

# Sustainability and Ethics Report



# Bhoomki at a Glance

# Words from our Founder



We at Bhoomki understand the destructive influence fashion has had on the planet and its people. Since the 1990s, every basic need has gone up in price except for clothing. As a teenager, I remember going into The Gap and purchasing a plain tee shirt for just under \$11. As I write to you that same tee plain shirt sells on their website for \$9.99. How is that even possible nearly 25 years later? I'm here to tell you that it has been on the back of developing countries where workers are paid pennies and their countries are environmentally ravaged to produce our insatiable need for cheap clothing. Buying fast fashion is just bad karma.

There is no denying that climate change is happening, despite those who say it isn't. Also as I write this, Australia is suffering from the most devastating wildfires in its history. In September 2019, the Amazon's rainforest – often described as “the lungs of the earth” - burned through the equivalent of 8.4 million American football fields. The temperature of the planet is rising, summers are coming sooner and carbon emissions are not slowing fast enough. Scientists know that along with the ongoing and unregulated release of greenhouse gases the Earth's temperature will continue to rise.

I don't need to tell you the fashion industry is one of the biggest polluters on the planet. How could it not be with its reliance on agriculture and livestock (cotton, linen, rayon, viscose, silk, wool, alpaca and leather) and

petroleum (polyester, air and ground shipping, energy to run machines and mills etc)? Some say fashion is the third biggest polluter of the planet behind oil and agriculture. Whatever the destruction ranking might be, fashion takes a toll around the globe.

There is hope.

Customer attitudes and habits are changing. As we embark upon decade three of this century, a tide of awareness around the destructive force that is fashion has risen. Sustainable fashion brands are popping up everyday on Instagram. Fast fashion giants like Forever 21, Top Shop and Payless Shoe Stores shuttered their stores and filed for bankruptcy. The resale business is booming and exhibiting greater growth than the industry at large. The conversations I have with my customers express a deep concern for the amount of stuff we have, and the importance of buying things we value and truly love. One of my favorite things to say to customers is: “Don't buy it, if you don't love it.”

I'm proud to say that in our eighth year, Bhoomki hosts one of the longest running ethical fashion boutiques not only in New York City, but in the United States. We have become a destination for ethical fashion enthusiasts around the world. With over seven years of data we can confidently say we have made an environmental impact by keeping textiles out of landfills, producing clothing with low toxicity and natural dyes, using organic cotton whenever possible, and selling like-minded brands who share the same mission. We've worked hard to make a social impact among our suppliers, and to do good by them. We made 50% of our 2019 production with materials made by textile artisans. Our social contract with our factory and our artisan suppliers is to provide a living wage and comfortable working conditions to their employees. It's been a part of our DNA since the day we opened our doors in 2012.

In our EIGHTH year, we proudly present our inaugural Sustainability and Ethics report to show you – our Bhoomki Believer – all the good work we've done. Thank you for continuing to support us along this journey.

Swati Argade



# Studio Bhoomki



## ARTISANAL TEXTILES

We're obsessed with handmade textiles, preserving craft and ensuring fair compensation for hand workers. We regularly work with India-based block printers, embroidery artists and handloom weavers, and work with women artisans as often as possible.

When you visit us online or in-store, you'll find clothing made from fabrics as varied as handwoven Assamese peace silk, shibori crepe, ikat cotton or naturally dyed linen. Every piece in our store honors the heritage of the handmade, and we love sharing the story of the people and process behind them.



## ETHICAL MANUFACTURING

The baseline for what we make and sell is rooted in fair labor practices. We have never wavered from our commitment to cut and sew our clothing in factories where employees work in comfortable and humane conditions and receive a living wage. We do this without sacrificing superb craftsmanship, quality and fit.

We proudly partner with a women-owned factory in Noida, India which employs members of artisan textile communities. These employees return to their homes with fabric orders from clients which help keep their craft traditions alive.



## #FORWOMENBYWOMEN

Bhoomki celebrates the intersectional identities of women from all around the world, and the diversity of voices within the fashion industry. We are passionate about creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs and craftswomen through our brand.

Our intersectional philosophy prizes inclusivity and diversity in every step of our clothing's journey: from our trusted female factory worker to you, our beloved customer, our Bhoomki Believer.



## SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

Our commitment to sustainability lives in our brand name. Bhoomki loosely translates to *Of The Earth*. *Bhoomi* means Mother Earth in Sanskrit and *ki* means of in Hindi.

It's no surprise that Bhoomki carefully designs and sources fabrics with low environmental impact like organic cotton, linen, peace silk and Cupro. We love working with natural fibers like organic linens, cottons and silk. We also seek out innovative recycled materials like Cupro where nearly 100% of the solvents used to turn cellulose into cloth return to the production cycle. We use AZO-free and/or OekoTex 100 certified dyes and are constantly on the look-out for long-lasting natural dyes.



# Our Mission for Sustainability & Ethics

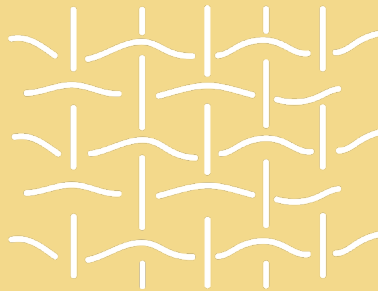
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Bhoomki creates and curates fine products for the good of the planet and its people.

We aim to:

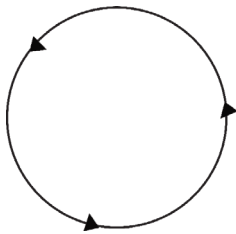
- » recognize and preserve traditional crafts' immeasurable contributions to the history and character of cultures and communities.
  - » create beautiful, timeless pieces with a low environmental impact.
  - » create financial and professional opportunities for women/artisans
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# Sustainable Materials



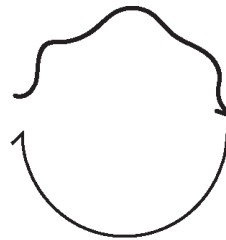
# Fabric Make-up & Qualities

We live for fabric, our textile-obsessed team loves little more than geeking out on how cloth is made. We aim to make apparel with a minimal environmental impact without sacrificing quality, wearability and feel. We source from a multitude of suppliers with a commitment towards natural fibers and dyes. Walk into our shop and discover that each piece is made from a natural or low impact fabric. You might find organic cotton, closed-loop cupro, handloom cotton, block-printed silk and the list goes on.



## RECYCLED CONTENT

Contains material made from post-consumer or textile waste.



## RENEWABLE

Materials manufactured quickly enough to keep pace with how fast they are consumed or used.



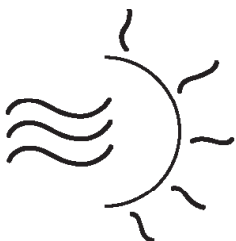
## BIODEGRADABLE FIBER

The ability of fiber to decompose naturally without adding toxins to the environment.



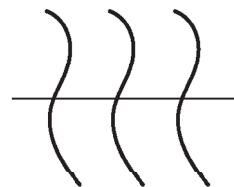
## NATURAL FIBER

A material made from plants, animals or geological processes.



## THERMAL REGULATOR

A material that naturally has a heating and cooling effect.




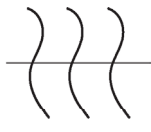

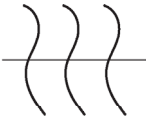

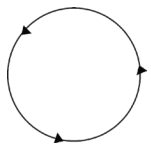



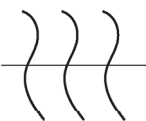





## BREATHABLE

Allows air to circulate through the fabric.



# Sustainable Fabrics

Here is a highlight of the fabrics that we used during our 2019 production year and their unique qualities.

