

Tsitaliya's CHANGING ROOM

Sustainably *elegant*

By Tsitaliya Mircheva

With the recent tenth *Ethical Fashion Show* in Paris in September and the 2012 *Sustainable Textile Conference* in Hong Kong in October, it seems as if the world is starting to show more interest in ethical brands. As consumers want to know more about the products they buy, where they come from and how they are produced, there is a change in designers' attitudes too.

"Nowadays, designers are more interested in developing ethical collections. Even high street fashion reflects that attitude. Look at the H&M Conscious Collection and the Red Carpet Green [eco-friendly fashion on the red carpet]," says Isabelle Quéhé, founder of the *Ethical Fashion Show*. The show is one of the must-attend events of the year for anybody working or interested in sustainable fashion. Held in the beautiful setting of the Carrousel du Louvre, one of its main goals is showing that ethical fashion can be at once trendy and creative as well as delivering social and environmental benefits.

The designers chosen to present their collections – who are taken from all backgrounds – must comply with the *Code of Good Conduct*, which focuses on the protection of men and women and their working conditions, the preservation of the environment and the protection of time-honoured crafts and skills that reflect different individuals and their cultures. Quéhé reveals the names of some designers committed to

sustainable fashion: Stella McCartney, Bruno Pieters, Christopher Raeburn, Marithé François Girbaud and Vivienne Westwood.

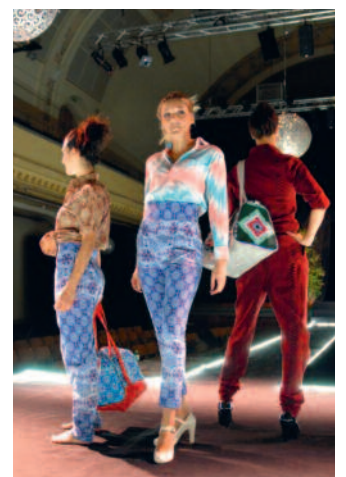
Eco-style stakes

As for the most eco-savvy consumers in the fashion industry, according to Quéhé, the prize goes to Scandinavian and northern European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom. Switzerland, according to the 2012 *Environmental Performance Index* by Yale University, is rated the most sustainable country in the world. This index measures factors including air and water purity, health, and impact on climate change. But how does Helvetia perform when it comes to sustainable shopping and style?

Switzerland has had its own ethical fashion event for five years now. *Ethical Fashion Night* is organised and held by non-profit organisation NiceFuture and will this year be held on 12 October at the Palladium in Geneva. Swiss designers including Trumpet By Meister, Heartical and Lowrider Teeshirt will be represented. "We also collaborate with a small boutique in Rolle called A Ma Fille and Sortie de Secours in Lausanne. They sell several European ethical designers such as Valentine Gauthier and Les Fées de Bengale," says Barbara Steudler, Director of NiceFuture. "There will also be a vintage fashion show organised by Les



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Fripeuses, a second-hand boutique in Geneva." Steudler thinks ethical materials still have high prices and very few designers can invest in creating ethical garments. NiceFuture aims to show that the world of tomorrow is only a matter of choice and that choice is ours. A NiceFuture press release states: "In Switzerland, there is a demand for accessible, diversified, current, trendy and responsible fashion, but the supply is lacking. To help consumers shop wisely, the organisation publishes an annual *Ethical Shopping Guide* with almost 400 addresses for bio food, ethical clothes, hotels and services." (www.nicefuture.com)

Supermarket style

Beside the designers, Switzerland's two biggest retailers, Migros and COOP, have each developed their own 'bio' labels. COOP Natureline garments are 'bioRe' certified. This means their cotton products are the trademark of Remei AG, a company that grows organically-certified cotton in India and Tanzania and follows fair trade criteria. With 440 different styles and a product range covering women and men, children and babies, and home textiles, COOP claims to be the largest retailer of fair trade, organic garments in the world.

Meanwhile, Migros Bio Baumwolle was among the first brands to buy organic cotton from Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation's [an organisation that promotes relations between Switzerland and partner countries] Mali communities in 2003. While this cooperation is still ongoing, Migros also buys organic cotton from India and Turkey. As a general rule, garments carrying this label are made from 100 per cent organic cotton fibre, or 80 per cent when elasticity is required.

Where to buy

Changemaker (clothing, interiors, decoration & gifts)
Shop at www.changemaker.ch or Sustainable Lifestyle, Marktgasse 19, 8001 Zurich

Wink (hip clothing store with a dedication to organic and Fairtrade fashion and accessories)
Shop at www.winkfashion.ch or Ottenweg 35, 8008 Zurich

Fairytale Select (High-end fashion and interior show room and shop with organic and Fairtrade fashion and accessories, and exquisite Japanese tableware)
Shop at www.fairytaleselect.com or Balgristweg 27, 8053 Zurich (by appointment only)

Clariant Advanced Denim (Combines the advantages of fashion flexibility with sustainable, eco-efficient manufacture)
Shop at www.advanceddenim.clariant.com

Big Pur Zurich (A new collection of natural fibre cotton sweaters in beautiful eggplant, petrol and raspberry colours, made for Big Zurich)
Shop at all the Big stores in the city or at www.bigzh.ch



"Our monthly column 'Changing room' seeks to capture your individuality. We want to help you nurture your style and give you the confidence to experiment and explore your character through bolder choices and current trends."
Tsitaliya Mircheva

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