

THE KIT



“I made my earrings,” says Sage Paul. “The ermines were a gift from my husband’s family in South Dakota. My husband’s uncle tanned them. Traditionally they would be worn in the hair with regalia. [Now that I’ve made them] into earrings I get to wear them more regularly. When I wear them, I feel the love of family, the care in family and also gratitude for materials that come from animals.”

The way forward

Sage Paul, activist, artist and co-founder of Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto, envisions a fashion industry with Indigenous creatives at the helm

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN ARANHA

The first time I tanned a deer hide was in a backyard in downtown Toronto in 2014. I was surrounded by Indigenous women and babies. Our teacher, Rosary Spence (Cree), shared the dehairing and fleshing techniques she learned from her grandparents. As we fumbled through the process, Rosary watched over us. We didn’t have enough skinning knives for everyone, so we took turns using a small Swiss Army knife. The tiny tool worked, but it was not efficient, and we laughed with whoever’s turn it was to use it.

The leather would be worked by hand until it was soft and supple and then smoked, leaving it with a distinct aroma. The leather is shared

to make clothing, accessories, outerwear and more. The unused parts of the hide are given back to the Earth in ceremony. Rosary laughed with us too as we learned this process, but her guidance was that of a true leader. There are many different ways to tan a hide, but sharing knowledge, teaching respect and value, and exemplifying gratitude in the process is a type of leadership practised among Indigenous people of all nations. I was raised in Toronto with these values. Our ways still survive today. This is normal for me.

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≡GASTRONOMER

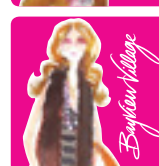
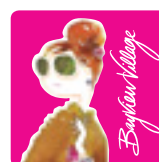
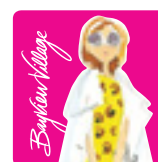
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PEONIE SWIM TOP, \$115, **BOTTOMS**, \$120, [HOLTRENFREW.COM](#), **NATIVE SHOES** SLIP-ONS, \$65, [NATIVESHOES.COM](#), **MOJI MASK**, \$20, [MOJIMASK.COM](#), **OUAI** WAVE SPRAY, \$34, [SEPHORA.CA](#), **SLOWTIDE** TOWEL, \$40, [SLOWTIDE.CA](#), **TOPSHOP** SHORTS, \$52, [THEBAY.COM](#)



How wonderful to sip something cool and bubbly on a tree-shaded terrace. Some wineries are still closed, but Niagara's award-winning Rosewood is offering tastings by appointment, and nearby Malivoire and Fielding Estates have opened their patios. Do some research to avoid disappointment.

HERSCHEL SUPPLY COMPANY HIP BAG, \$27, [HERSCHEL.CA](#), **CHARINE SARTE** DRESS, \$469, [SHOPBOP.COM](#), **STAUD** SANDALS, \$485, [SSENSE.COM](#), **STOKES DESIGN STUDIOS** WINE NOTEBOOK, \$9, [ETSY.COM](#), **BRONZE AGE** MASK AND SCRUNCHE SET, \$55, [ABRONZEAGE.COM](#), **REVLON** KISS CUSHION LIP TINT IN WINE TRIP, \$14, [SHOPPERSDRUGMART.CA](#)

Summer at home

Style editor **Liz Guber** curates Ontario outing starter packs to inspire local wanderlust



Not only does a drive-in movie theatre offer a quaintly nostalgic way to spend an evening, it's also a communal activity that's socially distanced by design. Plus, it will make rewatching *Dirty Dancing* for the 12th time feel downright novel.

H&M JACKET, \$35, [HM.COM](#), **VANS** SLIP-ONS, \$60, [VANS.CA](#), **S'WELL** FOOD CONTAINER, \$68, [SWELL.COM](#), **TUCK SHOP TRADING CO.** MASK, \$36, [TUCKSHOPCO.COM](#), **ILIA** ILLUMINATOR IN POLKA DOTS & MOONBEAMS, \$45, [SEPHORA.CA](#), **UNIQLO** PANTS, \$20, [UNIQLO.COM](#)



You can't get more isolated than a forest—no wonder camping and hiking are more popular than ever. Whether you spend your time reeling in smallmouth bass, canoeing through water lilies or kicking back with a book is up to you.

