

JEWELRY

How technology can make diamonds more sustainable

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Image credit: Courbet

By SARAH RAMIREZ

With the diamond industry continuing to trend towards sustainability, technology and innovation will play a key role in the sector.

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During a session at Luxury Briefing and the British School of Fashion's [Technology in Luxury 2021 virtual conference](#) on Sept. 22, diamond experts discussed changes in the movement away from natural, mined diamonds. From lab-grown jewels to carbon capture technology, younger consumers are gravitating towards more sustainable options.

"I think most of the large brands are having a pretty reactive, rather than proactive, way of following this [sustainable diamond movement], so they will not move until they see that their customers are changing," said Marie-Ann Wachtmeister, cofounder and creative director at [Courbet](#), Paris.

"I think most are investing in laboratory grown brands that are coming on the market, which is very much driven by a technological shift," she said.

The conversation was moderated by Diana Verde Nieto, cofounder and CEO at [Positive Luxury](#).

Diamonds are forever?

As Ms. Nieto explained, there are three different types of diamonds: natural diamonds, lab-grown diamonds and sky diamonds.

Founded by Dale Vince, [Sky Diamond](#) is a carbon-negative diamond company that creates the gemstones using wind, sun, rain and carbon dioxide.



Sky Diamonds are described as "cloud-sourced" diamonds. Image credit: Sky Diamond

"Obviously the most permanent form of carbon that we all know about is diamond," Mr. Vince said. "I thought right then that it would be amazing to be able to bridge between those things: take carbon out of the atmosphere and turn it into a diamond."

Sky Diamond has involved a seven-year research and development process. After three years of creating stones, the company is preparing to go to market.

While Sky Diamonds are not as significant a method for carbon capture as originally envisioned, the process remains a way to significantly reduce diamonds' environmental impact.

Innovations such as Sky Diamonds and lab-grown diamonds such as those that are sold by French ecological jeweler Courbet particularly resonate with younger consumers in the post-pandemic climate.

One of the challenges facing both Sky Diamonds and Courbet is governments in key markets, including France, require diamonds which are not mined are not labeled as "diamonds" and instead must be categorized as synthetic or similarly.

"We shouldn't create this stigma around this kind of diamond they are all diamonds," Mr. Vince said.

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