

Local Fashion TPE among 5 in Canada to Benchmark for Sustainability

It is well known that fast fashion is toxic to the environment and abusive to human beings. Recent research suggests that synthetic fabrics, aniline dyes and surfactants applied to minimize damage during transportation are also harmful to the wearer.

When did our clothes become bad for us?

Why is “less bad” the trend in a competitive and green-washed space where the consumer must prioritize their values because “it’s not possible to be completely sustainable”?

Clothing can and must be healthy (period).

Recently the non-profit Textile Exchange (textileexchange.org) conducted a global voluntary benchmarking program called “Corporate Fiber and Materials Benchmark”, which assembled information submitted by over 190 companies in fashion, footwear and home textile. Textile Exchange establishes standards of what materials are “preferred” in terms of their sustainability across the entire supply network, offers best practices, and certifies companies that align with global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s), minimize climate impact, and contribute to an equitable and circular economy. The SDG most commonly addressed by the participating companies in the 2020 benchmarking program was #12: Responsible Consumption.

18 countries benchmarked on the Material Change Index (MCI), and are now said to be leading the charge toward “nature positive, no regrets” textile sourcing. The leaders? Sweden, United States and Germany. Of the 191 companies, Canada boasts 5 working in transparent ways toward this goal.

Sanctuary Innerwear is one of them.

From her home here in Kawartha Lakes, Anna designs and makes a line of womxn’s innermost garments (cami’s, corselettes, boxers, nighties and gowns) and encourages us to “dress in mindfulness”. Anna sources the fabric for her line from one supplier through swatchon.com (Rep. Korea) using only certified sustainable Lenzing TENCEL® (eucalyptus) fabric in her designs. Lenzing AG also benchmarked on the MCI, piloting the program’s supplier and manufacturer divisions. TENCEL® is Lenzing’s flagship fibre, having been produced in a closed loop system using FSC/PFSC certified eucalyptus trees. Anna purchases the fabric in its undyed, unbleached form and then grows the plants used to dye it: madder for pink, indigo and woad for blue, weld for yellow. She responsibly forages for the rest: goldenrod, walnut, rhubarb and sumac. The resultant colours are dreamy and 100% natural. Anna sews all the garments. Additionally, she uses plants to distill an infusion, which she puts right into the fabric and includes as an anytime spray and laundering soap.

In sourcing only sustainable fabric and using plants as dyes, Sanctuary Innerwear was awarded Level 3: Maturing, acknowledging “emerging leadership” in sustainability. Sanctuary Innerwear enjoys esteemed company there with Tentree International and Stella McCartney, among many others which can be found on mci.textileexchange.org.

Anna is very proud of her commitment to sustainable sourcing and local manufacture. Her products can be found on her website sanctuaryinnerwear.com, on facebook and instagram, and at local markets and shows. Dress in mindfulness.