



Cross-Pollination:
Eco-Fashion: Going Green

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Introduction

The publication that you are about to read and wear is the result of The Museum at FIT's second annual Cross-Pollination Workshop.

A collaborative project involving students from the State University of New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City and Centro de diseño, cine y televisión in Mexico City, the Cross-Pollination Workshop was developed in tandem with the exhibition Eco-Fashion: Going Green, on view at The Museum of FIT from May 26 to November 13, 2010.

In the summer of 2010, The Museum at FIT invited five students from each institution to investigate ecological sustainability in fashion and what that means to them.

The two teams of students were then asked to work together to develop a joint project that would reflect their discoveries and conclusions.

In researching the topic of eco-design, the FIT students interviewed sustainable designers Héctor Galván (Mexico City) and Lika Volkova (New York), while CENTRO students met with sustainability expert Cristina Balcazar, United Nations advisor for water and sustainability.

Based on their particular abilities and areas of study, each team was assigned a specific role in the project. FIT students pursuing a Master of Arts in Textile Studies: History, Theory, Museum Practice were given the responsibility to provide theoretical support to CENTRO undergraduate students, majoring in fashion, product, and graphic design, who had been tasked with

creating eco-conscious objects. The teams' differing backgrounds became essential to the project's success.

Student researchers were able to share ideas with one another and exchange comments using Skype and Facebook. The close link between the schools would not have been possible without these and other social media tools. Facebook, for instance, provided them with the opportunity to express their thoughts and discoveries spontaneously, while Skype allowed them not only to see one another during conversations, but also to augment their points with visual aids.

Students' names and their contributions to the Cross-Pollination Workshop are as follows:

FIT:

Ariele Elia and **Keren Ben-Horin**
interviewers

Katherine Lapelosa and **Jessica Barber**
article writers

Audrey Chaney and
Laura McLaws Helms
photo shoot

CENTRO:

Pía Grassi designed a sustainable outfit
Paulina Ortega designed a toxic outfit
Alejandro Curi designed a machine to manufacture shoes out of rubber tires
Antonio Gallardo and **Eduardo Castro** executed the editorial design

In New York, FIT's students worked with **Tanya Melendez** and **Patricia Yagüe** at The Museum at FIT. In Mexico City, CENTRO professor **Sebastián Romo** advised and guided the students.

Friendly

Jessica M. Barber
Katherine Lapelosa

What is Eco

Sustainable Fashion Practices at the Community Level

«What is eco-friendly?» is a question whose answer is relative to the social, political, and economic situations of any given place and time.¹ While eco-friendly fashion has garnered much attention in recent years, it is not a new concept. Designers around the globe have been embracing sustainable and fair-trade practices for years, and the manner in which different communities carry out their production methods should be cross-culturally examined. What is commonplace practice in one country may be nearly impossible or prohibitively expensive in another, despite the advances we have made in employing green technology.

While developing countries such as Mexico may not have a structured fashion system to support the mass production of eco-friendly clothing and accessories, communities within the country are fertile grounds for experimentation with sustainable practices, which help build greater economic stability. For the purposes

of this project, we examined the work of three design students at CENTRO in Mexico City: one product design student, Alejandro Curi, and two fashion design students, Pia Grassi and Paulina Ortega. Collectively, these young designers have taken ingenious steps not only to reduce the ecological burden of their own creations, but to bolster the economy of their local community while paying homage to their cultural roots.

Like the CENTRO students, many designers around the world are contributing to the success of sustainability. Instead of outsourcing to foreign nations, they work from within their communities to support themselves in a corporate, globalized economy. This challenging goal has been undertaken by such designers as Max Osterwies for SUNO, Erin Tabrar and Helen Wood for Amana, and non-profit organizations like Global Mamas.² Even large corporations such as Nike and H&M have begun to follow the lead of their small business contemporaries by utilizing organic materials and implementing sustainable practices. While these businesses have made great strides in illuminating the issues raised by sustainability in international markets, similar progressive ideas are being promoted by a generation of young designers in smaller communities all over the world.

¹Smal, Desiree. *The Future of Eco-Fashion, a Design-Driven Approach*. Fashion: Exploring Critical Issues, 1st. 2009. Oxford: Mansfield College, 2009.

²SUNO is a collaboration between American fashion developers and Kenyan communities to create a design house, employs women from the Middle Atlas Mountains of Morocco to farm organic cotton, silk, and hemp, and produce fashionable garments that are then sold around the world. Global Mamas is a successful NGO in Ghana that teaches women to produce, manage, and sell traditional clothing and crafts within their own communities, as well as select fair-trade stores in the United States.

