



Borrowed from the Soil

A Farm-to-Closet Design Exhibition

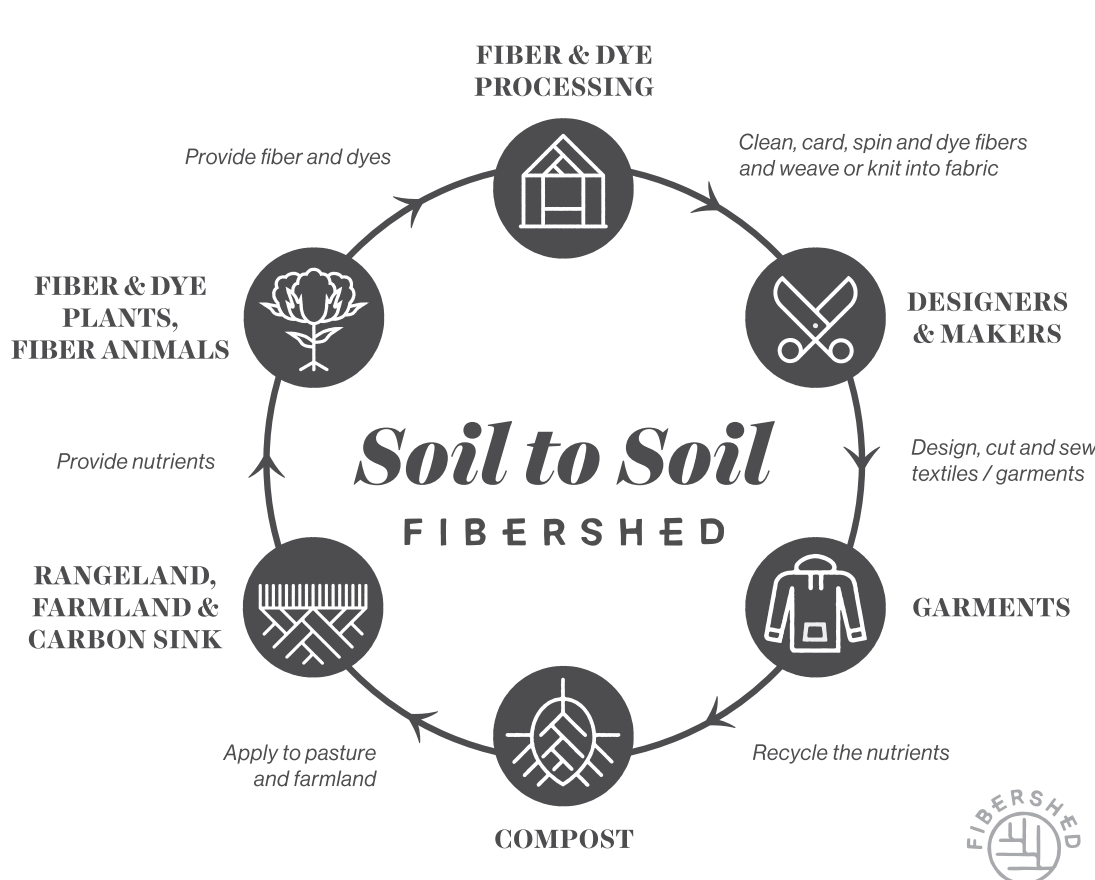
February 29–March 4, 2024

An introduction...

The essence of borrowing is an agreement to respect, care for, and be held accountable for what we are receiving in our temporary custody.

Although today's clothing relies on transnational supply chains, petroleum-based materials, and land and labor exploitation, there is incredible potential to make shifts to a system that originates from the soil and supports the longevity and health of our ecosystems and communities. Designers have a unique place in these systems to turn natural materials grown on our regional landscapes into beautiful, long-lasting goods that serve our communities. As temporary custodians of the materials we make and use in our daily lives, we have an obligation to respect and care for these soil-born materials with the promise to return them back to the soil again.

The 'Borrowed from the Soil' Exhibition will showcase the final designs from local makers partaking in Fibershed's year-long Design Challenge. Each designer is exploring how their design choices can embed longevity, compostability, and respect for the soil while using local natural fibers grown on Climate Beneficial farms and ranches.



FIBERSHED

Local Fiber, Local Dye, Local Labor

Fibershed is a non-profit organization that develops regional natural fiber systems that generate lasting prosperity for our local economies, global climate, and the health and diversity of our ecosystem. Our program activities focus on one goal: the development of systems from soil to soil, where textiles are grown, processed, designed, sewn, sold, worn, and eventually composted.

