



ALTCOUTURE

INDY'S ALTERNATIVE FASHION MAGAZINE



Letter from the Editor

I wish I could say I've always had an eye for fashion. I would love to tell you that I started coordinating outfits and scouring fashion magazines when I was a wee toddler. It would even be nice to say that I was one of the more fashionable girls in my junior high class. However, one look at any photos of me before junior year of high school would completely discredit any of these claims.

It's safe to say that my style and fashion sensibilities have changed over the years (thank goodness), as many of ours do. But I must admit that until sophomore year of college, my fashion concerns were focused on how good I could look with how much money. I never really noticed what country's name was stitched into the "made in:" tag of my clothing. I was mainly concerned with the price tag and, even more so, the invisible credibility tag that all clothing carries with it.

All that changed during the aforementioned sophomore year, where two very different classes managed to change my perspective.

A global and historical studies class revealed to me the reality of where our clothes are made and the poor working conditions that the workers often endure. I explored this fact further in a speech class, during which I researched global working conditions and gave a speech arguing that fair trade products provide a glowing alternative to the outsourced labor that produces our Western fashion.

I came to an important realization during this process. We spend a lot of time, energy and money trying to make a statement about ourselves with our clothing. My question became, what if we spent an equal amount of time considering how to make a statement about ourselves by being informed consumers and supporting fair labor practices with our fashion?

The passion for answering this question is the driving force behind Alt Couture. I wanted to find as many ways as possible to be fashionable and socially responsible at the same time. So, in order to create a chic wardrobe for the Alt Couture

“Let's figure out a way to be high fashion and highly responsible at the same time.”

photo spread, I scoured socially responsible thrift shops such as Goodwill for clothing items that may be fashionably questionable, but had a hint of potential. I then tailored and repurposed the chosen few into trendy wearables and *viola!* Trendy style that was totally guilt-free. Even if a garment was originally made in China or Indonesia, all of the money for the clothing went to Goodwill's philanthropic mission of helping Americans find jobs. No moral questioning required.

Now I hope you'll join me. Let's figure out a way to be high fashion and highly responsible at the same time. Let's utilize socially responsible garment industries such as fair trade, handmade and American-made wearables. Let's transform alt couture into haute couture.

Maria

Maria Porter, Editor-in-Chief

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CASUAL

batik scarf
\$18, the village experience
experiencethevillage.com



ALT
LOOK

beaded bracelet
\$12, the village experience
experiencethevillage.com



handmade wool hat
aggressively awesome stitches
\$40, homespun stores
aggressivelyawesome.etsy.com



silkscreened dress
megan lee designs
\$45, homespun stores
meganleedesigns.com



CLASSY

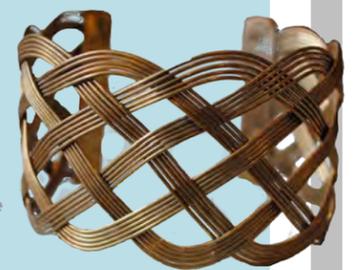
gold earrings
\$18, the village experience
experiencethevillage.com



printed clutch
\$18, the village experience
experiencethevillage.com



gold wire cuff
world finds
\$18, the village experience
experiencethevillage.com



TWO (EQUALLY FAIR AND FABULOUS) WAYS TO WEAR

With one handmade graphic dress, you can create either a laid-back artist vibe by pairing it with a handmade beret, neutral scarf and coordinating beaded bracelet, or add a gold woven cuff, elaborate patterned clutch and twisted wire earrings for an exotic, classy look. Now your flair can be socially responsible, no matter the occasion.



Spotlight on: FAIR TRADE

CAN YOU REALLY BE FASHIONABLE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AT THE SAME TIME? I SPOKE WITH A FEW LOCAL STORE OWNERS WHO DO SO EVERY DAY, AND WORK TO MAKE SURE WE CAN TOO.

THE VILLAGE EXPERIENCE

ANNE CAMPBELL, co-founder and part-owner of THE VILLAGE EXPERIENCE, explains how fair trade is an essential way to combat world poverty and how we can fashionably support this goal.

ALT Couture: Why is it important for consumers to know where their clothing and accessories come from?

Anne Campbell: It is very important to know that you are not supporting sweatshops and unfair labor practices. As Americans we have a unique opportunity to influence the marketplace in a positive way by demanding fair labor practices, no child labor and safe working conditions for our partners overseas.

AC: Why is it important for people to support Fair Trade clothing and/or accessories?

AC: It makes sense to support fair trade and know that your purchase is giving you a unique item and advancing impoverished areas where a lot of the people have not

had the opportunities for education that we have had. It gives the community jobs, skills training and hope for a better life for their community and children. The fair trade movement has changed lives and communities directly, while also providing new unique items to the US/International marketplace.