CENTRO student Alejandro Curi has invented something that he calls a “Kwarachi machine,” which uses discarded rubber tires to produce soles for a huarache-style of shoe. The huarache is a type of footwear traditionally made from woven leather; it has Pre-Columbian origins and is considered an object of cultural heritage in Mexico. The Kwarachi machine requires only hand labor as its source of energy. More than a westernized way to produce recycled, up-cycled, and second-life fashion, the Kwarachi’s low-impact design represents a new mode of production. Explains Curi: “This economic model seems to go against mass production...its resistance and durability let us install it in any public space in order to be operated by anyone. It also works with a material that is very accessible to anyone in Mexico, and can be found either in the streets or in landfills.” In this way, Curi’s machine re-uses a waste product as it contributes to the community’s economic stability.

The creative work of CENTRO’s fashion design students also raises awareness of two other topics often discussed in relation to sustainable fashion practices: toxicity and adaptability. Fashion design student Paulina Ortega provides a discourse on the subject of toxicity by creating a garment from vinyl, a synthetic plastic made from ethylene and chlorine and one of the least biodegradable materials available in the fashion industry today. Ortega asks, “How toxic can we be to the planet? At the same time, how do these toxic materials have a longer lifespan than ‘eco-friendly’ ones?” Unfortunately, the cheap cost of

these harmful materials encourages their continued use by the fashion industry, and their non-biodegradable nature is central to the argument in favor of alternative sources.

Garments employing greener materials and techniques must also be adaptable to changing consumer tastes and climates, in order to help eliminate consumers’ need and desire to replace their garments every season. Ortega’s fellow classmate, Pía Grassi, explores the topic of adaptability through the design of an ensemble that incorporates a stationary body around which modular components can be wrapped to accommodate personal tastes and changing climates. Grassi’s initial intent was to use organic cotton for her durable and versatile pieces, but like many designers striving to produce more eco-friendly designs, she found herself at an impasse.

To obtain the organic cotton to needed to produce her garments in Mexico, she would have to import the fabric from another country, which is extremely expensive and would require added expenditures of fuel and energy. Additionally, organic materials such as cotton are simply not as resilient as their synthetic counterparts, and because she intended to create a garment that could withstand the elements, Grassi found herself using synthetic blends—even for the execution of a “sustainable” design. Grassi’s experience illustrates a familiar dilemma for the eco-friendly designer: is it more eco-friendly to use organically grown materials that must be shipped from abroad and may last only one season, or locally sourced, synthetic fabrics that may be toxic to the environment, but can last a great deal longer?

10 Like Curi's huarache soles, which can be adorned in endless varieties, Grassi's design encourages a freedom of individual creativity that is somewhat lost in the age of mass production. The idea of making products "personal" again is a common thread that runs through many eco-friendly endeavours, and is especially important to the future of the sustainable fashion industry.

As a global community, we seem to have lost a sense of responsibility and respect for not only our environment, but also our own bodies. How we treat our surroundings is reflective of how we feel about ourselves, and what is harmful to one also harms the other. If we are content to clothe our bodies in noxious, wasteful products in which we invest little genuine emotional value, what does that say about the concern we have for the environment in which we live?

The harsh reality is that there is more work to be done, in Mexico and in communities around the globe. We must continue to question our current materials and modes of production, and assess the very real consequences of our actions, but we must also work to overcome the

difficulties of practicing sustainability in all areas of the world. A vital component of eco-fashion's current success is the ingenuity of designers working in the fashion industry today, and of those who will play an integral part in its future. But if we are to progress beyond the already enormous strides that have been made in developing greener fashion practices, we must recognize the inherent limitations presented by sustainable production in countries apart from our own—even those as close as right next door.

Instructions to create garment:

- 1 Cut out both pieces A and join together by n°5.
- 2 Cut out piece 10 and attach it to piece A only by two sides to create a pocket.
- 3 Cut out piece 11 and stick it on piece A, again, creating another pocket.
- 4 Cut out piece B and attach it together by n°1.
- 5 Cut out pieces 6 and 7 and stick them on piece A joining 6's and 7's together.
- 6 Cut out dented pieces (8 and 9) and stick them to the corresponding middle section.
- 7 Attach the whole 8-9 piece to pieces A and B on each side.
- 8 Cut out all the rectangular pieces (2, 3, 4, 12, 13, and 14) and attach them together on the corresponding numbers, to create two long straps.
- 9 Stick each strap to the corresponding side of piece B (2 and 12).
- 10 Enjoy!

