Fashion Values Challenge

Information for Applicants

Centre for Sustainable Fashion
How can Fashion value Nature?

The Fashion Values Challenge is a global call-out for transformational ideas. We are looking for innovations in products, services and systems across the fields of design, media and/or technology, that will enable the fashion industry to move from the Age of Extraction to an Age of Regeneration.

Fashion Values is an educational programme ideated and developed by Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF), UAL, in partnership with Kering, IBM and Vogue Business. It aims to enable the next generation of fashion designers, strategists and communicators to create sustainably; to empower imagination, innovation and consciousness through sustainability leadership; and to make education and learning globally informed, interdisciplinary and accessible.
Nature is the life force that provides us with the air, water, soil and other life forms that make up the elements that come together in the garments in which each one of us is clad.

The relationship between fashion and Nature is dependent on how these elements are valued in emotional, cultural, political, social and economic as well as aesthetic and technical terms.

A group of fashion and Nature advocates from diverse disciplinary, locational, professional and personal perspectives came together at a Roundtable event in January 2021 to define what Living Nature needs from fashion. The result – this brief – asks change-makers from all over the world to respond to industry challenges that, if answered, would be instrumental in restoring Nature through fashion.

We invite you to share your responses to the question:

“How can Fashion value Nature?”

This brief calls for applicants to demonstrate that their idea will help to shift the fashion industry towards a more sustainable future: one that restores Nature rather than extracts from it. Reacting to biodiversity loss and the climate crisis, we ask applicants to consider how fashion can become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. We are searching for compassionate, hopeful, connective, pivotal, empathetic and holistic ideas.

The Challenge brief is open category: we are seeking transformational ideas applied to the fields of design (p. 7), media (p. 9), and technology (p. 11). Applicants may propose an idea that focuses on one discipline, or includes multiple disciplines.

“You need to take the role of someone else and really try to describe what the expectations would be of the fashion industry from that role... what, for instance, a tree, or an ecosystem would need vis-à-vis you as a strategist?” — Eduardo Escobedo, Responsible Ecosystem Sourcing Platform
Design Focus

Brief focus: Design

Fashion products, services and systems that change the way we design, create, make, produce, wear, use or dispose of clothing. We are looking for creative approaches to restoring Nature through design. Submissions could include, but are not limited to:

- New knowledge and understanding applied to fashion design for sustainability
- Ways to map, understand or analyse fashion’s impact on Nature from a 360° business perspective
- Innovative partnerships or collaborations (especially with fields outside of fashion) to create change
- Ways to build long-lasting and emotional relationships with our clothes
- Nature-centric design and product development
- Nature-centric materials, textiles production or processing techniques
- Alternative models for craft, making and manufacturing
- Application of traditional, regional or indigenous knowledge of fashion design and sustainability
- New business models or offering fashion as a service
- Ways to use or restore waste

“This idea of what success is and looks like is very different for young designers nowadays. Whereas back in the day it might have been about working for a big brand, now a lot of designers are more attuned to how can they come up with solutions, and really address the climate crisis.”
— Emily Chan, Vogue Global Network

“We don’t have really a carbon budget left, we cannot take any new resources from this planet, we cannot kill any more animals for our handbags.” – Bel Jacobs, Extinction Rebellion

“Our fashion systems are not inspired by Nature, but the designs of the products or clothing are always inspired by Nature.” – Abhinov Asokan, MA Fashion Futures graduate
Media Focus

Brief focus: Media

Fashion media products, services and systems that create a positive narrative for sustainability and explore new ways of engaging with fashion. We are looking for creative approaches to restoring Nature through communications. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Nature-centric approaches to media (for example through image-making*, journalism, writing, brand communications, social media etc).
- Ways to make fashion sustainability accessible, engaging and understandable
- Ways to challenge colonial or normative fashion narratives
- Ways to challenge consumerist cultures and encourage sustainable engagement with fashion
- Ways to connect people emotionally, empathetically or viscerally with fashion & Nature
- Ways to effectively communicate complex sustainability topics or to raise collective awareness
- Ways to effectively communicate biodiversity and climate emergency priorities and actions
- Ways to harness social media and other person-to-person media platforms

*Including photography, moving image, styling, art direction, illustration, etc.

“How we educate and communicate, and the inspiration that Nature has for people, is one of the elements that makes fashion sector’s movement towards Nature-positivity... really powerful”
— Jennifer Whitty, Parsons New School for Design

“Let’s collaborate and create imagery that communicates the actual urgency of and the reality of the climate emergency to consumers, and communicates really clearly fashion’s role in this and how fashion could play a part in transforming this.” — Alice Wilby, Extinction Rebellion

“Acknowledging these tried and true realities is important, no matter what it is. And I do think that we get persuaded and sold beautiful stories by every corner of the industry.”
— Claire Bergkamp, Textile Exchange
Technology Focus