KAIA NATURALS THE VITAMIN CLEANSE, \$16 (PACK OF 30), [THEDETOXMARKET.CA](#), **PATAGONIA** PULLOVER, \$149, [MEC.CA](#), **TNA** BIKE SHORTS, \$20, [ARITZIA.COM](#), **MERRELL** SHOES, \$170, [MERRELL.CA](#), **FRANK AND OAK** MASK, \$24 (SET OF 2), [FRANKANDOAK.COM](#), **SNOW PEAK** SPORK, \$13 (EACH), [SNOWPEAK.COM](#), **THE NORTH FACE** BACKPACK, \$100, [THENORTHFACE.COM](#)

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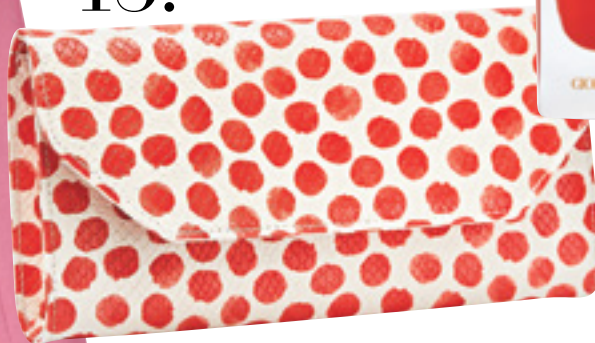
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1. Gucci watch,
BERANI JEWELLERY DESIGN

2. Comma blouse,
CHADWICKS

3. Giorgio Armani
Si Passione
eau de parfum,
SEPHORA

4. Face à Face
sunglasses,
SQUINT EYEWEAR

5. Purse, **RON WHITE**

6. Skirt, **RIANI**

7. Anne Fontaine
top, **LUISA CERANO**

8. Sandal, **RON WHITE**

9. Ljve Fashion skirt,
SANDRO

10. MICA & MICA
blouse, **SANDRO**

11. Greta Constantine
top, **ANDREWS**

12. Made in Italy
pants, **SANDRO**

13. Scarlet clutch,
**JEAN-PAUL FORTIN
(COMING SOON)**

14. Veronica Beard
blazer, **TNT THE NEW
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Post-pandemic, will shopping be better than ever?

COVID-19 is speeding up the retail revolution. **Liz Guber** explores why that's good news for shoppers



It has been my long-held belief that the music in most restaurants is too loud. Of course I miss dining out, like everyone, but I do not miss having to yell “I think we should get the Brussels sprouts!” to the person sitting just a few feet away from me as Radiohead reverberates off the walls.

When indoor dining does, eventually, resume, it will come with a new set of rules, including quieter music. This news was something of a small consolation—finally, a mild, yet persisting inconvenience swiftly eliminated thanks to an unfortunate cause.

Shopping, like dining out, is another pleasant activity that's been radically altered by the pandemic with stores doubling down on cleaning, capping capacity and roping off fitting rooms (all while trying to stay afloat). Still, I wonder if, after these initial (and necessary) measures have been normalized, shopping might actually become better—more enjoyable, convenient and efficient—permanently.

Justin Sablich, an editor at London-based innovation hub Springwise, says that for some, shopping holds enduring appeal no matter the circumstances. Indeed, when stores first reopened in Toronto, I walked past lineups everywhere from Foot Locker to Chanel. “Over time, stores will face the same

no matter what you're selling. “Giving shoppers convenient and flexible ways to purchase is a must,” adds Sablich.

Convenience was top of mind for Myriam Maguire, who founded her direct-to-consumer shoe line Maguire with her sister in 2017. When the Montreal-based brand began opening boutiques, including one in Toronto, the team wanted to streamline the traditional shoe-shopping experience. “No matter where you are in the world, it's the same. You walk in, wait for someone to serve you and then you wait as they disappear to find your size. Then, they either don't have it, or you need a different size and the process starts all over again,” says Maguire. That's why the brand offers floor models in every size so that shoppers can try as many pairs as they like with or without help and then buy a fresh pair that no one else has tried on.

With online transactions higher than ever and more of us becoming accustomed to shopping on our laptops and phones, you have to wonder why Maguire (and other upstart brands like it) would even bother with bricks and mortar in the first place. “Having a store gives customers more confidence,” says Maguire, noting that the team saw an uptick

“streaming commerce,” which has been gaining popularity in China, even before the pandemic. Sales staff have become live broadcasters, showing off wares in their own live-streamed “stores.”

