

Drawing Lines of Care: Fieldnotes	
Critiquing the Present	
Centre for Sustainable Fashion	April 2026

I Stood Up in Ahmedabad, Being Human in Chrisp St, I stood up in the House of Lords – a CSF first – we took our irons and ironing boards in and challenged MPs to get involved, which some did.
(2015-2018)

How to be a COPTimist...with Julie's Bicycle and signatures from Yoko Ono, David Bowie, Katharine Hamnett, Vivienne Westwood.
(2016)

Fixing Fashion. Speaking truth to power, holding feet to the fire.
(2016-2018)

Clothes Well Lived. A co-creation between CSF & H&M with student work in the windows of high streets across the UK.
(2015)

Taking I Stood Up to first time voters to encourage them to use their right, articulated through t-shirts and on voting forms.
(2015)

2016-2017

Jogging with Anna and Nina.
(2017)

Stella McCartney at The Kering Talk. Addressing the issues of deforestation and sustainable sourcing.
(2016)

Concern and Care

2015-2016

Inequalities and Intersections

Bright New Things. Fashioning a brighter future with Selfridges, showcasing talent. 'We can all be the catalyst for changing how our clothes are made.'
(2016)

Rokia Traore wearing Dress for Our Time at Glastonbury on the Pyramid Stage. Rokia said, 'I stand with refugees, will you stand with me?' We woke to Brexit news. What a place to be when that landed.
(2017)

The Craft of Use transformed soulless space into conversation, sound and action.
(2014-2016)

Launch of Art for the Environment Residency Programme (AER). Inviting our first postgraduate students to pause, reflect and activate change within a residency context where they are encouraged to experiment and exchange with peers and other professionals.
(2015)

Knowledges and Kinships

Nursing and Nature

Welcome friends, partners, associates, colleagues, and other fellow travellers. We are delighted to share Drawing Lines of Care Fieldnotes with you, compiled from valued contributions spanning multiple geographic locations, academic and other disciplines, beliefs, knowledges, and understandings.

Centre for Sustainable Fashion has been exchanging fieldnotes, through field days since 2012, gathering observations, samples, experiments, stories, and wisdoms from near and far. Fieldnotes can help us in navigating the tensions between the real, the possible and where hope lies.

These notes are intended to be read as evidence that gives meaning and aids in personal and collective understanding. They can help sense the insensible, mark the indeterminate and deepen connections between human and more than human beings. In 2026, as the world changes and the centre changes, the map really does not describe the territory.

We invite you to get lost and found in these notes as part of making sense of souls, soils and societies.

Song of Silence

Bewildered and lost
High pitched
Warm
Tingling
Echoes of sadness
Met with quiet hope
Remembering the joy
Or, the audacious naivety
Brings humanity

Be true and you, my friend
See the potential
Deeply, feel the dread
Ask why. Again. Ask why.
Hold strong
Flinch, by all means
Unperceptively, be its noise
Outwardly still
Let Nature arrive
Magnanimously
Incoming, all directions.

Feel the whoosh.
Did you let yourself?

Intuition, she dances.
I know, you know.
Patiently. Waiting.
Our sage.
Rising
Blinding
Trust is not enough.
Experience
To a degree.
Courage, more.
Keep going.
Forward.
Fully you.

In fashion we often reach for language to steady ourselves. Words like *sustainability*, *circularity* and *regeneration* promise clarity in a rapidly evolving landscape. They help us coordinate, communicate and advocate, creating the sense that we are moving in the same direction.

And yet, the more these words circulate, the more hollow they can become – like a ball of dough stretched too thin. Terms intended to guide transformation lose their substance as complex ideas are flattened into neat, marketable claims. They are absorbed into deeply rooted structures that continue to incentivise growth and domination at all costs.

This matters because the words we use do more than describe change; they shape our capacity to imagine it. Language influences which futures feel possible and desirable, and which emotions are stirred within us. When sustainability language remains bound to dominant industry logic, it reinforces business-as-usual rather than opening space for more transformative ways of thinking and doing fashion.

This tension invites a deeper question. Not whether sustainability language is useful – but how we relate to it, how we navigate it, and how we apply critical thinking to the values and aspirations that sit beneath the words we encounter. Because language is never neutral, and its meaning is never fixed.

Reflecting on language also requires us to consider where these ideas already exist. Many practices framed as innovative and sustainable today have existed for millennia within different knowledge systems. As First Nations fashion advocate Yatu Widders-Hunt explained in a 2020 *Fashion Journal* article:

“The language and narrative piece is important – we are not inventing something, we are returning to something that has always existed ... For Aboriginal designers, caring for each other and caring for Country are cultural values. Not separate things. It’s embedded in everything we do.”

Acknowledging and learning from these lineages allows us to engage with language in ways that go beyond surface-level adoption.

Amid the noise, I often return to the *Next Gen Assembly 2025 Manifesto* as a reference point for navigating sustainability language without getting trapped in it. Co-created with my fellow cohort members – a diverse group of fashion designers, system thinkers, social entrepreneurs, and storytellers from across the globe – it has served as a kind of “North Star.” The manifesto has expanded our imagination and fostered dialogue across disciplines, geographies, and lived experiences.

Its seven calls – from *recognising nature as a living partner* to *reclaiming the narrative* – offer anchors for evaluating alignment between words, action, and systemic impact. Alongside other resources and critical lines of inquiry and care, it forms part of my toolkit for assessing whether language and practice are truly aligned.

As we continue the shared work of honouring the past, critiquing the present, and imagining otherwise, we must hold language lightly and our values firmly. Staying attentive, critical and reflexive helps us see when language illuminates meaningful change – and when it obscures it.

Language can guide, signal and connect, shaping how we imagine and act. Yet its power ultimately depends on what underpins it: the choices we make, the relationships we nurture, and the systems and structures we collectively build and uphold.

I invite you to reflect on the following:

Are there terms that once resonated with you, but whose meaning or use has shifted?

What language helps you describe the future you are already practising – and opens space for imagination?

What does your critical toolkit consist of, and what helps you distinguish genuinely transformative efforts from those that are business-as-usual by another name?



When we look at the images a culture produces, we can learn a lot about its values. And with this I don't mean its stated values, the mission language or sustainability pledges, but its actual ones. What a culture presents as beautiful tells us something about its view of the world.

Aesthetic choices are always also ethical choices. When fashion media frames the human body as a surface to be perfected, it enacts a theory of what makes a human valuable. When it frames nature as a backdrop, it enacts a theory of the earth as inanimate. When it produces images designed to generate desire for the new, it enacts a particular theory of progress. None of these are just decorative choices. They are storylines about reality, told in the language of images.

The dominant aesthetic of fashion media is, in this sense, a faithful portrait of the system that produces it. Speed, extraction, engineered obsolescence: all of this is visible, if you look attentively. Fashion has always been skilled at producing striking visuals. But the beauty on offer is in service of a particular logic. It seduces us into wanting more and faster, always beyond where we are. There is no care in it. Care requires slowing down, staying with something long enough to actually see it, feel its weight and texture, build a relationship.

To draw a line of care through fashion practice also means asking what it would mean to imagine beauty differently. To transform it from aspiration to attention, as a practice of genuine perception and discernment. When an image is made with attention, something shifts. A person is genuinely seen rather than strategically posed. Materials carry the evidence of their origin, their labour and their place. Nature is not decorative, but is alive and has agency. These differences are not simply aesthetic. They are a set of claims about what the world is and who it belongs to.

This is where aesthetics and ethics become the same thing. Care – for a person, a material or a landscape – leaves traces in the work. It is legible, even when it is not spelled out. And the same is true for its absence: we shape the world through the images that objectify others, through the stories that create desire without accountability, through the publications that claim to stand for values of care that their visual language clearly contradicts.

The dominant system is not only sustained by its supply chains and business models, but by its visual stories – by what it has trained us to find beautiful, to desire, to consider normal. To make images and stories from a different set of values is, of course, not sufficient on its own. But it is not trivial either. It operates at the level of the imagination, which is where the possibility of otherwise begins.

Beauty is a moral and imaginative force. It is the culture, made visible. And it can be made with care.

Facing page:

Photography by Florence de l'Olivier with Yasmin El Yassini and living garment by Beth Williams, originally published in The Lissome, Issue 5.