Design Challenge

All of the designers featured in this exhibition are a part of Fibershed’s yearlong *Borrowed from the Soil* Design Challenge. Fibershed launched its year-long Design Challenge in March 2023 as an opportunity for textile designers and makers in Northern and Central California to explore a new soil-to-soil vision for the future of our material culture. Throughout this 12-month challenge, designers have had the opportunity to create a prototype following the Commitments and Technical Design Focus Areas below.

See Artist Statement section below for more information on each designer.

Design Challenge Commitments

All design challenge participants have agreed to following the below commitments:

- All participants are from the Northern and Central CA Fibershed region (from San Luis Obispo to the Oregon border).
- All designs must utilize 100% natural fibers and dyes.
- All designs must utilize regionally grown and processed / manufactured materials. We encouraged designers to build a relationship with place, and explore the current sourcing possibilities within California and honor the intimacy of the local textiles available. We also understand there are material, dye, and manufacturing limitations within our textile region. As Fibershed continues to work to invest and uplift our regional systems to grow more textile options in our state, we also value the important work happening in other regions. Designers are welcome to explore pan-regional textile options, and sourcing natural thread, notions, and dyes regionally when possible.

Technical Design Focus Areas

Throughout this challenge, we have encouraged designers to incorporate the following technical design focus areas into their prototypes:



Compostability

Utilization of natural fibers and dyes that begin and end with the soil, including notion material choices such as threads and closures.



Longevity

High quality designs and materials that reflect long-lasting use, repairability, adaptability, and mobility in every component of the piece.