Still, live-streaming, apps and flashy websites won't do much good if the merchandise doesn't speak to our current needs and desires. “Sales are shifting to a different type of product that is more practical and useful,” says Maguire, adding that she has eliminated a lot of heels from her fall collection. “The product has to be adapted to the current situation. When I go to department stores now I see gowns and party dresses. There's no way we're going to be wearing that for a really long time.” Maguire is all about giving her customers what they want. When the brand introduced its take on the “dad sandal” popularized by Chanel (at a much lower price) the shoes sold out in a week and a half.

The pandemic has created even more pressure to fix fashion's broken system—one that sees sandals hit shelves in February and then discounted as soon as June. In order to attract shoppers, stores (especially department chains) will need to rely less on pieces that rigidly adhere to seasons and occasions. There is also simply too much stuff. “I feel like

“Many of us have lived without spending [on fashion] for months. Now, customers are looking for the best of the best and what they're really going to use”

challenges they did pre-COVID—how to add value to the in-store experience over the convenience of shopping online—with the added task of making it safe,” he says.

Once the initial thrill of being able to shop wears off, customers might start to ask more of retailers. Stores have long touted the nebulous “experience” as a way to draw shoppers, but they'll now have to figure out concrete and genuinely helpful tactics to keep their customers and fight against the increasing allurements of online shopping. If shoppers raise their standards, stores will have no choice but to match them.

Sablich thinks that “new solutions focused on improving customer service and convenience could and should have staying power,” noting that grocery stores have largely been leading the way by innovating quickly. He points to New York grocery chain Fairway, which implemented a skip-the-checkout app that gains 1,000 new users each day. In Ireland, grocer Lidl uses an AI chatbot to give shoppers real-time information on how long lineups are via WhatsApp. Yes, these stores are in the business of milk and bread, not denim and sneakers, but a respect of customers' time holds universal appeal

in Toronto-area online sales after they opened in the city. “They will shop online and then they will arrive at the store knowing exactly what they want.”

Dwell time is a common metric for measuring a store's success—the more time you spend in a shop, the more money you are likely to spend. That was pre-pandemic. Now, shoppers will want to get in and get out, with as little friction in the process as possible, and this habit may stick for good.

Creating a digital presence that seamlessly interacts with the in-store experience is a trend that's accelerating because of COVID-19, says Eric Sherman, VP of real estate for Yorkville, at First Capital. Sherman points to TNT, a high-end fashion boutique that reimaged its online store to more fully reflect the stock on its racks. After browsing the new and improved website, customers can book a video shopping session with an associate who will walk the shop floor and pull items. Then, “you walk in because you still want that in-person tactile experience,” says Sherman.

These types of one-on-one shopping services aren't exactly new (especially for big spenders) but they are poised to become more commonplace. Springwise's Sablich points to the emergence of

a lot of unnecessary things will disappear and it will make place for more essential things,” says Maguire. “Many of us have lived without spending money [on fashion] for these months and now that stores are opening they're going to be looking for the best of the best and what they're really going to use.”

Melissa Evans-Lee, vice president of marketing at QuadReal Property Group, which owns Toronto's Bayview Village mall, says that while retail is always trying to innovate, these efforts are now happening faster than ever. The company is gearing up to launch Gastronomer, a virtual marketplace and food concierge service that will allow shoppers to curate their own menu from the mall's restaurants. “The time from program inception to launch is weeks, which would not have been contemplated previously,” says Evans-Lee.

Beyond the flashy tech, I'm looking for improvements of a more basic sort, too—more generous return policies, wider size ranges and unique products that speak to greater brand diversity.

“The modus operandi stays the same. The customer is still number one,” says Evans-Lee. With the volume turned down, I hope retailers are listening.

There was a time in my life, not too long ago, when I had a standing monthly appointment for a Brazilian. Every four weeks, I'd lie bottomless and terrified, waiting for the waxer to rip the hair off my nether region. Then I'd fork over \$50.

The place was around the corner from my apartment and the lady was chatty and kind of quirky, qualities that provided a welcome distraction from the pain. Once, she told me about a retreat she'd gone to to learn how to communicate with farm animals. “You can even talk to chickens,” she told me, before proceeding to pluck me like one.

