



Textile
& Fashion

Textile and Fashion Sector Group

Newsletter

December 2021



Business Support to Your Discretion



een.ec.europa.eu

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition for the year 2021 of the Newsletter from the Experts of the Textile and Fashion sectors, within the Enterprise Europe Network!

We implemented this edition with a huge session related to the *Sustainable Fashion* and it could not be otherwise after COP 26, the UN Climate Conference, with lessons for the fashion industry on policy change, sourcing and digital transparency.



Moreover, you can have a look at the *Scaling Circularity* report released by the Global Fashion Agenda and McKinsey & Company where they present lessons learned from the Circular Fashion Partnership for building pre-competitive collaborations to scale upstream circular fashion systems. You can discover these issues and more within the Newsletter.

You will also find updates on *Funding opportunities and European Initiatives* and the new edition of the project proposal WORTH II, the project that creates and supports transnational collaborations between designers, creative people, manufacturing enterprises (SMEs), crafters/makers and technology firms looking to develop design-driven and innovative products. You have time until February 2022 to apply.

Also, you will find interesting and inspiring success stories on innovative brands and projects from the UK, in collaboration with the Future Fashion Factory, plus feedbacks from our latest events and international b2b where we connect SMEs and clients from all over the world.

Don't forget to check the upcoming matchmaking events, free of charge, to find international collaborations!

Finally, if you are looking for international partners, we invite you to have a look at the session *Find International partners in the Textile & Fashion industry* and get inspired. We remain at your disposal for any doubts!

Keep an eye on our social networks and contact us if you need support!

We wish you all a warm Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year full of energy!

Federica Leonetti
Chair of the Textile & Fashion Sector Group

Funding opportunities and European Initiatives:

Pact for Skills



Pact for Skills – one year on!

10th November 2021 was the first anniversary of the [Pact for Skills](#).

The Pact for Skills is a shared engagement and approach **to skills development**.

It is firmly anchored in the principles of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and supports the goals of the [Green Deal](#) and the [digital transformation](#), as set out in the Commission communication “[A strong Social Europe for Just Transitions](#)”.

The pact aims to mobilise and incentivise private and public stakeholders to take concrete action for the **upskilling and reskilling of people of working age** and, when relevant, pool efforts in the partnerships.

The pact can be joined by any private or public organisation or partnership of organisations which aim to upskill or reskill people of working age.

The textile sector has a huge commitment within it to attract young talent to the sector who can play an essential role in reskilling and upskilling the existing workforce, responding to the needs of adapting to the rapidly transforming manufacturing and endmarket requirements, especially in the context of the digital and green transitions.

Join: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Pact_for_Skills_FORM

WORTH Partnership Project II funding opportunity



worthproject.eu

WORTH Partnership Project II is funded by the COSME Programme of the European Union. It creates and supports transnational collaborations between designers, creative people, manufacturing enterprises (SMEs), crafters/makers and technology firms looking to develop design-driven and innovative products. WORTH Partnership Project II is the second edition of the programme, which ran from 2017 to 2021.

In its first edition, 152 transnational partnerships were selected between 2017-2020, involving 349 partners from 34 [EU-COSME countries](#).

THE FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS OPENS ON 19th OF OCTOBER 2021 AND CLOSES ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2022

How to apply : <https://worthproject.eu/apply-now-2021/>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCHES ACCES2MARKETS TO SUPPORT TRADE BY SMALL BUSINESSES

The European Commission has launched the Access2Markets online portal to help small and medium-sized firms trade beyond the EU's borders. The new portal responds to requests from stakeholders to better explain trade agreements and help companies ensure their products are eligible for duty discounts. It will serve companies that already trade internationally and also those only starting to explore opportunities in foreign markets:

<https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content>

The portal allows companies to look up the following details for imported and exported goods in just a few clicks - tariffs, taxes, rules of origin, product requirements, customs procedures, trade barriers, trade-flow statistics.

