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LOCAL LOVE
From top: The plastic- and package-free re_grocery store; Cate Blanchett repurposed her 2014 Armani Privé Globes gown for the 2023 SAG Awards. Opposite page: The Nikki Green show at L.A.'s 2023 Vegan Fashion Week.

IT'S A BUZZWORD TO SOME, BUT SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS, AND THE CHOICES WE MAKE (EVEN THE SMALL ONES) CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Turning the Red Carpet Green



BY JASMIN ROSEMBERG
At the 2018 Cannes Film Festival, jury president Cate Blanchett stepped onto one of the world's biggest fashion stages in a black lace Armani Privé gown — the exact one she'd worn to the 2014 Golden Globe Awards. While repeating a dress was previously considered a faux pas, the bold move was in support of Livia Firth's Green Carpet Challenge, a joint effort by talent, designers, stylists and fabric producers to make fashion more sustainable. Since Cannes, Blanchett has reworn dozens of her previous looks at events including the 2023 SAG Awards — at which she debuted a repurposed version of that same 2014 Globes dress. She has opted for archival items and eco-conscious brands that use recycled materials, like Stella McCartney and L.A.-based Wolk Morais. "Cate's red-carpet efforts are very visual, and she also does so much in other areas," says her stylist, Elizabeth Stewart. "Just one example is a podcast on climate change with Danny Kennedy." ■



L.A. SHOPS TO SUPPORT

BY JULIUS MILLER
Shopping sustainably on a local level can often be difficult — according to the United States Department of Agriculture, the U.S. is littered with thousands of food deserts, for example, which restrict individuals' access to fresh produce and funnel their consumption toward unethical brands. However, L.A. presents a far different story, with farmers markets and sustainable businesses popping up on every boulevard and street across the city. Simply put: This city has it easy. But that doesn't mean there aren't some worthy highlights among its countless stars.
Cosmic Vinyl Cafe sits cozily in Echo Park, just a few blocks from Sunday shopping hot spot Silverlake Flea. Owner Oren Pius has nurtured a community out of other Sunset Boulevard businesses, many of which have their own sustainable practices. Pius hones in on veganism — you won't find a drip of dairy on his premises, not even hiding between the sleeves of his vinyl records. But it doesn't stop there. "All our coffee grinds are given away for composting," he says. "We try our best to leave as little a footprint as we can." 2149 W. Sunset Blvd., Echo Park, 213-568-3113, cosmicvinyl.com
Nearby is **Miracle Eye**, a Latina-owned family-run boutique in DTLA that brandishes its "100% sweatshop-free status." The four queens behind this kingdom are founder Larissa Blintz and seamstresses Gloria (Larissa's mom and head seamstress/cutter), Lucia (her aunt) and Luciana, whose skills tether dead stock vintage recycled fabrics into stylish garments with a groovy '60s flair and an ethically handmade-to-order ethos. 1031 N. Broadway, Chinatown, shopmiracleeye.com
▲ Keeping your closet green isn't the only way to think sustainably in L.A. Yes, the number of businesses that promote ethical consumption outside of fashion is small by comparison, but they're still out there. Take **re_grocery**, a plastic- and package-free grocery store with three locations in Los Angeles — Highland Park, Studio City and Mar Vista — that boasts of diverting "400,000 items of packaging from landfill" since opening. Through its refillable produce manifesto, the grocery store even got the sustainable badge of approval as a certified B Corp. That accolade comes from a rigorous process of measuring environmental impact, ethics and transparency, with an assessment done every three years. regrocery.co ■

GOLDEN GLOBES: LINDA WHEELER/EVERETT COLLECTION; BLANCHETT SAG AWARDS: AMY SUSSMAN/WIREIMAGE; STORE: COURTESY RE_GROcery; VEGAN FASHION WEEK: ALEX MAYS/AMZE; COURTESY KRISTINE UPESLEJA; HART: GETTY IMAGES

