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## STARS & STRIPES

US COUNTRY FOCUS  
The hottest labels to watch from  
East Coast to West Coast

ECO WARRIOR  
People Tree founder Safia Minney  
on 25 years at the forefront of  
Fair Trade fashion

MORAL FIBRE  
Ethical brands in the spotlight

# The moral high ground

At one time it would have been difficult to find a readily available fair trade clothing label, but now thanks to considerable changes in the ethical fashion movement, even the high street offers up eco-friendly or conscious ranges. Rebecca Jackson highlights some of the top sustainable, ethical and fair trade fashion brands.



## PEOPLE TREE

With a host of accolades under its belt and ethical fashion campaigner and CEO Safia Minney at its helm, fair trade clothing brand People Tree is based in Japan and London. Founded in 1991 in Tokyo, the brand is often cited as a leader in the fight for a fairer fashion industry. Accredited by the WFTO, the Fairtrade Foundation and the Soil Association, the brand is able to improve the lives of an estimated 4,000 farmers and artisans around the world. Handskills such as weaving and embroidery are utilised for their carbon neutral qualities and to protect local craft, while almost all cotton is 100 per cent Fairtrade certified. Aside from its own collections, the brand actively supports 50 fair trade groups in eight developing countries, while Minney is recognised as one of the faces of ethical fashion, featuring in campaigning documentaries such as *The True Cost* (2015).



## COLLECTION & CO

Collection & Co offers footwear which utilises vegan friendly materials. Specialising in heeled styles, the brand aims its collection at the contemporary and chic working woman. Proving that style and glamour don't have to be created using leather, founder Felesha Papa-Adams started the brand in 2015 after becoming vegan. The 23-year-old entrepreneur has established a collection of boots, heeled sandals, lace-ups and court shoes: all vegan friendly and cruelty free while also delivering high quality heeled styles at affordable price points. After listening to women complain about uncomfortable shoes, Papa-Adams was inspired to design a range of heels that start at 10cm. Designs generally consist of neutral and minimal colour palettes, though contrast hues are also used on styles such as the Celia boot. Materials are almost aesthetically identical to leather, offering a smooth to the touch feel.



## MAYAMIKO

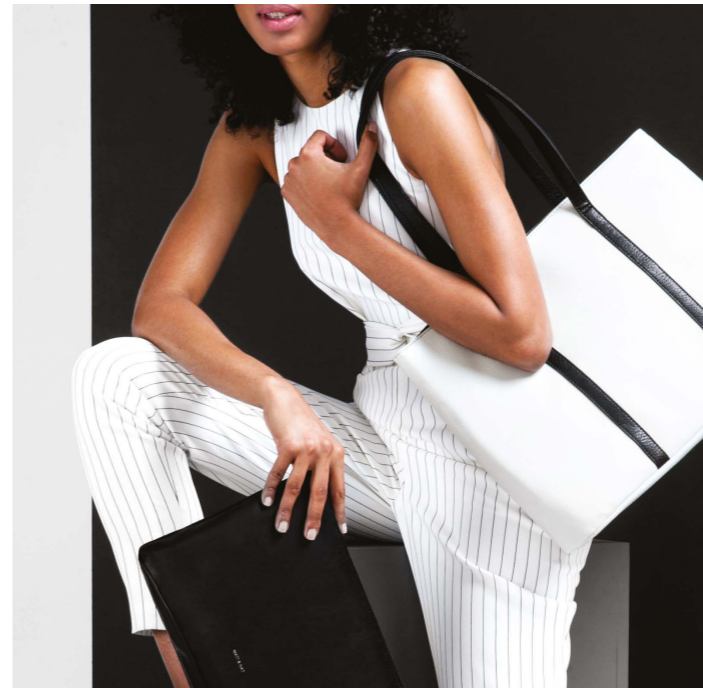
Brand founder Paola Masperi started the Mayamiko label as a charity that provided creative business training and opportunities to disadvantaged communities within the developing world. This progressed into a fashion business after Masperi wanted to provide people with the means to work and earn a living rather than to just receive aid. Fabrics are sourced from the local market in Lilongwe, Malawi, and are then carefully washed, cut and sewn in the workshop in nearby Chinsapo.