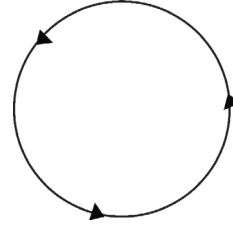
<p><b>COTTON</b></p> <p>Natural Fiber /</p> <p>Derived from the seed of the cotton plant</p>	 <p>Renewable</p>	 <p>Breathable</p>	 <p>Biodegradable</p>
<p><b>CUPRO</b></p> <p>Cellulose Fiber /</p> <p>Made from recycled cotton linter /</p> <p>Closed-loop production</p>	 <p>Breathable</p>	 <p>Biodegradable</p>	 <p>Recycled Content</p>
<p><b>SILK</b></p> <p>Natural Fiber /</p> <p>Derived from protein from the cocoon of the silk worm</p>	 <p>Renewable</p>	 <p>Temperature Regulating</p>	 <p>Biodegradable</p>
<p><b>TENCEL</b></p> <p>Cellulose Fiber /</p> <p>Made from wood pulp /</p> <p>Closed-loop production</p>	 <p>Breathable</p>	 <p>Renewable</p>	 <p>Biodegradable</p>
<p><b>ANIMAL HAIR</b></p> <p>Natural Fiber /</p> <p>Derived from sheep, lamp or alpaca fur (no mulesing and cruelty-free)</p>	 <p>Renewable</p>	 <p>Temperature Regulating</p>	 <p>Biodegradable</p>

# Production Break-Down



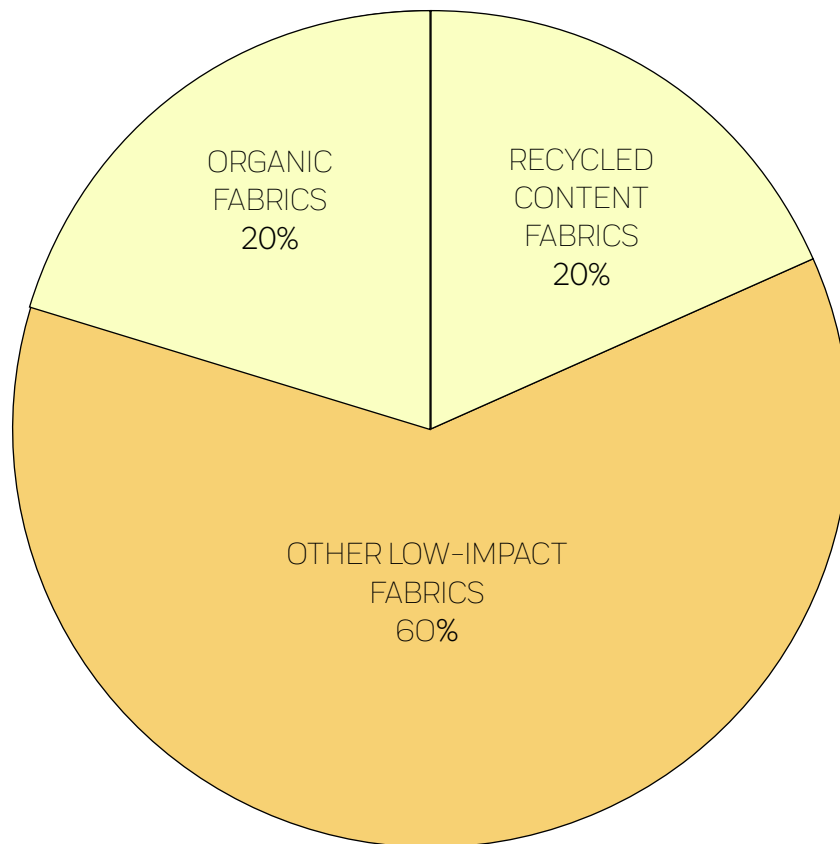
## Organic Fabrics

20% of our garments were made with GOTS-certified organic fabrics.



## Recycled Content

20% of our total garment production were garments made with fabrics derived from recycled materials.