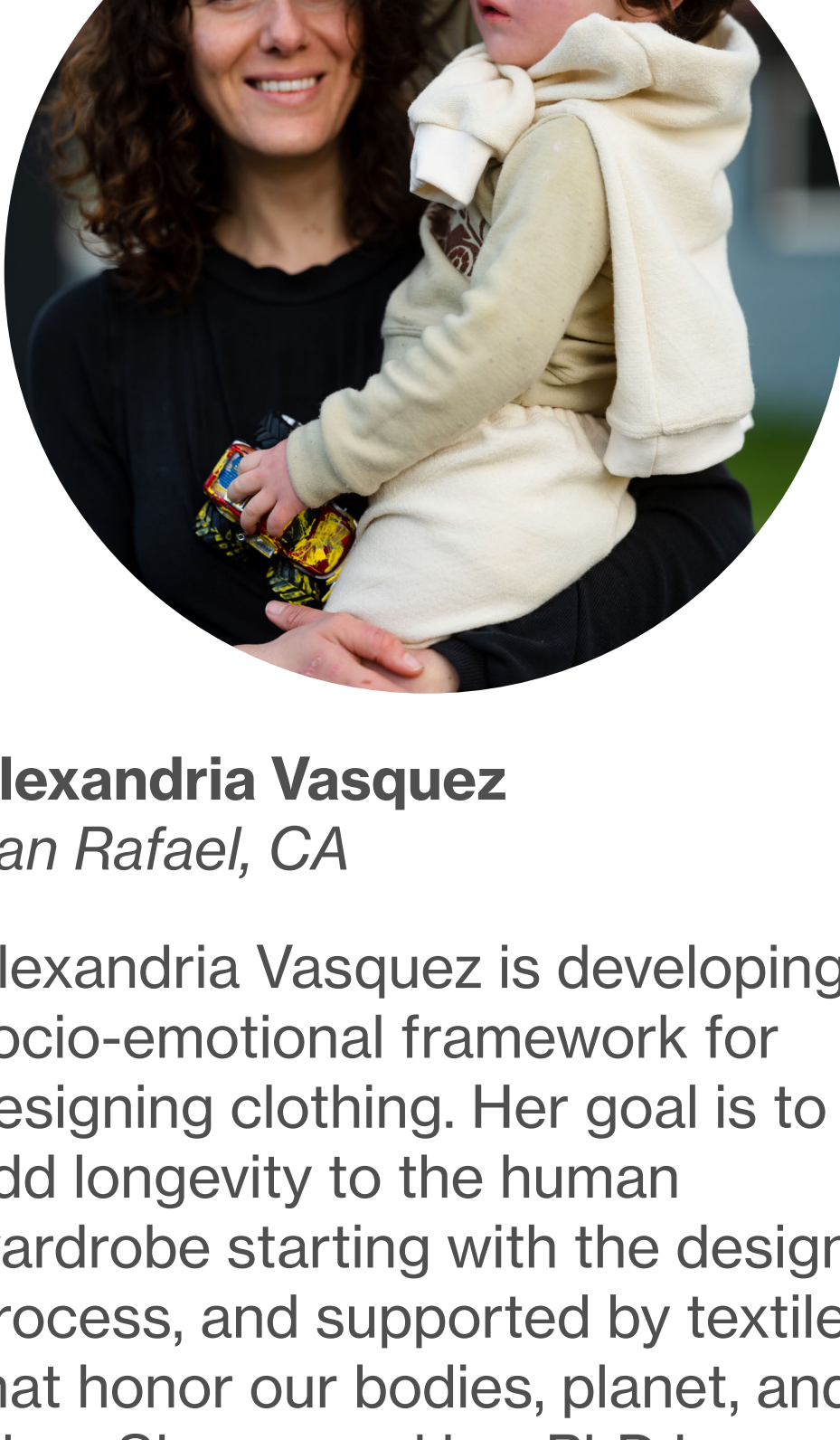


Zero Waste Design

Garment and pattern design to prevent fabric waste.



Artist Statements



Alexandria Vasquez

San Rafael, CA

Alexandria Vasquez is developing a socio-emotional framework for designing clothing. Her goal is to add longevity to the human wardrobe starting with the design process, and supported by textiles that honor our