

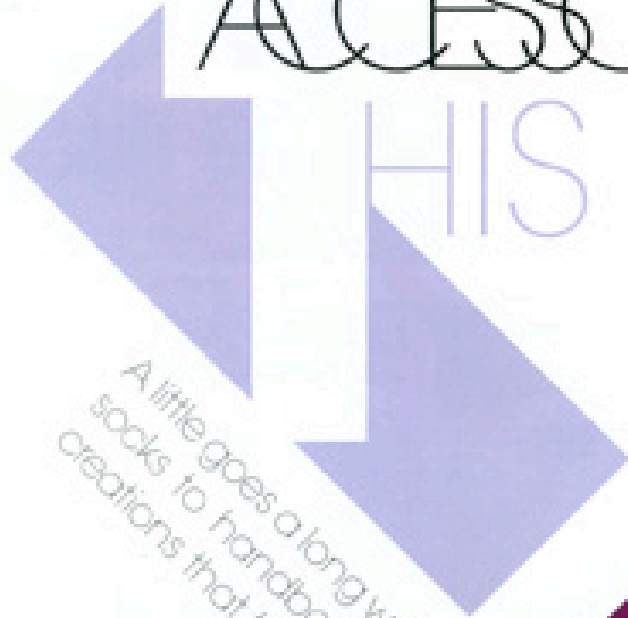


dear

habitat

ACCESSORIZE

HIS



A little goes a long way when it comes to accenting fashion. From socks to handbags to jewelry, meet three designers and their creations that take mere accessorizing to the subtle extreme.





A FOREST

Plucked from the Portuguese project, A Forest, these snappy socks come in five different themes: silent snow, autumn leaves, cherry blossoms, volcanoes, and green forest. Hip with the traditional dance and theater crowd in Japan you can wear these around the house, or grandpa-style with sandals. A Forest's goal is to communicate their ideas through art, design and fashion by organizing events and collaborating with other artists or companies in conceiving everything from tricotets to sweaters (personally started by A Forest) But don't toil around waiting for your next personal appearance check to buy a pair of these. They're part of a limited edition of 100 which are available for only three months. Who said fashion week was only twice a year?

MAXINE ORANGE

The concept of wearable art has been debated in the fashion world since Warhol's silk-screened soup can dresses. Maxine Orange, however, makes it perfectly clear that the two worlds can mix splendidly. Her namesake handbag collections are individual works of art. Each one is hand-painted on canvas and influenced by life's little imperfections. A native of Alabama, with a background in graphic design and print production, Maxine creates designs that reflect the woman behind the art. Her energetic swirls and playful use of color were a hit in Manhattan. However, California soon called her name, and is now where she devotes all of her time to her art and handbags.

HOUSE OF WARIS

Only in the new millennium would you find a Sikh actor (Waris), working with an American designer (Benjamin Choi), producing jewelry in Italy, to sell on the Internet (YOOX.com). Also, the plot thickens. The jewelry design titled Decomposition of the Flesh. Not the Soul would give any nationality a good spook. The collection is a macabre mix of cufflinks shaped of teeth and skulls, a shell necklace with a secret hidden pearl and the one-of-kind signature piece, The Hand, an expertly crafted choker that could fit divinely into the pumice of the bride of Frankenstein. While in Italy, filming The Life Aquatic, Waris discovered a small workshop of artisans that would make his unique design philosophy a reality. Acting as a curator and co-designer, each season Waris selects a special someone from the world of art, fashion, style and design to create an experiential line. This season's choice was the rising star of 7th Avenue, Benjamin Choi, who has developed a reputation for his daring creativity and staunchly original view on clothes. The collection is available online throughout the spring season with another designer collaboration expected to follow. "I work with other artists, architects and designers whose work I love. It opens up a whole new world for us," says Waris.

— cator sparks