Sustainability:



[Global Fashion Agenda](#), the leading forum for sustainability in fashion, and McKinsey & Company launched the new [Scaling Circularity report](#)

You can check the recorded video where key findings from the report have been presented including the lessons learned from the Circular Fashion Partnership's first iteration in Bangladesh, and discusses the investment and infrastructures needed to scale circular fashion systems:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwnh68STML4>

Highlights from the report include:

- New research demonstrates the potential for pre-competitive collaboration to scale textile recycling technologies
- The textile recycling opportunity offers the potential to drive up to 80% circularity in the fashion value chain, whilst also creating jobs and value for investors
- Scaling textile recycling could build a 10 – 20 bn USD market
- All major recycling technologies found to have better environmental impact across several indicators

The Circular Fashion Partnership programme in Bangladesh has demonstrated how industry actors can work together to overcome barriers to scaling potential recycling markets

LEARN MORE ABOUT CIRCULAR FASHION: <https://www.globalfashionagenda.com/circular-fashion-partnership/cfp-overview/>

The fashion takeaways from COP26

The UN Climate Conference is over, with major lessons for the fashion industry on policy change, sourcing and digital transparency.

During COP26, the UNFCCC [Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action proposed](#) new commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, 100 percent electricity from renewable sources across owned and operated facilities and the sourcing of environmentally friendly raw materials by 2030.

These goals are designed to support the ambition of the Paris Agreement in limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by encouraging brands to set science-based targets to reduce emissions across scopes 1, 2 and 3 of the supply chain.

However, what was glaringly missing from the conversation was the question of growth – both in terms of financial growth and production volumes. There were representatives from three major brands on the panel, ranging from luxury to high street, but according to our [Fashion Transparency Index 2021](#), not a single one of them discloses their annual production volumes. In fact, just 14% (34 brands) disclose the number of products produced annually. We cannot have a discussion on carbon reduction without also discussing overall reduction and addressing consumption as a vital part of reducing climate impact.

More details from the [Fashion Revolution article](#)

For more insights : [The fashion takeaways from COP26 | Vogue Business](#)



Another fascinating article is the *Springwise* report on 2022 next generation trends in eco-consumption and what they might mean for your business next year...

<https://www.springwise.com/next-generation-trends/next-generation-trends-2022-eco-consumption>

Circular Economy Hotspot Event in Barcelona

The yearly event Circular Economy Hotspot took place in Catalonia last 15-18 Nov 2021 <https://www.cehotspot.cat/>

4 days of knowledge to discover why Catalonia was a cradle for outstanding practices and the latest innovations in the circular economy. More than 20 guided tours were organized (3 of them concerning Textile and Fashion Industry) to discover more than 160 best business practices in circular economy in Catalonia and Europe.

In addition, the event offered the possibility to join the Smart City brokerage event on 18th November to meet delegates and companies from around the world participating at the Circular Economy Hotspot and discover successful business initiatives, R&D projects, government strategies and collaborations in Circular Economy: <https://lnkd.in/dvyEgyWU>

Next Circular Economy Hotspot will take place in November 2022 in North-Rhine-Westphalia (Germany).

Environmental Sustainability is Already a Reality in the Fashion Industry

For quite some time now, fashion has become synonymous with environmental and social costs. The more impactful the fashion industry becomes in terms of pollution, water use, carbon emissions or even gender inequalities, the stronger the need for a shift to sustainable fashion is. And the truth is, although there is still a long road ahead, the fashion industry is already changing, adopting more sustainable business models and practices.

As the Enterprise Europe Network plays a key role, as international cooperation is vital to foster sustainable fashion. Indeed, the Network, with particular emphasis on the Textile and Fashion Sector Group is improving collaboration among countries, promoting designs, materials, production methodologies, supply chains and life cycles focused on making fashion sustainable.

Actually, the considerable number of business and research partnerships achieved is the result of this joint effort to work towards a more sustainable pathway, not only for designers and producers, but for consumers, as well.

The use of recycled materials, second-hand fashion, custom clothing, fair and ethical fashion, sustainable business models, eco-design, energy efficiency, Kilometer Zero are some of the actions companies are already taking to support sustainability in their course of action. I firmly believe sustainability is in everything – is a lifestyle!

