

JUNE 2016



Models in items from the latest collection and (inset) Peggy Sue Deaven-Smitnieks

Farm to closet

Toronto Fashion Incubator's hottest new designer, Peggy Sue, on launching her line

Peggy Sue Deaven-Smitnieks received Toronto Fashion Incubator's New Labels Award last month for her innovative fashion collection that focuses on using fibres that are sourced, milled and manufactured locally.

When did you become interested in fashion design?

Growing up in Los Angeles, I was exposed to the film industry and costume design. I worked and interned at costume shops and companies and realized I wanted to make clothing that was worn every day and that made the everyday woman feel special and unique in her life.

Were you always focused on farm-fibre fashion?

Absolutely not. In fact, because I graduated during the lowest part of the recession, I began working in large, big-box fashion, which was not socially or environmentally conscious at all. Then I developed relationships with farmers from local farmers' markets in New York and saw how their lives were enhanced by local purchases and realized how supporting local has incredible effects on the economy.

What was it like winning the New Labels Award?

I blubbered like a happy exhilarated baby down the entire catwalk. That win wasn't just about the money or even the win as a designer personally. It was also about the fashion industry and its incredible gatekeepers validating my company's attempt and intentions of supporting the local fibre and fabric economy.

What's next for you?

Materials development for our next fall/winter collection as well as our first spring/summer collection. We have to take what we showed we could do with one-of-a-kind textiles, natural colours and custom yarns and do the same thing for spring/summer.

Where do you go shopping in Toronto?

I buy a great deal of second-hand clothing through Queen Street's vintage shops such as 96 Tears, In Vintage We Trust and Frou Frou. I believe in purchasing new items through investment pieces, which are higher priced, and then getting the other items second-hand so as to help with all the garment waste going on these days.