

BUSINESS OF HOME

BOH

ISSUE 12 | SUMMER 2019

A PUBLICATION BY EDITOR AT LARGE

Could you go a day without producing any trash?

Heath's pursuit
of zero-waste
manufacturing



PLUS

It's easier (and cooler) than ever
to get green. We show you how.



EDITOR'S LETTER

In early May, I helped judge a furniture competition at Pratt Institute's Brooklyn campus, where a class of industrial design students had been tasked with creating modular, small-space-friendly pieces in American red oak—white oak's less popular, more sustainable, pink-hued cousin. The experience underscored something that was already becoming incredibly clear to our team, with this issue well underway: Sustainability means different things to different people. The Pratt students tackled the topic from two angles—through the material itself, but also through quality, durability and functionality. In essence, their thoughtfully designed projects encouraged consumers to choose better, multipurpose pieces that will last—and ultimately, to buy less.

Approaches to sustainable design range from ethical manufacturing to upcycled materials and transparent sourcing. We explored these and others in our first-ever green shopping guide (page 14), which is as much a compendium of companies making the effort to do the right thing as a primer in the kinds of questions you can ask any brand.

A recurring theme in this issue is that there are small steps we can all take to make a difference. The design industry isn't going to save the planet by itself, but we're certainly in a position to effect positive, significant change. Some of the easiest places to start? Ask your vendors what they're doing about sustainability and what their products are made of (see Arianne Nardo's profile of Sustainable Furnishings Council co-founder and executive director Susan Inglis on page 40 for inspiration). Find experts in green building and bring them into your projects, take classes or get certified by green organizations—and start making better choices on your clients' behalf, even if they don't think they care. (LEED-accredited San Francisco-based designer Jennifer Jones offers amazing advice on how to do this on page 28.)

There's a role for everyone: On the manufacturing side, we profile Heath Ceramics owners Robin Petravic and Catherine Bailey, who have launched a forward-thinking effort to make their company zero waste. We also feature two stunning, sprawling architectural projects—clocking in at 8,000 and 17,000 square feet—that upend tired notions of what building green looks like today. My hope is that this issue can be a launchpad for thinking differently about what it means to design green—and how we can achieve it right now.

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ON THE COVER: Heath Ceramics owners Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravic, in the company's San Francisco workshop. Photo by Marc Olivier Le Blanc.



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Three years ago, Heath Ceramics embarked on a radical company-wide journey to eradicate waste. *BOH* caught up with the California-based brand to find out how, why—and how much it (didn't) cost.

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For more than a decade, Susan Inglis has steadily and tirelessly beat the drum for green practices in the home furnishings industry.

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17,000 Square Feet —and Sustainable?

Sprawling, net-zero spaces leverage creative new technologies and methodologies—proof, once and for all, that sustainability comes in all sizes.



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LEFT: KAA Design Group's Tower Grove, a sustainable 8,000-square-foot residence in Los Angeles.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MANOLO LANGIS

ON THE BEAT

Green Light

Taking the first step toward shopping with sustainability in mind might be daunting, but these 63 brands make it easy to go green.

BY ROBYN SMITH

NAVIGATING THE NUANCES of so-called green products can be an intimidating task. First, there's the sheer volume of goods making green claims—but just because it's got a recycled-looking brown tag or is labeled "organic," is it really sustainable? What do all of the stamps and certifications really mean? How much will your clients expect you to know about each product's provenance if you're touting its eco-conscious bona fides? And if something is made with recycled water bottles, how nice can it really be?

A few simple directives can simplify your shopping experience: Buy intentionally, get to know the brand you're buying from, and shop with your values at the forefront. "Look at the DNA of the business itself rather than the words that describe the product," advises Erinch Sahan, chief executive of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO). "A mainstream brand can have one product that got a certification or one ingredient in one product that got a certification, but we need to ask about the business itself."

