

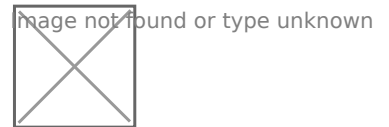
Nicole Bridger Creates Socially Conscious Clothing

Company shows designer labels can be conscious

Nicole Bridger is sewing something different into the fabric of her clothing design company — a philosophy to do what is right for the Earth, its people and spirit.

[Nicole Bridger Design](#), which has a boutique in Vancouver, features a women's line of socially conscious clothing that is "effortless, luxurious and makes people feel sexy and special in their every day."

Nicole says taking care of the Earth through using sustainable fabrics from natural and renewable resources with low impact dyes is what she believes is the right thing to do. She grew up living a conscious lifestyle, and the values are ingrained.



Nicole Bridger

Photo credit:
Candace Meyer

"My company is an extension of myself in a lot of ways," Nicole tells *Axiom News*. "I want to create something that is going to have a positive impact, make use of my time on the planet to help move us into a better direction."

Nicole says the clothing industry is "terrible" on the environment, with a lot of possibilities for improvement.

"I think it's possible for us to still have the luxuries that we enjoy today while being conscious and treading a lighter footprint," she says. "Eventually I'd love to have a closed-loop system, so that we are zero-waste, it's just a matter of time and getting there and the technology being available to do that."

There are many steps to making clothing — including where the yarn is made, milled, cut and sewn — so the garments can pass through eight different mills or factories before it reaches the company, says Nicole, noting there is a lot of room there to improve people's lives.

She says a long-term goal is to develop co-op style factories in developing countries, where the company is improving their quality of life because they would be part owners.

"Instead of just showing up and creating a factory it would be really about their community," she says.

In the meantime, Nicole Bridger Design uses ethical manufacturing processes. Most of its goods are manufactured locally in Vancouver. When manufacturing overseas, Fair Trade factories are used, and Nicole says she tries to find out as much as possible about the working conditions.

"The world is changing and the industry is changing and there is this huge growth in the green market," she says.

A lot of mills are trying to keep up and cater to the green market, and are getting certifications such as Fair Trade or [bluesign](#). Nicole says this is a "great trend" that is moving quickly.

Nicole says the spiritual element and trying to help women to love themselves as they are is very important to her, which is different than the fashion industry which tends to focus on people's insecurities.

Each piece of clothing has an affirmation label sewn in that says "I am love." This message is meant as a reminder to speak kindly to oneself and others, and to spread positivity.

Part of being an ethical lifestyle brand includes connecting like-minded people, and Nicole says the Vancouver store is used as a community-building space. Having noticed during sales like-minded women starting to talk and exchange numbers in her old studio, Nicole says she wanted to create a space for these women to connect.

The store now holds regular events on topics of interest, such as greening your home, natural baby food and fashion shows with models who are real women of

different ages and sizes.

“I’m showing that it’s possible to be a designer label and still be conscious,” she says.

“There are lot of brands that are adopting the greener way of doing things and what I’d like to see is eventually it become the norm, and that everybody be doing that and really out of necessity,” she says.

“We need to adopt new ways of existing in harmony with our planet and with each other and here’s a way that we can start doing it.”

Nicole Bridger Design was founded in 2007. Nicole received Canada’s first Eco Designer of the Year award in 2010.

Nicole attended this year’s [Social Venture Institute conference](#) and was part of a women’s entrepreneur panel.

If you have feedback on this article, please contact Jennifer at 800-294-0051, ext. 26, or email [jennifer\(at\)axiomnews.ca](mailto:jennifer(at)axiomnews.ca).