

Title: Talking Sustainable Fashion with VAED Founder Veronica Arroyo

Topic: Fashion

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Cover Photo:



Image Courtesy: [Instagram](#)

Veronica Arroyo, a 21-year-old fashion designer from Miami, wants to create a new normal for the fashion industry: sustainable, zero-waste, custom clothing. As a Puerto Rican native, Arroyo grew up on an organic farm, allowing her to become familiar with eco-friendly businesses firsthand. Now, after spending time at Columbia College Chicago and the Miami Fashion Institute, she has decided to combine her passion for the environment with her love for design through her sustainable fashion company, [VAED](#).

“It’s pronounced vah-ehd,” Arroyo said when asked about the company’s name. “It stands for Veronica Arroyo Environmental Designs.” The term ‘environmental’ barely scratches the surface when it comes to the care Arroyo takes to ensure her company has the smallest carbon footprint possible.

“Everything is made to order,” Arroyo explained. “It’s so that I don’t produce any more waste, and that I can make pieces custom to your size.” Arroyo customizes her pieces to limit the number of returns she receives – something that she claims to be one of the most prominent perpetrators of waste and pollution in the fashion industry.

“People don’t realize that half the time, almost all the time, companies do not resell returned items. They just burn them,” said Arroyo. “They don’t have the time to look at what could be wrong or repackage it.”

To create her pieces, she sources her materials through thrift shopping and purchasing discontinued (“deadstock”) fabric. What makes her sustainable approach even better is VAED's use of fabric scraps as filling for pillows. Arroyo also takes care with her plastic-free packaging, using water-based tape and creating tags out of recycled cardboard.

“I make my own paper, too. It’s literally the longest process of my life!” Arroyo says with a laugh.



Image Courtesy: Veronica Arroyo

In a way, Arroyo always knew she would start her own company. She began sewing garments at only thirteen years old and began to show her work at fashion shows a short three years later.

“I always had, like, my own brand,” Arroyo said with a smile. “I’d always keep trying to have, like, a business, but it’d always fail because I never really knew what I was doing.”

Arroyo explained that although she had years of sewing practice under her belt, she remained unsure of what kind of designer she aspired to be. Then, during the years she spent attending Columbia College Chicago, she watched the documentary, *True Cost*, on Netflix.

“It shows you the whole behind-the-scenes of the fashion industry, like how polluting and terrible it is,” she said, emphasizing her initial shock. Despite shopping fast fashion brands her entire life, she never realized the impact those organizations were having on the destruction of the environment.

“I was just not aware of how terrible the industry was,” Arroyo remarked. Her decision to end her contribution to the wasteful tendencies of the fashion industry inspired her to do good by our planet. Arroyo had discovered her calling: sustainable, slow fashion.



Image Courtesy: Veronica Arroyo

She describes her brand as free-spirited and bohemian, and she enjoys mixing “very colorful prints, but with an edgy look.” Additionally, Arroyo is her own personal stylist, photographer, and website and social media director, including both [Instagram](#), and [TikTok](#).

Despite the effort put into each garment, from sourcing the materials to packaging the final product, Arroyo ensures that her prices stay low. She wants customers to feel good when shopping at VAED, knowing they are receiving a quality product with a low environmental impact at a great price. However, nothing she has done has happened overnight, and it has been a constant learning process.

“It’s definitely developed over time, like with new things that I keep learning on how I can be better, so I’m sure it’s gonna keep changing,” she explained. “Everyone has to keep growing, we’re not gonna stay the same.”



Image Courtesy: Veronica Arroyo

Although VAED just launched in July, Arroyo is already planning for the future. Eventually, she wishes to grow her business to include more employees, but she still wants to keep it small. She would love to collaborate with artisans around the world, providing work to people in less affluent nations and using natural textiles.

“I don’t want to become a huge brand that’s gonna be whipping out a bunch of stuff all the time, that completely defeats the purpose of being sustainable,” Arroyo explained. “I’ll always keep it very unique and custom so that nothing gets wasted.”

Head to vaedva.com to check out Veronica Arroyo’s latest work.

Strike Out,

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