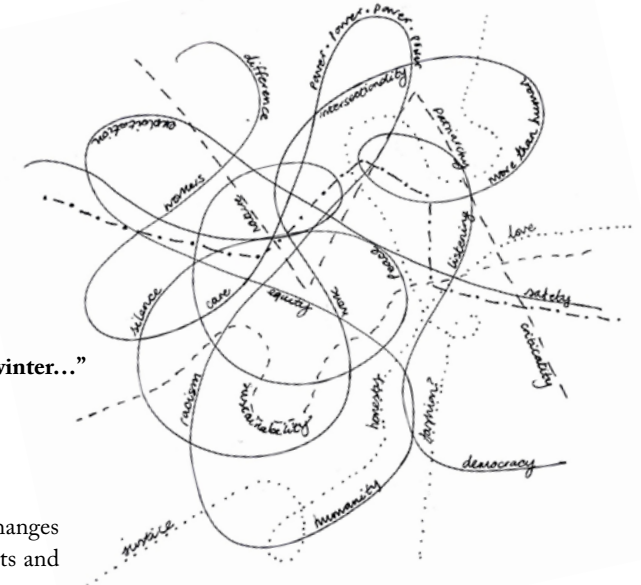




Photo by Fadime Öztürk. A group of garment workers at a garment manufacturing plant.

Workers are not machines or operational resources to be optimised. They are human beings with needs, voices, ideas and realities that matter. Fashion is a labour-intensive industry, and safeguarding its future means seeing workers as people, not data points for resource optimisation.

NOTES: Hakan is a member of CSF Governance for Tomorrow Advisory Board.



“Little darling, it’s been a long, cold, lonely winter...”
(Harrison, 1969)

Now as then. War raged. Technological changes loomed large. Polarisation divided. Protests and solidarities were forged. Resisting. Hoping.

Yet, still the power plays feel heavy. Violent. Dangerous. Unstable. Chaotic. The pendulum swings. Flags flutter. Stories and symbolism. Weaponised nostalgia. Relentless noise. Power again. Who can shout the loudest? Distraction? A dying system, fighting for survival?

But pay attention to the silence. It echoes.

The silence of saying nothing. Turning away?

The silence of the past refusing to be past. The ghosts of unfulfilled histories and lost futures haunting our precarious present (Coverley, 2020). To remember is to (re)connect. To peoples, conversations, ideas. To work that held something open. In the long past or more recent present. Memory as a form of care. To keep alive what is disappeared, disregarded, silenced. Listen. Speak. Shout. Act.

Who maintains what others build upon? Who tends, repairs, sustains?

Precarious life.
Precious life.

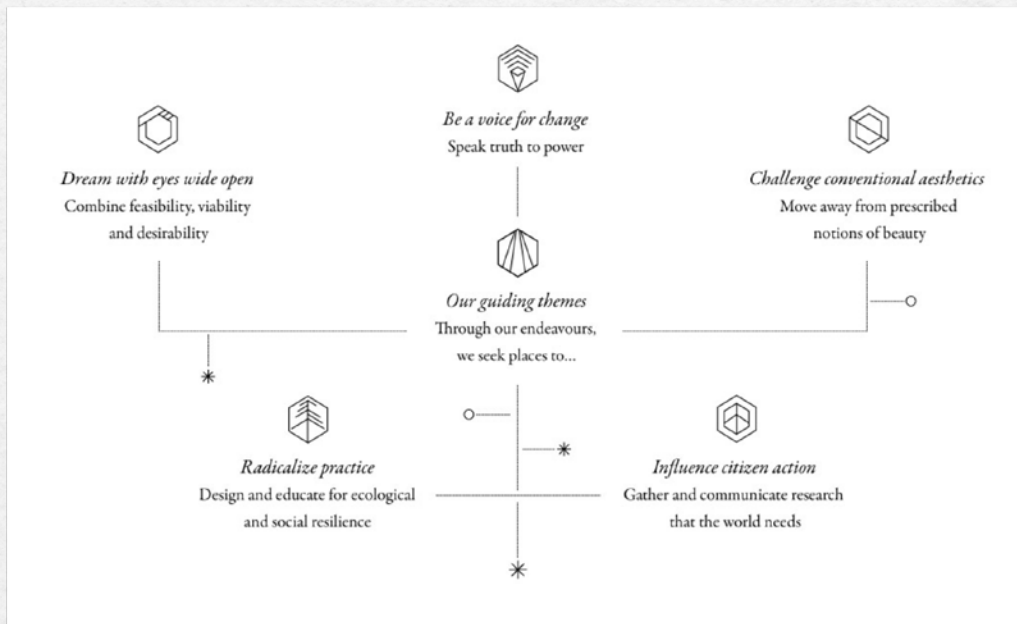
NOTES:

The lines that connect the things I care about and think about a lot, tighten further in their tangled interconnections. Everything is connected.

The structures of exploitation, injustice, and marginalisation, the need for solidarities, empathy, and care, spaces for voices and histories of both people and the more than human world. They tangle with the crisis of narration (Han, 2014), techno feudalism, managerialism, harder work, work harder, flailing attentions, a straining economy; oil, oil, oil, growth, growth, growth.

And fashion sits inside all of this. Clothing as need and desire, as labour and extraction, as connection and politics. The personal and the planetary impossible to separate.

Sometimes I want to straighten out these lines. Untangle them. Order them. But if they are connected then untangling is surely impossible? They are entangled. Within them are places and spaces to work and connect. Resist and reflect. The pull of working in sustainability was the pull of potential. Of the possible. Of the political. So it continues. Connected. Critical. Political.



Lines of care for me at this time are about linking to others who think and vote differently than I do

I find this highly polarized time extremely uncomfortable, dis-couraging and dis-appointing.

There's a prevalent inability to recognize and acknowledge that polarization takes two opposites and that we (on the left) contribute a great deal to this polarization through our gut reactions to the 'other' side ... in our language ... and in our wishes.

I can't tell you how many times I've sat with 'intelligent' people who have wished that the bullet fired at President Trump hadn't missed. But is this the world we want to live in? One in which we simply bump off someone we disagree with?

I'd like to hospice this pattern of thinking.

In sustainable fashion territory, we have used polarization in the past as a tool ... to demonise: farmers for using chemicals, companies for overproduction, wearers for over consumption ... etc.

This has fostered fear and resentment; companies are fearful of stepping into new territories, and are pulling back from talking about sustainability; working class wearers don't want to be told what to do by the (Brahman left) middle class.

Over the past several decades we have learned that improving on product sustainability doesn't work. The myth of efficiency holds true in business models and a global economy dependent upon growth.

I'd like to see care applied to re-building relationships and building trust across sectors, so that critical thinking can be held, leaned into and acted upon.

I imagine researchers, ecologists, new economists, policy makers, CEOs and members of the public working together to enable companies to build new business models focused on ecological and social rejuvenation as a central goal.

Parallel to this, highlighting groups working on completely new models that can example and demonstrate 'ways other' than what we currently have.

So we hospice business based on growth for growth's sake and together imagine a post growth fashion complex that centers social and ecological wellbeing.



[Spinning fashion back to the land]

imagine if we were curious, conscious and connected creators.

~ an invitation to pause, embody and reflect
a somatic experience of cloth

pause. Take a breath. Bring your attention to the clothes you are wearing

notice a piece of cloth against your skin. Feel its weight. Its temperature. Its texture.
Use your fingers to explore it. Is it soft, rough, smooth?

How does it make you feel? Does it evoke any memories?

do you know its origins?

imagine the fibres that make this cloth. Picture the lives they have known; the
plants or animals they came from, the landscapes they grew in

when were these fibres last alive?

perhaps they were once part of a plant reaching towards the sun, or hair from an
animal moving through a landscape, or fibres derived from ancient plant matter
compressed over millennia

imagine you are the fibre. What landscapes surrounded you? What species were
nearby?

what stories, skills, and knowledge did you share with the humans who first worked
with you?

take a breath. Whisper thank you to our interspecies ancestors whose fibres and
knowledge make our clothes possible.

This practice invites us to consider what our clothes might teach us, and to reflect
on the ancestral knowledge embedded within materials we often take for granted

Just spaces^[1] are often circular^[2].

Indigenous, collective, generous sites for listening, activism and hope. Spheres of influence, centring sustainable shifts. These in-the-round spaces, eschew the hard edges of constructed, patriarchal spaces, fashioning urgent interruption, disruption and dissent and crafting developmental, productive moments.

These moments matter.

They nudge, develop and encourage tiny, insurgent transformations. They nurture spheres of exponential change and birth movements.

These moments in turn sustain.

Circles for discernment, centres of cooperation, sparking insight, action and joy.