How to sniff out the truly meaningful initiatives? Sahan suggests a few cursory questions: Does the company prioritize looking after the best interests of the people who make its products? How is its supply chain structured, and what is its actual impact? (Have they made sure that the people who make up the supply chain are treated well from start to finish? Do they get paid enough to live and work with basic human dignity?)

The tough questions matter: Especially as sustainability has become trendy, a suite of would-be do-gooders have sprung up with big claims—and little to back them up. "Brands on the more authentic end of the spectrum will always have to contend with greenwashing by some mainstream brands, because [as soon as] we come up with a description of who we are, someone will try to co-opt our language," he says.

Sahan's focus is on what he calls "mission-led enterprises," or companies that ethically support the people who power every step of a brand's supply chain, but there are many ways to approach sustainable shopping. Even at the most fastidious companies, it's extremely rare to be completely sustainable, so a good strategy is to shop with the values that are most meaningful to you and your clients in mind. "There's never a silver bullet solution," says Elizabeth Segran, who writes about eco-conscious fashion for *Fast Company*. "I'm always thinking about beautiful things and materialism, and with my readers, I'm promoting consumption. But on the other hand, I think about the impact. If I need to buy something, the best thing to do is to buy something durable, well-made and as ethical as possible."

Segran chooses to focus on the positives of rampant greenwashing: "The environmental crisis we're in is complex and multifarious. A lot of founders of companies are also learning about this as they go along, and they're making the best decisions they can," she says. "It shows they're responding to the trend, and hopefully that means things are moving in the right direction." ■

IF YOU CARE ABOUT:

Transparent Sourcing

These brands raise the bar on material provenance, from cotton fiber DNA testing and rapid tree replacement to resourceful repurposing of scrap metal, invasive plants, and more.

Bloomist



The new, hyper-targeted e-commerce site carries artisan-made decor inspired by the natural world, like the *Beach match striker*, which is made of stones collected along the New England coast.

Flaneur



The bedding brand hires a third party to do DNA testing on its fibers to ensure that each of its products, like the *Tricolor Tie-Dye* collection, is made of 100 percent U.S.-grown Supima cotton.

Skylar Morgan



Regional lumberyards and land plots razed for construction in the Atlanta area provide reclaimed Louisiana sinker cypress—which would otherwise be discarded—for the company's *Hillock* armoire.

Greenington



The brand's furniture, including the *Sitka* dining table, is made of rapidly renewable moso bamboo gathered and manufactured in northern China.

Scott Group Studio



The rug brand sources wool for products like its *Agata* carpet from New Zealand sheep raised at high altitudes on a diet of nutrient-rich vegetation, resulting in softer, stronger fiber.

Hannah Beatrice Quinn



The San Francisco artisan assembles raw materials from flea markets, lumberyards and scrap-metal yards into her collection of household tools (like this broom) in her 300-square-foot studio.

Artefacto



The *Indiana* chaise lounge features timber that's immediately reforested in Brazil.

Stickbulb



The *Chime* chandelier incorporates redwood from a former water tower on Brooklyn's first skyscraper: "Our mission is to raise material provenance to the same stature as form and function," says founder Russell Greenberg.

Watermark Living



The natural pole rattan used to make the company's *Hammond* lounge chair is harvested from routinely reforested vines.

Havwoods



The brand's European white oak flooring is all certified through the Forest Stewardship Council.

Nathan Anthony



The *Pow!* ottoman is upholstered in high-performance Ultrasuede fabric, the first nonwoven suede made of partially plant-based polyester, which is derived from sugarcane in India.

Mitchell Black



With its new *Organics* collection, the company's wallcoverings are printed on PVC-free vinyl and LEED-certified paper made of natural fibers and recycled content.

Hartmann & Forbes



Renewable materials are a hallmark of the brand's sourcing, including water hyacinth for its *Junsei Colourweave* shades.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT:

Ethical Manufacturing

These brands cultivate exceptional relationships with their partners and maintain ethical manufacturing and workplace practices through every step of the supply chain. In short, every worker is treated well.

Boll & Branch



The online retailer has invested in organic cotton farms and fair trade factories in India to make luxury bedding like these striped linen sheets.