The Mayamiko charity trains and employs women from the local community to work in the tailoring workshop, which operates a zero waste policy. Each piece of leftover fabric from the cutting room is upcycled and turned into accessories such as the brand's zero waste scrunchies or the yoga-inspired Namaste Collection. As a finalist at the 2013 Ethical Fashion Forum Awards and a finalist at the 2013 Vogue Italia Eco Talents, Mayamiko is not short of industry recognition.

## LAPIDARIUM

Lapidarium specialises in ready-to-wear apparel and accessories, and is focused on developing textile and print ideas. Within this design framework, all materials used by the London-based brand are sourced with an eye towards environmental and social good.

Established in 2015, the brand uses a sustainable supply chain while focusing on zero waste technologies which create minimal environmental damage. The majority of textiles used are recycled or certified, aiding the brand's primary aim of delivering products which are sustainable, innovative and design-led. Overall, the brand goal is to merge a craft-focused aesthetic with sustainable practices. As a champion of UK-made products, all pieces are made in the company's studio in north-east London. Working with trusted mills and using certified organic and recycled fabrics, vivid prints and colour combinations inspired by microstructure and graphics are produced across the line.



## MATT & NAT

The concept of Montreal based brand Matt & Nat is to explore the synergy between material and nature. Started in 1995 under the motto 'live beautifully', the brand is committed to not using leather or any other animal based materials across its range of bags, wallets and shoes. Opting instead to explore and utilise innovative ways to improve sustainable and eco-friendly methods, Matt & Nat produces high-quality products with timeless appeal.

Through the seasons, the brand experiments with different recycled materials including nylon, cardboard, rubber and cork. Since 2007, the brand has been committed to using linings made solely of 100 per cent reused plastic bottles. Recycling more than two million plastic bottles during the manufacturing process, Matt & Nat produces an extensive range of bags, from satchels and backpacks to yoga bags and belt bags. Collections are split into themes such as the brand's signature Dwell Collection, made from 100 per cent PVC.

## FOOL DOST

Created in 2016, Fool Dost is a womenswear line designed in London, characterised by a relaxed, minimalist aesthetic fused with a contemporary bohemian vibe. The label's debut collection presents easy-to-wear garments that feature flattering, elegant cuts. Indian influences are seen throughout the apparel collection, which typically embodies clean lines. Natural fibres are used in items such as the One Sleeve Dress (pictured), which reflects a simple design and colour palette typical of the label. Collection pieces are handmade by artisans in the brand's Fair Trade partner workshop in Northern India. Through collaborating with the workshop, Fool Dost is able to support and grow the sustainable employment of the local community, aiding women's economic empowerment within rural India. The brand supports the growing slow fashion movement and echoes the sentiment of producing and consuming fashion thoughtfully.



### FARRAH FLOYD

Farrah Floyd unites high-level quality design with sustainability in its clothing line. Using innovative fabrics, the collections are developed and made following a series of zero waste principles. Trained as a fashion and textile designer, and holding a masters degree in Sustainability in Fashion, brand founder Bojana Draca developed a special zero-waste cutting technique by using only rectangular pattern pieces. In 2012 with her master collection, Heroine\_collection, Draca won a bronze in The Creative Conscience Awards UK and reached the semi-finals of the EcoChic Design Awards in Hong Kong.

The latest collection, Life is Elsewhere, combines a subtle use of fabrics and colours, creating a playful look that's aimed at the brand's typical market: free-spirited, self-confident women. Innovative cupro and wool fabrics, organic cotton and viscose combine with prints made in collaboration with textile artist Heiner Radau in this ready-to-wear collection.