And what does it *really* mean to hold space? To broach the unspoken, unpick the conjuncture^[3] and embrace complexity? Where, how and who leads this vital work? To declutter the mind of excess alternative waste and facts? How do we keep up the momentum, retain focus, keep well?

Are these the feminist places that Sara speaks of? The kill-joy spaces^[4], vulnerable, exposed, angry and sacrificial? Essential, exacting spaces to commune, commiserate, plot, scheme and exhale.

Marginal, agile. Within and around institutions, underneath, slotted in. We try to hold dear the things that bring us joy. Ping!

Fragile, constructed, minimalist bliss?

When anchoring, rotund spaces for decolonial musings and radical acts disappear we are diminished. Silent springs.^[5]

Lost. Communal sites to live better with the dissonance of these vuca-esque times.^[6]

Lost. Prime locations to challenge the off key and tone deaf with a louding voice^[7] and the hope that one day we will be. In tune.

We guard this with our lives; for the living, for the more-than human and the yet-to-be-born.^[8] We are because they were.^[9]

Loss of these spaces may equal an increase in under-commons^[10] activity. A pleasant equation of more fertile, furtive formations and networked zones of risk, chance and possibility...Newer shoots, sweeter grass^[11]...

Hark, hold on, wait a minute... Toni says^[12],

'Even though the world is bruised and bleeding...chaos can lead us to knowledge—even wisdom. Like art ...'. And of course she is right.

Always.

Just processes pattern our existence and proffer longevity. Curvaceous, familial formations in which we burst. Blossom even.

We flourish in community.

And we nurture, tend and protect these meta-moments for our lives.

NOTES: [1] Just Spaces is a space and workshop developed by Anna Fitzpatrick and Carole Morrison, extending Arao & Clemens framework of safe/brave spaces to develop more just spaces in which to hold each other accountable. [2] See Little Book on Circle Processes by Kay Pranis. [3] See Stuart Hall and Doreen Massey. [4] See Sara Ahmed. [5] See Rachel Carson. [6] VUCA is an acronym; volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity used to convey interconnected-ness in turbulent times.

NOTES: [7] Louding voice is taken from Abi Dare's novel and is used to convey a young, Nigerian girl's demand for education, agency and self-determination. [8] Ubuntu is an African belief-system predating colonialism, erasing divisions between human beings, other beings, and the environment. [9] See A. Sivanandan. [10] See Moten & Harney. [11] See Robin Wall Kimmerer. [12] See Toni Morrison. Carole is a Centre for Sustainable Fashion Associate

First staged in London in 2015 by Renée Cuoco and Anna Fitzpatrick, The Public Living Room was an experiment in what might happen if the cues of home (comfort, familiarity, Ikea furniture) were moved into public space. People stopped for the absurdity, then stayed because it felt recognisable. They lingered, talked to strangers and sometimes did nothing at all.

A decade on, that learning feels more urgent than ever. In an era of digital saturation, shrinking communal areas and divisive politics togetherness is critical. It needs a space, a setting. And that setting needs to be made.

It was vital then. It is vital now.

THE PUBLIC LIVING ROOM

A temporary domestic environment for public use

Facilities include:

- *SEATING
- *SOFT FURNISHINGS
- *TEA
- *INFORMAL CONVERSATION
- *BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH STRANGERS

Various open spaces around London

WEATHER PERMITTING

Dates and times vary

DROP IN IF ENCOUNTERED

NO BOOKING REQUIRED!

NOTES: Renée is a former member of Centre for Sustainable Fashion.

In the current state of our fashion industry, the lines of care have become tangled. The complexity of the fashion ecosystem and vast number of players has woven a complicated web, making this large, linear industry hard to shift at scale. The convoluted web also makes driving sustainability feel complex and overwhelming.

Against this tangled backdrop, my experience has been that we often work in silos. Teams focus on their own roles and objectives within businesses – from the sell-through rate of a merchandising team to the ROAS of a seasonal campaign of a marketing team.

So how do we untangle the lines of care, while collectively finding ways to weave them into a new cloth from which to cut the industry? There are many opportunities and areas on which to work, but here are a few threads to begin with:

KNOWLEDGE & EDUCATION.

How clothes are made and how this process impacts the environment and society, has become a distant idea to many of us, if thought about at all. From what material fabrics are made, nature's role in those raw materials, the human hands that bring garments together, and what happens to them once we throw them away; these essential elements are not just overlooked, they are often not even understood. We need storytelling to weave this information and value into our clothes rather than being assessed on price and convenience. And this knowledge and education is not just for customers, but for all of us working in the industry. How can we expect to rebuild the industry from the inside without this understanding and an open mindset to embrace what we do not yet know?

COMMUNICATION & CONNECTION.

We break down the silos in our businesses and the wider industry by communication and creating connections. Communication requires us to learn to speak one-another's languages, from both business and cultural standpoints. Perhaps most importantly, communication requires us to listen to and hear one-another's perspectives. Understanding our shared objectives, and also where they differ, enables us to develop the soft skills of sustainability connection that can navigate internal politics and find solutions across functions.

PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP.

Senior leadership and the c-suite have such crucial parts to play in driving change as their roles have the overarching picture and set the direction for the business. Leadership and purpose can come from all parts of the business though, and needs to, as pushing from the bottom up or laterally, is just as important. Work in sustainability benefits from understanding the value of all participants in the ecosystem as it needs to be woven into the everyday.

These are a few threads of focus shared in the hope that we can embed, empower, and embrace new lines of care. These threads are ones which being a stewardship board member of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion's Governance for Tomorrow programme brought to life for me. It was a real honour and inspiration to work as part of a group of nine individuals from all different parts of the fashion ecosystem and the world to explore governance frameworks for luxury fashion that embed equity and ecology at the heart of decision-making. I thank the CSF team for the opportunity, and for all of the incredible work the centre has done over the years.

There are many opportunities and areas on which to continue the work. What threads will you weave?

NOTES: Kaye is a former member of CSF Governance for Tomorrow Stewardship Board.



Clockwise from left:
1. Original artefact.
2. and 3. AI generated interpretation of artefact

Much of celebrated contemporary fashion and beauty culture has been shaped by Black British diasporic aesthetics and practices that emerged from communities often under-represented in institutional knowledge systems. In neighbourhoods where cross-diasporic cultural exchange shaped everyday life, many young West Africans growing up in London were influenced by independent Black British youth magazines in the 1980s, alongside Caribbean and African American cultural forms.

Sound system culture, pirate radio, dancehall and, from the mid-1980s onward, hip hop created cultural spaces and visual languages that were never simply about looks or style. Within these communities they functioned as forms of communication, survival and world-making.

Identity moved across different cultural spaces at once. Nigerian culture was the home culture. Caribbean culture was the street culture. American hip hop was the emerging global youth culture. This layered experience produced a distinctive Black British cultural mix. Much of this cultural life, however, was poorly documented or indexed by institutions at the time.

These cultural forms travelled hand to hand, sound to sound, style to style, long before they were acknowledged by fashion institutions, museums or image banks. They were maintained through storytelling, told on vinyl, in social gatherings and in family photo albums. This was care in action: communities keeping their own visual languages alive when institutions either struggled to recognise them or excluded them from their indexes.

Today, new cultural systems are emerging through artificial intelligence. These systems generate images by learning from vast datasets of visual culture. But when culturally specific archives are missing from those datasets, something subtle happens.

The system recognises the form of the image,

but not the cultural context that produced it.

A hairstyle becomes an aesthetic trend.

A visual language becomes a generic “style.”

A cultural history is flattened into an aesthetic moodboard.

This is what I describe as The Index Gap™, the distance between cultural production and its recognition within institutional and technological systems.

The Index Gap™ is not only a technical problem, it’s an ethical one. It exposes where fashion and AI still approach culture as something to extract and remix, rather than something that carries authorship, memory and responsibility.

Care, in this context, cannot stop at preservation or representation. Care requires that the knowledge systems behind cultural practices remain visible, credited and understood as they move across archives, media platforms and emerging technologies.

Care should ask who is named as author, who is credited as creator, who is indexed as source, and who is silently treated as raw material for a sustainability story.

If we accept CSF’s Declaration that “we speak truth to power,” and that fashion’s political, cultural, ecological, economic and social dimensions are interconnected, then cultural recognition is not optional. It is a condition for living well together in an interdependent world.

Without cultural recognition, preservation risks becoming another form of extraction.