The Urban Electric Co.



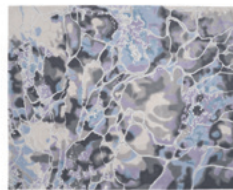
The Charleston, South Carolina-based manufacturer of made-to-order lighting like *Cubism* invests in employee amenities, apprenticeships and education.

GlobelIn



The subscription box company sources handmade objects—like the *Moroccan* plate and *Malika* mug—from fair trade vendors around the globe.

Tai Ping



Protected by fair pay and safe conditions, Chinese artisans make the hand-tufted *Apogean* rug in state-of-the-art workshops.

Ducduc



Crafted in the children's furniture company's restored 1890s production facility in Connecticut, the *Regency* bunk bed—and all of the brand's catalog—is made to order by master builders in a safe, clean work environment in an area of high unemployment.

54kibo



The contemporary African design destination's hand-carved *Djembe* side table is sourced from the family-run Tekura Studio and crafted by a small group of skilled artisans in Ghana with a WFTO membership in process.

de Le Cuona



The textiles house works closely with accredited mills in Europe to make its fabrics, including the silk velvet and linen of this *Flange* cushion.

L'Aviva Home



Materials for the *Jujuy* rug are sourced from an Argentinian women's cooperative that raises sheep, then shears and hand-spins their wool. (The sheep are given nicknames according to their coloring: *hormiga*, meaning bee, when they are multicolored; *chola* when they are white; and *choco* when they are brown.) The co-op is one of many artisan groups the New York design studio collaborates with; another, in Bolivia, creates *Árbol* lamps from salvaged tropical hardwood.

Ngala Trading



Founders Lawson Ricketts and Nick Geimer visit with their manufacturing partners in Africa about four times per year. (The pair, having lived in South Africa for a decade, are close to many of their partners' families, as well.) The *Nama* side table is made with ostrich eggshells, a byproduct of the local food industry.

Merida



The brand's jute rugs are made in partnership with GoodWeave, a network of nonprofit organizations dedicated to preventing child labor in the rug industry.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT:

Low-Impact Production

These brands boast nontoxic materials, a reduced carbon footprint, local manufacturing (and therefore reduced transportation in shipping), biodegradable packaging, and minimal chemical emissions.

Artistic Tile



It takes 60,000 gallons of water a day to make pieces like the *Euclid* collection—but it's all reused, thanks to a proprietary system that collects rainfall and filters up to 200 gallons per minute.

Sagegreenlife



The Chicago firm contracts with horticulturists and engineers around the globe to install living walls, which are planted in Biotiles, patented tiles that use Rockwool (fibers created by combining rock and chalk at high heat) instead of soil.

Fermob



The French outdoor furniture manufacturer makes the *Adada* rocking horse from leftover parts from the manufacturing process of its other lines.

Plover



The home textiles brand opts for hydrogen peroxide instead of chlorine to bleach the organic fabrics used in its limited-run collections, like the *Black Geo Circles* sheet set.

Sunbrella

The performance textiles brand owns and operates solar arrays at its factories that generate enough energy to power more than 150 homes. It recycles postindustrial waste into its Renaissance yarn, and its Anderson, South Carolina, facility staffers plant trees, restore habitats and clean up highways.

Cerno



Last year, the lighting company planted more than 100 trees in a creek near its manufacturing facility in Laguna Beach, California, with the aim of reducing the runoff that reaches the beach. Unused material from products like the *Nauta* table lamp are repurposed or recycled.

Plain English



The British company, which opened its first New York outpost last year, adheres to a zero-waste policy at its workshop. While producing its custom-designed and built-to-order kitchens, it burns sawdust and offcuts to heat its workshop.

Linda Cabot Design



The Boston designer's *Symmetry* placemat is digitally printed on organic cotton from India using biodegradable ink.

Parachute



The brand's textiles, like its *Tassel* towels, are not only grown organically, but Oeko-Tex certified—which means no harmful chemicals were used at any stage of production.