Photographer **Laura McLaws Helms**, Model **Kristin Thoreson**,
Sittings Editor **Audrey Chaney**, On-set assistance provided by **Ariele Elia**

Protection of the Elements

Stylish protection from the elements has long been a focus of fashion design. Students from CENTRO in Mexico City are instead striving to protect the elements from the devastating effects of stylish consumption. Against an industrial backdrop, three young designers prove that hope and ingenuity are fashion's best line of defense.



Take a Stand.

Top with detachable sleeves, drawstring trousers, and hood by **Pia Grassi**, all of cotton and wool synthetic blends.



Consider All Possible Resources.



Drawstring trousers worn as shrug, tank, bicycle shorts, and low-slung pouch bag by **Pía Grassi**, all made of cotton and wool synthetic blends.

Say Goodbye to Toxic Relationships.



Adjustable sack-back bubble dress with wide belt, and peaked “fly” hood by **Paulina Ortega**, all of non-biodegradable vinyl and other polyesters.

Re-Purposeful Design.

Sandals made from recycled automobile tires, designed by **Alejandro Curi**. The sandals are created by machinery intended for use in rural communities.

B



4

Clean sophisticated lines and garments that are stripped of unnecessary adornment are at the core of the SANS aesthetic. Designers Alessandro DeVito and Lika Volkova are constantly challenging the conventional use of clothes. Their thought-provoking designs bring attention to the meaning and intended use of each piece in this modern, consumer age.

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interview

Ariele Elia

Keren Ben-Horin

SANS

Alessandro DeVito and Lika Volkova, the design duo behind fashion label SANS, could not have chosen a better word to define their values and aesthetic sensibility. A French word meaning “without,” sans captures not only the clean and minimalist style achieved by these designers, but also their unique approach to the complicated business of making fashion. DeVito and Volkova design within a distinct set of parameters that go beyond what may be considered mainstream, continually challenging themselves and pushing their designs to a new level. For their 2007 collection, which received the Eco Domani award, they presented deconstructed dresses and multi-functional garments made from natural fibers such as wool, tussah silk, bamboo linen, and soy.

Never compromising, DeVito and Volkova have developed an environmentally conscious business model with strict guidelines that require, for example, leaving behind the use of bamboo rayon because its toxic production process. As their work evolves, they produce ever more complicated garments, yet the sewing patterns that they sell online are quite simple and straightforward, giving the costumer a space in which s/he can truly take part in the creative process. In an increasingly competitive market, where trends are always new and constantly

changing, the pure and somewhat mysterious nature of Sans has opened a gap, a breathing space, that gives the term “eco-fashion” a whole new meaning.

Designer Lika Volkova gave us a glimpse into the world that is SANS.

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Do you define SANS as a sustainable eco-fashion label?

Sustainable means something that lasts forever, which goes against the notion of fashion. Fashion is always changing. So how do you address sustainability? You can build a business model that is sustainable, but will it last forever? We sell digital patterns online, because it solves the things that I find important: how to keep people busy and how to minimize waste. There are billions of people and everyone has to do something. Not only from an economical aspect but also because we live in a restless society and everyone has to explore their own chances of making things. Some companies recycle secondhand clothes, but I have a hard time with it because I am selfish. I like to make new things.

How do you think consumers can tell the difference between a truly sustainable garment and a garment that is only marketed as such?

Basically, if there is no information on the piece there is no way it is sustainable. It should have the total number of pieces produced, where it was produced, what was used

in the production, and how the piece was transported. Perhaps the only better way is to go to the little local designer, but how exciting that is? We don't have that set of mind. Not in New York.

What is the design sensibility of SANS?

Personally, I am interested in unexpected function and I am driven to paradoxes and contradictions. One of the pleasures of design is combining all of it into something new. Also I am interested in turning objects into symbols. For example, today you hardly see women wearing suits—maybe they wear a jacket to the office, but never a full complete suit out on the street. It seems inappropriate for a contemporary life style. I used that idea as a symbol and turned the suit into an accessory. It is a combination of a jacket and pants that creates the deceptive look of a suit, but it is worn as an accessory over your clothes. It looks like a basic suit but it is not serving the purpose of basic wear. It says something about the necessities of a contemporary lifestyle. It hints to the ridiculousness in life but it still has a practical use.