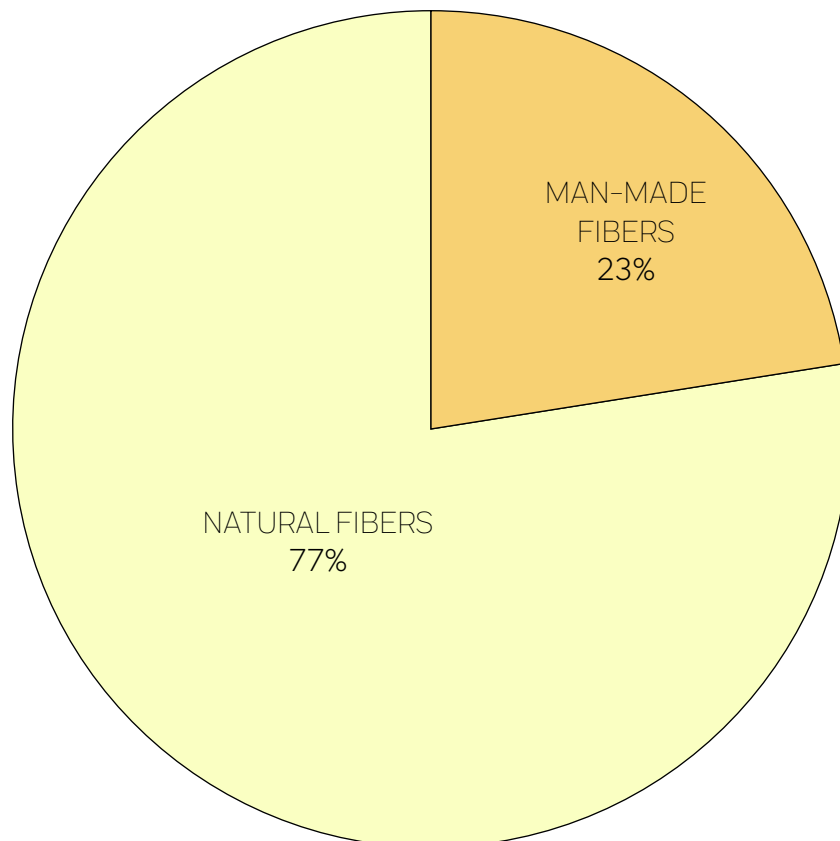
TOTAL PRODUCTION

# Production Break-Down



## Natural Fibers

77% of our garments were made with natural fibers. These included cotton, wool and silk. 100% of these garments are biodegradable and renewable. The remaining 22% were made with sustainable man-made cellulose fibers like Lyocell and Cupro. 100% of these fibers are produced in a closed-loop system and are biodegradable.

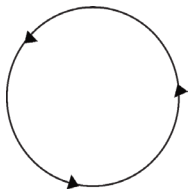


TOTAL PRODUCTION



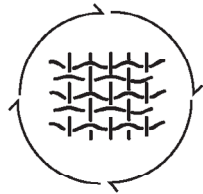
# Bhoomki Packaging

We consciously brand and package your goods to ensure they make it safely to their new home with the smallest possible environmental impact. We source packaging that is made from waste, that you can reuse and that you can also recycle.



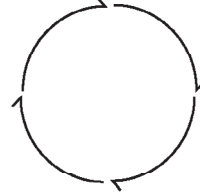
## RECYCLED CONTENT

An item or fabric made from discarded materials.



## REUSABLE

A material that can be reused.












## RECYCLABLE

A material that can be recycled.



## BIODEGRADABLE

The ability of fiber to decompose naturally without adding toxins to the environment.

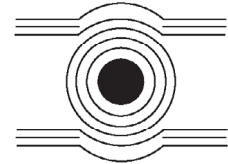
Bags and Boxes	 Recycled Content	 Recyclable	 Reusable
Shipping Poly Bags	 Recycled Content	 Recyclable	 Reusable
Hang Tags	 Recyclable	 Biodegradable	
Tissue Paper & Gift Wrap	 Recycled Content		

# Artisan Crafted



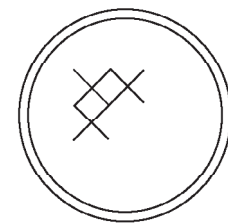
# Artisan Techniques

We're obsessed with handmade textiles, preserving craft and ensuring fair compensation for handworkers. We are particularly passionate about our collaborations with women artisans. Learn more about some of our favorite textile techniques from 2019 below!



## BLOCK PRINTED

A technique where a motif is carved into a wood block that is then used to print an impression onto fabric. We collaborate with block printers in Bagru, Rajasthan. Most of the printers in our unit are women.



## EMBROIDERY

A fabric treatment where fabric is decorated with materials like beads or sequins or thread using a needle.

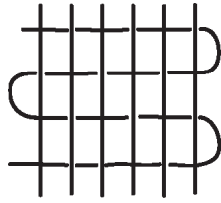


## IKAT

A dye application technique where a set of threads are tied off and dyed to create motifs or shapes that become apparent once the threads are woven together on a handloom.