Team 7



The Austrian cabinetry and furniture maker sources wood from its own forests in the north of the country; the rest of its supply comes from sustainably managed European forests.

Ziggy



The brand's handcrafted pieces, like the *Charles* dresser, are made of formaldehyde-free North American plywood and coated in a water-based finish.

Copeland Furniture



To make products like the *Estelle* armchair, the manufacturer operates a solar field on its factory grounds that produces more than 800,000 kilowatt hours of power annually—roughly two-thirds of its power consumption.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT:

Philanthropy

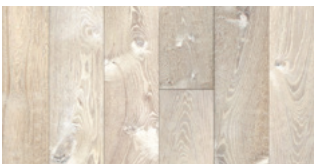
These brands adopt humanitarian practices, encourage their employees to volunteer regularly and route a significant portion of proceeds to good causes every year.

Samuelson Furniture

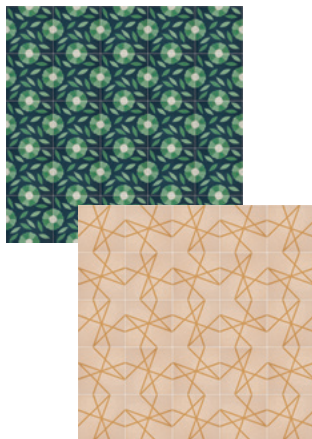
The Florida-based company has furnished 32 residences for Give Kids the World Village, a local nonprofit for children with life-threatening illnesses. It has also donated nearly \$500,000 worth of its furniture, like its *Occasional* chair, to communities affected by hurricanes.

Eskayel

One percent of the textile studio's total sales, including from the *Belize Blooms* pillow, is contributed to nonprofits like Vital Action Project that help protect the environment.

Duchateau

Through its partnership with the National Forest Foundation, the flooring company plants a tree for each hardwood floor (like *Driftwood Grey*) that it sells.

Granada Tile

The brand's *Cosmos* and *Shatter* cement floor tiles are manufactured in Nicaragua, where the company has gifted product to a zoo, public library and elementary school. In the U.S., its Los Angeles-based co-founders give tile to Habitat for Humanity, and donate to local nonprofits.

Armadillo

Part of each purchase from the Australia-based rug company is donated to its nonprofit foundation, which funds a school in India—from uniforms and textbooks to teacher salaries and medical, dental and eye care. The company also bought and installed solar panels so that the school can run solely on renewable energy.

Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams

The retailer (and *Poppy* swivel maker) funds a nonprofit daycare for working parents in its North Carolina factory and scholarships for employees' children, many of whom are first-generation college students; and works with Exodus Homes to give jobs to formerly incarcerated individuals and aid their transition back into society.

Skyline Furniture

The Chicago-based upholstery company, the manufacturer behind quick-ship brand Cloth & Company's *Josephine Fringe chair*, has been involved with charities like City of Hope and Chicago Lighthouse for more than 70 years. The company also provides free ESL and GED classes while employees are on the clock.

Renovation Angel

The nonprofit recycles entire luxury kitchens by installing them in homes across the U.S. Part of its proceeds support Designs for Dignity, which renovates spaces for other nonprofits. Since its launch in 2005, it has recycled more than 5,000 kitchens, diverting over 30 million pounds from landfills.

Garden State Tile

For each 2,000-square-foot purchase from the *Koala* porcelain tile collection, the brand adopts a koala in the buyer's name.

IF YOU CARE ABOUT:

Upcycled Materials

These brands transform previously used materials—think engine coils, fishing nets and chalkboards—to construct new, beautiful objects for the home.

Mater



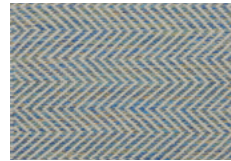
For its *Ocean* collection, the Copenhagen-based brand reenvisioned a 1955 design as outdoor furniture, manufactured entirely from ocean waste like recycled fishing nets. In some cases, the company even pays Danish fishing operations to recycle their used nets rather than abandoning them at sea.