Can you explain the process of how you choose sustainable fabrics?

The fabric is always problematic; there are not many sustainable fabrics. We know a number of small mills in China that are willing to experiment. Since they are small, they are willing to produce fifty or one hundred yards. There is cotton grown in Texas, but the best quality cotton is from Japan. We also use wild silk and a PVC coating that is less offensive. We try to work with soy, but it does not dye well.





Bodkin

Originally Bodkin Bodkin is an ongoing exploration of ecological fabrics and a many of the difficulties associated with making something that is not, but has the ability to be made through design pieces that does not compromise

SANS designs and patterns featured in an eco-fashion exhibition at Pratt. The patterns are sold in their online store for affordable prices. It gives the consumer the opportunity to be involved and individualize each garment. It also helps reduce the carbon foot print by eliminating importing materials, production, and shipping.



Fashion is never compromised, as SANS designs are carefully thoughtout. They are unique pieces reflecting the designers' personal passions and desires without neglecting what they perceive as their social responsibilities.

Here, an outfit combining both natural and synthetic fabrics in bold fashionable colors. Each dyeing process and each fabric chosen is meticulously researched and tested, and its affect on the environment is considered in the design process.

It requires tons of water and chemicals. Unfortunately, no one is working on different ways of dealing with this issue.

Who is your target customer?

I am trying to avoid a targeted group of people, but from my observation it is probably creative people that are more open to us. The last collection I did was based on the lifestyle of slow movement. The idea was that the garment occupies space, that it is very big and noticeable. You can just hide your body inside it and camouflage yourself. I received phone orders from women from the Midwest, but when I tried to inquire about their size, they were reluctant. I realized they were probably overweight and they somehow found the clothes because they were spacious.

So in essence each collection determines its own customer?

It is not a normal business approach, but I would like to see things in that way, I guess.

How do you promote?

I don't. I don't believe in forcing [fashion] or convincing anyone that something is fashionable. To me it should be an experience. The interaction [with people] is more important than sales.

Do you sell your product to retailers or only to individuals?

We sell our digital patterns online and we take online orders from individuals. I am trying not to sell to big stores because it just doesn't make sense to me. I don't like the idea of a collection and trend that has a short life span. When your designs are shown in a magazine, and are available six months later, after they were already well

advertised, it defeats the purpose of being surprised. When you make something yourself it is something nobody has seen. There is a sense of adventure. I remember the generation of my grandparents in the Soviet Union. In every house they made their own clothes. They worked from 8 to 6, they had kids to feed, but in the evening they would sew their clothes. It was a normal activity. It didn't seem to them special or difficult. I believe that if you don't work with your hands, the mind declines. It is important to realize that you can make things, especially in the United States where today it is an alienated practice. We have costumers from all around the world: Holland, England, Canada, Australia, the Third World, and even African countries, but very little in the United States. I guess it's a really difficult thing for some people to imagine.

Where do you see the future of eco-fashion and what could be done to push this movement forward?

I think the most important part of this whole thing is technology. If there could be a way to use harmless technology that would allow us to produce temporary things. For example, materials that decompose in a very short time. If technology companies like HP got involved, they could replace the normal dyeing process with huge printers. It would minimize the waste and consumption of water. I would also like to work with more people. There is no mutual effort in the family of companies to make anything better. There is no consideration for dyeing or fabric. I never understood why everyone doesn't come together to create a foundation: a place where things get researched, new fabrics get funding, and more conscious efforts are made. But this industry is superficial.

interview

Ariele Elia
Keren Ben-Horin

ONE TO ONE

Introduction

Designer Héctor Galván was born in the city of Tampico in the state of Tamaulipas on the north coast of Mexico. While he began his career designing textiles for Italian fashion companies, he also experimented early on with Mexican folk materials and recycled textiles.

Being in close proximity to the United States border, he was subject to many cultural influences, but rather than take the traditional route of many border residents and study in the United States, he decided to travel around his home country. Within Mexico there are more than 60 distinct languages and an array of different cultures,

so it is fitting that cultural context is the most important aspect of Héctor's designs. His specific interest in fashion comes from his anthropological studies, and he views fashion as an outlet for people to express their hopes and aspirations for the future of society. He collaborates with other designers such as Carla Fernández and Mexican entrepreneurs such as Rafael Micha and Carlos Couturier.

How important is it for designers to relate to their culture and surroundings?

