



Few fashion designers forage around their backyard for traces of metal or pick up fallen leaves from their nature strip to use in their creations.

But for East Geelong textile designer Keran Jarecki, it's all just part of the process.

"I go and pick the plants and scavenge through the garage for metals, and dye all of the pieces by hand," says the creator of local label Goomo Cloth.

"Lots of nails," Jarecki says, pointing to one of her best selling pieces – hand-dyed long socks – where, sure enough, little imprints of metal flecks make up the pattern.

Although she enjoys this unique, time-honoured process, there's also an important purpose behind it.

"I'm not easily coping with the globalisation of the world," Jarecki admits. "Sustainability is a huge underpinning of my business and the core of that is always natural dyeing."

FASHION \ A LOCAL LABEL DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM THE COLOURS OF NATURE, WRITES ANNA KOSMANOVSKI

Working from her home studio, Jarecki makes all Goomo Cloth garments herself, hand dyeing materials such as silks, linens and merino wool.

Earthy colours and natural influence reign supreme in these unique pieces. Oh, and those little patterns that look a lot like leaves – that's exactly what they are.

While others see fallen foliage, Jarecki sees potential.

"The beautiful Japanese maple tree out the front is a huge source," she says. "I use it extensively in all my pieces."

Eucalyptus and prunus leaves are other sources, but the possibilities are endless for the "printing" process Jarecki uses.

"A lot of people would be familiar with natural dyeing in terms of making a 'stew' out of certain things such as cochineal or marigolds," she says, "but this is actually the contact between the leaf and the fabric ... so, the colour's actually coming directly out of the leaf, into the fabric."

Looking both comfortable and stylish in her own creations – a pair of loose-fitting linen trousers and one of her newest lines, a linen-knit "Flossie" top – Jarecki describes the ethos that drives Goomo Cloth.

"The important thing for me is that things are Australian made," she says. "I use as many Australian fabrics as I can get – when I can get them."

"So many of my customers buy from me because this is something they believe in too."

"Obviously they like my things, that's their first attraction, and then when they 'get' the whole Goomo thing ... that's why I do what I do."

And there's a lot of customers who "get" it, with



her pieces fast becoming favourites for those heading overseas to face European winters.

"The socks and the mittens and the scarves," she says. "Every single time I go to a market, people buy them to take them overseas."

Growing up, her mother was a professional dressmaker, so the creative designer received a grounding in fashion and textiles from an early age. She worked in the fashion industry before starting Goomo Cloth 17 years ago.

As well as her one-off, hand-dyed pieces, Jarecki releases a seasonal range of women's pieces – such as her linen pants and tops – that come in limited ranges.

Like many local makers, going to market is an

To market:
Keran Jarecki
with the
caravan that
acts as her
change room.
(MICHELLE
KELCEY)

integral part of her business and she values the opportunity to meet her customers and receive invaluable feedback.

"I think that is the nicest thing about what I do, because I actually see the customers in the clothes ... and I get an idea of what style looks good, what looks bad, what kind of shapes look good on," she says.

"I've got the choice, as the season goes along, to change the styles depending on what is selling well and what suits the people that are buying things as well."

Jarecki is a market regular, appearing both locally (Piccadilly Market, Queenscliff Community Market, Nightjar Festival, etc) and throughout Victoria.

Fitting to her sustainability ethos, part of her Goomo Cloth set up includes a refurbished, 1960s caravan repurposed as a change room.

Her designs are attracting attention from abroad, too.

"Every time I look at my blog site, there's a map to track who's looking from around the world," Jarecki says, "and [viewers are] coming in from everywhere."

Although some Goomo Cloth pieces can be found locally at the National Wool Museum Shop, she's looking forward to expanding her presence by launching her online store later this year.

"I think I'll start putting up a few things and see how it goes ... scarves, mittens and socks."

» goomocloth.wordpress.com