As culture now travels from street to archive to dataset to prompt, our lines of care must include new forms of indexing, crediting and consent. To draw lines of care is to insist that when culture moves, its memory, authorship and value move with it.

That is where joyful resistance lives, in refusing to let our visual languages be detached from the people who made them possible.

NAME: Charley Copperthwaite, Anna Fitzpatrick & Hannah Riley

TITLE: A Philosophical Conversation on Education for the Fashion Commons

AFFILIATION: Centre for Sustainable Fashion

Student:

So, what is a commons?

Philosopher:

A commons is something we care for together. Nobody owns it, it belongs to all of us. We sustain it through shared responsibility, shared access and shared imagination.

Student:

Could there be a fashion commons?

Philosopher:

We could say there already is. Commons practices have existed for millennia. Think of how craft is passed down and how techniques are learnt from those before us.

Knowledges and practices are fragmented. They come in many forms.

The question is whether we are ready to name it.

Student:

So, in the commons, there is no such thing as ownership?

Philosopher:

It is more the refusal to believe everything must be owned to have value.

Student:

But it feels like we're taught to compete as individuals before we're taught to collaborate. The current fashion system seems incompatible with what we're imagining here.

Philosopher:

Indeed, and this is not accidental. The structures we learn within have been shaped by a particular economic logic, one built upon colonial paradigms and the illusion of progress accessible only to the few.

Under the dominant economic landscape that shapes the current fashion system, we are discouraged from collaboration and sold the idea that collective working will come at the cost of individual success.

It is precisely this pretence that has fuelled the myth of 'The Tragedy of the Commons' (Hardin, 1968) or the idea that shared resources will inevitably be destroyed by individual self-interest. An argument routinely used to justify continued privatisation and enclosure.

But this was always more ideological than evidential. Practices of commoning have always existed, and instead of dividing communities, they strengthen them.

Student:

So, what would it mean to teach or learn about fashion as a commons?

Philosopher:

It means teaching that knowledge is relational and commoning is about community with others and stewardship of our Earth.

It means that value comes from experiencing rather than having.

It means asking different kinds of questions.

Student:

This feels radical though. What are the ethical implications of preparing students for the commons when the current fashion system appears in direct contrast?

Philosopher:

Perhaps the question is, what are the ethical implications of not preparing students for the commons? It is indeed radical compared to the dominant colonial capitalist economy and system. But we must understand that an idea need not fit comfortably within the structures of its time to be worth pursuing. Indeed, it is often through challenging those structures that real transformation takes place.

The commons requires both the agency to act collectively and the responsibility to steward what we share. It is not passivity but active ethical practice.

It is the possibilities of a more equitable, just and interconnected ecosystem. Fashion has always carried through the practice of commoning. It is knowledge passed between hands, across communities and generations, sustained by ownership but by collective care.

NOTES : _____

It's been 6 months since I departed the UK. I didn't leave London because I hated it, I was just kind of over being stuck in a loop of being a single parent on universal credit. I left because it felt like the right time to take a leap. It made sense.

England is my home, London shaped me as a young adult. My work, my community, the way I think ... All of it grew in London. It's a city where public life is visible. Where politics and culture sit close to the surface. Where you can feel systems operating but also feel collective resistance to them.

Moving to Los Angeles was about financial mobility. Space. A different pace. Perhaps moving into my 4th floor of life (my 40s). The possibility of building something more stable for my family. Some kind of sense of ownership over my life.

Arriving here has complicated that story. The American Dream is persuasive from a distance. Up close, it's harder. I've met people working relentlessly just to stay afloat. People afraid of losing healthcare, housing, status.

There's an undercurrent of fear here that I didn't expect. Not abstract fear but administrative fear. Paperwork. Immigration and precarity.

I am a US citizen. My children are not. Not yet. I took a risk coming here and the reality has shifted something in me. I can live and work here without question. They are waiting for green cards. Once I can afford to pay for them.

It creates a strange imbalance inside our family. Legally I belong. They are provisional. It makes citizenship feel less like a passport and more like a hierarchy.

Politics feel heightened here. More black and white. Borders are not theoretical; they shape daily life for many people here.

Conversations about belonging can be charged. And yet, at the same time, I'm surrounded by extraordinary natural beauty I haven't begun to explore. Mountains behind highways. Palm trees lining urban streets. The pacific stretching far. Landscapes that dwarf this human tension. That contrast stays with me. I have always felt most comfortable in stark contrast.

I came for opportunity. I arrived in some complexity.

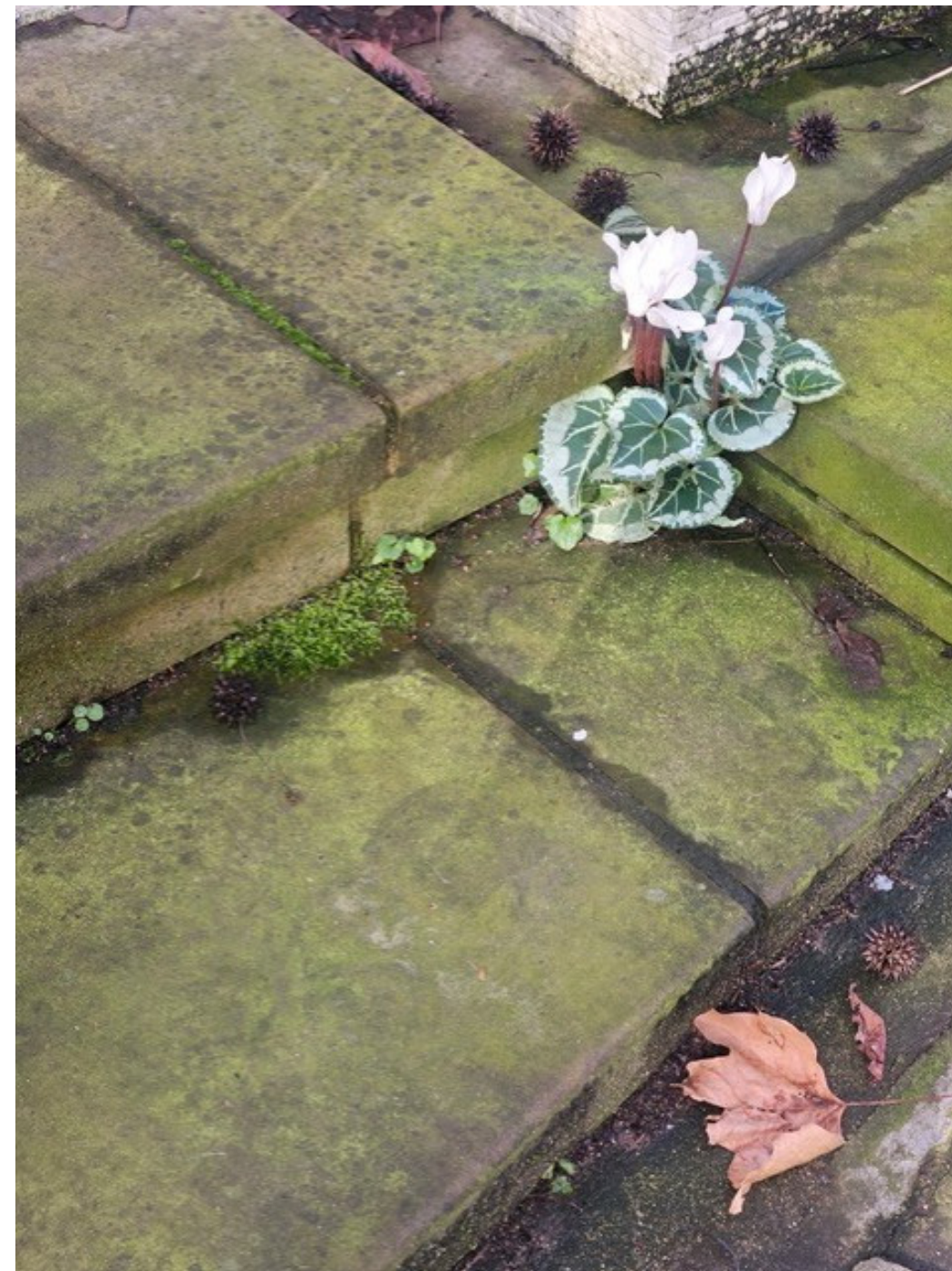
As someone who has worked and practices in sustainability, I can't ignore how mobility works. Who gets to move freely, who waits, who is undocumented and who is protected.