So, let's join forces to do much more, because from our experience, the future of sustainable fashion is a bright one.

Céu Filipe, AEP – Portuguese Business Association, Chamber of Commerce and Industry

UK's Future Fashion Factory Supports 12 More Sustainable Fashion Innovation Projects

- Over £1 million investment in sustainable fashion and textile innovation was secured through Future Fashion Factory's fourth Innovation Funding Call
- Total investment secured through grant calls exceeds £3.3 million
- 12 collaborative research and development (R&D) projects were successful in Innovation Funding Call 4

Twelve collaborative R&D projects were successful in Future Fashion Factory's latest round of R&D grant funding, taking the total investment in fashion and textile innovation secured so far to just over £3.3 million.

Embracing a variety of tools and approaches to achieve agile, profitable, sustainable fashion and textile manufacturing in the UK, the projects enable businesses to solve pressing industry challenges through collaborative research with industry and academic partners.

Independent fashion brands, heritage Yorkshire mills, and manufacturers at each stage of the fashion and textile value chain are among the successful businesses.

Together they are addressing challenges such as using waste as a raw material in a circular economy, integrating AI into intelligent data-driven design and manufacturing, and developing the UK's agile manufacturing and product development capabilities to support re-shoring.

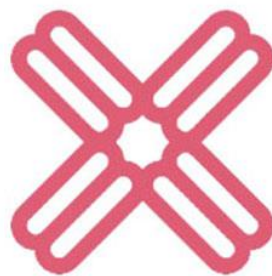
Future Fashion Factory is part of the [Creative Industries Clusters Programme, an £80 million initiative led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council \(AHRC\)](#), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The Programme is led by the University of Leeds in partnership with the University of Huddersfield and Royal College of Art.

Projects will tackle challenges including:

- Communicating accurate colour information digitally without sending physical yarn samples
- New tools and technologies enabling UK fashion 'micro-factories'
- Testing the user journey for an AI-driven virtual bra fitting service
- Integrated, intuitive, user customized design platform for fashion creatives
- A circular manufacturing process for sustainable running shoes
- A robotic prototype of a combined digital-design-engineering system for 3D weaving
- Developing AI and machine learning to automate factory planning
- An advanced, circular swimwear material made from waste synthetic sportswear
- High-quality yarns for the luxury fashion market from Yorkshire-grown hemp
- Biodegradable sequins made from waste and industrial by-products
- A new weaving facility to test cutting-edge performance fabrics in the UK
- A proof-of-concept collection of 3D-woven trousers

Professor Stephen Russell, Director of Future Fashion Factory, said: "The fashion and textile industry has a huge role to play in achieving Net Zero and tackling other environmental challenges, as well as in creating economic opportunities by supporting the sustainable growth of design and manufacturing in the UK.

"These projects reflect the commitment of businesses to innovation that will help the industry meet these ambitions by reducing waste, using alternative materials, and enabling accurate digital communication about garments and fabrics so that only what is necessary, is made."



Future Fashion Factory

For more information please contact Sarah Parkin, Future Fashion Factory Communications & Digital Engagement Officer: extsp@leeds.ac.uk

[Circulytics](#): The Ellen MacArthur Foundation developed Circulytics to measure a company's current circularity level. The tool helps brands in the transition towards more circular business models as it can - across the entire company's operations - reveal the extent to which circularity has been embedded. Once the company has a greater idea of their current standing, they can outline next steps for implementation to improve. The Circulytics tool uses a wide group of circular economy indicators for its assessment in areas such as strategy, innovations, and material flow.

[Fashion For Good \(FFG\)](#): Based in Amsterdam, FFG is a platform for innovation and an educator both offline (museum and events) and online (resources library for circularity incl. tools, guides, and reports) as well as webinars. The innovation platform encompasses three programs: a start-up accelerator - giving access to funding and expertise; a scaling program - giving access to fundings and expertise; and the Good Fashion Fund - an investment fund pushing the implementation of sustainable innovations within the fashion industry.

Past and Upcoming events:

TORINO FASHION MATCH 15th-18th November 2021 _Digital Edition:

Unioncamere Piemonte, as member of the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) and member of the EEN Sector Group Textile and Fashion, organized the sixth edition of the [Torino Fashion Match](#) bilateral meetings event as part of the [Torino Fashion Week 2021](#), the international, independent and innovative format aimed at the international enhancement of *young emerging fashion designers, small and medium-sized enterprises, innovative brands and manufacturing companies* for the **textile and fashion sectors**.

The 2021 edition of the b2b involved 462 participants from 47 countries thanks to the support of 90 Enterprise Europe Network's support offices as co-organizers of the event.

SECTORS:

- Textiles and Fashion (fashion clothing and accessories)
- Creative industries (accessories — jewelry)
- ICT solutions related to the fashion industry
- Retail | and e- commerce | distributors and fashion stores
- Investment in the fashion industry — Women's entrepreneurship
-

Unioncamere Piemonte, coordinator of the *Sector Group Textile and Fashion*, within the EEN network, organises and promotes throughout the world this **initiative aimed at the textile sector** to facilitate the emergence of international collaborations between new brands, companies, suppliers and distributors, **encouraging the enhancement and international promotion** of brands and companies that, thanks to Torino Fashion Week, acquire international visibility and new contacts useful to expand their business.

In addition to the b2b, [4 thematic TALKs](#) were organised, hosting speakers and international experts as well as institutions and officials of the European Commission:

- **15 Nov_Circular Fashion : Resource efficiency in Textile industry, India vs EU**
- **16 Nov_Sustainable Finance | Investing in Female Founders**
- **17 Nov_Digital Marketing| Fashion Tech**
- **18 Nov_EEN service, Internationalization New markets and European Funding opportunities**

You can watch the recorded sessions of the TALKs: <https://torino-fashion-match-2021.b2match.io/page-811>

NEW 2021:

- Involvement of international platforms of e- commerce
- Involvement with [EBAN](#) (European Trade Association for Business Angels, Seed Funds, Early Stage Market Players): investors interested in the textile/fashion sector
- Involvement with [Retaissance](#) platform (UK), retail network
- Focus US Companies (With the EEN support office in New York, EABO)

Results:

503 Registered profiles on the b2match
(PMI, fashion designers, consulenti, esperti, fornitori, ICT experts, e-commerce)
462 profiles active on matchmaking sessions
91 EEN network co-organisers
315 participants in the TALKS
47 Countries involved

Check here for more details: <https://torino-fashion-match-2021.b2match.io/>

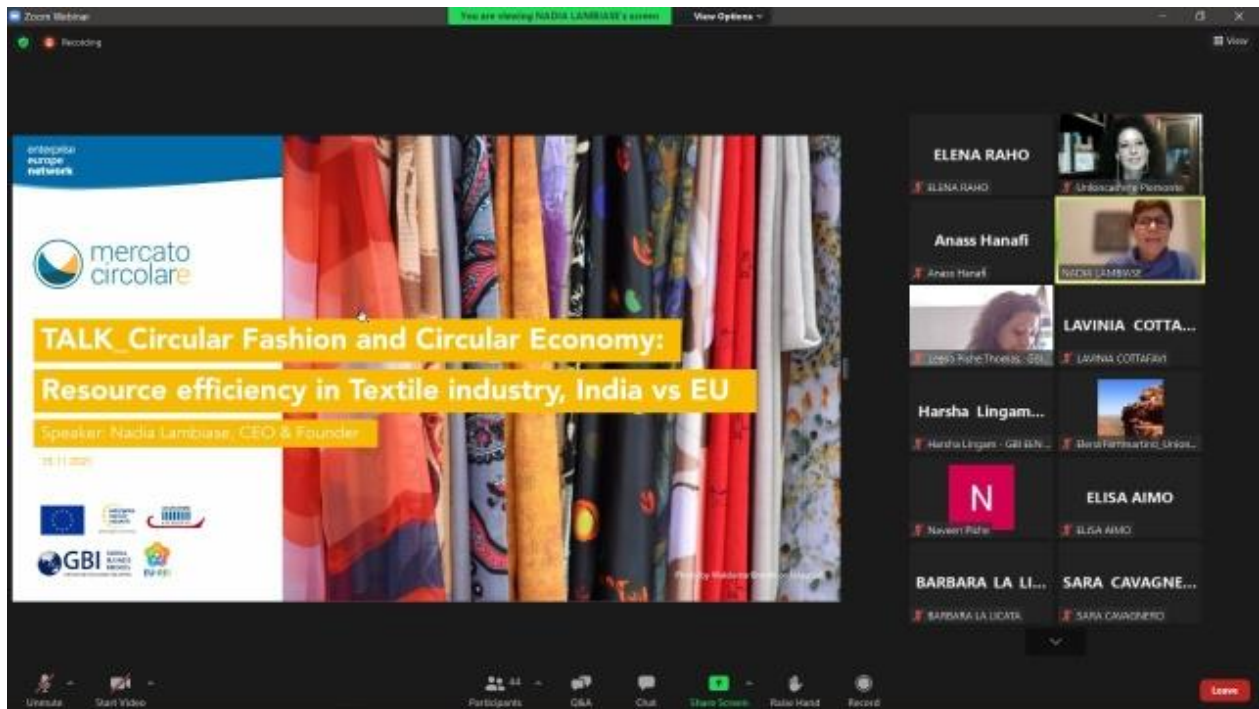
We are glad to inform that each **SUCCESS STORY** that we will register from our clients who successfully attended the brokerage event finalizing agreements with international peers or new clients or who performed during the Torino Fashion Week shows, will be promoted among the European Commission Channels and website of the EEN worldwide!

Many of them have been already awarded during the Torino Fashion Week so they are now planning to showcase their collections within some famous fashion store department in Italy.

Please find [here](#) the FINAL PRESS 2021 of the event and check the TFW shows at this webpage: <https://torino-fashion-week.eu/>



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International textile sector B2B event “Textile Connect 2021” attracted more than 600 companies from 45 countries!

Is it possible for companies to digitally find new business partners that works with textile and fashion? Textile Connect 2021 proves that it works! More than 600 companies from 45 countries connected during four days of digital matchmaking.



On the first days of June 2021, the second edition of the international textile sector matchmaking event “Textile Connect 2021” took place. This year the matchmaking was organized by partners in Sweden, Almi Företagspartner Jönköping AB, and Lithuania, Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts. Both parties are also a part of Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and the EEN sector group Textile and Fashion.

“The event was a great success! Many participants signed up, not only from Europe but also beyond and there were lots of meetings taking place during the 4 days of virtual matchmaking resulting in new business deals. This is a very time-efficient way to connect and build relationships for the future” - Therese.

Textile Connect attracted participants from all over the world

Textile Connect 2021 connected companies/designers looking for production partners such as manufacturers, service providers and suppliers within the textile and footwear industry. Repeating last year success, this year matchmaking attracted many companies not only from Europe but also companies from Asia, Africa, the USA and South America. Nearly 600 international meetings took place.

"I'm very satisfied with the concept – it gives me the opportunity to meet lots of potential business partners! It's both time- and cost efficient and you get to discuss many topics during the 30 minute meetings. I have already met several business partners who I will continue working with. This is the new way to meet and create new contacts!" – Tina Olofsson, owner of the Swedish company Grace of Sweden.

Digital matchmaking = time efficient

The demand for innovative fabrics and sustainable services is bigger than ever based on company's requests. The matchmaking gave the opportunity to meet new material suppliers, production service providers, agents or distributors from near and far abroad. Companies used the possibility to connect, some companies had more than 10 international meetings during the 4 days of the event.

"The event was great. The technology worked fantastically, and the meetings were efficient and calm. I am super happy and I have already found several potential business partners." - Annette Philip, Swedish participant and owner of Annette Philip Design.

The event was free of charge and companies thought it was technically easy-to-use and an investment-free access option. All this without having to leave home.

"I found Textile Connect 2021 very useful for both my business and expanding personal understanding about the textiles, solutions available and exciting innovations in the industry. It was definitely worth my time since I discovered several potential partnerships during the event" – Augustė Kaknevičiūtė, the owner of a sustainable brand in Lithuania "ONE 100".

Zita Volskienė, a representative of AB Šatrija, a manufacturer of technical garments in Lithuania, who participated in this type of event for the first time, was pleased with the idea and organization of the event. She says that in these difficult times, it is a great way to look for partners abroad. And, although she did not have many meetings, she has already agreed with one foreign company on further cooperation.

Ingrida Braziūnienė, one of the organizers of the event, also states, that the interest of the worldwide textile community shows how relevant events such as Textile Connect 2021 are.

"The number of meetings indicates that there is always an interest to cooperate. Textile companies from all over the world represent different products and services and with the help of events like Textile Connect 2021 they can significantly expand their client base abroad." – Ingrida

Contact us

Are you interested in finding new business partners within the textile industry? Get in touch with your local Enterprise Europe Network office and we can help you out.

EU FashionMatch Amsterdam 11.0 @Modefabriek



Put this in your agenda! The website <https://fashionmatch-11th-edition-online.b2match.io/> will be on the air soon...

Meet your future business partner in the international fashion business in a VIRTUAL brokerage event program

Welcome to the virtual EU FashionMatch Amsterdam 11.0. Following the footsteps of previously successful events, Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is delighted to invite you to the 11th edition of the EU FashionMatch Amsterdam on Sunday 30th January, Monday 31th January and Tuesday 1st of February 2022.

The Modefabriek fair @RAI Amsterdam will be held on 23-24 January 2022. Hopefully this time people can visit the fair again physically. Decoupling the matchmaking from the Modefabriek fair allows exhibitors to participate in the EU FashionMatch 11.0. This gives the exhibitors 1 week to do their follow up.

Please note that all participants with video-meetings at the EU FashionMatch have a free admission to Modefabriek. Let us know in your registration if you are coming to Amsterdam! We will put you on the guest list.

During the EU FashionMatch companies from all over the world, active in textile and fashion, can meet potential business partners. Besides the international brokerage matchmaking, this edition is focusing on nearshoring of the European production in Turkey and Portugal of sustainable textile and fashion.

Programme Items

- Webinars on 30th, 31th January and first February 2022
- Virtual Matchmaking sessions on 30th, 31th January and 1st February 2022

Find International partners in the Textile & Fashion industry:

A Lithuanian manufacturer of technical garments, having Gore-Tex manufacturer's certificate, is offering manufacturing and subcontracting services

POD Reference BOLT20210607001

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/4c317868-7c3d-459c-97d0-bbb4a4279436>

A Portuguese-based leading jersey manufacturer of innovative, sustainable, smart fabrics for fashion, athleisure and lingerie brands is interested in widening its market by forming long-term manufacturing agreements with companies requiring a bespoke service

POD Reference BOPT20211117003

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/services/PRO/Profile/Detail/5b602487-1164-46d2-8309-45eff02b1eb7>

For further information please contact: ceu.filipe@aeportugal.pt

Dutch creative SME with award winning baby/children's bedding and nursery textile is looking for fabric manufacturers, who can supply them with small quantities

POD Reference BRNL20210319001

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/2f80751e-fab5-421a-883c-1167ed52af58>

A French eco-responsible leather goods SME is looking for suppliers of vegetable leather, cork or cellulose in rolls

POD Reference BRFR20210916001

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/6b8ac98c-81b4-4be2-8313-fa3233aa9bb1>

UK e-retail knitting products website seeking new suppliers of wool and yarn

POD Reference BRUK20210721001

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/c677ae5c-2909-4111-b09d-82fe6f73b43d>

Italian artisanal producer of hats and other accessories for women is interested to establish distribution and/or commercial agency agreement with partners abroad

POD Reference BOIT20200722002

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/39e44333-758a-4f74-90e5-c797a282cf9f>

Singapore manufacturer of polyaryletherketone (PAEK) polymers seeking European partners via distribution service agreement

POD Reference BOSG20210528001

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/e83c929c-74e7-46a7-bf9f-430b688a5986>

Romanian manufacturer of dresses seeks suppliers of fabrics under supplier agreements

POD Reference BRRO20210526001

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/tools/PRO/Profile/Detail/695c5784-cd90-4297-a7f8-c9b9b9637910>

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Stories from entrepreneurs in the fashion industry:



Who are you?

I'm Sally Smallwood, I'm a fashion designer from the UK.

What is it you do?

I have a clothing label; WRECKREATION. My studio is based at Greencroft Industrial Estate in County Durham, where we create everything in-house with a focus on the individual. The garments are made to order or custom-built with a truly customisable experience, where a client can change the colour-ways to match their car.

How long have you been doing it?

Officially since 2015 but I started making my own clothes at a young age as there was never anything in the shops that I resonated with. I studied fashion at Northumbria University where I specialised in menswear. When I graduated, I started making outfits for musicians, for stage-wear and music videos and it grew from there.

What inspires you?

I am predominantly inspired by motorsport. The sounds, the smell, the colours, the energy. It triggers something which incites me to create.

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As do the works of Goethe, Jung, Nietzsche, etc..

Their theories, the victorious stories of characters with great strength who stand up for what they believe in and live their ideals. Those whose goal is to create positive change, the architects of the future who set no limits, who bravely step out from the sidelines, those who defy rules and question authority.

I aim to give these ideas a new form.

Some artists use paint as their medium.

I use clothes.

Tell us about your work

WRECKREATION was born from the ideology to
Wreck stifling doctrines and to Create your own world,
establishing a firm belief in the individual.

It's really about human potential; bulldozing limitations, never settling for mediocrity and striving to be the best and brightest versions of our true selves, that we can possibly be. Combined with my enthusiasm for motorsports and everything else high-octane, I was able to carve a unique position; Racing couture for the trailblazers of tomorrow.

The flagship SUPERCHARGER Jeans are an expression of rebellion towards mediocrity, showcased on stages and in music videos, and gaining media attention worldwide like the BBC and in magazines such as British GQ.

What have you got coming up in the future?

Just before Le Mans 66 was released, I was lucky enough to be invited to Las Vegas to meet with Shelby, the iconic performance car manufacturer who featured heavily in the film. The president of the company, Gary, took me for a blast in a Shelby Super Snake. Driving around Vegas in sport mode, he said to me, *"Everything starts with a dream..."*

And it was a dream come true! Not only to see the cars but to hear first-hand, the stories of Carroll Shelby, who had been an inspiration since I was young.

From that meeting, came a collaboration between WRECKREATION x SHELBY.

Inspired by the bold vision of Carroll Shelby, an exclusive limited edition of the SUPERCHARGER Jeans has been created which have drawn admiration from Shelby's CEO; "We've never seen anything like this... these jeans are revolutionary". due to the synchronicities between the custom performance vehicles and the SUPERCHARGER jeans.

I have adopted fabrics that are used in the automotive industry, due to their high tensile strength and durability. Like a Shelby, the jeans also arrive with a secure digital identity, a certificate of authenticity and an owners manual. I am so excited that we can create these jeans to your specific measurements, in the colours of your choice, whether that's to match your Shelby car or your mood!

@wreckreation_official

www.wreckreation.co.uk

Compostable Leather Alternative for Sustainable Accessories



The prototype will be fully compostable once hardware has been removed. Image: BEEN London

As the circular economy has become a rising priority for fashion businesses, demand has continued to grow for innovative materials that are both economically viable and environmentally friendly. From regenerative agricultural practices to natural substitutes for synthetic chemicals and recycled fabrics, businesses throughout the supply chain have been focusing on ways to reduce their environmental impact and make better use of every resource.

[BEEN London](#) has been creating luxury accessories from waste since 2018, using everything from recycled IKEA uniforms to a plant-based alternative to leather made from surplus apples. In that time they have collaborated with the likes of Amelia Windsor and been featured in Harper's Bazaar, The Guardian and more, as well as being named 'Ones to Watch' at the Drapers Sustainable Fashion Awards.