# Artisan Techniques



## HANDWOVEN

A technique where two sets of threads are interlaced to create fabric on a handloom. We collaborate with weavers from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. The women of the households spin the thread and set up the spools on the handlooms. The men in our groups sit and work at the handloom and do the weaving.



## HAND-DYED

We treasure our collaborations with many of the hand-dye groups we work with in Rajasthan. This past year we partnered with an artisan supplier who grew organic indigo, yarn-dyed organic cotton in organic indigo, and wove the handloom indigo-dyed yarn into the softest khadi.

We also partner with skilled Leheriya artists who practice a tie and dye art exploding with color and patterns of lines. The maharajas of Rajasthan wear turbans made of the silk produced by our Leheriya partners.

Our dyeing partners use natural dyes or azo-free dyeing agents for our fabrics to reduce the amount of harmful toxins released into soil and water sources.

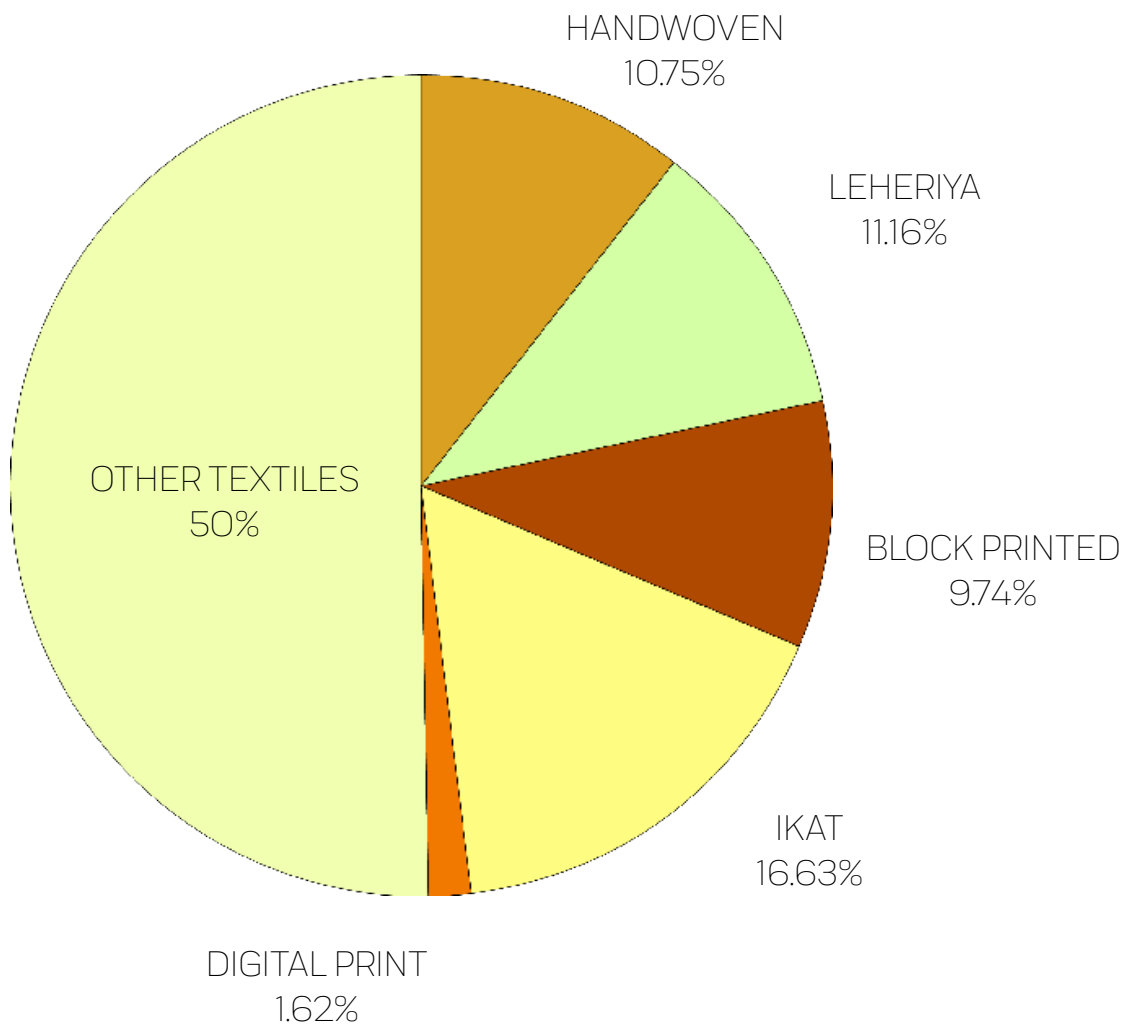
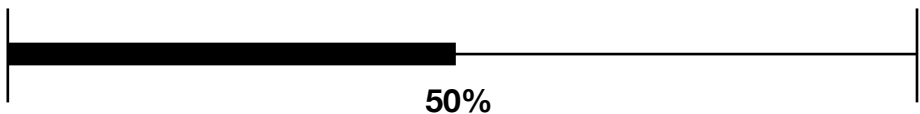


