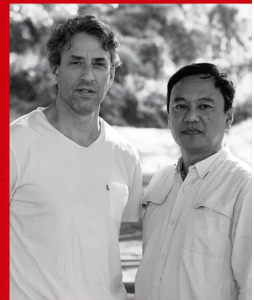
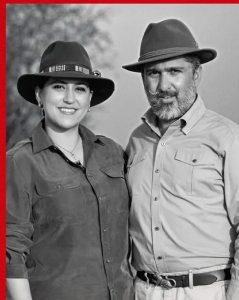
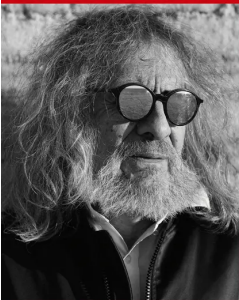


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One Year On: Catching up with the 2020 LEICA & Anantara Changing Your Mind Award Winners

Ahead of the 2021 awards, *Vanity Fair* catches up
with last year's winners.

FEBRUARY 26, 2021





journey. A picture. A moment. Open your mind to have it changed: herein lies a new way of exploring the world. These individuals do things differently.

Remember when you had your last slightly madcap idea and nobody supported you, but you did it anyway? That's their M.O. They're infinitely imaginative, mind-bogglingly original and endearingly unaware of their courage. Here is the 2020 line-up: of dreamers, but also doers.



CAT GARCIA

Step by Step: Gastón Ugalde

Provocative. Passionate. Political. Born in La Paz, this contemporary artist and activist has a deep connection to his homeland of Bolivia. “The mountains, the desert, this is where my art began,” he says. “I’ve been walking around my incredible country for 40 years, from the Andes to the Amazonian jungles.” Gastón works in performance, painting, sculpture, land art and photography, yet whatever his medium, his subject is his beloved country and its complexities. “Bolivia is unique in the Americas because 60 per cent of our population is indigenous,” he says. “That is

what really influences me: our everyday life, farming practices, family rituals and cosmological visions of the universe.” It’s a Bolivia most tourists don’t even glimpse. His art includes a series of collages made from the coca leaf, and patchworks of Inca and Aymara blankets stitched together. But he may be best known for his installations in the Salar de Uyuni (the world’s largest salt flats), such as a stairway of salt blocks leading to nothing. To showcase the region further, he has recently begun guiding visitors into Uyuni, exploring and explaining the landscape to them. “I really feel like [my guests] become part of the artwork, that they’re not just observers but performers,” he says. “And if people are interested in my art, they are interested in my country.”

2021 Update:

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A year ago, I travelled from La Paz to London to receive the *Vanity Fair Changing Your Mind* award. I arrived the night before the ceremony, which took place at the Kimpton Fitzroy hotel, and was pleased to see many people at the event that I hadn’t seen in years, as well as to meet other award winners and the *Vanity Fair* team.

I flew back to Mexico City the following day to resume my show at the ZONAMACO Art Week. Over the following four days of the fair, the only thing I talked about to friends, artists, gallerists, collectors and attendees was my crazy transatlantic journey to receive the award, which I was so honoured to take home. I received so many messages of congratulations and, of course, there were many people who couldn’t believe that I flew to London for just one night; it still feels unreal but it was very much part of my old normal.

These were some of my most exciting moments of 2020, before the pandemic unfolded and I had to rush back to Bolivia and suspend all my art ventures around the world. The new situation forced me to reorganise all my plans and made me focus

on rediscovering my own country. As such, I found myself returning to trekking and climbing the Andes, seeing them with different eyes, photographing them. I also chose to travel to other remote places I hadn't visited in years, such as the forests of the Yungas and journeying by river to Madidi National Park in the upper Amazon river basin.

Then I took a break in my hometown, La Paz, which had turned into a ghost town, completely empty and silent. I spent a month rediscovering my city on foot and photographing it. Then I continued my journey to Bolivia's lower valleys, home to the undiscovered wine region of Bolivia—Camargo, Valle de los Cinti—which is full of history and incredible landscapes. I'm still on the move now, currently in the Salar de Uyuni, after fully recovering from Covid (which I've had twice). I'm looking forward to a great 2021.

CAT GARCIA

Green Light: Antje von Dewitz

In a world where outdoor blurs with high design, street fashion and mountain sport, VAUDE is standing out as the manufacturer of sustainable wear, changing our minds on what to buy and what to wear on our travels. An entrepreneur to the bone, Antje took over the family business 10 years ago and pledged that VAUDE would become Europe's most sustainable outfitter. "I want to use my position to change behaviour, to engage myself in a world worth living in," she says. The company, based in

Tettnang, Germany, introduced a seal of sustainability, Green Shape, and a collection made of bio-based, recycled and natural materials. Last year, the German government, hand in hand with VAUDE, came up with a seal for German consumers. “We’re dragging other brands up with us, trying to raise consciousness,” Antje says. There is a specific VAUDE eBay site where consumers can resell used products. They also work with iFixit, an online repair platform, to extend product life. At their upcycling workshop, they reuse material remnants. Since 2012, the company has been climate neutral at their headquarters and the goal is to extend that worldwide. “Within five years, all our products will be made of recycled or natural-based materials,” Antje says, including jackets from castor oil beans and fleeces from wood fibre. “At the beginning, sustainability was a drag on innovation, but now it’s become a driver.”

2021 Update:

Last year, we got off to an excellent start. After many years of hard work, we had clearly succeeded in creating international recognition for our sustainable commitment and products; for us, the *Vanity Fair Changing Your Mind* award ceremony in London was a summation of that. But about a month later, the consequences of the pandemic hit us hard: store closures and curfews in many European countries caused our sales to plummet dramatically. We even had an acute Covid outbreak at our own manufacturing facility in Tettnang, Germany, so we suspended production completely for 14 days to help limit the number of infections.

Despite the uncertain situation, we remained optimistic, expecting “only” a 10 per cent loss in sales. Unlike many brands in the outdoor and textile industry, we continued to invest in our collection and innovation; we lessened the workload of only about a third of our employees; we did not halt production of any of our lines; and we remained in close contact with our retailers. We found individual, partnership-based solutions to adjust both the payment for and delivery of our products, in response to the dynamic situation.

Around 200 employees, or 40 per cent of our workforce, shifted to working from home. Thanks to our long-standing focus on trust, good cooperation and an optimal work-life balance, we were prepared for a change such as this; our strong values were already in place and had been tested out for many years. In order to keep in touch

with all our employees, whether in part-time work or working full-time remotely, we established the “VAUDE Campfire”, a digital video blog accessible from anywhere, on which we report how we are doing almost daily. Personally, it was great to see how the whole team stood together in solidarity, how many ideas and initiatives were sparked to get through the crisis together. That gave me a lot of support and strength.

We have actually finished the year in a much better position than we had planned before the crisis. One reason is that a real outdoor and biking boom has taken place. People everywhere are heading out into nature and discovering new outdoor opportunities for themselves. At the same time, the crisis has also increased awareness among a great many people about their own consumption, interrogating themselves about what kind of world they want to live in. Sustainable products and trustworthy brands are in demand more than ever before. That has helped VAUDE a lot.

CAT GARCIA

Flock Together: Rune Hørslev-Petersen

When Rune opened his first ad agency, it had a very distinctive USP: an understanding of the youth market. “I was an expert in the young because I was young,” he says. “To get PR, I said that everybody would be fired at the age of 29. I’d have to fire myself eventually, too.” Based in Copenhagen, Denmark, he is not a typical ad man. “I can’t remember making anything that people would recognise as