

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kering leads the pack on creating sustainable eyewear materials

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Kering is working with a biotechnology company to create a fully biodegradable plastic. Image credit: Kering

By DANNY PARISI

As the luxury industry at large becomes more environmentally friendly, brands will move toward the use of sustainable materials to manufacture goods.

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One sector where this is particularly notable is eyewear. Brands such as Kering Eyewear, which makes the frames for brands such as Gucci, Bottega Veneta and Saint Laurent, have begun using new materials to make products more sustainable to produce.

"We chose to develop this project with INCICO, as it will enable us to comply with the schedule we set and launch the industrial production anticipated by the entire cosmetics industry," said Marco Astorri, chairman and CEO of **Bio-on**, which is collaborating with Kering Eyewear. "This plant is strategic for us because it allows us to determine new standards for biopolymers for cosmetics and to continue our intellectual property business model through licensing.

"This is why we want the best professionals by our side."

Sustainable materials

Kering is one of the biggest proponents of sustainability and reducing emissions in the luxury world. Through its large stable of brands, Kering has made it clear that sustainability at all levels is a priority.

The latest iteration of this plan is a partnership with Bio-on, a sustainable materials company, to create a new type of plastic for manufacturing eyeglasses.

This partnership is part of Kering Eyewear, the company's newly minted eyewear subsidiary.

Bio-on will be working to create a new material based on Minerv PHA, a fully biodegradable type of plastic.

Plastic, at the cost of its cheapness and ease of production, is incredibly wasteful and hard to get rid of. Plastics fill the ocean and take hundreds of years on average to naturally degrade.



Kering has made renewable materials a main focus. Image credit: Kering

This leads to huge masses of leftover plastic that sit in the environment and create waste.

With Bio-on, Kering is hoping to create a new type of plastic that, when it is no longer needed, can be safely and responsibly discarded with minimal impact on the environment.

PHA bioplastics, like the kind Bio-on is working to create with Kering, are made with plant sources, which are renewable, as opposed to petrochemicals, which, as fossil fuels, are not.

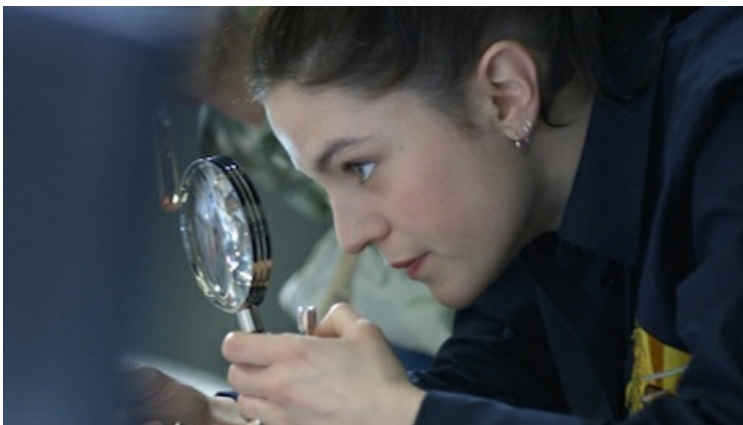
This means that not only will the plastics degrade faster and easier, but that they can be produced without depleting the limited store of natural resources available on the planet.

Environmentally focused

Kering has been focusing on creating and developing new sustainable materials in a number of other projects, most notably its Plug and Play accelerator.

Kering has announced that the success of its inaugural batch of startups for the "Plug and Play - Fashion for Good" accelerator has led to a second edition.

To fast-track sustainable innovations in the luxury and apparel industries, Kering announced its support of the Plug and Play - Fashion for Good accelerator, a collaboration between Fashion for Good and the C&A Foundation. Plug and Play is a global innovation platform that supports and accelerates the development of startups in the retail and fashion sector with a focus on creating new materials ([see story](#)).



Kering and Bio-on are creating a PHA bioplastic. Image credit: Kering

Other brands in the eyewear industry have taken the approach of "upcycling" existing goods into materials for eyewear.

For example, Scotch whisky distiller Glenmorangie upcycled materials for a sunglasses collection last year.

The distiller has teamed with handmade sunglass brand Finlay & Co. to create shades made from repurposed oak cask barrels Glenmorangie has used for its scotches. Since each oak cask has a unique wood grain pattern, each pair of Finlay & Co. sunglasses will be distinct, a bespoke quality likely of interest for discerning scotch drinkers ([see story](#)).

These projects show that the luxury industry as a whole, and particularly the eyewear sector, is thinking about

materials as a foundation to building a more sustainable production line.

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