Financially mobility for some often sits alongside extreme vulnerability for others. I feel grateful. I feel unsettled. I feel privileged. I feel complicit. I feel protective. I feel sad. I feel fortunate. I feel love.

Leaving London has clarified what I value. Arriving in Los Angeles has made systems visible in a new way. I'm still adjusting. Still questioning what security actually means.

Maybe this move isn't about chasing a dream. Maybe it's about understanding what stability really costs. Who pays for it. How we pay for it. Processing stability amongst instability.

For now, we're here! Waiting for green cards. Locked in. Learning the landscape. Holding both the fear of return and the possibility of remaining.



NOTES : _____

NOTES : Please see attached a photo of a glorious but modest, little cyclamen that says it all: much is possible even if unexpected, unpredicted, unimaginable even at times. Pioneers inspire, need to be supported and enabled – joined! Like you, your work at the centre, leading the charge, inspire so many of us, thank you for all you did at CSF – and you will do no matter where and when. Much love, stay close!

A half-finished Poem – 'No' 17 times.

This is about a poem – which has just reminded me that it was there; half-lost in the messy, unarchived life-notes; waiting for some heartfulness, attention.

It is telling me that now seems like a good opportunity to bring some of its 'no' energy to the present moment. The main word being – No – which is the poem's (working) title.

"No.

The truest partner, stubbornness.
Perhaps sentinel to Yes *and* No,
Rooted into ground itself as
Breath-burnt care,
Subtle prayer?
No"

It is possible that some poems can only be lived, and that some poems are never to be finished ... Not because the effort to do the work is too difficult. Instead, the neglected poem reminds me how lives are lived in certain ways – when we have absolutely no say in the matter. It pains me to share this half-poem, because I feel vulnerable showing something so unfinished, incomplete. My sole responsibility. I am ashamed to have neglected it, but only when it reappears, sprouting, rooting, no; alive.

If it is not right, for me, to share its fully unformed openness, its undemanding presence means a new crucible, reformed boundaries; are its conditions. Unfinished work is at the threshold between the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' – present – and needs everything but routine.

"Monstrous decay,
Eats the flesh of thought to bone
Apparently alive, apparently not,
No is the worm"

NOTES : _____

The present demands a particular 'No'. Not to stop or to surrender but to cease. Ultimately, we will have to accept our lives unfinished. We bring our unfinished selves to the carnival. And these many frayed edges, on all sides, will allow me to return to writing this poem, when the next opportunity presents itself, just as we find others listen to what we do not yet know we have to say.

"To write within its cursive straights its elementary chemical.
Minus minus does not become a plus.
No is not a commentary on life, pretence that I am I.
Force of love and loss combined. No sees
through shallow presence"

Borrowing from an incomplete poem; that speaks to me now, I'm thinking of the many "Nos" of my children; at 2, at 10, at 16 and at 21; each with a distinctive sound, and resonance, and how we've unlearned to reclaim the word 'no' - one of those few we speak, if it can be called speaking, with all-of-the-body-at-once.

For now, because there will never be another "now" (a sound very similar to "no") these 'extracts' are dedicated to Drawing Lines of Care.

All I had to do was rediscover the voice in which the note was written, consciously plant myself in the earth, and say 'No', with everything I'm for and against, both united in this No - strange wisdom, left unfinished, until now.

"No is not a word
It does not dream; its metal
song unfurls"

Where do we draw the line?

To be human should mean being able to conduct oneself with humanity.

Practicing humanity.

Why make governance, international law if it is to break all convention and think it does not apply to anyone not white, not European, not "western".

Western imperialism crossed the Atlantic only to dumb down and flaunt its inflated ignorance.

"The UN education agency, UNESCO, says that the bombing of a primary school during the US and Israeli military attacks on Iran on Saturday constitutes a grave violation of humanitarian law."

170 young girls killed

Women of Iran, are you liberated?

Mothers, together, mourn

I mourn, mourn the loss of any sense, any instinctive sense of what is right and what should never be enacted.

Persia is not an empty desert

But the Cradle of civilisation

Of painting

Of poetry

Of cuisine

Of woven silk lampas

Of velvets

Of fine patterns

Of Mughal gardens

All originate here

Sustainability has no meaning

When

We destroy

Bombard

Sink

And watch, bystanders to this rape of civilisation

NOTES: _____

The Dyers' Circle CIC, Central St Martins, University of the Arts Lon

The Golestan palace, halls full of patterned marble

Intricate mirrors

Carved ceilings, ornate

Standing for centuries through revolution and modernisation as a witness to skill and invention,

its gardens reflections of Persian cosmology

Shattered.

As is the line, fragmented now,

The textiles are torn

The ink is spilled

The red of madder has become blood, diffused

To leave grey,

The grey of smoke

The grey of dust.

Women of Iran rise up as Safavid goddesses, like Durgas of destruction to save your heritage

And curse this Western man's world

Enclosure, exclusion, dominant epistemologies. I was thinking about the characterising dimensions of colonial modernity (Quijano, 2007) when I made this image. Arora and Stirling who write on science and technology policy talk of controlling imaginations (2023). Restructuring on a local and global level is drawing its sharp edges, marking boundaries around what fits inside and out, excluding imaginations of flourishing pluriversal worlds. But these worlds will thrive once more, for the time being in powerful margins. Recall the rural hedge school masters of colonised Ireland; they carried out their fugitive teaching as Gaeilge for a hundred years in the undergrowth.



NOTES: _____

We work in sustainability because we want to make a difference. However, I feel as a sustainability movement, we have barely scratched the surface. I think a lot of us in sustainability think about this, obsessing over our impact, our work, and even work as means to survive in this economic system.

There are a lot of conflicting thoughts and feelings you have working in sustainability, which I am sure many people can relate to. A constant inner-monologue that critiques our work.

Are we making enough impact? Are we making any impact? Am I enabling a broken system or am I changing it from the inside? Am I focused on making a real difference or am I working on my career? Do I work in sustainability because it makes me feel good or because I am actually doing good and how would I even know the difference? Do companies and politicians even care about sustainability anymore? How do I manage career progression, with a meaningful job? Is caring about my salary just the same as companies prioritising their bottom line? Shall I pivot to more academic work on radical ideas? Is that where the work is needed? Where am I best suited to make a difference? In degrowth, we need to reduce work but does that include sustainability work? What work needs to be reduced, stopped or increased? Who gets to revalue and reduce their work? What about the work that is overlooked, dismissed and extracted for the most vulnerable people? Am I being self-indulgent?

I have no answers.

But perhaps it's enough to ask these questions to ourselves repeatedly to make sure we are making the best decisions we can. We need to stay in the trouble and wrestle with these questions in order to constantly reevaluate our work and the impact it has on people and the environment. We work in sustainability because we feel a moral obligation to try, and perhaps the best thing we can do is to just crack on as best we can with what we have and hope that change is made by a big wave of little improvements, made by us.

NOTES: _____

The cotton harvest has arrived in India. Months earlier, a farmer planted cotton seeds with credit-financed inputs, unsure what price he would receive. He straps sacks of raw cotton to a motorbike and rides to the local trader. At the scale, the price is revealed; with school fees due and food low, he accepts whatever is offered. Afterwards, the cotton moves through mills and factories, accumulating value while risk remains concentrated at the chain's start. The season brought costly inputs, erratic rainfall, and pest outbreaks. This structure defines many supply chains: risk at the start, value and pricing power downstream. International development experts have worked for decades on solutions to stabilize incomes, reduce vulnerability to shocks, and expand opportunities for rural producers. Yet many of these constraints persist within fashion supply chains, threatening sustainability goals. What could fashion learn from development solutions?

Most fashion sustainability initiatives focus on improving material production, centering on organic cotton and regenerative wool. Certification schemes, traceability systems, and training programs encourage better agricultural practices, but they rarely address the underlying constraint shaping those decisions. Development experts studying these root causes began testing unconditional cash transfers. An unconditional cash transfer program in Kenya implemented by GiveDirectly found that households receiving cash improved welfare, invested in productive assets, and became more resilient to shocks¹. A complementary approach emerged in Bangladesh, showing that temporary cash support, combined with assets, training, and savings tools, helped women transition to more stable livelihoods². Follow-up studies show many of these gains persisted years after programs ended. Beyond cash

transfers, programs in Ethiopia provided seasonal employment building irrigation systems, restoring watersheds, and constructing rural infrastructure, financed jointly by government and development partners to strengthen agricultural productivity³.

