

London College of Fashion, UAL
in collaboration with BAFTA

Style Guide: Exploring Fashion and Sustainability



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Being a voice for change

Fashion is a distinction of being human. Each day, we represent ourselves, connect with others and express creativity through things we choose to wear. It can be awe-inspiring and joyful; but it can also be devastating and destructive.

The facts are well known: fashion's current demands far exceed nature's capacity to supply the products and services that we rely on. Fashion is tied up in ecosystems and species destruction and the climate emergency, all while undervaluing our second skins. At the heart of the problem lies a deep-rooted failure to value fashion using environmental, social and cultural terms rather than the basis of its economic contribution. Alongside this, fashion is implicated in exploitation of labour and loss of dignity; the concerns of fashion are intersectional and intergenerational.

There is another story of fashion, however. Stars are risings, designers, businesses and organisations that champion and represent fashion that is equitable and regenerative. As Professor Dilys Williams, Director of Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion, UAL highlighted, "Fashion is fundamentally changing, and the old conventions of fashion appear less and less relevant in a world disrupted by climate, social and personal change, this new kind of fashion focuses on places, people, nature and celebrating life."

This includes thinking differently about your wardrobe. According to NUW, a virtual clothes swap app, there's a positive movement towards no longer feeling the need to own things, but still getting to enjoy them. Whilst it is estimated

that British shoppers spend £800m per year on outfits for special occasions that won't be worn again, there are exciting options to extend the life of fashion. The red carpet offers a unique opportunity to lead the way and showcase more truly beautiful choices. At London College of Fashion, UAL we believe that fashion can be transformative. Fashion is a powerful expression of values and we can all contribute to a fairer fashion system which places people and planet first; but to make these 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 (read more in Fixing Fashion linked below).

The red carpet is a powerful platform. Stepping out in front of the cameras, outfits are beamed across the world instantly. Outfits are scrutinised which can elevate the actors, designers and stylists, who spend hours of careful preparation getting the look just right. The time to act is now; the red carpet is a dramatic change-maker. If we don't change, by 2050 the fashion industry will use up a quarter of the whole world's carbon budget. The number of garments produced annually has doubled since 2000 and far exceeds 100 billion a year, with an estimated three in five of these pieces being discarded within 12 months. The waste being generated by the fashion industry has reached unprecedented levels and 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. Many designers are creating change and looking for change-makers they can dress. In the words of Rejina Pyo, "What we need more of is...people in positions of power who... say we can do it differently".

How to choose more sustainably for the red carpet

London College of Fashion, UAL is once again working with BAFTA to invite guests to dress more sustainably this awards season. We've developed this guide to help you make considered fashion choices and to become a voice for change through fashion.

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 opportunity to extend the lifetime of our items. Buying second hand helps to reduce the number of new resources used to produce fashion. The global resale business is evolving dramatically, offering a range of services that are changing customer attitudes to sustainability, luxury and the concept of ownership. The market for resale, vintage, preowned and pre-loved fashion is seeing a surge in resellers offering seamless experiences with guaranteed authenticity services.

- [Cocoon Refresh](#)
- [Collector Square](#)
- [Cudoni](#)
- [Depop](#)
- [Ebay](#)
- [Hardly Ever Worn It \(HEWI\)](#)
- [One Scoop Store](#)
- [Rebelle](#)
- [Sellier Knightsbridge](#)
- [The Real Real](#)
- [Vestiaire Collective](#)
- [Vide Dressing](#)
- [Vinted](#)



Rent

Rental markets are also experiencing growth due to the changing attitudes toward ownership across generations. Access is the new ownership and the idea of experiencing instead of owning is gaining momentum, which is good news for people and planet. It also represents an important shift away from fast fashion.

- [By Rotation](#)
- [Endless Wardrobe](#)
- [Hurr](#)
- [Loanhood](#)
- [My Wardrobe HQ](#)
- [Nuw Wardrobe](#)
- [Onloan](#)
- [Rotaro](#)
- [Save Your Wardrobe](#)

Designers and brands to look out for

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.

- [Away to Mars](#)
- [Bethany Williams](#)
- [Birdsong](#)
- [Joao Maraschin](#)
- [Labrum London](#)
- [Mother of Pearl](#)
- [Olivia Rubens](#)
- [Phoebe English](#)
- [Rejina Pyo](#)
- [Riyka London](#)
- [Stella McCartney](#)

Want useful guidance on the sustainability attributes of the brands you love to help you make a more positive impact? Download the 'Good On You' app, a directory of sustainable and ethical ratings, giving you the power to make better choices.