KRISTINE UPESLEJA SHARES HOW TO THINK GLOBAL

BY JULIUS MILLER



SUSTAINABILITY IS about more than swapping your bacon, egg and gouda for an Impossible Breakfast Sandwich at Starbucks. And you won't get (vegan) brownie points for passing glares at Forever 21 and Zara in the mall, either. True advancement in the world of conscious consumption encompasses the globe, and you can begin with your own community. "We need to start here," says Kristine Upesleja, lecturer, professor and the founder and former manager of the Innovative Textiles & Materials Department at FIDM/Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, who has been working with sustainable textiles for nearly two decades. "This whole system here [in the U.S.] is totally messed up." Saying goodbye to plastic containers and hello to paper bags is already a huge step, but distinguishing an actual biodegradable product from one that only claims to be is more of a leap. Upesleja says to favor "USDA or Oeko-Tex certified" products because "in some way, you can make sure that these materials are either biodegradable or recyclable." Being thorough is never a burden, and it just might help save the planet to read that extra paragraph online. Making conscious choices matters, too: Swap the trendy SHEIN haul for one timeless investment piece by

Stella McCartney; swap plastics for paper (even if the straws aren't better for sipping, they're better for the planet); walk or bike to places instead of driving (and save money paying for parking), and maybe the Earth won't spontaneously combust someday ... or not nearly as quickly, anyway. Upesleja, of Latvian descent but born in Berlin, grew up around a culture that completely embraced the idea of sustainability. "It's way more advanced in Europe," she says of basic recycling methodologies, which go beyond blue bin/gray separation practices. She cites bioplastics, a category of plastics made from natural materials, as an impactful alternative to traditional plastic, which is made from petroleum-based raw materials. Corn-based bioplastics can cut down on greenhouse gas emissions by 25%, a great step toward reducing our collective carbon footprint. Although she notes that "we don't have facilities here [that] would even be able to recycle bioplastics," looking for and purchasing such products can create more demand so that might change. Still, Upesleja stresses that education is key, especially in a country with people "who don't believe in climate change." She adds, "We really need to educate people from kindergarten." Even those who feel versed in eco-consciousness have a lot to learn about what is actually helping the environment and what is hurting it. Biodegradable plastics, for example, are directly sourced from fossil fuels, creating microplastics that can contaminate other recycling streams if not processed correctly. Until the American recycling system improves, focusing on the other two "R's" behind conscious waste management, "reduce" and "reuse," is something everyone should do. ■

VEGAN FASHION WEEK IS NO LONGER ON THE FRINGE

BY MAYA GOTTFRIED
VEGAN FASHION was widely unknown when Vegan Fashion Week (veganfashionweek.org) launched in Los Angeles in 2018. Focused on runway shows featuring stellar cruelty-free clothing designs, it has spread awareness, helping establish the city as an ethical-style leader. "The initial stereotype of vegan fashion was far from glamorous," says VFW founder Emmanuelle Rienda. "It was perceived as a fringe fashion concept." VFW also launched a Hollywood styling house, dressing celebrities and supporting brands. "Los Angeles has always held a crucial role in our journey," says Rienda. "With its vibrant cultural tapestry, mix of high-end fashion, street style, entrepreneurial spirit and forward-thinking ethos, it's the ideal environment for the seed of ethical fashion to sprout and grow." This year's VFW event in October at Downtown's California Market Center attracted *Never Have I Ever's* Richa Moorjani, *The Underground Railroad's* Mychal-Bella Bowman and Support + Feed founder Maggie Baird — Billie Eilish's mom. VFW's runway featured ethical shoe brand A Perfect Jane, apple skin luxury goods line Guillaume Larquemain and vegan clothing line Nikki Green. "Now, ethical luxury is no longer on the fringes," says Rienda. "It's mainstream and growing." ■



"I LOVE THE SPICY CHICKEN SANDWICH AND THE TOTS AT HART HOUSE. IT'S A CLASSIC." — KEVIN HART