Her anecdotes were amusing, but the rest of the experience was not. Having to pull on various bits of flesh while chit-chatting about the weather (or livestock) felt like something out of a Samuel Beckett play. And the pain! Submitting myself to torture month after month, all in the name of “grooming,” just started to seem ludicrous. Why was I even doing this?

I mean, I *knew* why. When I was coming of age in the early aughts, bushes, both pubic and presidential, weren't getting much love. Blame it on the ultra low waists of the era or the exploding popularity of online porn, but having hair down there was largely seen as unsightly and unsanitary. A study from *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* found that most guys from



A longtime waxing devotee gives up the Brazilian and goes *au naturel*

my generation (60 per cent) preferred a hair-free sexual partner. And it wasn't just men. I distinctly remember a scene from the first *Sex and the City* movie in which Samantha chastises Miranda for not having waxed. “I could be on death row and not have that ‘situation,’” she tells her.

It's that kind of thinking that would cause me to feel embarrassed between waxes. I tried shaving, but the aftermath was a nightmare of ingrowns and prickly stubble. Eventually, I just grew tired of being ashamed of my body. “That's it,” I told myself. “I'm letting it grow.”

The decision was life-changing. At last, I was liberated from all the appointments and the pain—even the shame was gone. Because much to my surprise, I felt sexy.

Really sexy. Like a Helmut Newton photograph. Maybe part of it was the thrill of doing something “forbidden,” but mostly I was on a “I am woman, hear me roar” kind of high. I even ordered Emma Watson's favourite pubic hair oil to keep my budding bush soft and nourished. It felt good doing something nice for it for a change.

I've never looked back. I have a little trimmer I use to avoid spilling out of bathing suits, but I haven't seen my waxer in more than two years. I hope she's on a farm somewhere conversing with cows and that we're both living our best lives. —As told to The Kit

The way forward

Continued from cover

“
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could work, especially in the fashion industry,
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”

In the past months I've been scrolling through pictures on Instagram of so many Indigenous women expertly hand-tanning hides remotely. I'm also working remotely, using this time to focus on building the future of the now postponed Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto, where I'm the founding artistic director. The news keeps referring to this distancing as the “new normal,” a shortsighted description for the global changes we are experiencing. In the world of fashion, what is “normal” or “business as usual” was invented in 14th-century western Europe by aristocrats and monarchies to preserve status and a class system. That same imperial system colonized Indigenous people and exploited our “normal.” What is thought of as “normal” or “business as usual” was never normal for me in the first place.

When colonizers came to what is now called Canada, to live and prosper, they traded with expert hide and fur tanners: Indigenous women. The Hudson's Bay Company saw the value of the hides and began to expand and profit from what they perceived to be their newfound riches. Without forming meaningful relationships with the many hundreds of Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, and facing harsh weather conditions, it was difficult for the company to succeed or even survive.

It was because of a Dene woman named Thanadelthur that HBC was able to sustain its mission. Thanadelthur was trilingual, knew the land and her people, and she shared that knowledge with the English traders. The written account of her life is one-sided, and, bafflingly, her beauty, highly regarded, is documented as an asset for the English mission. As historian Sylvia Van Kirk wrote in 2017, “Apart from being ‘a handsome young woman,’ Thanadelthur possessed a forceful and intelligent character—a combination which captured the interest of the doughty old governor of York Factory, James Knight.”

To me, this portrayal greatly undermines and dismisses the skill and teachings she brought to the English camp as a leader and guide. That was in the 1700s. HBC's mission to exploit the fur trade for itself grew until the fur trade and the company no longer included us, Indigenous women.

Centuries later, Indigenous leadership is still dismissed in the fashion industry. At major fashion weeks in Canada and around the world, one designer, at most, has been Indigenous. Less than 1 per cent of the brands available at major retailers in Canada like

Hudson's Bay and Holt Renfrew are Indigenous-owned. As non-Indigenous designers continue to profit from the misappropriation of our culture, systemic barriers (like accessing certain kinds of loans if an individual lives on-reserve) prevent Indigenous designers from growth. Despite these realities, our communities continue to create spaces and opportunities for each other, from Indigenous Fashion Weeks to entrepreneurial accelerator programs and a thriving trade and online economy.

Our work continues as the capitalist fashion system is crumbling under the COVID-19 pandemic and fumbling with solidarity statements to stay relevant amidst global anti-racist protests. This is a wake-up call.

