

London College of Fashion, UAL

Style Guide: Exploring Fashion and Sustainability



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Being a voice for change

Sustainable

This awards season BAFTA are doing more than ever before to consider sustainability across its awards ceremonies, including inviting guests to ‘dress sustainably’. To help navigate some of the issues around fashion and sustainability London College of Fashion, UAL are supporting BAFTA with more information on how you can dress sustainably. This handy style guide encourages us to make different fashion choices and be a voice for change.

It is hard to imagine a world without fashion, but as we face up to the realities of the global climate emergency, we have to recognise that, as Professor Dilys Williams, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion, UAL highlighted at a recent government inquiry, “the system is broken and it cannot continue as it is.”

According to fashion activist Orsola de Castro; co-founder of Fashion Revolution, “The most sustainable garment is the one we already own.” It is estimated that British shoppers spend £800m per year on outfits for special occasions such as weddings that won’t be worn again. The ‘Red Carpet’ offers a unique opportunity to lead the way and showcase more sustainable choices. What do you want your clothes to say about you?

At London College of Fashion, UAL we know that fashion can be transformative. We know that fashion is a powerful expression of values and that we can all contribute to a system which places people and planet first; but to make changes we need to recognise the scale of the problem.

The facts speak for themselves; textile production contributes more to climate change than international aviation and shipping combined, consumes lake-sized volumes of fresh water and creates deadly chemical and plastic pollution.

It takes over 2,000 litres of water to make a cotton T-shirt. The average person in the global south has access to less than 20 litres a day and in 2025 half of the world’s

population will be living in severely water stressed areas. The damage being caused by fashion, an industry predicated on newness and accelerated consumption, is undeniable.

According to the recent ‘Ellen MacArthur Foundation’ report, ‘if nothing changes, by 2050 the fashion industry will use up a quarter of the world’s carbon budget.’ Yet, the number of garments produced annually has doubled since 2000 and exceeded 100 billion for the first time in 2014. Within 12 months 3 in 5 of these pieces will end up in landfill. The waste being generated by the fashion industry has reached unprecedented levels; in our insatiable thirst for fashion we have lost the ability to see our clothing as precious – we have stopped valuing the people and resources that go into making our clothes and instead have begun to see them as disposable. The good news is that there are positive signs that the system is changing, and that the pervasive fast fashion model is being challenged for the first time in over 20 years.

As Clare Press, Sustainability Editor at Australian Vogue said recently, “Action is the best way to combat climate anxiety. Take back your power, be the change.” The ‘Red Carpet’ is a powerful platform – stepping out in front of the cameras, outfits are beamed across the world instantly, outfits are dissected and poured over, elevating the actors, designers and stylists who spend hours of careful preparation getting the outfits just right. Our clothes speak volumes about who we are and what we stand for – fashion has a powerful way of making a statement – power that can be harnessed to spotlight the issues around fashion and sustainability.

How to choose more sustainably for the red carpet

stair

The clothes we wear use precious resources and should stay in wardrobes for as long as they possibly can, whether ours or someone else's.

Re-sell

Resale offers an interesting opportunity to extend the useful lifetime of our items and divert them from landfill. Buying second hand also reduces the number of new resources going into the production of fashion. The global resale economy is growing at a rapid rate fuelled by changing consumer attitudes to sustainability, luxury and the concept of ownership. The market for resale, pre-owned and pre-loved fashion is evolving with resellers offering seamless experiences with guaranteed authenticity. Websites such as Vestiaire Collective are also offering monthly payments, helping spread costs and therefore making items more affordable.

- [Vestiaire Collective](#)
- [One Scoop Store](#)
- [The Real Real](#)
- [Rebelle](#)
- [Vinted](#)
- [Depop](#)
- [Cudoni](#)
- [Hardly ever worn it](#)
- [High fashion society](#)
- [Collector square](#)

Rent

Changing attitudes toward ownership are also growing the rental markets, especially amongst millennials and Generation Z who are already more connected to the sharing economy. Access is the new ownership and the idea of experiencing instead of owning is gaining momentum - this is good news for people and planet and represents an important shift away from fast fashion.

- [My Wardrobe HQ](#)
- [Hurr Collective](#)
- [By Rotation](#)
- [Endless Wardrobe](#)
- [Nu Wardrobe](#)
- [Loanhood](#)



Brands to Watch

If you do want to buy something new make sure you spend your money wisely. By sticking to brands who advocate sustainability and inclusivity you send a strong signal to the industry that you don't want fashion at any cost. Fortunately there are lots of established and emerging designers working in new and exciting ways.

- Stella McCartney
- Mother of Pearl
- Bethany Williams
- Phoebe English
- Christopher Raeburn
- Rejina Pyo
- Reformation
- Mara Hoffman
- Lora GENE

Keep an eye on emerging brands like *Riyka London* and *Birdsong* whose tag line is 'Dress in Protest,' all garments are made in East London by women who all earn the London Living Wage and *Ninety Percent* an innovative contemporary womenswear which donates 90% of profits to charitable causes and the people who made the collection happen. Customers are invited to vote for their chosen good cause using a unique code on the garment care label.

