

21.02.14		
	The good wardrobe	
	<i>Estethica: Emerging & Established Ethical Design</i>	

Zoe Robinson 21 February 2014



Following [my piece last week](#) about the new phase for London Fashion Week's ethical initiative Estethica, here's the rundown of the emerging and established designers who have just shown their conscious collections at Somerset House.

Emerging ethical designers:

Louise de Testa

This collection immediately caught my eye. It is colourful yet subtle, beautifully cut, cleverly conceived, and youthful, yet feels like it would be wearable for a woman of any age. Paris-based Louise de Testa is committed to reducing waste in the production of her collections which utilise end of roll cloth (someone else's leftovers). Simple jersey dresses are made from recycled cotton viscose which is produced in a close-loop system, meaning any chemicals used in the process are captured and reused. Off-cuts are incorporated to create statement pockets and panels, resulting in what looks like very chic patchwork.



Wearable eco chic from Paris-based Louise de Testa

K2TOG

A woman after my own heart, designer Katie Jones see huge potential in garments others might discard. She sources Aran jumpers, Shearling coats and leather skirts which she hand-embellishes with vibrant colours. The imaginative decoration is, as Katie told me, determined by the original

garment – the particular knit on an Aran jumper will inform how she builds up colour and texture to create the ‘new’ piece.



Designed and hand-embellished by Katie Jones of K2TOG. Photo: Kevin Mason

Devika Dass

Beautifully soft alpaca is expertly hand-knitted in to luxury garments by a knitting circle of women in a remote part of Peru. Designed by founder Devika Dass, the collection utilises the traditional yarn spinning and handiwork skills of the makers. A cosy grey knit adorned with delicate hand-crocheted silk ribbon, and a non-fur ‘fur coat’ (as seen below), made by knotting hundreds of individual soft, long fluffy angora yarns onto the knit, provide evidence of expert craftsmanship, and result in a high-end knitwear collection.



The Astrid coat, designed by Devika Dass and hand-knitted in Peru

Flavia La Rocca

Cleverly cut modular pieces which are sold individually or in a pack so that garments or parts are multi-purpose and interchangeable. The wool is recycled – the softest recycled wool I’ve ever felt – from discarded clothes and unused fabric. Flavia La Rocca’s AW14 collection is currently available for pre-order via new fashion crowd-funding site [Wow Cracy](#), which enables you to support emerging designers, whilst they benefit from testing the market with their customers. Discounts of up to 50% are available on the first ten orders of Flavia La Rocca's AW14 collection.



Flavia La Rocca's modular AW14 collection is made in Italy using recycled wool

Cangiari

Produced in Calabria in Italy, the garments are made from traditional hand-loomed fabric of the region using organic yarns. Run by a social cooperatives, Cangiari supports disadvantaged people in the area by giving them work. Whilst this is a womenswear collection, the grey over-sized soft tailored jackets lend themselves to unisex styling. However, the distinctive weave and unusual, yet wearable cut of the Continual Cape in classic natural cream (below) made it the standout piece of Cangiari's collection..



The Continuing Cape by Cangiari, made of hand-loomed organic cloth

Established ethical designers:

Pachacuti

‘Art Forms in Nature’, a collection of drawings by scientist Ernst Haeckel was the first of two influences for Pachacuti’s AW14 collection. This sculptural, elegant ‘Odyssey’ collection features hats in bright, bold tones adorned with Devon silk ribbon and accents of sustainable Icelandic salmon leather. In contrast the ‘Highland Fling’ collection, which features Dashing Tweeds’ reflective cloth and printed velvet pheasants is modern take on classic British hats and headpieces.



As with all of Pachacuti's hats, the Deerstalker is designed in the UK, handblocked in Ecuador and is certified Fair Trade by the WFTO

Mich Dulce

Philippines-based Mich Dulce uses Filipino materials, including Piña, a fabric made of pineapple fibre to create beautiful, sculptural and playful hats. Woven by the women of the T'Boli Peoples of Lake Sebu in South Cotobato, the fabric is central to their heritage and traditionally used in celebrations. Each hat is then handmade by women from the Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, 'a Philippine-based poverty alleviation and nation building movement', who are trained and supported by the designer.



Mich Dulce's baseball hat inspired AW14 collection made from pineapple fibre

Bottletop

On the first day of London Fashion Week, Bottletop celebrated an exciting collaboration with renowned New York fashion designer Narciso Rodriguez as well as a new partnership with Pepsi®. 'The Jessica' clutch and 'The Candice' bag, each available in black or nude blush, are handcrafted at the Bottletop atelier in Brazil using enamel painted upcycled metal ring pulls and 'Amazon-friendly' Brazilian leather. Pepsi's support and the proceeds of the collaboration enable the Bottletop Foundation to run health education and empowerment programmes for women and young people.



'The Candice', in nude blush, named after Candice Swanepoel, by Narciso Rodriguez and Bottletop

Katrien Van Hecke

Katrien Van Hecke's AW14 collection explores print and structure. Her trademark printed silk dress

is complemented by wool and 'ecological' ([OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 certified](#)) cotton pieces, all of which are vegetable dyed: beetroot, nut leaf, sandalwood, henna, cachou and eucalyptus all create this season's colour palette. For one print, the pigment is sprinkled on the fabric and mixed with Himalaya salt. A second bolder look is created through block printing, as Katrien explains, "The screen print ink I used is water solvent and environmentally friendly. These block prints function like a painting, and the way they are placed is completely coincidental which gives the pieces their exclusive one of a kind identity."

Block printed vegetable dyed dress from Katrien Van Hecke's AW14 collection