

# TORONTO LIFE

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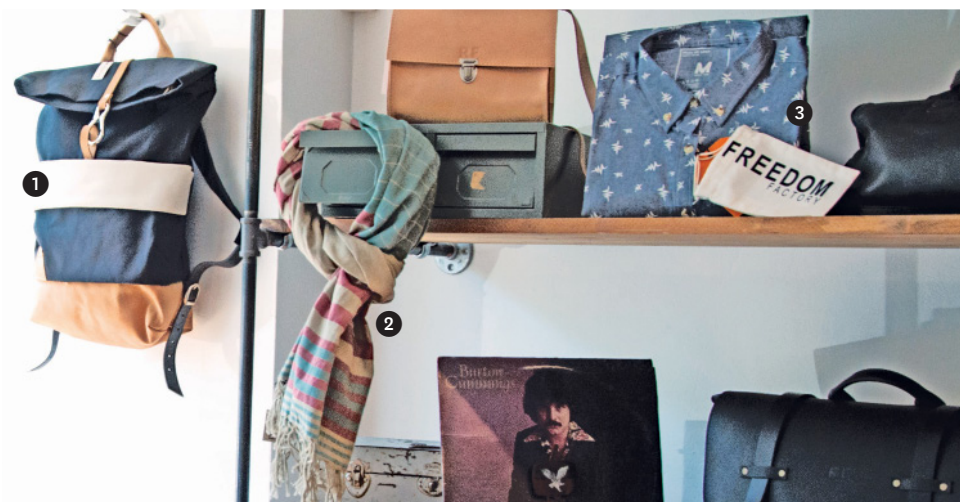
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## Know Thy Shelf

A new Toronto boutique gives priority to provenance

**Over the course** of a decade-long career as a marketer for massive retailers like Holt Renfrew, Sears and Danier, Alice Clarkson (the one in the hat) never stopped wondering about the merch she was selling to consumers—specifically, where it had been produced, and at what potential human cost. Eventually, those nagging doubts sparked a business plan: in March, Clarkson and her wife, Léonie Lilla (the one in the tie), opened Pipler Accessories, a cute boutique in Cabbagetown where nearly every scarf, purse and rope of beads can be traced straight to its maker—whether it's a niche Canadian designer, an artisan co-op in South America or a factory worker earning fair wages in Bangladesh. 453 Parliament St., 647-346-2324.



## Do the Right Bling

Summery baubles from far-flung locales—no globe-trotting required

Raven and Lily's wooden bangles are made by women living near the Himalayan foothills in northern India. \$25 for two. Pipler Accessories, 453 Parliament St., 647-346-2324.



A Peace Treaty runs a small workshop in Jaipur, India, where artisans create gorgeous hardware, like this brass fan necklace finished with gold and turquoise. \$198. [Apeacetreaty.com](http://Apeacetreaty.com).



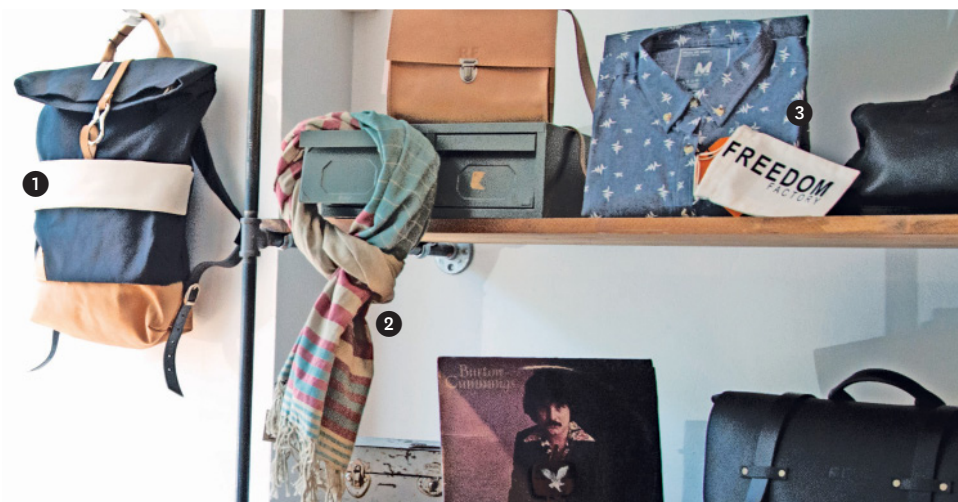
Far and Wide Collective sells beautiful baubles by artisans in post-conflict countries. This lattice ring by Blue Diamond, a small Afghan jeweller, is studded with agate and other indigenous stones. \$369. [Farandwidecollective.ca](http://Farandwidecollective.ca).