I am very inspired by my cultural

surroundings. I was born on the coast of Mexico and near the border with the United States. For me, Mexico's geographical location is very important in our culture. Mexico is a contact culture. This dates back to colonial times under Spanish rule when Mexico was a stop for travelers on their way to the Philippines. I think that this concept is very important. In Mexico you don't need to go anywhere, the influences come to you. They are always coming from different sides and the outside influences get assimilated into the culture.

Do you collaborate with a lot of local designers?

Yes, I collaborate with a lot of local designers, chefs, artists, and architects. We are currently collaborating with the Flora¹ studio on a project with a family of Otomí, Indian people. They are from the mountains of Hidalgo [a state in Central Mexico]. I work with the Otomí people in maintaining what is natural to them in their embroidery, design, and business.²

To you, what is the difference between "eco" and "natural"?

Natural is the most important... the form is important, the material is important. [Natural is] the everyday things that we don't even think about... the most basic and elementary things in everyday life, like eating, sleeping, and so on. The difference between "natural" and "eco" is that "eco" is oriented toward ecology. I am a "natural" designer every time [but I do not] necessarily design "eco."

¹"Taller Flora [headed by designer Carla Fernández] operates like a traveling laboratory; one part of the workshop takes place in indigenous communities and the other in Mexico City. The project attempts to create a sustainable option that incorporates craft processes, involving itself in the contemporary scene without being 'folksy'." (Fernández, Carla. Taller Flora. México: Editorial Diamantina: 2006, p. 14.)

²"One of Flora's missions is to enhance artisans' creativity...By using processes that are familiar to them, it is easier for them to create new designs and thus avoid becoming manufacturers of other people's products." (Fernández, Carla. "Taller Flora" in Espia. México: Editorial Diamantina S.A. de C.V.: 2006.)

So essentially you are trying to cover all aspects of life?

Yes. The relation of the person with time and space, and the city is a real life problem. City life is very mentally draining, which decreases the quality of life.³ Environmental pollution is also draining in a physical way. I work with many clients, designing interiors [for them]. I am at changing many aspects of their life through my work as a designer. Every time I work with a client, it is an opportunity to transform design as a practice. I view design as a facilitator for people to enjoy everything. To me, this is a basic human need.

For instance, a wealthy client who owned 850 hectares [approximately

2100 acres] of land came to me and wanted me to design a golf course and an eco-hotel. He is just the tip of the iceberg because, by designing for this guy, it will reach many people. I wanted to offer my client something beyond the surface happiness [building a golf course] and find what really makes this man happy [an eco-friendly hotel]. By developing this hotel, his message will reach all the visitors, thus beginning to change people's frame of mind. I proposed with my team the idea for the Mangrovia Hotel, a one-stop destination. The architecture, the engineering—everything is taken from the mangrove tree, so it is all inspired by nature. The red mangrove [tree] is found by the oceans in Mexico.



The floors in the different areas of the Hotel Básico are made from recycled rubber tires from taxicabs. Mayans have used rubber since pre-Columbian times, so rubber is familiar to residents of the Yucatan Peninsula, where this hotel is located. Photo courtesy of Héctor Galván.

³⁰Galván is making a reference to Modern architecture and urban planning, where the physical surroundings affect human perception of time and space. Galván is opposed to Modern Functionalist design, which he regards as anti-natural.



Héctor Galván used sheep wool to manufacture the organic textile to cover the walls of singer Ely Guerra's recording studio. Photo courtesy of Héctor Galván.

It is the most natural system in the world for filtering water. The color from the mangrove is very important to me. In Mexico the mangrove tree is also called palo de tinte [stick of dye]. It is the dye used in textiles all over the world. It's a beautiful red color similar to the cochineal. Palo de tinte has been very important to Mexico, historically and economically.

Can you explain your idea behind the tire floors of the Hotel Básico lobby?

The owners of the Habita Group [owners of Hotel Básico] wanted a very Mexican—new Mexican—design, reflecting the new politics. I was free to do anything I wanted, with limitless budget. I decided to focus the overall design of the hotel on “the” modern moment in cultural life in Mexico.

