

# Sustainable Style

In an attempt to combat the fashion industry's detrimental effects on the environment, more brands are prioritizing ethical solutions.

By Alyssa Gautieri



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARIELLE

The equivalent of one garbage truck full of clothing is burned or dumped in a landfill every second. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, 85 percent of all textiles go to the dump each year. The fashion industry is the second-largest polluter in the world, responsible for 10 percent of annual global carbon emissions, while drying up

and polluting water sources. But a real movement is underway to make significant changes. Whether it's recycling plastic bags, upcycling unwanted fabrics, or a commitment to plastic-free packaging, fashion industry innovators are discovering ways to reduce their environmental impact without sacrificing style. "Having worked in corporate

For every pair of sneakers purchased, Cariuma plants a pair of trees in the Brazilian Rainforest. Sneakers are designed using a natural rubber, which is gathered from the hevea brasiliensis tree through ethical tapping.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARIUMA



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE R COLLECTIVE



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARIELLE

Designed in collaboration with Weiyu Hung, the Arnhem Jacket from The R Collective is made from upcycled wool and priced at \$320. On the opposite page, priced at \$690, the Medea Coat from Arielle is vegetarian, from farm to fabric — made from merino wool, organic American cotton, and Repreve®, which is a fiber made from recycled water bottles.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADE BY ALEX

fashion, I was so disenchanted by the ethics of the single bottom-line approach," says Arielle Crawford, founder and designer of ARIELLE. "Seeing the amount of waste that was created and how many seasons we were churning out every year, it felt like doing the splits between my values and my career path." "I continue to work in sustainable fashion because I believe it's an urgent area of environmental activism," says Christina Dean, founder of The R Collective.

Those who want to make a difference in the fashion industry often begin by sourcing the right materials — whether it's for a stylish handbag, pair of sneakers, or a new clothing line. ARIELLE uses innovative materials such as a Milk fabric — which is made from a dairy industry byproduct that's collected from runoff at organic dairy farms, fermented, and spun into a fiber. Megan Eddings, founder and CEO of Accel Lifestyle, used her background in

Above, made by Alex Dabagh, each aNYbag saves three pounds of plastic from going to landfills and recycling centers — which makes up about 95 upcycled plastic bags.

At Left, cut from organic cotton chunky rib knit, the Mission Dress by Arielle sells for \$180.

chemistry to create the Prema® anti-bacterial fabric.

Cariuma creates high-quality sneakers using natural materials such as bamboo, sugarcane and cork, as well as recycled plastic bottles. “We believe that true sustainability stems from creating a longer-lasting product with premium, natural materials,” says Fernando Porto, co-founder of Cariuma.

Creating a sustainable brand is about more than responsible materials, it’s also about ethical packaging, partnerships, and supply chains.

For Eddings, it took about three years to find a reliable domestic supply chain. “Finding factories that focused on ethical treatment of their team and sustainable practices for the environment was very challenging,” she says. “I have personally visited every factory that we partner with and talked to the men and women making our fabric and garments.”

According to Porto, sustainability starts with the people within Cariuma’s ecosystem. “It’s our belief that sustainable practices begin with respect and good work conditions for every single person who works with our brand,” he says.

A challenge for Eddings was creating a plastic-free shipping solution. “What we were looking for did not exist from one company,” she explains. “We had to find multiple companies to partner with to create a 100-percent plastic-free solution.”

More and more, consumers want to know the story behind their clothing. As a response, fashion brands are erring on the side of transparency.

“We know that the fashion industry will continue to expand with the growing population, and so the race is on to find ways that this can happen whilst not completely destroying our shared resources,” says Dean.

Eddings believes that sustainability and ethical practices have “skyrocketed” since she founded Accel Lifestyle in 2016. “The consumer today is savvy,” she says. “People do their research before making a purchasing decision and consumers are more focused on choosing brands that align with sustainable and ethical ethos.” [THE](#)



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACCEL LIFESTYLE

**Above, breathable and lightweight, the Accelerated Women’s Classic Crop Tee from Accel Lifestyle is created using the Prema® fabric – an anti-bacterial fabric with anti-stink technology.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARIUMA