

Would you be surprised to learn fashion runways around the world are moving toward trends completely devoid of materials that come from animals? No fur, leather, feathers, wool or silk in sight—or bland fashion—but plenty of ingenious new fabrics and sustainable style.

In an event organized by PETA UK in 2016, a runway popped up in the heart of Piazza del Duomo in Milan with activists and a TV personality sporting vegan fashion and signs that read Vegan Fashion Revolution, Leather Is Dead, and No Sheep Was Beaten. In August of 2018, a vegan fashion event was held in London, and haute couture reigned during the Vegan Fashion Weeks held in Los Angeles in February and October of 2019.

History of Vegan Fashion

While vegan fashion has had a surge in popularity in recent years, it has its roots in the 60s, starting with the hippy movement. After decades of fashion led by the wealthy upper class, the peace and love revolution gave birth to sustainability. The folks in this counterculture were disinterested in the latest trends of the Paris and New York runways. Their focus was returning to a simpler way of life, which included clothing made from natural fibres like cotton.

The hippy movement was followed by the punk and goth eras of the 70s and 80s whose devotees also shunned fashion per se, and instead frequented second-hand shops for vintage pieces. Awareness of animal cruelty was prevalent in the 80s. The most outspoken among those who were intolerant often lashed out at the fur industry and those who support it. This continues today as awareness grows and more people speak out against animal cruelty.

Advancing the Movement

Actress Evanna Lynch and TV Personality and Ethical Luxury Fashion Specialist Ksenia Lavrentieva teamed up with Canadian Vegan Magazine and UK photographer Toby Shaw for a vegan fashion shoot, to challenge the mainstream fashion industry—proving that vegan fashion

is not comprised of the stereotypical shapeless garments many people imagine, but rather beautifully imagined contemporary designs that just happen to be ethical and sustainable.

“There is too much innovative technology out there for us to keep relying on the same outdated products being marketed to us. I believe these innovations will help us progress and save billions of animals as well as the environment in the process,” says Lavrentieva.

Lynch speaks about the vegan lifestyle on her award-winning weekly podcast called *The Chickpeeps*. “People think vegan, and think they’d have to give up things, sacrifice things. We’re trying to show people that you can still have your style and your aesthetic—you don’t have to lose your whole identity to become vegan.”

Vegan & Sustainable Textiles

As Lavrentieva pointed out, new and innovative textiles are now on the market. Given its broad use in everything from fashion to vehicle upholstery, cruelty-free and sustainable leather must become the norm. While polyvinyl chloride and polyurethane have been used as leather substitutes for decades, they are plastics, not biodegradable and therefore not sustainable.

Enterprising people endeavoring to lead the industry towards eco-friendly solutions, have come up with

ON THIS SPREAD

- Raincoats @ongoodauthority
- Bamboo silky tops @artisarafashion
- Mini Paname Camel apple skin purse (Pg. 37) @ashoka_veganbags
- Nude stiletto pumps (worn by Evanna) @nakfashion
- Black patent stilettos (worn Ksenia) @nakfashion
- Pink and cream back packs @expressionsnyc
- ORIGAMI portfolio bags @hemincuff

ingenious alternatives such as vegan leathers made from plants. These include banana, apple, mango and corn fibers; pineapple, teak and mulberry leaves; cork; grape marc; and orange rind.

Mushrooms have also been successfully and profitably turned into vegan leather, primarily for items like shoes, gloves, wallets and handbags. Additionally, some furniture manufacturers are using mushroom leather, and creative bride Erin Smith 'grew' her compostable wedding dress using a combination of tree mulch and mycelium—a type of fungus that is naturally white—an obvious choice for a wedding dress.

The Ananas Anam Company in the Philippines makes vegan leather from pineapple leaves, which they call Piñatex. Using the waste from the pineapple industry means this product is environmentally friendly and sustainable since no additional water or fertilizers are required.

The company estimates the production of this natural leather costs 20% less than animal-based leather. Some of the accessories by Ashoka Paris Vegan Bags shown here in the London photo shoot are made from yet another revolutionary material made from apple skin.

Many vegan leathers are difficult to distinguish from animal-skin leather proving the obvious—the fashion industry can evolve and no longer needs to rely on the inhumane practice of using an animal's skin or fur to make fashionable products.

Andrew Freiburger, a graduate student at the University of Victoria, provides a stark comparison to these plant textiles with a bit of background into the animal-based leather industry:

"A popular misconception holds that leather is sustainably and ethically sourced as a by-product of the meat industry. Animal textiles, however, incentivize and economically support the same animal agriculturists that produce meat and pollution. The industrial tanning process further inhibits textile biodegradation via kilograms of toxic chromium and tens of thousands of gallons of water per ton of hides, 10–40% of which are eventually scrapped."

In 2020 and beyond, there's no place—and no need—for animal cruelty in the fashion industry. Designers who are in line with this vision will find success with their brands, as the future of fashion is indeed vegan. ●

Learn more about Ksenia - next page. Evanna Lynch interview pg 50.



All photography in this article by Toby Shaw - U.K.

@tobyshawphoto



ON THIS SPREAD

- Black vegan leather biker jacket and skirt & cream suede version by @dauntless_nyc
- Snake skin pattern stilettos with gold emblem and black stilettos @taylorandthomas_la
- Black and Camel apple leather bags @ashoka_veganbags

Fashion styling for Canadian Vegan Magazine's London fashion shoot by: Ksenia Lavrentieva - courtesy of and available @immaculatevegan — Immaculate Vegan is a new premium vegan shopping destination. They search the world for the most desirable, innovative vegan designers; carefully curating a collection of sophisticated, slow, sustainable and vegan fashion brands." www.immaculatevegan.com