Using local suppliers and manufacturers, including one of East London's remaining artisanal leather workshops, the brand retains the value of natural resources with minimal environmental impact. On average, BEEN London says, the carbon footprint of its bags is 10 times smaller than high street equivalents made from virgin materials.



Traditional methods are used to make the bags in East London. Image: BEEN London

Leather alternatives remain one of the biggest materials challenges for the fashion industry, where even waste streams like surplus food have their drawbacks. “The main issue with leather alternatives at the moment is that they’re near impossible to recycle,” explains Genia Mineeva, Been London’s founder. “There’s often a small print mentioning PU or polyester – essentially plastic – backing somewhere, even in the most innovative, vegan, low-carbon materials.”

An effective substitute, then, needs to be plastic-free and biodegradable while being durable enough to last. To tackle this complex challenge, BEEN London is joining forces with materials innovator [Biophilica](#) to make a unique groundbreaking prototype bag made from Treekind – Biophilica’s patent-pending solution made from urban plant waste.

Using the same design as BEEN London’s bestselling ‘Cecilia’ bag, the prototype is petite and structured with an adjustable strap and designed to be used as an everyday crossbody or as an evening clutch bag. Developed with support from ReLondon and the Mayor of London’s Green New Deal Fund, it demonstrates the versatility and performance quality of the natural Treekind material.

Leaves and twigs from local parks make up the raw materials which are then collected and processed in West London, meaning Treekind offers a local solution that keeps the carbon footprint of BEEN London’s supply chain low.

It is also fully biodegradable and compostable – consumers will simply need to remove the hardware and fastenings before placing the bag in a home compost bin – as well as being estimated carbon negative.

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“Treekind has been created with local production and manufacturing in mind, so working with a fellow London-based innovator is very exciting,” says Mira Nameth, founder and CEO of Biophilica. “We believe that bringing together strong design, heritage craft and new plant-based technology is exactly what the future of British fashion should be.”

The pilot is currently underway and although it will be some time before a Treekind bag is available to BEEN London customers, Genia is already excited about its potential impact across the fashion industry and among consumers. Demonstrating that it is possible to find a plant-based alternative to leather which is just as durable day-to-day and can be part of a circular system could represent a sea change – especially in accessories design, where performance is paramount.

“This bag could really change the future of fashion,” she adds. “We’re extremely proud to be the first bag brand to trial Treekind and can’t wait to roll this out to our customers in the future.”



Local manufacturing for a wide range of styles and colours is key to the brand's ethos. Image: BEEN London

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Social Media Updates:

Social media updates: From us to you...

Social media has become the most influential and important virtual space where the platform is not only used for social networking but is also a great way of digitally advertising the brand. Having an online presence as a business on any of the social media forums like Facebook /Instagram or LinkedIn is a great way to interact with our audience and to really connect with them on a professional level.

It has become a vital part of how the business world operates and communicates particularly over the last years please take a moment to follow the Textile & Fashion Sector group platforms to make sure you don't miss out on any news, events, initiatives, funding and collaboration opportunities on offer!



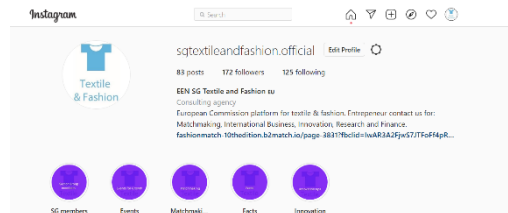
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Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/sgtextileandfashionofficial/>



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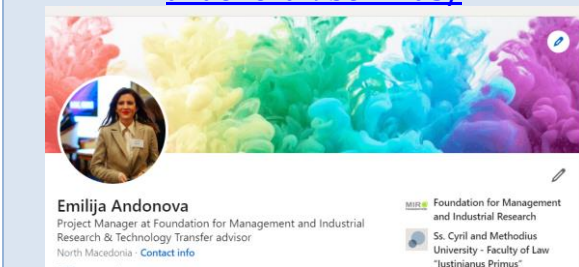
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