Brief focus: Technology

Fashion technology products, services and systems that enable innovation in the ways we produce, use and engage with fashion. We are looking for creative approaches to restoring Nature through technology. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Ways to measure, track, critically analyse, understand and/or report on fashion’s impact on Nature
- Applications of innovative technologies, sciences and tools to fashion and sustainability
- Application of traditional knowledge and tools to fashion and sustainability
- Ways to embed Nature into the development and application of fashion technology
- Nature-centric approaches to the production, consumption and cycling of fashion products
- Decentralised, open-source, crowd-sourced or peer-to-peer technology practices applied to fashion and sustainability
- Digital or immaterial fashion practices

“It’s got to be… not just collaboration, but partnership with the science community as we figure out the methodologies and tools that can support that, and the evidence base to protect Nature and the climate.” — Catherine Bottrill, Pilio

“…Understand where we are now in terms of what our status quo, why sustainability isn’t as accelerated as it should be, and then ask the question: how do we break that status quo using your innovative thinking, creative tools?”

— Dian Jen Lin, Post Carbon Lab
Applying Design Thinking

The Challenge brief is an opportunity to apply the learnings from Fashion Values: Nature, CSF’s four-week online course enabling learners to understand biodiversity in the context of fashion and create a plan for fashion that protects our earth’s systems. One of the key frameworks included in the course is design thinking: ways to think critically in order to apply a concept to a feasible outcome.

Design thinking is not limited to ‘fashion design’: it can be applied across all parts of the fashion system, from business to technology to communications.

Step 1. Empathise
Time to listen, learn and reflect. Draw on the resources shared and undertake an exercise to empathise with Nature.

Step 2. Define
Focusing on a provocation and what you have learned so far, you will define and personalise the task you wish to explore.

Step 3. Ideate
Time to kickstart your creative thinking and come up with ideas and concepts to respond to your task. Your responses will not be limited in focus, scale or audience. They might be new fashion products, systems or services. They may relate to design, communication or business skills. You will be encouraged to think radically and expansively to imagine new approaches and practices. Then, through a review process, you will narrow down your ideas to just one for further exploration.

Step 4. Prototype
By prototyping your idea you will bring it to life, enabling you to test it. This will show you how to make adjustments and improvements to your concept that could bring it closer to a reality. Here you will also consider next steps for communicating your vision to enable a change in practice or thinking.

Throughout the process, you will develop your own agency, and understand how to act on your knowledge, experiences and ideas to enable action.

The Challenge welcomes responses that have followed this framework to develop their idea ready for application.
Judging Criteria

The Challenge brief is open to professionals, students and design enthusiasts around the world. Applicants must be aged 18 years or over. Group applications are accepted.

The following judging criteria will be used to select the ten finalists and two winning ideas:

**Relevance**
- The ability to engage with, analyse, research and respond to the Challenge key question.
- A clear demonstration of how the idea will benefit its users / audiences / stakeholders.
- A clear understanding of the Fashion Values online resources.

**Originality**
- The ability to conceive and develop original ideas in response to the brief.
- A creative approach to sustainability from the perspective of fashion design, media and/or technology.

**Feasibility**
- Demonstration of design thinking: applying a concept through to a feasible outcome.
- Demonstration of the feasibility of the idea: how it would be brought to life, what stakeholders would be involved, and how it will enable change for the industry.
- Clear communication of the idea.

**Sustainability impact and thinking**
- A holistic understanding of fashion and sustainability across ecological, economic, cultural and social perspectives.
- Demonstration of the sustainability impact of the idea: how it will change fashion’s relationship with Nature.

The Fashion Values programme provides tools and resources for innovators to develop change-making ideas. We ask that you use these to catalyse a new idea, or refine an existing one. Demonstrating alignment with the Fashion Values tools in your application will give you a competitive advantage.

Submission Requirements

Participants to the Challenge must submit the following. See the Challenge webpage for further details.

**About you**
1. Personal details
2. Short applicant bio (up to 150 words)
3. Your personal profile. Please include:
   - Your reasons for applying
   - Your relevant interests and experience
   - Whether you are a student or professional
4. Education background

**About your project**
5. Title of your project
6. Description of the idea (up to 100 words)
   A quick introduction to your idea, and why it will help fashion to value Nature. Please note this section may be used for publication purposes should your idea be shortlisted.
7. A detailed description of your idea (up to 500 words) Please include:
   - How your idea will impact Nature
   - The relevant field(s) for your idea (Design, Media and/or Technology)
   - The relevant audience, users or stakeholders for your idea – who will benefit from it? How will it change how they engage with fashion?
8. Project stage: Concept stage; sketch; ready to prototype; working prototype; other.

**Further attachments**
9. Visualization of the idea (minimum 2, maximum 6 images; up to 1 video)
   Visuals (images and/or video) of your idea, such as diagrams, mock-ups, or photographs of prototype / proof of concept of the idea, if applicable.
10. Personal motivation (text, video or audio, up to 250 words or 1-2 mins)
    A quick overview of your personal motivation in applying to the Challenge. Please include:
    - What sustainability means to you
    - What you want to change about fashion
    - How you will benefit from the award
Fashion Values

Join us

In partnership with Kering, IBM and Vogue Business

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