The other day I participated in a consultation group for the revival and rebuild of an equitable economy, post-COVID. In this consultation, Kerry Swanson (Cree, Irish, French), a fellow participant and role model of mine and co-founder of Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto, said, “More equity equals more innovation.” That is to say, the colonial systems we are operating under no longer serve our society, and the only way we will evolve is by allowing new and interconnected systems to come to the fore. In order for the industry to keep innovating and surviving, we must look to the existing systems from diverse communities that offer a different view of what's normal.

When I think about how this new normal could work, especially in the fashion industry, I look to my matriarchs and ancestors who have been respectfully innovating rich ideas and materials within a system of reciprocal values and gratitude since time immemorial. How can the fashion industry be a part of this? First, build solid, long-term relationships with Indigenous leaders and research our fashion. Then, make a commitment to increase Indigenous representation at fashion events and panels. Retail buyers must be willing to change their practices by buying smaller quantities from more designers and accept that buying from local brands will come with a higher upfront wholesale cost. Most importantly, the industry needs to get involved with the initiatives already led by Indigenous people.

I envision the future of fashion with Indigenous creatives and creators at the helm of leading more informed understandings of fashion, culture and industry—like Rosary Spence, Kerry Swanson and the legacy of Thanadelthur.

Sage Paul, photographed in Toronto by Justin Aranha. Paul wears her own clothes, including trousers from Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto's recent collaboration with Simons. The trousers feature artwork by Caroline Monnet, a French-Algonquin artist and filmmaker.



Meet fashion’s most exciting new player

Christian Allaire is a new kind of *Vogue* editor. Kelly Boutsalis talks to the Canadian bringing Indigenous voices to the forefront



Christian Allaire is rewriting the rules of fashion journalism. Allaire, who is Ojibway, is the fashion and style writer at *Vogue*. When his first Indigenous-focused fashion article for the venerable fashion title, “How 6 Indigenous Designers Are Using Fashion to Reclaim Their Culture” went live, Indigenous people sent him a more than a hundred tweets, DMs and comments.

“It opened the floodgates. I started receiving a ton of pitches and started being introduced to so many great new artists and designers,” says the writer by phone, from his parents’ home in Nipissing, Ont., where he’s riding out COVID-19. “Indigenous designers don’t get the same coverage as others, so once we saw that it resonated, and there was talent out there to write about, I just really ran with it, which is a dream.”

Speaking about fashion, Allaire is simultaneously funny and serious, admitting that he thought he’d be in Ontario for a weekend and only packed two wild printed shirts and jeans. Three months later, “This is not the look,” he jokes.

Allaire can trace his love of fashion to cultural events and powwows he attended on his home community of Nipissing First Nation in Ontario. Years later, ignited by beautiful regalia at powwows, he decided to pursue a career in fashion journalism.

“I knew that it was a very competitive field and what sets me apart from the thousand other fashion writers out there [is that] I come from a culture that

I have always been driven and always took internships whenever I could, started writing for free, networked my ass off. But every job I have gotten has also been thanks to the relationships I built and just good timing in general,” says the 28-year-old.

The *Vogue* gig has brought Allaire to the Met Gala twice, and he made sure to wear an Indigenous-made piece at the huge fashion event, a custom-made red beaded flower pin by Toronto-based Skye Paul of Running Fox Beads, for the 2019 theme of Camp. “It would be campy for me to wear something very traditional, which was beadwork in my eyes, in a new fun way, so I paired it with a frilly shirt and sequinned boots.”

Allaire jokingly likens picking his favourite designers to that of “picking a favourite child.” Still, his eye for beautiful work and understanding of the culture has brought incredible designers like Jamie Okuma, Warren Steven Scott, Keri Ataumbi, Liandra Swim and Tania Larsson into the fashion conversation. Although it has long upheld Western-centric notions of fashion, a name like *Vogue* still carries the kind of mainstream legitimacy that money can’t buy and can bring invaluable awareness to designers.

Allaire has recently covered Indigenous designers from South Africa and Australia, as the publication broadens its coverage of brands outside of North America. “It’s American *Vogue*, and we will obviously spotlight Amer-

“I write about authentic design and what that means today. A lot of people think it’s an old, traditional, bygone craft, but there’s still designers doing it today”

really is not respected in the fashion industry and their designs are often appropriated or copied without any recognition,” he says. “I write about authentic design and what that means today. A lot of people think it’s an old, traditional, bygone craft, but there’s still designers doing it today. I knew from day one that’s what I was going to do.”