# Bhoomki Artisanal Textiles

Traditional textiles artisans produced 50% of the fabrics used in our garments in 2019. We proudly supported indigo dyers, hand-weavers, leheriya dyers and ikat weavers, and in 2020 will continue to build our relationships with these groups.



ARTISAN CRAFTED



# 2020 and Beyond

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It's been a humbling process to say the least staying true to our commitment to bring you beautiful responsibly made handmade clothing. We take an honest and vulnerable approach to the materials used when developing our textiles and sewing our garments. We study every stage in the development of our custom fabrics, examining the dyeing process, discussing the origins of the raw materials, knowing what resources an artisan partner needs to get started. We must do this while supporting suppliers who compensate their artisans and workers fairly and with dignity. Over the years, we've taken time to develop relationships with our production partners. Ultimately it is a rewarding process but not without challenges and we've identified where we can do better.

We're delighted to share with you our future goals to implement further positive impact in our supply chain, and some action items to keep us focused on our mission to make ethically crafted products. We can't help but refine and improve our processes, craft and design. It's just part of who we are and what we must do for our planet's future.

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# Goals

## PACKAGING

### Production Plastic Poly Mailers

If you work in fashion, you are all too familiar with the poly packing bag. What's more iconic than clothing racks filled with garments covered in plastic weaving through the streets of the garment district? From time to time, our factory sends boxes filled with individual garments packed in single use polys to ensure garments stay dry while they make the journey from Delhi to New York City. Plastic bags are used for an average of 12 minutes. They need over 400 years to breakdown in a landfill! Polybags are ubiquitous in our industry and while its elimination has been an uphill battle we have made progress.

We know that each garment doesn't need its own bag, and asked our factory early on to pack 2-3 garments per polybag as we phase out polybags entirely. In 2020, workers will fold the collection neatly into one recyclable bag which we can reuse. We vow to eliminate the use of single use plastic by the end of 2020.

#### Action Items:

- By March 2020, have folded garments shipped in one large plastic bag, wrapped in paper for extra weather-protection.
- By January 2021, eliminate the use of single use plastic bags entirely in our factory shipments and online orders.
- To research affordable packaging solutions that are recyclable, biodegradable and/or compostable for incoming and outgoing shipments.

### Bhoomki Packaging

Currently our packaging is almost as good as it gets. Our shopping bags and hangtags are made from recycled post consumer paper, and printed with soy inks. We think we can do better, and found a few areas to improve. Our web mailers are made from post consumer recycled fabric and are reusable, and can be recycled.

#### Action Items:

- Use remaining plastic tags and transition to undyed cotton strings.
- Identify organic cotton string vendors.
- Begin tagging in-store and web orders with organic undyed cotton.

# Goals

## ORGANIC FABRICS

20.49% of our total production used organic fabrics. This felt like too little, and we know we can do better. We're confident we can significantly increase our use of organic materials by partnering with suppliers who share the same commitment and source mostly organic and other sustainable fabrics.

Action Items for 2020:

- Approach our current cotton and silk vendors regarding their organic offerings.
- Identify potential new GOTS-certified cotton and silk vendors.
- Use all of our current cotton and silk stock to eliminate all internal dead stock reserves.
- Source majority GOTS-certified cotton and silk by 2022.

## ARTISAN FABRICS

Preserving craft is in Bhoomki's DNA. As we continue to grow, we realize the importance of developing long term relationships with our artisan suppliers. We recognize the ingenuity and infinite creativity of our artisan partners. It's an honor to create products based on their ancient craft processes and to offer their work as meaningfully as we can in the North American market and beyond. Instead of exploring different craft processes each season, we choose to partner with 4-5 groups to invest in developing product and providing long-term sustainable income while they grow their businesses.



