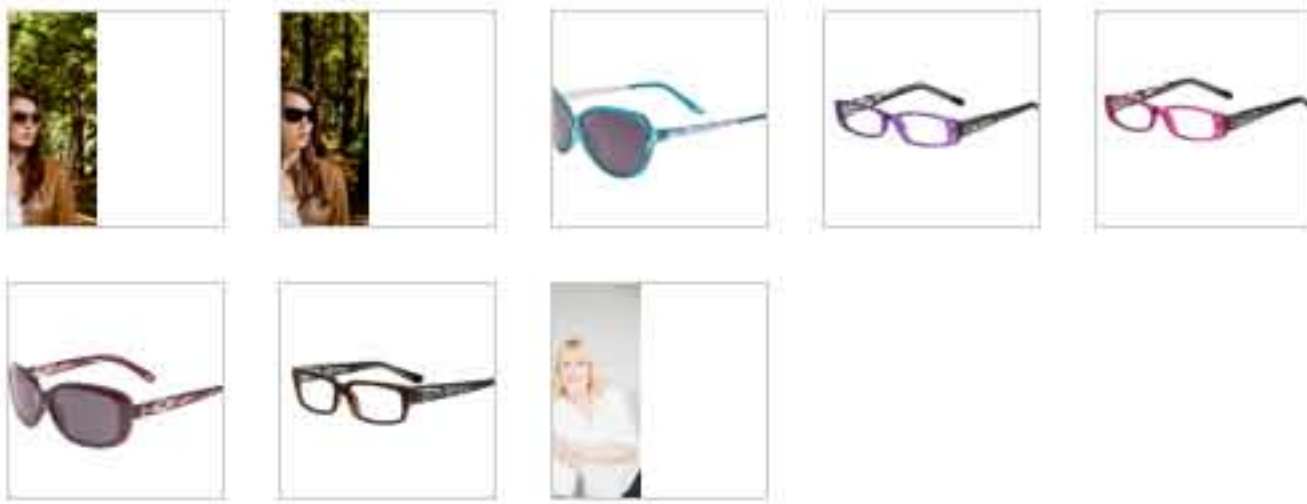


Block 'em Out!

by Sofroina Timmons
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I get a kick out of throwing shade wherever I go. My swag is complete with a large pair of dark sunglasses but lately I'm loving **AYA** contemporary vintage sunglasses in neutral and bright colors with funky indigenous art inscriptions. **Aya's eco chic collection uses recyclable eco-friendly materials such as buffalo horn and bamboo to create sophisticated eyewear for every occasion.** Each piece is designed with colorful metals, sophisticated patterns and luxurious acetates that emphasize top quality UV/UVA lenses that are light weight and easy to wear.

I rock out my AYA vintage 50s mixed eyewear with my modern retro fashion during the week and on the weekends I go for a throwback 80s vibe, an edgy fashion and bold chunky jewelry. You've probably noticed this brand at tourist attractions - fine Art galleries, Smithsonian Museum in Washington and New York and Optical stores nationwide. See more styles and designs online at ClaudiaAlanstore.com.

How and why did AYA Collection start and who started it?

My company Claudia Alan was launched in 2003. I had the opportunity to take some time off and reflect on what I really wanted to do. I had loved what I had been doing in my career path, marketing and designing eyewear, but I wanted to take it to the next level. I wanted to take more risks creatively, and give back to charity. So I created our company, with a mission to "create beautiful products that make a difference". And that is what we have done thus far my line of eyewear has raised \$75,000 for ONEXONE's First Nations Nutritious Breakfast Program. The idea for our AYA collection featuring First Nations art was my brainchild and conceived at that point in time, but not launched until 2007. I grew up in Sydney and Vancouver where indigenous art is prized and I thought it could be a great combination to bring eyewear and native art together into a beautiful offering.

What was the inspiration for your newest ECO CHIC collection?

Our most recent ECO CHIC collection was inspired by the luxurious and eco friendly materials, buffalo horn and bamboo. They come together in a harmonious and chic way that our customers love. Each pair is one of a kind due to the nature of the materials.

What does "AYA" mean?

The word 'AYA' has several beautiful meanings in a variety of languages that resonated with me. Exist, Colorful, Beautiful, Loved, Wisdom, Miracle, and Sign.

How do you remain competitive in this market?

Always trying something different so you really aren't competing with the rest and continually striving to do it better.

Consumers have been frugal about shopping decisions lately, what is your company doing in light of this?

Creating pieces that were so unique they couldn't help but attract attention at the same time keeping prices within reach of most consumers.

Where can AYA Collection be purchased and at what price points?

Claudia Alan Glasses range from \$35- \$329 and are available at fine Art Galleries, Museums like the Smithsonian in Washington and New York, Optical stores and online at www.claudiaalanstore.com.

What's next for AYA Collection?

Mixing materials and textures in eyewear is another trend and we are going to be pushing the boundaries here and trying different techniques to our wood templated glasses. One of a kind and limited edition pieces are also something we are going to further explore with one of a kind art applied to our glasses in the form of painting and other mediums. The vintage rectangular shape has been very strong the past few years but the extremely round silhouette is starting to push its way into the marketplace, definitely something to watch for. Changes in the bridge line in glasses are showing now too. For some time a very straight bridge has been in vogue but we are now seeing more dips and angles and some interesting brow detail. Colorful metals combined with luxurious acetates in semi rimless and full rim frames...



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