At Ryerson University in Toronto, Allaire was determined to get his fashionable feet in the door and aggressively pursued internships, completing several stints at *Flare* and *Interview* magazines, with the latter bringing him to New York City, his new home.

After covering New York and Milan fashion weeks and interviewing Christian Louboutin for *Footwear News*, Allaire went freelance in 2017. Soon after, an opportunity opened on *Vogue*’s production team during fashion month. The month-long gig involved tasks like building online galleries for runway shows. The next fashion season, he returned to do it again.

“I just sort of stuck around,” he recalls, beginning with working for the site as a contract writer before transitioning to a full-time employee for the digital arm of *Vogue* last summer. His first print piece, on Choctaw artist Jeffrey Gibson, appeared in the May 2020 issue. He captioned his Instagram post on the achievement as “Baby’s first print story!”

“I think I’ve gotten to where I am based on two things: hard work and luck.

ican designers, but I think people are interested in hearing about brands from countries that they don’t live in. Shopping is not focused on where you live but on your emotional ties to a designer’s story.”

Sharing those stories will be something he’ll continue to do. “Indigenous brands seem like such a small market, but I literally can’t keep up.” In May, Allaire included 15 Indigenous designers in a story on sustainable fashion. One of those designers was Tania Larsson, a Gwich’in fine jewellery designer from Yellowknife. “He is a person who is changing our history,” Larsson says by phone “He’s impacting us in such a huge way, and I know that it’s going to ripple through ages.”

The writer, meanwhile, often underestimates the profound effect his stories have but does admit to frequently hearing about the significance of his stories from the people he covers and readers, alike. “I want to give a platform for the voices who haven’t really been heard. There’s always a new brand, and that’s inspiring because it means that someone can feel more confident than ever to pursue fashion design and find resources.”

For Larsson, Allaire’s work goes beyond fashion. “It’s like sharing our culture, which for the longest time has been under attack.” With Allaire on *Vogue*’s masthead, representation of Indigenous designers can finally turn a new page.

Indigenous fashion designers to know



EVAN DUCHARME
Métis artist Evan Ducharme’s designs pay tribute to his cultural heritage while carving out a contemporary Indigenous identity. One standout is his custom-made “Census Print,” which reimagines a 1916 Canadian census document containing his maternal great-grandfather James Lavallée’s “French” origin scratched out and replaced with “Indian.” This powerful statement is translated onto skirts, bomber jackets and bags.



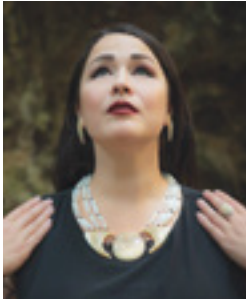
WARREN STEVEN SCOTT
A member of the Nlaka’pamux Nation, Warren Steven Scott left horticultural studies to pursue fashion at Ryerson University. The designer has gained a loyal following for his sculptural and bold acrylic earrings and has collaborated with handbag brand Opelle and retailer Simons. Scott aims to bridge Western notions of luxury with his “ancestral worldview on ethics, craft, and aesthetic sensibility.”



CATHERINE BLACKBURN
English River First Nation award-winning multidisciplinary artist and jeweller Catherine Blackburn is interested in creating new interpretations of Dene art and engaging with Canada’s colonial past. Her earrings and bolo ties feature dynamic colour combinations and intricate leather and beadwork. Her work has been showcased throughout North America, including the Art Gallery of Mississauga.



LESLEY HAMPTON
Lesley Hampton started her fashion brand when she was 22 and still in fashion school, but her talent and eye for stunning clothing that pays homage to her Anishinaabe and Mohawk heritage quickly made her a famous name. Her designs have walked the red carpet of the Golden Globes and are a frequent fixture on Canada’s party circuit—but something tells us that the designer is only getting started.



TANIA LARSSON
Tania Larsson designs and creates Gwich’in fine jewellery in her studio in Yellowknife. Larsson sources her materials, like muskox horn and animal hides (which she tans herself), from nature and travels the world in search of rare vintage and antique beads. She describes her jewellery as something that “transcends time and culture.” She’s also one of the founding members of Dene Nahjo, an Indigenous innovation collective.



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