AC: How has working with Fair Trade products changed your style?

AC: I love all of the fair trade accessories and home goods available. I have always had eclectic style and incorporating fair trade products into my everyday style is so fun. I cannot tell you how many times I get stopped for a cool pair of earrings I have from our group in Kenya, or a handcarved vase in my home from Thailand or bright batik scarves from Indonesia. I

would say fair trade has enhanced my personal style and my home.

AC: What are some easy ways that people can introduce Fair Trade fashion into their closets (or jewelry boxes)?

AC: It is so easy to start with a pair of earrings or a beautiful scarf to go with your everyday wear. These pieces are so special and unique and the story that stands behind the project will make you proud to wear each and every item. It also allows you to educate people when they ask you about your fair trade product. Fair trade has been integral in aiding HIV+ communities, women that have been rescued from trafficking, and many more.

The Village Experience is located at 6427 N College Ave, Indianapolis Visit their website at experiencethevillage.com

ALT Couture: Why is it important for consumers to know where their clothing and accessories come from?

Amanda Mauer Taflinger: Knowing where your purchases come from and who made them allows you to ensure both quality construction and fair labor practices in the items you choose. Our economic choices can't be separated from their political and/or environmental repercussions. Where and how the fabric for your garment was grown matters. Who made your garment and their quality of life matters. And how much fuel was expended in the shipment of that garment matters.

AC: Why is it important for people to buy handmade clothing and/or accessories?

AMT: It's not necessarily about buying exclusively handmade, but more about making choices that respect human dignity and environmental sustainability, and buying handmade is just one of the ways you can do that. When you buy handmade you know

your money is going to support the work of an independent artist. Often, purchasing from an individual allows you to establish a relationship with that person. You can ask them directly about their practices and process. You will also find more unique and interesting clothing and accessories that are handmade, so you are not likely to run into someone else wearing the same item.

AC: How has working with handmade products changed your style?

AMT: I am more deliberate about my clothing and accessory purchases. Now I would rather spend a little more on a better-made item that will last longer than buy something inexpensive and poorly made. I also shop a lot less; I will wait 6 months until I know a great indie handmade fair is coming up, then do a whole lot of purchasing then. I am still a fairly simple dresser - typically black tops and blue jeans - but my accessories tend to be more unique and dynamic. I have a TON of great

jewelry pieces made by local and independent artists whom we have met through our shop, Homespun, or our fair, the INDIEana Handicraft Exchange, over the past five years, as well as at some other great indie fairs held around the country.

AC: What are some easy ways that people can introduce handmade fashion into their closets (or jewelry boxes)?

AMT: Start with purchasing something small, like a hair clip or a screen-printed t-shirt. Once you start getting compliments on that special item, you will be more encouraged to buy more handmade! It's amazing how much those pieces stand out in this day and age of so much mass production. You could also add handmade fashion to your wardrobe by doing some easy DIY projects on items you already own. Embellish a sweater or skirt with a simple applique or buttons, make a fabric bead bracelet or necklace out of scraps of cloth, or sew a simple tote bag from your old t-shirts.

Spotlight on: HANDMADE

AMANDA MAUER TAFLINGER, owner of HOMESPUN:MODERN HANDMADE and founder of the INDIEana Handicraft Exchange, gives her insight on how handmade accessories can support local artisans and make a unique fashion statement, all at the same time.

Homespun is located at 5624 East Washington Street, Indianapolis Visit homespunindy.com or indieanahandicraftexchange.com for more handmade fashion



HOMESPUN

CROPPED JACKET (originally a blazer): \$4.29, Goodwill;
EMBELLISHED TANK (originally a plain cami): \$2, Goodwill;
HAREM PANTS (originally a skirt): \$4.29, Goodwill;



ALT of the EARTH

Belted dresses, flower-patterned rompers and feather-embellished tanks (all tailored and repurposed from thrift shop finds) come together to create a guilt-free, socially responsible spring wardrobe that's still to die for



PATTERNED DRESS (originally a skirt): \$4.29 Goodwill; STUDED BELT: \$1, Goodwill



FLORAL ROMPER (originally a dress): \$4.29 Goodwill; WOVEN BELT: \$1, Goodwill; EARRINGS: Designed by the editor from reclaimed jewelry parts