These examples challenge a core assumption in fashion supply chains that training, certification, and better farming practices alone can deliver productivity. In practice, sustainable production requires strengthening rural producers' economic stability. Yet fashion supply chains rarely incorporate these solutions. Drawing on lessons from development practice could open pathways to empower rural producers, build more inclusive supply chains, and create shared value for farmers and brands. If applied to fashion supply chains, these lessons would reshape sustainability. Brands, financial institutions, governments, and producer organizations could jointly invest in farmers' financial stability. Unconditional cash transfers timed to lean seasons or pre-harvest periods could help farmers invest in inputs that stabilize yields and fiber quality, especially when paired with market linkages. Price stabilization financing, such as minimum price guarantees or revenue insurance, can protect producers from sharp market fluctuations, increasing supply reliability and relationships. Innovation funds for next-generation materials could absorb early-stage supply-chain costs while scaling fashion sustainability by making it affordable for consumers and channeling premiums to farmers. Crop storage and credit systems allow producers to store fiber and access credit, making it easier for brands to track fiber origin and reduce supply disruptions.

Harnessing these development tools could bring brands, manufacturers, NGOs, and finance together to build a fashion system that better serves farmers and the environment.



Auditing is not a line of care. On a recent visit to a worker advice centre in Pakistan, I am sat on a plastic chair with a circle of 16 women and men working for major export suppliers in Karachi. The room is dark. We drink sweet tea brought from the local shop on a tray. A poster displays the logos of well-known fashion brands.

These workers are not earning enough to live with dignity. Many still take home the same wages they earned a decade ago, while the cost of living has risen sharply. Electricity prices alone have increased by 155%. They get home after 9pm and still have to cook, often with limited gas supplies. Many say they get only three to four hours of sleep on average.

We talk about what they would do if they had more time or money. The answers are modest. Some say they would take their children out for dinner. One woman says her son needs shoes. Several women explain that their daughters finished school at 16 but the families cannot afford the 15,000 rupees needed for the matriculation exam, meaning these girls cannot obtain their qualification. "How are we supposed to cope?" one asks. I share these stories because none of

them will have reached the brands through supply chain monitoring.

Auditing is not working for anyone. The previous week we spoke with a supplier who said some form of audit took place on 255 days out of 365 in the previous year at their facility, requiring more than 50 different reporting formats.

For workers, the process is equally flawed. Every person we spoke to said they had been instructed to tell auditors that "everything is good", or risk losing access to the factory and therefore their income. One worker said they were told to say they had permanent contracts when they did not. Another said that workers who gave the "right" answers were given 1,000 rupees the next day.

Brands report that their audits have not revealed major violations of their codes of conduct. Systems originally designed to assess basic labour rights in factories now function more as protection for buyers. The flow of information fails to hear the words of the people the system is meant to protect.

Yet another approach is taking root. The worker advice centre I am in is one of 22 centres in Pakistan run by local unions and labour support groups and staffed by trained paralegals. They help workers raise cases with the labour department and with HR contacts in factories.

Crucially, paralegals document each complaint and categorise the risks. Workers from hundreds of factories visit these centres. Due to the volume of cases, the data offers brands a way to check independently whether violations are occurring in their supply chains and to hear directly from workers in a trusted space. Here, the line of information begins with the rights holder, and their care comes first. Maybe this is one piece of the puzzle.

NOTES : 1. Poverty Action Lab, The Long-Term Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers: Experimental Evidence from Kenya. 2018 2. Poverty Action Lab, A Path to Prosperity for the Most Vulnerable Families. 2025 3. IFPRI, The Impact of Research on the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). 2013

NOTES : Anna is a labour rights activist in Karachi.

If my wardrobe was my friend,
She would remember the things I forget.
Moments lost to me, but held gently in her threads.
If my wardrobe is my friend,
Why do I ignore her when she whispers?
When she asks me to care, repair, preserve?
In a sector striving for circularity, maybe care is the first step.
Because in a world asking us to slow down,
Extending the life of what we own is how we learn to listen.
So if my wardrobe is my friend,
Would I still abandon her?
Or would I let her stories live a little longer?

NOTES: Rory and Sanya are former members of Next Gen Assembly



The contemporary textile and fashion industry operates through highly efficient, tightly controlled global supply chains, where production often takes place on the other side of the world according to precise specifications. Mass manufacturing prioritizes process stability and ease, which in turn demands strict standardization in design. Color selection, for instance, is guided by trend-forecasting maps and encoded into numeric systems so that every hue can be clearly communicated across partners. This level of control across fabrics and trims ensures that garments—and all their details—match exactly in shade, reinforcing consistency in industrial production.

Within this paradigm, any color instability or imperfection—even subtle shade variations—is

treated as a defect that can hinder sales and relegate products to second-quality status. Durability and stability function as the primary criteria of color quality, shaping both production decisions and aesthetic judgments. “[A] good colour was also permanent. It did not fade when washed or when exposed to sunlight or heat. Good colour did not become dull as it aged, nor did it peel, rub off or destroy the medium it coloured. Discussions of the stability or solidity of colours were more exacting than deliberations about beauty. Permanence was a more difficult goal to achieve, and its failures were a greater concern.” (Lowengard, 2001, 94).

Lowengard’s historical observation shows that concerns about permanence predate synthetic dyes, emerging early in industrialization. Today, the sector relies heavily on synthetic dyes precisely

because they can be replicated at scale to produce consistent colors—though this consistency comes with environmental costs.

The current industrial system and the controlling approach in manufacturing ends up in the aesthetics of easiness and sameness. Would it be time to challenge this fashion aesthetics, while we begin to use other kind of colours, materials and designs in the context of sustainability? As previous text presents the aesthetics of colour in industrial contexts we could go back in time and think about the aesthetics of colour before synthetic dyes and think how to create other kinds of colour aesthetics by using natural dyes in textile colouration.

Rather than treating variability as a defect, a new paradigm could value difference and nuance: palettes shaped by local ecologies, hues that shift

gently with light and wear, and garments whose patina records care and use. Such an approach would align colour quality not only with durability but also with ecological integrity, traceability, and low-impact processes. Standards could prioritize safe, regenerative dyeing, transparent sourcing, and designs that accommodate repair and remanufacture—recognizing that controlled diversity can coexist with functional performance.

By redefining “good colour” to include living variation and environmental responsibility, we can move beyond the aesthetics of sameness. Reframing fashion through sustainable color—embracing natural dyes and the expressive differences they entail—offers a practical way to mend part of the fashion system and cultivate a more meaningful, accountable fashion aesthetics.



This and facing page:

Photo credit: Fading colour from Logwood,
Design Sofia Ilmanen, photo Diana Luganski,
Biocolour-project



The picture was taken at Jamestown beach in Accra, Ghana. We spent the morning volunteering, picking up the items that had been washed around the bay from Kantamanto market. The Global North waste coming to the Global South from traders to traders. Everyone needs to make a living. The smell of rotting man made fibres made me ill for a week afterwards. We globally consume too much clothing, and this is where it goes at end of life. There is a thriving second hand and upcycling community in Ghana which is amazing. The future is to track clothing across Africa using downstream evidence. The traditional Kente cloth tradition must not be lost.

NOTES : _____

Care Is Work
A field note from Kantamanto

In Kantamanto Market in Accra, care is not an abstract concept.

It is work.

It is the work of hands that mend torn seams.
The work of eyes that search through piles of discarded garments.
The work of bodies that carry heavy loads of clothing through crowded pathways.

Every week, millions of garments arrive here from the Global North. They come folded into tightly compressed bales — anonymous remnants of a global fashion system built on speed, novelty, and overproduction.

Many of these garments were donated with the promise of giving them a second life.

Yet when they arrive, a significant portion cannot be sold.

So what happens next?

In Kantamanto, care becomes an act of joyful resistance.

Tailors repair garments that were never meant to last.
Traders sort through textiles with extraordinary patience.
Designers transform discarded clothing into new forms and new stories.

Waste is not simply discarded.
It is negotiated with.

In this space, fashion reveals itself not as a singular act of design, but as a collective practice.

A garment passes through many hands.

Each intervention leaves a trace.

Each repair is a refusal of disposability.

NOTES : Yayra is a former CSF Governance for Tomorrow Stewardship Board member.

These practices challenge dominant narratives about innovation in fashion. They remind us that circularity did not begin in laboratories or sustainability strategies.

It has long existed in markets, workshops, and communities where creativity emerges from necessity.

Honouring these practices means recognising them not as marginal or temporary responses to crisis, but as sophisticated systems of care.