In my opinion, Mexican modernity is completely linked to petroleum. From Lázaro Cárdenas [in 1937] to almost the end of the 20th century, the history of Mexican modernity is intrinsically linked to oil. Big projects, such as the National University and Acapulco, were funded with wealth derived from oil. The “oil culture” in the Gulf of Mexico is very important. Its influence in the popular industrial culture of blue-collar workers is very subtle and strong. Oil is endemic, in their blood. On the other hand, the ancient Mayans had discovered rubber and used it to make balls for the games they played. It was a material they were very familiar with. At the time of the Mexican Revolution [of 1910], the Indians migrated while fighting in the war. They went to

to the cities and they wore huaraches [sandals]. Wealthy people used cars to move in and out of the city. The tires of those cars were [made of] rubber, as the soles of the huaraches. This draws a connection to the cars—the rubber tire is what the car runs on and the rubber sole is what a person walks on. But shoes are more personal. So in a sense, the floor of the lobby of the Hotel Básico, made of 100 meters of tires, is a huge huarache, to be worn by everyone, rich and poor.

Do you consider yourself a green designer or is that just an added bonus?

I am not worried about this concept. I think my designs are beautiful. To Mexican designers, beauty is an aspect they admire. The whole of the work is what matters, the total of the work—the concept.

In an interview, I read you were making organic felt. In the end you said it seemed like it was going to be a good option, but it ended up being very expensive.

Mexican rock star Ely Guerra, a beautiful woman, commissioned the interior design of her recording studio. The central design inspiration was a tree, a lamb, and a rabbit. I wanted to use the color of the oak tree and indigo blue. We had the idea to use a type of felt made by the Chamula women [of the Chiapas state]. It is a 2,000-year-old technique, traditionally used for garments. It is a handmade woven fabric, made with completely organic wool and dyes. I added zippers to make it look more industrial. The wood we used for the furniture was the unwanted wood that

lumber camps discard because of its imperfections. Ely said she liked imperfections because they have more expression. She thought the project was great.

I consulted with mathematicians and engineers in Mexico City to find out the proper thickness for the felt on the walls. The Chamula women would put the textile in a bucket with hot water for many days to generate the perfect thickness for the felt. Through their familiarity with the materials, they knew how much time to leave the textile in the water to achieve the right calibration. I think that the Chamula women are true technicians. The felt didn't even need a lining! After getting the right wall coverings, I added eight chairs in eight specific positions to achieve the right sound distortion and get acoustics right.

Can you explain what some of the other designers in Mexico City are doing with regard to eco-design?

There are many people that are working toward this kind of solution, like Carla Fernández, who is in the same building as us. But truly, there are few eco-designers. There is more work being done by people who are NOT designers, in agriculture, garbage processing, engineering. There are engineers at the National Polytechnic School that designs houses from plastic and garbage. Horticulturalists in Xochimilco [a neighborhood in south Mexico City] work with original chinampas, floating lots for planting, the last Aztec technology that is still alive and truly green because it was designed for the characteristics of Mexico City, which was built over a lake. There is also a project "Pase Usted" which translates to "you



Elements used for the interior of the recording studio: organic wool made from a 2,000-year-old technique, zippers, and the wood used for the chairs. Photo courtesy of Héctor Galván.

are welcome [in my home]." This is was an initiative of Mexico City's government to have a forum to exchange ideas and present projects that bring solutions to issues within the community.

Where do you see the future of eco-design?

We need to make a reform on law in order to make this an everyday natural life. It's a very important point to plan all of these matters and issues: production, economy, and life. Without statements from the law, it will only be a trend.

There needs to be a change of lifestyle, a change of mind from efficiency to enjoying life—an anti-modern view of life. People have to slow down their pace of life. I think that the real sustainable system doesn't exist in Mexico.

The systems of well-being are incorrect in Mexico, with a historically unfair government and law system.

In my country, people who live in the mountains, native or not, could be our best designers. But we need to help these communities.

We need charities to take them out of

poverty, because they cannot do it on their own.

What piece of advice would you give to a young designer who would like to practice sustainable design?

First, to have a real understanding of the people who are really in charge of the system of production. Second, to understand the needs of the client and the market. Education is very important. We need to educate the consumers; they need to know how [a garment is made].

When a client goes to a designer with a bad idea, it's the designer's responsibility to seduce the client to not go through with the bad idea. This is very important because the client will eventually find a designer that will produce his bad idea. As a designer, you must not allow bad ideas to spread. There is going to be someone [in the industry] who will copy the bad idea, but they are copying something that is wrong and then the error is committed again and again. You must take responsibility for your designs.

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The pattern template that was used to create this wearable publication was designed by SANS and reproduced with the permission of Lika Volkova and Alessandro DeVito.