bodies, planet, and labor. She earned her PhD in sociology, and started Herderin in 2018 after some time

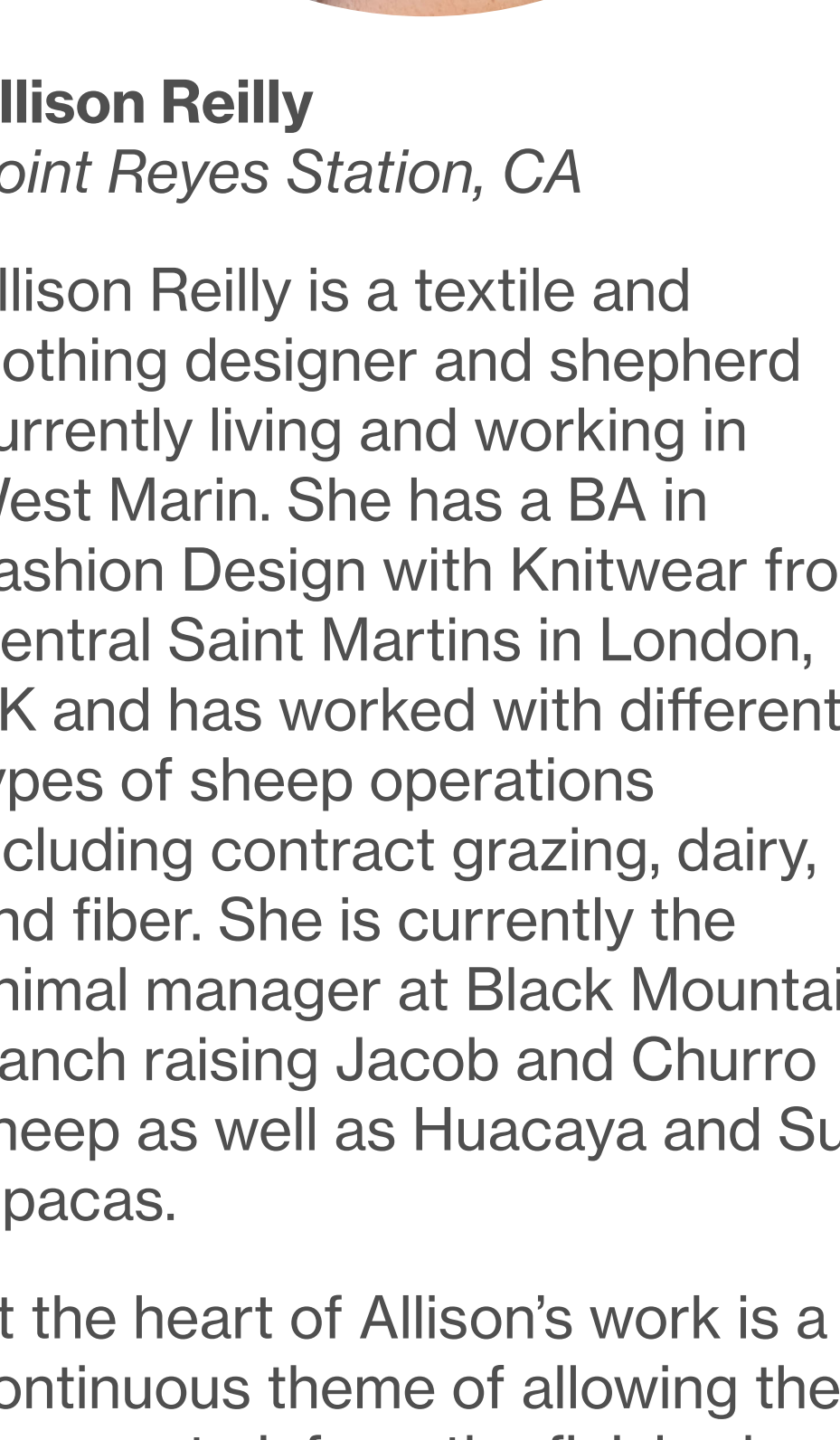
experimenting with clothing and interiors designed for the nervous system. She is currently working on an essay, “Nature/Self: The Self, Climate Change, and Empathic Design,” which applies sociological theory to the design process.