Systems that understand materials as companions rather than commodities.

Systems that insist clothing can have more than one life.

To draw lines of care in fashion today is to ask difficult questions.

Who carries the burden of our clothes?
Whose labour sustains the life of garments?
Whose knowledge shapes the future of fashion?

Perhaps the most important lesson from Kantamanto is this:

The future of fashion will not be built only through new materials or technologies.

It will be built through relationships — between people, materials, and the environments that sustain us.

Care, after all, is not a sentiment.

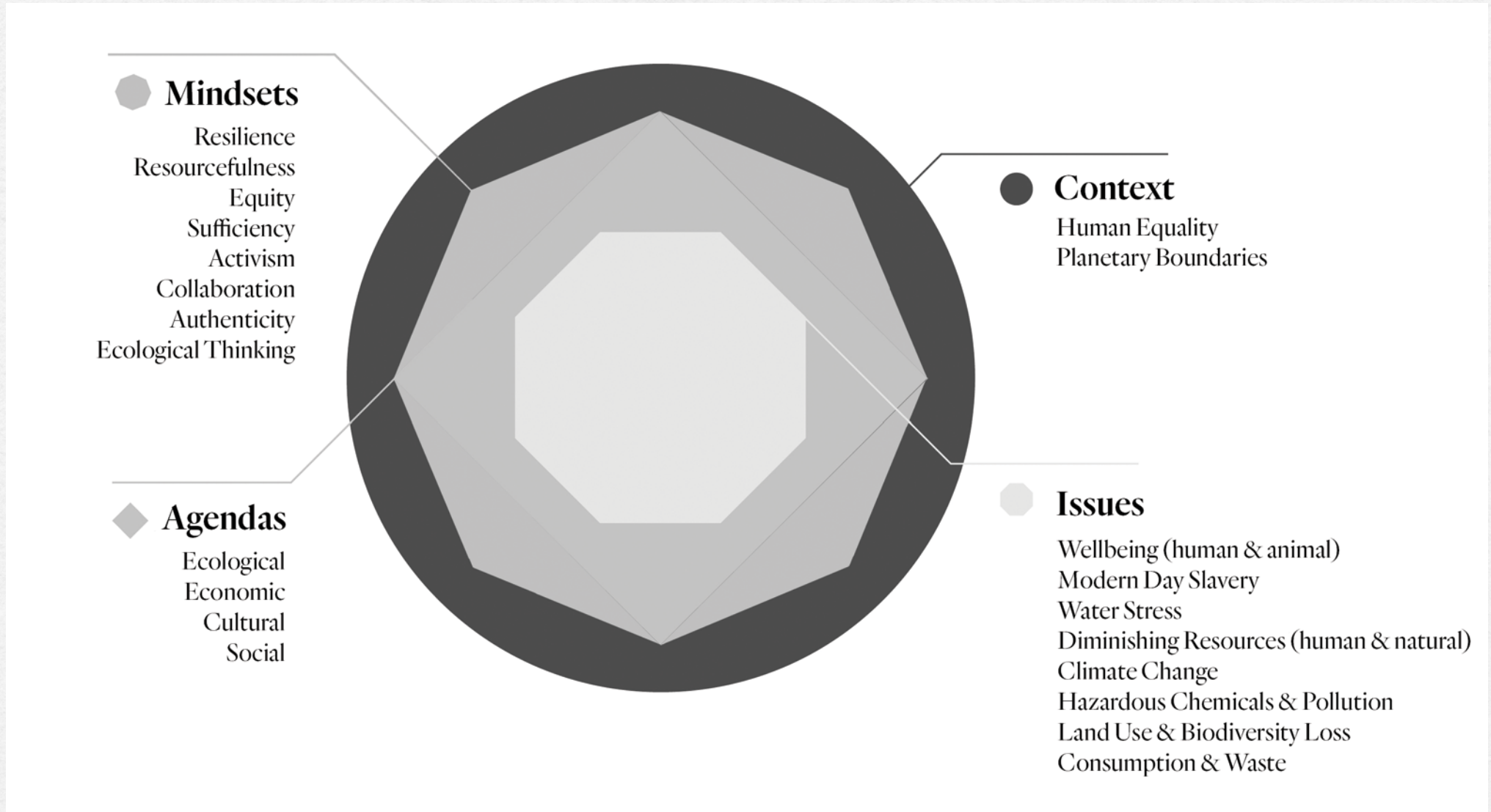
It is a practice.

And in places like Kantamanto, it is practiced every day.

Care is work.
And the future of fashion will belong to those who choose to practice it.

NOTES: Yayra is a former member of CSF's Governance for Tomorrow Stewardship Board





NOTES : The CSF Framework was used in research, education and knowledge exchange projects to navigate complexity and design learning using values-led systems thinking as an antidote to techno-fixing and problem solving commonly found in sustainability work.



I have been documenting Wood Green High Street, my local shopping street in North London, for more than ten years. Only a few miles from London's more recognisable and luxurious Zone 1 retail districts, Wood Green offers an alternative expression of the global fashion city. This assemblage of images brings together fragments of its visual economy – shop fronts, garments, signage, and informal displays – to trace a different narrative of fashion's circulation.

The language that appears on the street suggests a hardness, a sense of endings, and a precarity that mirrors the wider pressures facing both fashion and the high street. Yet no shop stays empty for long. Each unit is rapidly restocked with goods of ambiguous origin, continually adapting to the shifting conditions of 21st-century global economics. In this restless cycle of closure and renewal, Wood Green becomes a barometer of contemporary instability and a reminder of the asymmetries embedded within the global fashion city.

I watched my son take his first bite of broccoli today.
'Little trees', I called them.
I witnessed nature nurturing my baby, and I wanted
to explain all the ways we must nurture nature so that
nature can nurture us, inside and out.
I witnessed his first reaction to the texture, the taste.
A shudder.
An appreciation.
And then back for more.
It got me thinking...

How do we create a blank page so that we can
experience the joys of nature for the first time? How
can we experience clothing in the same way so we
appreciate its touch, its story, and how it makes us feel
without the observation of others?

Have we become so jaded, so exploitative of what is
simply given to us hand to mouth, cloth to body, that
we have forgotten the first time we sensed something?
Would it make a difference in how we combat and
advocate fashion for nature, for the future?
How do we remove what we know and start again?

I feel we may have overcomplicated things...
Perhaps from commonality, habit or comparison to
others. Fashion has become a mixture of all three.

My son has nothing to compare broccoli to.
No shame in showing his true reaction to how it feels.
If we could remove what we know and start again,
would we make better choices? Would we speak out?

Maybe fashion isn't about what to wear but about
learning how to feel again.
Remembering how it felt the first time.



NOTES : _____



orbits wealth and power. Scarcity and exclusivity are framed as inevitabilities rather than choices. Competition is introduced early and rewarded often. But scarce civilizations war. They do not thrive.

Fashion's dominant logic mirrors broader economic systems that disconnect people from materials, from makers, from meaning. Globalised supply chains obscure the hands that sew. Creative directors are pushed to deliver collections at a pace that leaves little room for reflection. Teams operate in silos, far from production realities. Speed becomes a virtue, and volume, proof of relevance.

Let's be honest. When a designer is responsible for nearly eighteen collections a year, as in the case of Jonathan Anderson, can depth survive that cadence? This is not a question of talent. It is a question of structure. Fatigue and disconnection are built into the system. Even couture can begin to feel optimized for visibility rather than impact. And when production is optimized for visibility, relationships become secondary. The same distance I felt at that party – proximity without connection – exists through the system itself.

We know community matters. As they say, if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Warm maroon lighting washed over tufted leather couches like a filter you couldn't turn off. Waiters floated by with sponsored cocktails. There was a certain understanding that every name on the guest list meant something – editors, influencers, designers, people who decide what gets seen and what disappears. On paper, it was the room you're supposed to want. The kind Fashion tells you is proof you're in. You've arrived.

And yet, standing there with a drink in my hand, I felt it immediately: the air was thin. The conversations were rehearsed. The glamour was loud, but the room felt empty. Cold.

People did not know each other. Or if they did, it was the kind of knowing that lives on Instagram. A quick "Let's get a picture..." type of intimacy. Positioning in place of presence. I felt a strange pressure, though maybe self-inflicted, to not ask too many questions, as if connection itself carried too much risk in a room built on optics.

A party is supposed to be the simplest form of community. So if even that feels hollow, something deeper is at play.

