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EcoChic Collection Interviews Beautiful Soul

Saturday, August 1st, 2009

by [Deborah Miarkowska](#)

EcoChic Collection are delighted to be showcasing the work of Beautiful Soul. A new ethical label, recently selected by Esthetica, finalist at the Fashioning the future summit (2008), last seasons Ethical Fashion Forum: Innovation winner and most recently selected by the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (London College of Fashion) Business support programme.



It's not supposed to be easy, as we appreciate it far more if we have worked hard to achieve it... If I can do it, anybody can.

I graduated from the London College of Fashion in 2008 with a BA (Hons) in Fashion: Design and Technology. During my final year, I was involved in a project based around 'saving the earth'. I was hooked. Fashion with a true meaning, for me, is the only way forward. I have always been a 'goody two shoes', I love a challenge and most importantly, I am at my happiest when I am caring for others. It's that simple.

'Beautiful Soul' became a reality in November 2008 and I remain as positive and as focused as ever. I literally jumped for joy when I heard that I had been selected to show my Spring/Summer 2010 at Esthetica (London Fashion Week) in September 2009... Good things are starting to happen.

What or who inspires you?

I am inspired by people who 'have a go' and don't just spend their life talking about what they hope to achieve. I love positive, honest and driven individuals, who face life with a *smile* and keep trying until they achieve their goals.

As for the fashion industry. Since starting out in the 'responsible' sector, I have been truly inspired by the drive and passion of many individuals. The sense of camaraderie and mutual respect for each other is refreshing... We are fighting the same battle, from the same corner; but we are tackling it in our own unique way.

What do you enjoy most about running your own business?

The variety of duties.

When you first start out, this can be extremely daunting, as you have to constantly juggle and teach



Following a meeting at the Ethical Fashion Forum in London, we were delighted to interview Nicola Woods Founder of Beautiful Soul who inspired us in sharing her story.

Nicola, tell us a bit more about yourself and your business.

Some years back, I had the opportunity to travel the world with one of my closest friends. It enabled me to escape the rat race and question my direction in life. Whilst in Tokyo, something happened to me. I was surrounded by the most amazing boutiques. I was like a child in a sweet shop. Mesmerised. Excited. Totally Inspired. Something inside me quite literally *came to life*. I realised then that I had to make radical changes and I was prepared to make the sacrifices needed, in order to chase my dreams of becoming a fashion designer. I had buried these dreams for as long as I could remember. (Hence my love of Japanese kimono's - from the heart.)

Changing career paths to some is ruthless and yet their frustration continues to fester. I believe that if you really want something and you are willing to make sacrifices and work as hard as it takes, you will achieve your goals.

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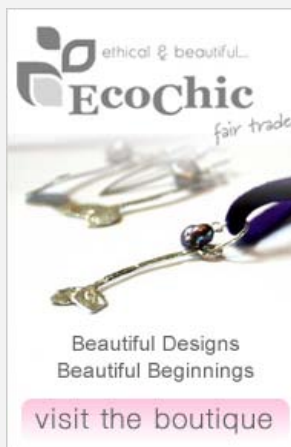
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yourself as you go along. From design innovation, to pattern manipulation, to book keeping, to sourcing and manufacturing responsibly, to negotiating with buyers, to self promotion. A day in the life of a responsible fashion designer is extremely diverse.

Good time management and perseverance is 'key'. Every day brings a different challenge and the variety adds colour, it prevents boredom. I wouldn't change it for the world.

What is the most challenging aspect?

At the moment I would have to say the sourcing of responsible fabrics and dedicating time to create a strong/lasting relationship with my manufacturing team (a registered women's project in London).

I am not a designer who does things by halves and my Spring/Summer 2010 collection will incorporate the most scrumptious up cycled fabrics, embellishment that is being handmade by a small cooperative that I set up in South Africa, with a twist of fair trade and organic luxury. The overall garment will be produced in London. The research and training is endless, but it will be worth it.

Funding is also a big factor. Sourcing and manufacturing in this manor doesn't come cheaply, but I am focused and driven by my ethos and a 'Beautiful Soul' garment wouldn't be complete without this combination of ingredients.

How do you see fashion going green in the mainstream?

There is a definite demand for responsible fashion. Take Estethica (London Fashion Week) as an example. From what I understand, from the grapevine, they are inundated with an increased number of applicants every season. This is extremely exciting and confirms a positive movement. Us 'responsibles' have a lot to thank the Ethical Fashion Forum and the Centre for Sustainable Fashion for. The work they are doing to carve the way, is applaudable. They have supported 'Beautiful Soul' from the beginning and have made the journey less scary. Personal thanks from 'Beautiful Soul' to a group of highly dedicated and beautifully passionate individuals.

Any message to your customers.....

My ultimate goal is to build a strong brand identity, which will grant me the freedom to do some 'amazing' things.


From a design perspective, I hope to combine a meaningful concoction of ingredients with direction and versatility, in the hope that a 'Beautiful Soul' garment will remain with you for a lifetime.

Fashion is such an influential tool. I know I cannot change the world, but I strongly believe that if we work together, we can make times easier and I hope that 'Beautiful Soul' will gain recognition for its contributions, initiative and sincere enthusiasm/passion to 'make a positive difference and impact'.


Beautiful Soul coming soon to EcoChic Collection.

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