### MA RA MI

Ma Ra Mi was established by designer Andra Clitan through a desire to create a fusion between traditional Romanian art and fashion and different cultures from all over the world. With exclusive designs using traditional crafts from a range of countries, the goal is for products to be made ecologically and locally, thus creating less pollution, reviving natural dyes and returning to original craft materials such as timber, fur, hide, textile, ceramic and glass. The majority of orders are taken in limited numbers or on commission, which also minimises environmental damage. Hand-woven pina and abaca fabrics made in the Philippines by local people are utilised during manufacture, ensuring skills are used and rewarded with a fair wage. Overall, with a strong focus on the people behind production, the brand maintains and encourages a dialogue between designers and craftspeople.

### ABURY

Abury was founded in 2008 by Andrea Bury after a trip to Marrakech to renovate an old house in the Medina. Inspired by the skills of the craftsmen, Bury built the brand around a desire to preserve the dying handicraft tradition and the heritage of the Moroccan people.

The label operates as a fashion platform that brings together traditional artisans with avant-garde designers, typically producing collections that foster intercultural exchange while preserving craft. Offering a range of accessories and bags ranging in size and style, unique designs and contrasting colours are presented in each collection. The brand's upcoming ADEX Winner Accessories Collection – A Non Existent Tribe – is the result of an international search for emerging designers. The capsule collection uses traditional craft knowledge from different cultures and features six bags in a mix of leather, straw and alpaca wool. 50 per cent of the collection profits will be reinvested in education projects in Ecuador.



### RAVEN + LILY

Raven + Lily was created as a means to alleviate poverty among women. Through partnership with groups of marginalised women, the brand helps to employ over 1,500 artisans in countries around the world including Ethiopia, Kenya and Pakistan. With an aim to break the cycle of poverty, the brand focuses on producing modern minimalist products that are made by hand and follow Fair Trade standards. As a certified B-Benefit Corporation, the brand provides fair wages, donates back to workers' communities and follows eco-friendly practices in its sourcing and design process. Style is simplified and silhouettes are stripped back to reveal timeless staple pieces, which focus on texture, color and cut. Materials including baby alpaca, mohair, hand-loomed silk, organic denim and upcycled jerseys are sustainably sourced. Minimalist geometry is also seen through eco-friendly brass, horn and beaded jewelry designs, along with the shibori collections and vegetable dyed leather bags. The brand's ethos of empowering women through simplified clothing is reflected through its minimalist designs.



### BRAINTREE

Braintree clothing offers a modern and contemporary collection underpinned by sustainable and ethical credentials. All clothing uses natural, sustainable or recycled fibres such as organic cotton, hemp, Tencel and bamboo, and is designed in-house. Style is timeless and effortless to wear, and is intended to slot into existing wardrobes. Signature styles include the luxe knitwear range and dresses that fit and flatter, showcasing fresh exclusive prints each season. The latest collection looks to nature and the wonder of our surroundings for inspiration. The palette takes inspiration from saltwater, showcasing a spectrum of blues and seaweed greens – borrowing texture from weathered walls, moss and moorland to inspire effortless style. Shades of rust and rose are used in hand-drawn patterns, soft florals and shape-shifting texture. Bold brushstrokes of plum and amethyst combine with contrasting hues and with geometric dapples, dots and splashes.



### BEHNO

Behno's mission to redefine and bring awareness to the craft and character of 'made in India' has helped towards the cause of setting a new standard for the manufacture of India's garment trade. Established in 2012 by Shivam Punjya, the brand's mission to revolutionise the way garment workers are treated, viewed and employed is seen in practice through its ethical garment factory based in Gujarat, India: MSA Ethos. MSA Ethos implements Behno's ethical framework, The Behno Standard, which comprises six categories: health, garment worker mobility, family planning, women's rights, worker satisfaction and benefits, and eco-consciousness. With an overall aim to be part of a global mission to inspire change and improve factory conditions, the brand has no doubt helped to improve the quality of life and safety of individuals – an increasing concern after the Rana Plaza factory collapse in 2013.