When I say Fashion, with a capital F, I mean the institutions that manufacture global fashion moments. The conglomerates. The fashion weeks. The schools. The supply chains. Capital F Fashion

NOTES: This visual submission builds on work undertaken during my practice-based PhD, which explored the concept of disruption. Against a backdrop of social and political underminings, the work provides a visual representation of breaks or 'ruptions', experienced here in the context of the 'classic white shirt', which carries with it its own cultural, symbolic and temporal narratives.

NOTES: Mel is a former member of Next Gen Assembly.

I woke up today.
Twice.
First when the sun burst through that crack in the curtains that I never seem to close properly.
And then again, when I remembered I can live every day with a purposeful rage.
I saw with my ears today, that every recipe for meaning needs love.
That everything meaningful reveals how it cares.
And that care-filled rage connects me to everything and everyone.
These awakenings come.
Just like the waves.
Some are gentle.
They make me sway.
They remind me I need to move.
Sideways, forwards, up, down.
I could stand in these waves forever and a day.
On legs made of jelly, toes barely reaching the ocean floor, out of my depth, but still able to breathe.
Other days the wind picks up as if it knows something is wrong.
Whispering into the sea.
Move!
The waves become ferociously loving.
They uproot of my every way of being and knowing.
They care that I grow, that I move, that I know.
More.
And less.
They care that I follow the threads of my ancestors.
That I release joylessness so it can burn in the sun and sink into the sea.
On these days the waves don't just move me.
They completely reshape me. Forcing my eyes wide.

Jolting me out of the comfortable bed I've accidentally tucked my mind into.
Showing me ways forward that weren't there before.
Reminding me of my purposeful rage.
Each time I forget how many awakenings have gone before.
Every slumber is re-released.
Rage is reignited.
Moments meld.
My time.
Your time.
Their time.
Our time.
The wrong time.
The right time.
I dive in and catch myself only to feel you catching me too.
Falling in the forest.
Breathing in the trees as they breathe in me.
Palms down.
In earth.
Connected.
Embraced by the sun that floods my heart with love.
Carried home by the winds that scream out when everything is wrong.
Washed clean by the waves that know all my secrets.
I woke up today.
Twice.
Once with care and once with purpose.
Ready to rage.
With love.

NOTES: _____

A Recipe for Joyful Resistance

When the world* tells you to stop noticing, stop questioning, stop critiquing, stop thinking, stop creating, stop imagining ... joyfully resist instead.

*Dominant extractive colonial systems perpetuated by repressive growth-at-all-cost metrics and patriarchal, authoritarian-style leaders and governance.

What is joyful resistance?

To resist is to refuse to accept or comply with something, to take a stand.

To be joyful is to feel great happiness or pleasure.

Joyful resistance is embracing (de)light to withstand the dark.

Ingredients:

- A hopeful attitude
- A desire to create care-filled change
- Feelings of rage and unruliness
- A willingness to speak truth to power
- Childlike imagination
- Empathy

Methods:

- Go on a walk. Notice what is hidden in the nooks and crannies. Look at the cracks in pavements, the peaks of light between clouds, the space between gutters. What do you notice?
- Look around, what forms of nature do you see? Ask yourself, what can we learn from reeds that whisper by riverbanks, pollinating bees that sprinkle their magic dust, ladybugs that listen, lichen that hugs the trees?
- Lie on the ground. How does the world look from this angle? Does your body feel weighted or weightless?

- Start doing star-jumps. Imagine you're a starfish under the sea who is expelling bad vibes.
- Cry. Let the tears flow. If no tears come, sit in your stillness. And/or cry out, scream, lament – with or without volume.
- Dance in jeopardy. Let rhythm flow through your body – limbs stretching and moving – let your body speak through these moments.
- Play hide and seek with someone. Take pleasure in playful adventures.
- Find fallen leaves, petals or twigs and use these to create a word or image on the sidewalk, a message to strangers. What needs to be heard?
- Create a music playlist which inspires you, gives you energy. Listen to this music.
- Draw a map. You could map something in your immediate or present world, a past world, an imaginary world, or someone else's world.
- Read something that describes injustice. Draw lines through injustice. Rewrite this story with care.
- Write a message to someone who has helped shape the way you see and experience the world. You don't have to know this person. Send this message to them.
- Choose a book randomly and read a random page. Are you pleased by a discovery? Or annoyed that you don't know the full context?
- Decide what 'making sense' means to you. Remember, making 'sense' is optional and 'sense-making' is subjective.
- Smile at the people who you pass by in the street, on the bus, at the corner store etc. Don't be afraid to share joy and connections with strangers.
- Open a door. Close said door. Walk into a new door. Envisage that on the other side of this door is a new chapter of your life and/or the world. You are entering a new realm.

Enjoy joyfully resisting! Use this as inspiration to create your own recipe.

Facing page:

The words 'BE KIND'; written in fallen flowers outside of someone's home in Kew, London.
Photo taken by Hannah Riley.

NOTES : _____



Permissible resistance

Remember when we knew
and kept pushing anyway.
When looking away
was just part of getting dressed.

When the cost of a thread fell
to someone who didn't set the price.
When people were spent
in buildings we had never been to.
And childhoods became supply chains
for things left folded in the dark.

When we glamourised extraction
and normalised exploitation
all to line pockets already bursting at the seams.
When the distance between us
was the whole point.

Remember when we pressed oil against bare skin
and called it desire.
When we wrapped our kids and ourselves
in toxins that would outlast our bones.

We drained ecosystems
and called it progress.
And turned waterways into colours
we didn't yet know the names of.

When the beaches filled
and the oceans drowned.
And we burned through seasons
before the next ones walked out.

More.
Remember when more was the answer
to every question that wasn't asked.
Faster, bigger, never enough.

The ceiling raised,
then raised again,
and no one asking
what was holding up the walls.

Can you believe it was ever that way.
Permissible by design.

...

Somewhere in all of it were the ones who first said no.

A dream job. Would I fit there? It soon becomes the CSF family. A dream team. A reminder to be led by dreams. (2018)

Guardianship and Guidance

Creeping through the V&A after closing time, installing the exhibition with ghosts. (2018)

Everyone getting Mon for secret santa. (2021)

#IWroteYourGlossary [loved the challenge but Mon and I still want the T-shirts] (2019-2021)

I went to Za'atari. Momentous, personally and politically. A confrontation with life. (2019)

Division and Dialogue

Fashion SEEDS. Applying CSF's framework to fashion education around the world. Responding to the concerns of tutors in 72 universities. (2019-2022)

Fashioned from Nature at the V&A with MA alumni, Edwina Ehrman, Ligaya Salazar and film makers including Akinola Davies Junior. (2018)

CSF Launches first ever open access online courses in Fashion and Sustainability with long term partner Kering. (2018)

2018-2019

Hanging Buy Nothing Day banner. Black Friday was troubled by Buy Nothing Day. Black Friday Still Troubles. (2018)

2020-2021

Anna came out to Za'atari Refugee Camp, so good to have her there, to have her eyes, her mind and her heart bear witness with me - someone 'back home' to now know what I mean. (2019)

Then, suddenly, it is taken away from me. They rescue me. I survive. It's a carnival of crisis. (2021)

Anger and Attention

Paris Fashion Week workshop for all the global Vogue Editors in Chief, organised and delivered by CSF within a week's notice - happened to be the week I handed in my PhD that I wrote alongside my full-time job. (2019)

The conker I picked up on the way from interviewing a small designer business for Fostering Sustainable Practices, in Brixton with Dilys. I couldn't believe my luck - having landed what had been my dream job since I first read Kate's and Sandy's books in 2010. It's still in the pocket of that tweed jacket 8 years later. Very shiny. (2018)

We stand up - with courage. It's time to ReGo - going again and again. Designing from the margins. (2020-2022)

We asked 'What's going on?' Keep asking it. Joining the dots. (2019)

Sitting in a hotel room in Paris planning to facilitate a workshop with all the global Vogue Editors in Chief. At 11:30pm: 'Just to be clear - are we really doing post-its with AW?' (2019)

We live by our own values. Fashioning values. We practice care - for each other, for diverse communities, for the more-than-human. Stitching quilts of care. Shaping better lives - in and through fashion. (2019-2022)

Designer: Dörte de Jesus
Printer: PRINT.WORK
Editorial team: Anna Fitzpatrick,
Dilys Williams, Hannah Riley,
Mila Burcikova, Nina Stevenson
Editorial Coordinator: Niamh Tuft

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