

SUSTAINABILITY BRIEFING DOCUMENT

SDC GLOBAL DESIGN COMPETITION



Sustainable thinking in fashion and textile design – what will your approach be?

Criteria: The emphasis must be on colour, with 'sustainable colour' being one key aspect that must be considered within the competition [brief](#). In particular:

"Innovative or creative approach incorporating some aspect of sustainable thinking within the original design and/or final design application".

This could be interpreted as: including sustainability in an original way into your design and/or the finished product.

Judging: The judges will expect to see a clearly defined idea, taking into account an aspect of sustainability, included into the design and/or the written statement. This could be related to either the environmental or social elements of sustainability (see definition below) or both, which influence the design or are effected by the design application. As there is still a large amount of debate and complexity relating to this issue, this leaves plenty of opportunity to bring into mind your own ideas and viewpoints, but what is important is to evidence that you have thought about this issue and developed your individual take on it. It is also not necessary to incorporate sustainability into all aspects of the design and its final application, though this is certainly not prohibited. What is most important is to make the sustainability element strong and clear where it is incorporated.

Definitions of 'sustainability':

(1) DEFRA and the [UN NGO Commission on Sustainable Development](#) utilise the Brundtland Commission (1987) definition:

- Sustainability – development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(2) Sourced from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, [Vol. 1](#), London College of Fashion (LCF) Fashioning the Future booklet:

- Sustainability – harnessing resources ethically and responsibly without destroying the social and ecological balance.

'Sustainability' is concerned with economic activities (such as production, manufacture and other forms of wealth generation including design) that take into account and address issues of ethics and the environment (e.g. labour practices, land degradation, pollution etc), thus it is development at a rate that can be sustained.

Brief overview of different areas of the textile life-cycle where sustainability could be incorporated:

Resources* used for:

(*i.e.: raw materials; energy; labour; utilities, e.g. water, land etc.)

- design, manufacture, production (also consider technology, wastage)
- distribution, marketing, packaging (also transport)
- consumption, utilisation, disposal (including possible reuse)

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Suggestions to get started...

- What are the opportunities of sustainable design?
- Natural dyes and fibres vs synthetic dyes and fibres – is it true that 'natural' always means better for the environment?
- Does technology have a role to play?
- What do the terms 'lean manufacturing' and 'cradle-to-cradle' mean in this context?
- How sustainable is the design in a mass market?

References, further reading, web resources, design ideas and inspiration:

Sustainable Fashion & Textiles: Design Journeys by Kate Fletcher www.katefletcher.com

Eco Colour by India Flint www.indiaflint.com

Fashioning the Future booklet, [Centre for Sustainable Fashion](http://www.csf.ac.uk), London College of Fashion

DEMI Guide to Design for Sustainability, www.demi.org.uk – textiles life-cycle

www.makeyourmarkinfashion.org/sustainable_fashion

www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org

www.ethicalfashionforum.com

www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/index.htm

<http://www.showstudio.com/project/wonderland>

www.consumer2007.info/wp-content/uploads/design8-%20Markkula.pdf

(article about sustainability in fashion, giving some background and a definition)

www.fashion-incubator.com/archive/is_fast_fashion_sustainable/

(article raising the issue of style longevity)

www.treehugger.com/fashion_beauty/

www.unngosustainability.org

Katharine Hamnett interview: <http://www.sdc.org.uk/listenhere/listenhere.htm>,

www.leeds.ac.uk/textiles/CTT/greenchemistry.html

Eco-labelling and textile eco-labelling, *Rev. Prog. Color.*, **28** (1998) 61

It must be green: meeting society's environmental concerns, *Color. Technol.*, **124** (2008) 67

Discuss: If you'd like to discuss with other students and experts in colour about sustainable thinking in fashion and textiles, you can do so on the forum at www.colourclick.org (you will need to be signed up to the website, which costs £15 per annum, or is free for SDC members and students at [patron colleges](http://www.colourclick.org)) or you can post comments on the relevant entry in the SDC colour blog: www.sdc-colourblog.blogspot.com

Please note: this is not a definitive list and we will be adding to this over time. If you have additional suggestions please send these to us or add them in the forum or colour blog.