

How to choose SUSTAINABLE LEATHER

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
LINEAPELLE

Conclusion

The aim of the webitorial is to promote thought and discussion on 'How to choose sustainable materials' in the fashion industry, with contributions from research and design experts as well as product, quality and sustainability managers.

We're also putting the spotlight on leather, a material that originates from agri-food industry waste and has the potential to further improve its environmental impact. Our series of interviews highlight how science and technology has a major role to play in all this at a time when current

products and processes are being challenged by the new agenda of sustainability.

Together, we are working hard to reduce the impact on the environment as we strive to achieve the target of zero carbon emissions by 2050. At the same time, the fashion industry also needs to meet the expectations of consumers who have become increasingly demanding in terms of the sustainability credentials of the companies they do business with.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE

Sustainability is a term that covers many aspects of safeguarding people and the planet, but it can only have real meaning if it is supported by sympathetic choices, commitments, laws, regulations, and innovative thinking.

Sustainability and the future are now inextricably entwined. A secure future for the planet depends on our ability to obtain immediate and tangible results from our efforts to avoid the predicted disasters caused by climate change.

For this to happen, we need to make the most of all the latest innovation provided by research and the many forward-thinking start-ups working across the globe set on solving the sustainability issues within the fashion industry.

MATERIALS - RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The introduction of low-impact materials seem to be one answer to the problems we face. But the search for new green fibers will not be enough if we fail to address the current issues concerning leather production: starting with the fabrics and ending with the skin.

Leather is highly durable and well suited to recycling and regeneration projects. However, on the downside, it is also associated with the high carbon emissions caused by the intensive farming that is linked to the meat industry.

For this reason, some believe leather could be under serious threat from imitation materials that, while good in their own way, simply cannot match the desirable properties of leather. These new alternatives include the so-called eco-leathers of vegetable or synthetic origin that have nothing to do with real animal leather, produced in accordance with internationally recognised legislation.

The fact is, 'real' leather is a unique material with huge sustainability potential, as highlighted by the UNIC-Italian Tanneries 2021 Sustainability Report which assesses it in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda.

CIRCULARITY AND RECOVERY

The commitment of companies to find solutions to the production of waste in the manufacturing process is undeniable. All innovations that recreate new materials from

processing waste or from the recycling of pre-existing fabrics and leathers are, of course, welcome. As is anything that supports the circular economy and the reuse of existing items.

'Vintage' fashion is fueling new markets and represents a form of sustainability that is changing the approach to the problem by many brands. The reuse of objects is on the increase as we see more and more workshops spring up to repair and recycle garments and objects to extend their lifespan.

SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNICATION

As well as being planned and executed with care, sustainability must also be communicated transparently and honestly to avoid harmful 'greenwashing'. This will encourage those in the supply chain to make better decisions. And the end consumer to make better-informed ones.

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