Groundwork Home



Repurposed surfaces are standard fare for the Philadelphia-based manufacturer, which counts old paving stones, school chalkboards, marble shower stall dividers and factory machine bases among the materials it upcycles for its custom furniture.

Lee Jofa



The brand's latest indoor/outdoor rug collection, including the chevron-patterned *Sellister*, is made entirely of recycled plastic from India.

Ferm Living



The woven polyester *Way* cushion is crafted from recycled plastic bottles.

Ethnicraft



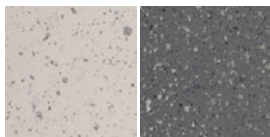
The shapes that adorn the *Graphic* sideboard's doors are composed of leftover wood scrap from the company's factory, which would otherwise be too small for furniture.

Stitchroom



Sales of pillows produced from remnant fabrics, used to train the e-tailer's new stitchers, go to a New York arts nonprofit.

Formica



Post-production paper chips from solid colorways—which would otherwise have gone to waste—comprise 30 percent of the brand's *Paper Terrazzo* sheet laminate.

Native Trails



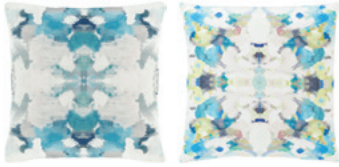
Hammered copper products like the *Cozumel* vanity top are made from recycled copper (mostly engine coils) sourced and constructed in central Mexico, where the craft has deep roots.

Tala



Because the glass used to make solar panels needs to be of incredibly high quality, much is discarded. Tala has repurposed the rejected glass into Glaskeramik, a new material that is the foundation of its *Magma* collection.

Annie Selke



The brand uses recycled plastic—the *Raleigh* and *Highland* pillows are made entirely of recycled polyester—in its indoor/outdoor collections.

Lovesac



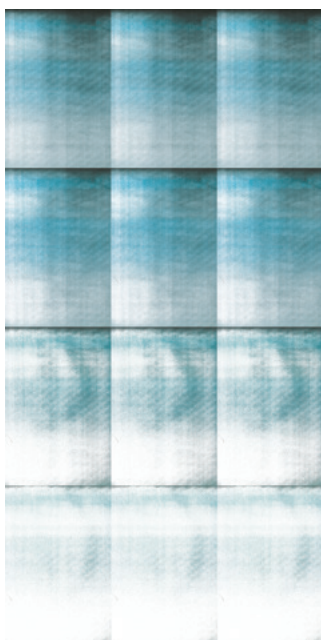
The modular *Sactional* sofa's upholstery is made from recycled plastic bottles; cushions are filled with shredded scrap foam from the sofa industry.

Ann Sacks



The *Crackle* collection by Kohler WasteLAB is made of unfired clay culled from Kohler's Wisconsin factory, turning the waste into a reusable material.

Kinnasand



The Swedish brand's *Scrap CMYK* curtains are made of recycled polyester from used plastic bottles.

Kvadrat



Reused scraps from the Danish textile brand's yarn spinners in the U.K. are reformulated to create its *Re-wool* collection, which includes 21 colorways and is made with 45 percent recycled wool.

Nothing



The Brooklyn-based design collective, formed by recent Rhode Island School of Design alumni, makes its *Amber* lighting using pulled roving (unspun wool) and upcycled fabrics—anything from blue jeans to industry scraps.

Slash Objects



Recycled tire rubber and salvaged marble from across the U.S. are combined to create the *Coexist* standing mirror.

Buffy



The fill of the *Cloud* comforter is made of recycled polyester. Since 2017, the brand has recycled more than 7 million plastic bottles.

Crossville



Since 2012, the brand's Tile Take-Back program has turned 130 million pounds of post-consumer porcelain (think: toilets) into pieces like its *Reformation* tile.

Meso Goods



The brand uses organic Guatemalan wool sourced in Quetzaltenango for its *Area* rug; it also recycles post-consumer bottles into glassware.