

## [Katharine E Hamnett](#)

Up until today Katharine Hamnett hasn't succeeded yet in persuading her licenses to produce in an ethical and environmental friendly way. She cancelled many of her licenses and is now back to manufacturing herself. In 1989 she discovered that the consequences of the cotton industry are unacceptable and mortal. The amount of deaths per annum from accidental pesticide poisoning of 10000 people has increased to 20000 per annum in 2008. 1000000 people a year die because of unprotected use of pesticides. Additional consequences are numerous. Some consequences are made clear in the following reports;

["The impact of cotton on fresh water resources and ecosystems."1999](#)

["The impacts of pesticides on children's mental health and development."2003](#)

The world market price of cotton is very low and so are the incomes of the cotton farmers.

[Katharine Hamnet visited cotton farmers in Mali, click here to see the movie.](#)

[Organic cotton](#) has a lot of advantages. However it doesn't seem to be sexy to be [green](#). Katharine Hamnett proves otherwise. Her shirts with bold texts are very popular. Especially her Clean Up Or Die shirt from 1989 and her Save The Future shirt from 2006.



Young designers are beginning to understand the power of ethical and environmental friendly clothing. [Esthetica](#) is an example of an agency that demands responsibility of her labels. Katharine E Hamnett is one of their Labels. Even the [C&A](#) and [H&M](#) have an organic cotton programme. The Dutch company [Kuyichi](#) produces clothes made out of organic fibre. [Elsewear](#) represents clothing factories from various countries, that work with organic cotton. The Dutch agency Elsewear can connect you to the factory that makes your design into an organic cotton garment. [lcco](#) supports sustainable cotton farming projects and connects them to European clothing/textile companies that are willing to invest in sustainability. This is very good for the cotton farmers because farmers who grow organic cotton receive a premium on the market price. The yields per hectare are lower, but the profit per hectare is higher.

Amanda Guinness, Class E Basic year.

Katharine Hamnett has a lot of political statements and she communicates these statements often by printing them on shirts. You heard about her while we were at platform 21. Her vision on the cotton industry fascinated me the most because it's so much connected to her own profession. She is terminally frustrated at the industry's refusal to even attempt to do things ethically and environmentally. She cancelled many of her licenses and is now manufacturing by herself. She is selling her Katharine E Hamnet line from her own international online store. E stands for Ethically and Environmentally.

Normal cotton is mortal for the farmers and the environment. Organic cotton makes a 15% increase of income for the farmers and doesn't damage the environment. Looking at all the interviews, articles, and movies I found, I started to wonder why so little people know what organic cotton is and why so many companies just don't care about cotton farmers. The cotton industry is so big and yet people on the street have no clue what organic cotton is if you ask them. Of course, in such a superficial meeting as trading, the contact is not intense enough to make the factories second-guess their responsibility.

It's very hard to care about the other when you don't know the other. On one hand that makes me think that people are rather stiff in their interaction and in their empathy. On the other hand it offers opportunities to get to know the other more. Some western people succeeded in that. Like Katharine Hamnett. Somehow she was more involved to begin with. She really took the effort to understand the cotton farmers and then she started to feel empathy and she started to see their working conditions. You and I probably don't feel this empathy as strongly, even though we try to in a passive way. It's said that a person can only feel empathy for 60 people, not more. That's why I still wear clothes made out of normal cotton. Why I just change the channel when I see people who are less fortunate in their wealth or health.

Since I discovered that tampons still contain dangerous pesticides as well I really started to feel angry about this, and that was when I didn't know anything about Katharine Hamnett. Is that what it takes to open people's eyes? Telling western women that they are poisoned by cotton as well only slower than those cotton farmers? I hope not. That's why I'm happy that I dived into Katharine Hamnett's statements about the cotton industry, if it wasn't for her hard work then I would still think that it's not that bad. -einde presentatie-