It's also worth browsing websites who stock multiple labels:

- AntiBad
- Fashion Conscious
- Rêve En Vert

Good on You offers useful guidance on the sustainability attributes of various bands and further tips on the choices you make.

And once you love it
keep it for longer

nabi

Mending and repair offer practical approaches to extend the lifetime of our clothes and an ever increasing number of services are available to support this.

Repair kits such as *Woolfiller* as well as sewing cafes such as 'Sew Over It' which has a supportive community to help with your sewing repair are a great way of looking after your clothes. Companies such as *The Restory* offer a seamless mending and restoration service for products.

Above all, one of the most important aspects of having a more sustainable wardrobe is being more mindful. We have a huge amount of choice when it comes to fashion at every price point, but regardless of price we need to consider whether an item is really needed in the first place. It is estimated there are 3.6 billion clothes left unworn in the nation's wardrobes, working out at 57 items per person - with an average of 16 items only worn once and 11 still with the tags on. When you consider how much water, energy and raw materials go into the production of every garment, not to mention the labour and the carbon footprint of the transportation of the clothing, this is not an approach we can maintain.

The most cost effective way to a more sustainable wardrobe is to reclaim your wardrobe – find those pieces that you have only worn once and swap them with friends – or re-style them – rediscover pieces that make you feel like you. Check out your nearest *Fashion Re Boot* fashion's answer to car boots sales and find pre-loved clothes that you can breathe

new life into. Stop buying into every trend and instead think more about what you really love and what makes you feel good. Although the cost of clothing has fallen since the 1970s, we are spending a greater proportion of our disposable income on clothing, so actually when it comes to fashion if we buy less we can afford to spend a little more on pieces made by brands which don't exploit people or planet.

During the party season sequins are hard to resist – but sequins are made of plastic - instead buy second hand or get swapping with friends. It's also worth getting to know what your clothes are made of. Multiple studies have shown synthetic fibres make up the lion's share of microplastics found in oceans, rivers and lakes and clothes made from synthetics (polyester, nylon etc) are widely implicated as the source of that pollution. Unlike natural fibres, such as cotton or wool, synthetic fibres do not biodegrade. It's also worth checking the care label for the fibre composition - it's much easier to recycle garments that are 100% one sort of fabric than a blend.

Last but not least NEVER throw your clothes in the bin – a staggering 11 million items in the UK end up in landfill every week. Check out 'Love Not Landfil' to divert clothing to a better place.

Sustainable Fashion on Social

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Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion, UAL
@sustflash

Over the past 10 years CSF has built its reputation as the world’s leading research centre for fashion and sustainability. Be the first to hear about the issues affecting the industry and access free resources including tool kits and online courses.

Aja Barber
@ajabarber

Aja’s top tip is to diversify your feed - you cannot achieve sustainability in fashion without diversity and inclusion and it’s always a good idea to follow people who challenge you to be better.

Venetia Falconer
@venetiafalconer
Producer, Presenter and Fashion Activist, Venetia is passionate about slow fashion. Follow for practical advice without judgement.

Wilson Oryema
@wilson_oryema
Writer, poet and multidisciplinary artist Wilson Oryema has just produced a short documentary about ‘How Toxic are My Clothes’ which is well worth a watch.

Clare Press
@mrspress
Sustainability Editor for Vogue Australia and hosts a podcast called Wardrobe Crisis – a prominent climate activist and passionate advocate for sustainable fashion her podcast invites guests from all over the world to talk about fashion and sustainability.

Fashion Revolution
@fash_rev
Co-Founded by the inspirational Orsola de Castro and Carry Somers, Fashion Revolution is a global movement calling for greater transparency in fashion. They created #WhoMadeMyClothes, encouraging us to think about the people behind our clothing and challenge the status quo.

Stories Behind Things
@storiesbehindthings
A storytelling platform that celebrates sustainable fashion and mindful consumption set up by Jemma Finch and Ella Grace Denton. A great resource for delving deep into fashion and sustainability.

Ruth Macgilp
@ruthmacgilpblog
Blogger and activist Ruth provides regular insight into how to be more ethical in fashion.

Lucy Siegle
@theseagull
Lucy is an author, journalist and presenter specialising in sustainable fashion and climate change – she is a planet specialist – she regularly writes for the Guardian and was an Executive Producer of the ‘True Cost’ – a landmark documentary about fast fashion.


Further Reading


<i>Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion, UAL</i>
<i>Ellen Macarthur Foundation: A new textiles economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future</i>
<i>Fashion and Sustainability: Understanding Luxury Fashion in a Changing World</i>
<i>Fashion Revolution</i>
<i>Fixing fashion: clothing consumption and sustainability</i>
<i>Impact of a cotton T-Shirt</i>
<i>McKinsey Report: Style that's sustainable – a new fashion formula</i>
<i>Toxic Plastic in our Oceans</i>
<i>Water scarcity</i>
<i>WRAP Report – Valuing our Clothes</i>


Front and back cover:
Rafin Jannat, BA (Hons) Fashion
Design Development


Page 6:
Laura Jasiunaite
BA (Hons) Fashion Pattern Cutting

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