of Sheen, and it was my perfect job – a creative outlet with some sort of humanitarian aspect to it," she says. "Some people came up with time machines, but mine was actually practical and doable. I had no background in jewellery; I didn't know how to craft, but my family told me: 'Don't worry, just figure it out.' That was seven years ago."

Bakhsh's delicate jewellery in diamonds and 18-carat gold (and more recently, sterling silver) is built around three pillars: design, culture and humanity. "For every piece that's sold, a percentage gets donated to a different cause, which changes depending on what's happening in the world," she explains. "I am Muslim, and our religion states that you should give with your left hand and your right hand should not know what you are doing. I do it for my own reasons, and because it is what I want to do. A lot of my customers didn't actually know about it, so it's an

added bonus. It's not the reason that people purchase my jewellery." In 2018, Sheen received recognition from the British Fashion Council for its positive impact and fundraising work. Fusing traditional architectural motifs with modern jewellery, Bakhsh's most recent collection, titled Kenza, is a tribute to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which she describes as her second home.



KATRINE HANNA: NURTURING NATURE

Australian-Lebanese shoe designer Katrine Hanna has always been fascinated by plants. "I love plants, particularly those that are unique to a specific region. Being Australian, I already had a knowledge of the flora there, and

that led me to experiment with banksia," she says. Native to Australia, the banksia tree has 173 different varieties and is so integral to the environment that the tree's seed pod needs the heat of a bushfire to open, and a certain species of honey possum relies totally on its nectar for survival. Dried, each pod has a distinctively gnarled, pocked look. "I had a seed pod on my desk and one day I looked at it and thought, as a heel [for a shoe], this would be insane." Having tested its robustness with a specialist Italian company, the shoe designer set about transforming this overlooked pod into beautiful and unique heels for her light, strappy sandals. "It's very hands on. People go out, pick it for me and ship it. It starts as a yellow flower, and when it dries and the petals come off, you get a closed, green pod. It needs fire to open the seed valves, and the seeds fall out and a new tree grows. The pod is what's left. No animals depend on that for food. "It's completely sustainable and I am not taking anything away from the environment." ▶