High-Tech Naturalism: Pangaiaâ??s Sustainable Fashion

Description

Inside Pangaiaâ??s bright, minimalist pop-up store in Selfridges, London

Founded in 2018, global fashion brand Pangaia make minimalist, relaxed lounge and sportswear with a difference. All their fibres and fabrics are made from naturally derived or recycled sources. They also work with some

surprisingly unconventional raw materials, including seaweed, wildflowers, mushrooms, fruits and vegetables, many of which would otherwise end up in waste. Working out how to recycle and transform discarded waste products into luxurious materials involves in-house high-tech bio-engineering, which Pangaiaâ??s chief innovation officer Amanda Parkes calls â??high-tech naturalismâ??. She says, â??Making materials out of anything â?? from bananas, to coffee, pineapples, grapes and apples â?? this is the stuff weâ??re really excited about. We want to use up waste produce wherever it appears in nature.â?•

British Designer Es Devlin has created four orange garments for Pangaia

Poems taken from an installation by the designer are printed on the clothes

Pangaia launched their new, ecologically aware brand in 2018 with a vision: to create clean, minimal clothing with as little an impact on the environment as possible. Their name, â??Panâ?• meaning all-inclusive and â??Gaiaâ?•, the ancient earth goddess, nods towards this deep respect for nature. While Pangaia is a global business with offices in London, New York and Moscow, all their lab work and clothing production happens in Portugal and Italy, areas known for conforming to ethical fair-trade standards.

Pangaiaâ??s relaxed, minimal clothing aesthetic

Like a rising number of fashion brands, Pangaia are committed to working with recycled materials. Many of their sweatshirts are made from repurposed and retired textile scraps, or what they call a â??responsibly-sourced, high-quality, recycled and organic cotton mix.â?• But it is their innovative approach to the production of new yarns and fibres that has really woken up the design industry to a wealth of new possibilities. Pangaia say, â??All Pangaia products are vegan. Nothing is made with the skins, hair or feathers of animals, including fur, leather, wool, and silk. All fabrics are either plant-based or lab-grown.â?•

Pangaiaâ??s relaxed, minimal clothing aesthetic

Among their most daring and successful new products are t-shirts made from lightweight seaweed fibres, which are moisture-wicking, long-lasting, and also fully biodegradable. Another revolutionary breakthrough is Pangaiaâ??s product called â??flowerdownâ??, an alternative to goose down which is made from 100% dried flowers. Other materials on their roster are leathers made from pineapple leaves, grapes and mushrooms, and a new brand of softer denim, crafted from Himalayan nettle. The vibrant colours you see on Pangaiaâ??s website are the result of dyes made using flower, plant, fruit and vegetable extracts in a lab. They even treat all their products with a peppermint oil infusion, known for retaining vibrant colour, and for keeping clothes cleaner for longer.

Pangaiaâ??s Brightly coloured clothing dyed with plant, fruit, flower and vegetable extracts

Pangaia sees this diversity as an important step in making sure we donâ??t deplete the worldâ??s natural resources. Parkes draws on the production of cotton as an example, saying â??Thereâ??s nothing wrong with cotton itself. Itâ??s about our systems. Weâ??ve over-industrialized it. Weâ??re killing the ground it grows in and everything that grows around it. We have to find alternate solutions, and itâ??s not that weâ??re looking for a single alternative, because thatâ??s actually the problem. The solution is biodiversity.â?• What all this radical, ground-breaking work proves is that it is possible to produce a range of virgin materials in ethical and sustainable ways, without causing lasting damage to the planet.

Pangaia trainers made from grape leather

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Pangaia are also conscious of how they market, package and sell their products. They only use recycled and compostable TIPA packaging, and they have recently joined forces with the company Renewal Workshop, which encourages buyers to give their garments a second life, either through being sold on second-hand or recycled into something new. While Pangaia are well aware that they are still a global fashion brand producing consumer goods for a worldwide audience, they also see it as their mission to change the way wearable garments are made, distributed, and given new life. Parkes says, on one hand, â??Weâ??re a fashion company. Weâ??re making objects.â?• But she adds, â??â?¦ thereâ??s a conversation around fashion that can be used to point toward a positive solution. Thatâ??s what I want Pangaia to do.â?•

CATEGORY

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2. SUSTAINABILITY

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Author
rosie-lesso