And once you love it keep it for longer

Maintenance and repair

Once you've found a garment you love, sustainability is about cherishing it through careful laundry, maintenance and repair. There are now an increasing number of services available to help, including seamless mending and restoration services, home repair kits, online tutorials and sewing cafes. Check out [The Restory](#) for incredible accessories repairs.

How much is enough?

There's a huge range of choices, at every price point. The question we must ask ourselves is, 'How much is enough?' It is estimated there are 3.6 billion clothes left unworn in our nation's wardrobes, which works out to 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 each and every garment, not to mention the labour and the carbon footprint of the transportation of the clothing, this needs to change. The most mindful way to a more sustainable wardrobe is to reclaim your existing one – find those pieces that you have only worn once and swap them with friends, or restyle them and rediscover pieces you love. It's time to stop buying into every trend and think more carefully about what we already have.

The price of fashion has fallen dramatically since the 1970s. However, the cost in real terms, has escalated, both for those negatively impacted in the production chain and also for the wearers. Data shows we are spending a greater proportion of our disposable income on clothes as we are buying more and enjoying them less. How about buying less, buying better and enjoying fashion more?



Know what you are wearing

As part of being more conscious with fashion choices, it's worth getting to know what your clothes are made of. Multiple studies have shown that synthetic fibres make up the lion's share of microplastics found in oceans, rivers and lakes, and clothes made from synthetics (polyester and nylon) are widely implicated as the source of that pollution. Unlike natural fibres such as cotton or wool, synthetic fibres do not biodegrade. If you are to purchase a new item, it's worth checking the care label for the fibre composition of the garment as it's much easier to recycle garments that are 100% one sort of fabric, rather than a blend.

Did you know that sequins are made of etched aluminium bonded to polyethylene terephthalate (PET)? They are another source of harmful microplastics. As Rachel Clowes Founder of the [Sustainable Sequin Company](#) said, "Plastic sequins shimmer for a few hours on the dance floor then languish at the back of the wardrobe for a few years, before lying intact in landfill for a few centuries or more." As you prepare your look for the awards; if sequins are your go-to, try a fabulous vintage piece or share something with a friend.

Finally – we've all been there the day after the night before – stained shoes, red wine spillages... Instead of throwing away your clothing and accessories, try bringing them back to life with specialist cleaning. If your garment really is beyond help, 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 Landfill](#) to divert unwanted clothing to a better place.

Sustainable fashion on social media

Keep up to date with the latest news on fashion and sustainability by following these thought-leaders on social media:

Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion, UAL

[@sustfash](#)

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

[@venetiamanna](#)

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.

Leah Thomas

[@GreenGirlLeah](#)

Founder of Intersectional Environmentalist, Leah Thomas is a writer and author with a passion for climate justice and intersectionality, based in the United States. Thomas shares insights into how to be more intentional and conscious in your choices, in a time of Climate Emergency.

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 fashion industry to do better.

The Right Project

[@therightproject](#)

The Right Project is a personal and professional development space, to help you navigate sustainability with clarity and confidence.

Lucy Siegle

[@theseagull](#)

Lucy is an author, journalist and presenter specialising in sustainable fashion and climate change. Lucy 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.

Want to learn more?

Books to read

- [Loved Clothes Last by Orsola De Castro](#)
- [Consumed by Aja Barber](#)
- [Wild Dress: Clothing & the Natural World by Professor Kate Fletcher](#)
- [Rise and Resist by Clare Press](#)
- [Fashionopolis: The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes by Dana Thomas](#)
- [Overdressed: Responsible Shopping in the Age of Cheap Fashion by Elizabeth Cline](#)

Learn more through an online course

- [Fashion and Sustainability: Understanding Luxury Fashion in a Changing World](#)
- [Fashion Values: Nature](#)
- [Fashion Values: Economy](#)
- [Fashion's Future: The Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Reports and Resources on Sustainable Fashion

- [Ellen Macarthur Foundation: A new textiles economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future](#)
- [Fixing fashion: Clothing Consumption and Sustainability – Environmental Audit Committee](#)
- [The State of Fashion 2022: McKinsey](#)
- [WRAP Report – Valuing our Clothes](#)
- [Pulse Report – Global Fashion Agenda](#)
- [CSF and Condé Nast Sustainable Fashion Glossary](#)
- [Fashion Futures 2030](#)

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