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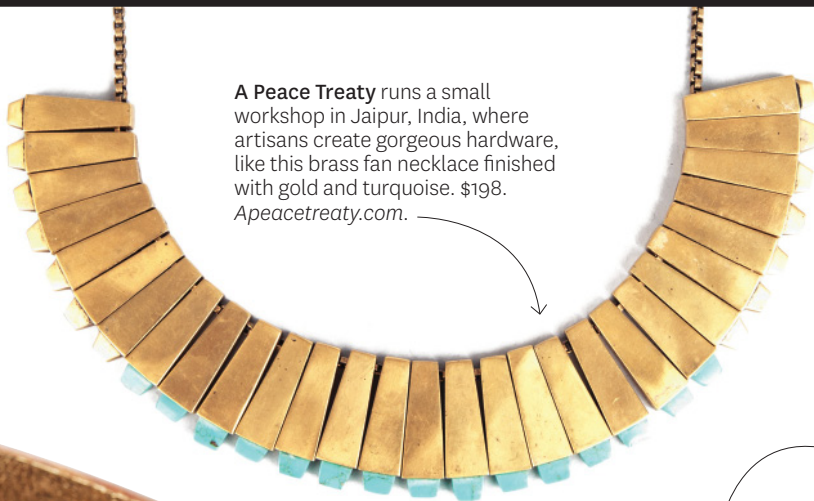
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# Haute-Minded Couture

Ethical fashion doesn't mean ugly hemp hippie clothes.  
Just ask Toronto designer Laura Siegel

BY JEAN GRANT



**1 Rachel Fortin's** minimalist satchels are hand-stitched in Montreal. This sturdy pack is made from canvas and vegetable-tanned leather. \$295.

**2 Yama Aj Chixot** is an artisan group from the village of San Juan Comalapa in Guatemala. They use a pedal loom to create traditional textiles like this cotton shawl. \$45.

**3 Peau de Loup** makes tomboyish button-downs in partnership with Freedom Factory, a non-profit foundation that provides education and fair wages to women and girls in Bangladesh. \$75.

**Most people hear "ethical fashion" and think fair-trade Birkenstocks. How do you combat that crunchy granola image?** I focus on design. "Ethical" is a standard that has nothing to do with aesthetics.

**So what makes clothing "ethical"?** Two things: the effect it has on the environment and the effect it has on other human beings. You want the people making your clothes to be happy people.

**Your clothes are made by artisans all over the world. How do you find them?** The sustainable design world is strangely close-knit. **My last collection was made by craftspeople from the Kutch region in India.** I met them through a woman who runs an artisan collective there, and I met her through a sustainable shop owner in Vancouver.

**I have to ask: how much do you pay the artisans?** It depends on the craft. For dye work, it's \$16 to \$40 per metre. For weaving, \$5 to \$30 a metre.

**You made a documentary, *Traceable*, about a work trip across India. Most memorable moment?**

There were some tricky times. We had to leave one community because the leader wasn't happy we were filming. The people there had never seen a camera like ours, and all the kids got really excited. I guess you could say it caused a ruckus.

**How do you get people to pay \$150 for a scarf when H&M hawks knock-offs for a tenth of the price?**

I'm not telling everybody to go out and buy my clothes. But people need to consume less. Often it's like, "Oh, I don't really love this, but it's only \$15."

**It's tough to resist a bargain.**

It's so hard! And confusing, too. Everything is billed as "sustainable," but is it really? The fashion consultant Julie Gilhart has a word for that kind of talk—she calls it "sustainababble."

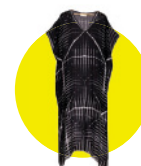
**Bottom line: why should people care about this?** Because it feels good to care. It's a nice way to live.



Siegel's scarf is woven with scraps of recycled sari fabric. \$135.



This two-toned clutch consists of hundreds of interwoven leather strips. \$225.



The pattern on this silk caftan was created using an ancient form of tie-dye called bandhani. \$435.

This diamond ring from Cabbagetown's **Fair Trade Jewellery Co.** is made with 18-karat gold mined by small-scale operations in Peru. \$1,895. 523 Parliament St., 647-430-8741.



This hammered brass cuff, sold by the Toronto-based shop **Unikati**, was crafted in Cambodia using recycled bombshell casings and bullets left over from the Khmer Rouge regime. \$55. [Unikati.ca](http://Unikati.ca).



**Shugufa Yousofzai**, a 28-year-old jeweller in Kabul, makes these gold-plated lapis lazuli studs. \$120. [Farandwidecollective.ca](http://Farandwidecollective.ca).



The Toronto charity **Me to We** employs women from the Maasai region in rural Kenya to make pretty beaded pieces, like this turquoise tassel necklace with a hand-cast brass charm. \$25. [Metowe.com](http://Metowe.com).

