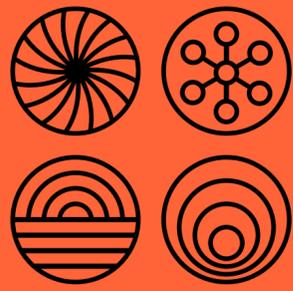


# FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

CASE STUDY:  
PHOEBE ENGLISH



Image: Phoebe English



CASE STUDY

# PHOEBE ENGLISH

Founder/Owner Phoebe English  
Type Designer fashion label  
Sector Womenswear/Menswear  
Established 2011  
Location London  
Size Micro  
Website [phoebeenglish.com](http://phoebeenglish.com)

"It is about bringing the craft of making back into design."

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"There's always been this overarching push to expand and get bigger and get better and have more money. Everyone has always been like: you should be making it in Portugal or Turkey, and you can make profit. It's been very hard just to be actually a Made in England brand."

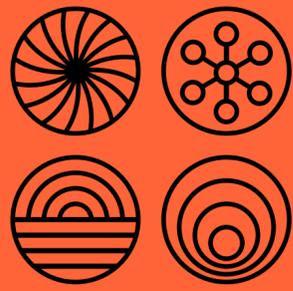
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"What we're trying to do is use design as a vehicle to amend or alleviate some of the problems the systems within the industry are putting into place."

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PHOEBE ENGLISH





## CASE STUDY: PHOEBE ENGLISH

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Preserving what is already here and designing into what already exists (e.g. her 'Nothing New' collection).

Gathering and sharing information about fashion's damaging practices.

Ensuring control over design and production process to 'know' the impacts of her work.

Staying local and resisting the push towards getting bigger, stretching supply chains which, in turn, results in a loss of control and transparency.

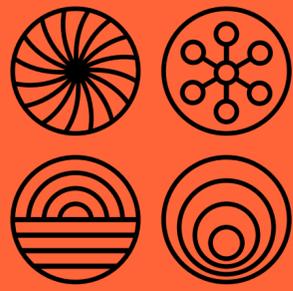
Focussing inwards; refining elements, stopping doing certain things and using certain materials.

Proactively educating herself and her team.

Connecting and building relationships of trust and understanding that can scale up sustainable practices and positive impact.



Image: Phoebe English



OVERVIEW



Phoebe English is a designer of skills-led, often hand-crafted, carefully considered clothes. She works from a design studio in London, where she draws, sources, makes, co-ordinates and distributes collections directly or via wholesale. Her team consists of full-time, part-time and freelance members, who play an important role in a business that is as much about making relationships as it is about making clothes.

Trained as a designer and showing both off and on schedule at London Fashion Week, Phoebe's practice is much more than designing collections. A significant part of her work focusses on being a sustainable fashion advocate, through sharing knowledge and making connections between the roots of fashion: materials that come from the earth and shapes formed by skilled hands. Developing an understanding of fashion's relationship to nature and acute awareness of the Climate Emergency have led Phoebe to design with an 'emergency mindset'.

Phoebe English's ethics of care is realised both in products and across the business. Her pieces are designed as seasonless, genderless, timeless and to a certain extent technology-less. She sees her work as a reaction to what is going on elsewhere in fashion, and offers an inspiration and encouragement to a range of aspiring and established designers.

Phoebe English takes a culturally engaged approach to design and business, developing a model that

extends who and what fashion represents in terms of people, craft, and artistic and aesthetic practice. She describes sustainability as 'design with good intention'. This also led Phoebe to join forces with designers Bethany Williams and Holly Fulton to set up the Emergency Designer Network, making and delivering NHS scrubs, alongside dealing with all the challenges relating to the wholesale side of her own collection.

Phoebe English is a prime example of a transformative fashion designer who seeks to change the fashion industry from the inside out, through her subtle, committed and effective activism that is visible across all her work.

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"I think success is what I have now. It's not something that I'm still looking for. I have a lovely team, I have a lovely studio, I am making things that I really like, and I'm doing it with the processes that I believe in. So that feels pretty successful to me. I don't feel like it's something that is far away."

PHOEBE ENGLISH

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With special thanks to the many Fostering Sustainable Practices project partners, participants and Advisory Board members.

Design by: Studio LP

The Fostering Sustainable Practices project investigates creative practices in design-led fashion micro and small enterprises (MSEs) as an evidence base for change towards a more sustainable fashion industry. Project findings are underpinned by two-and-a half years of work with more than forty fashion MSEs, who demonstrate sustainable prosperity in and through Fashion.

This collaborative research is led by Centre for Sustainable Fashion, a University of the Arts London research centre, based at London College of Fashion. Project partners are based at London College of Fashion, The Open University and Middlesex University's Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research (CEEDR; a partner in Surrey University's Centre for Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity).

Fostering Sustainable Practices is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