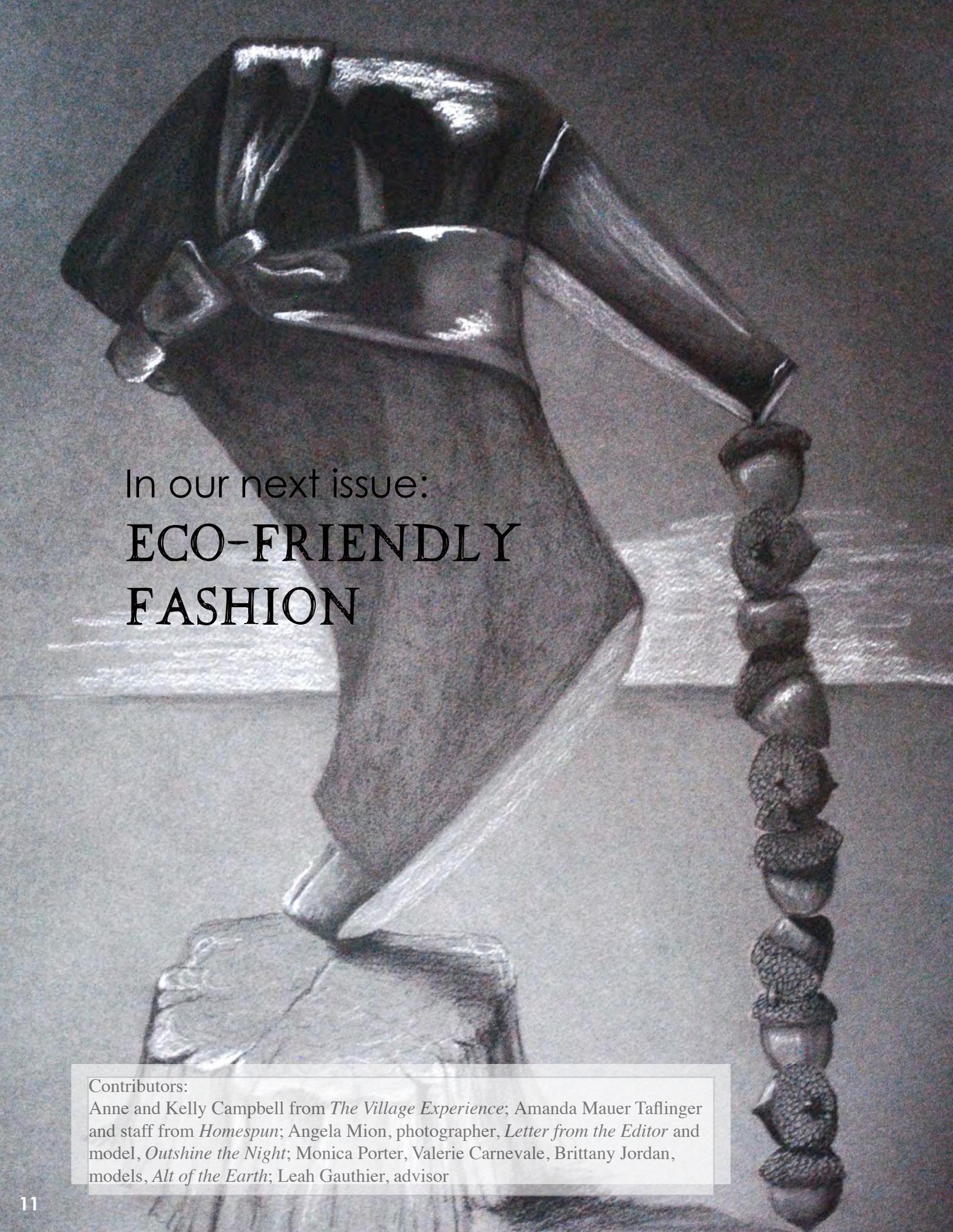
EMBELLISHED TOP: (originally a long-sleeved tee) \$2.50, Goodwill; EARRINGS: Designed by the editor from reclaimed jewelry parts

OUTSHINE

the *Night*

DON'T START THINKING THAT ALTERNATIVE TRADE FASHION IS JUST FOR HIPPIE-GYPSY PICNICS IN THE PARK. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS JUST AS TRENDY AT A PARTY OR A CLUB. PAIR A METALLIC EMBELLISHED TOP WITH MATCHING CHANDELIER EARRINGS TO SHINE BOTH INSIDE AND OUT.





In our next issue:
**ECO-FRIENDLY
FASHION**

Contributors:

Anne and Kelly Campbell from *The Village Experience*; Amanda Mauer Taflinger and staff from *Homespun*; Angela Mion, photographer, *Letter from the Editor* and model, *Outshine the Night*; Monica Porter, Valerie Carnevale, Brittany Jordan, models, *Alt of the Earth*; Leah Gauthier, advisor