# Low Impact Care

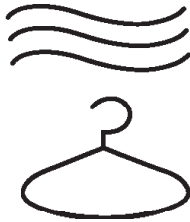
# Caring for Bhoomki Pieces

You can make an impact by simply changing the way you wash your Bhoomki pieces. See our easy tips on low-impact care that you can start with your next trip to the wash!



## COLD WATER

Washing with cold water can save up to 1/10th of the energy used to for a warm cycle. It's better for the longevity of your garments' color, too!



## HANG DRY

Nearly 3/4ths of an individuals carbon footprint related to washing clothes comes from tumble drying. Hang your items to dry or lay them flat to maintain the integrity of the fiber, to save on electricity and reduce your carbon footprint.



## GREEN DRY CLEAN

If your garment calls for dry cleaning, do so sparingly. When it becomes absolutely necessary to dry clean, choose a dry cleaner that avoids using perchloroethylene (aka perc).

# Ethical Manufacturing

# Ethical Code of Conduct



When we seek partners, we aren't just looking for superb craftsmanship and quality—we are looking to partner with those who share our core ethical standards. We believe that the fair treatment of workers and artisans is at the root of a great product. We are fortunate to annually visit our factory and artisan groups in India.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

All of our partners must provide a safe and healthy working environment and comply to local laws regarding health and safety within the workplace.

## LIVING WAGE

All of our partners must be afforded a living wage defined by their local law. We work with suppliers who pay their workers hourly instead of per piece and place a cap on amount of hours worked per week with time off for religious holidays and family functions.

## ETHICAL BUSINESS STANDARDS

Within the working environment, no partner should use involuntary forced labor or child labor.

## SUSTAINABLY MINDED

Artisan and factory suppliers must commit to reducing waste and plastic consumption in their businesses. In addition, they must show a commitment to sourcing natural and sustainable materials and using either natural or low-impact dyes.

# Glossary

#### AZO-FREE DYE

Colorants that don't include azo-dyes, a family of synthetic dye groups that contain toxic compounds ranging from chlorine bleach to known carcinogens such as aryl amines.

#### BIODEGRADABLE

An item that can break down into natural materials in the environment without causing harm or leaving toxins during this process.

#### REGENERATED CELLULOSE FIBER

Fibers made from the chemical induced transformation of natural cellulose polymers.

#### CLOSED-LOOP SYSTEM (specific to cupro and tencel production)

A system of production where the materials used to make the fiber (solvents) are extracted from the material and then reused instead of being discarded.

#### CUPRO

A regenerated cellulose fiber derived from discarded cotton linter.

#### DEADSTOCK SUPPLY

Surplus fabric used for production in 2019 from the Bhoomki studio.

#### FAIR-TRADE

A certification that ensures that producers work in safe conditions, protect the environment, build sustainable livelihoods and earn additional money to empower and uplift their communities. See more [here](#).

#### GOTS CERTIFICATION

The leading standard for organic textiles. To obtain this certification, the material must contain a minimum of 70% organic fibers and comply with a rigorous manufacturing, environmental and social criteria. See more [here](#).

#### MAN-MADE CELLULOSE FIBER (specific to cupro and tencel production)

Fabrics that are sourced from natural, renewable resources but undergo a chemical process to manufacture the thread/yarn.

#### NATURAL DYE

Colorants derived from plants, invertebrates or minerals.

#### NATURAL FIBERS

A material made from plants, animals or geological processes. Examples include: cotton, flax, hemp, linen, silk and wool.

#### PERCHLOROETHYLENE (perc)

A solvent that is commonly used for dry cleaning despite the EPA identifying it as both a health and environmental hazard.

#### RAPIDLY RENEWABLE

Renewable materials that are typically harvested within a 10-year or shorter cycle. These include cotton, silk and wool.

#### RENEWABLE MATERIALS

Materials that can be manufactured, grown or generated as quickly as they are consumed.

#### RECYCLABLE

A item or fabric that is able to be recycled.

#### RECYCLE

To convert waste into reusable material.

#### RECYCLED CONTENT

An item or fabric made from discarded materials.