Compostability



Longevity



Allison Reilly

Point Reyes Station, CA

Allison Reilly is a textile and clothing designer and shepherd currently living and working in West Marin. She has a BA in Fashion Design with Knitwear from Central Saint Martins in London, UK and has worked with different types of sheep operations including contract grazing, dairy, and fiber. She is currently the animal manager at Black Mountain Ranch raising Jacob and Churro sheep as well as Huacaya and Suri alpacas.

At the heart of Allison’s work is a continuous theme of allowing the process to inform the finished product. She follows the thread backwards by developing a deep relationship with every step; from raising sheep and shearing them, to hand processing raw wool and spinning the yarn, to knitting and weaving the fabrics that form the final garment. In this way, she honors all of the shepherds, shearers, millers, and fiber artisans that have come before her as masters and stewards of their craft. Historical and utilitarian references inform her design sense and reflect a love for beautifully crafted yet functional wardrobe staples meant to be used daily, repaired, and loved.



Compostability



Longevity



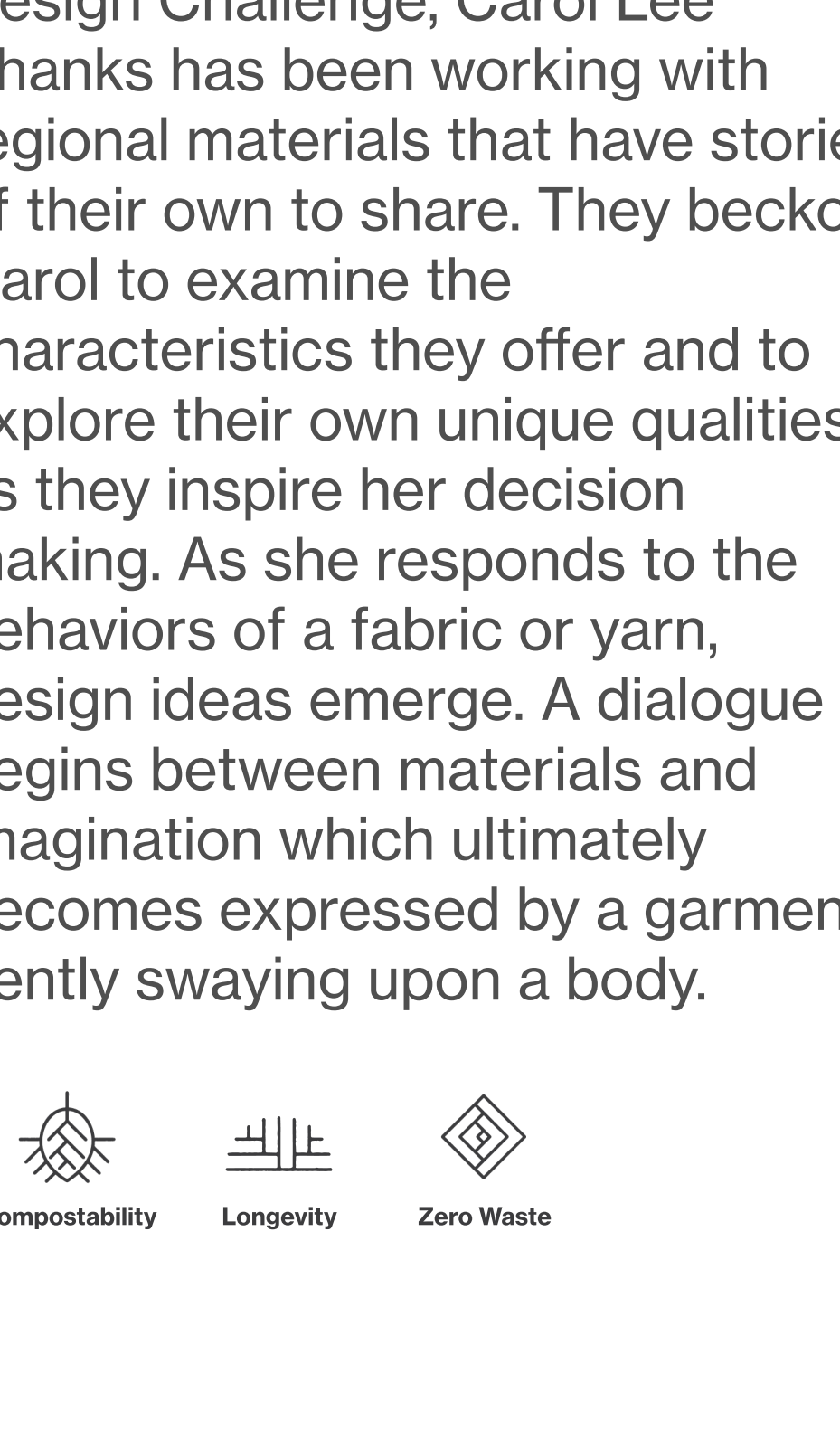
Alma Heffernan

Carmel, CA

Alma Heffernan is inspired by surrounding nature and wildlife. Rendering whimsy and personality into her works using color and imagination, with the ultimate objective of presenting in the form of quality wearables that stand the test of time. Alma hopes to positively impact people and the planet by maintaining integrity and authenticity to the local environment in the clothing making process. T-shirts displayed in this collection will go into production soon! Follow Alma’s design and production journey at [instagram.com/ahartdesignstudio](https://www.instagram.com/ahartdesignstudio)



Compostability



Carol Lee Shanks

Berkeley, CA

During the yearlong Fibershed Design Challenge, Carol Lee Shanks has been working with regional materials that have stories of their own to share. They beckon Carol to examine the characteristics they offer and to explore their own unique qualities as they inspire her decision making. As she responds to the behaviors of a fabric or yarn, design ideas emerge. A dialogue begins between materials and imagination which ultimately becomes expressed by a garment, gently swaying upon a body.



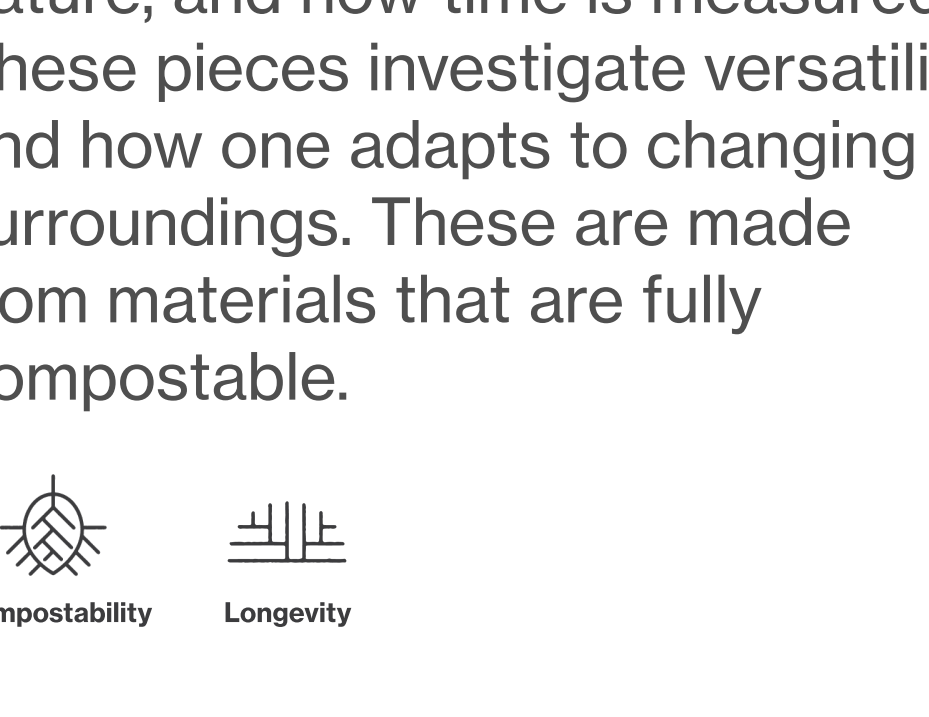
Compostability



Longevity



Zero Waste



Carol Miltimore

Berkeley, CA

Carol Miltimore’s work explores adjacency, our connection to nature, and how time is measured. These pieces investigate versatility and how one adapts to changing surroundings. These are made from materials that are fully compostable.

Compostability

Longevity



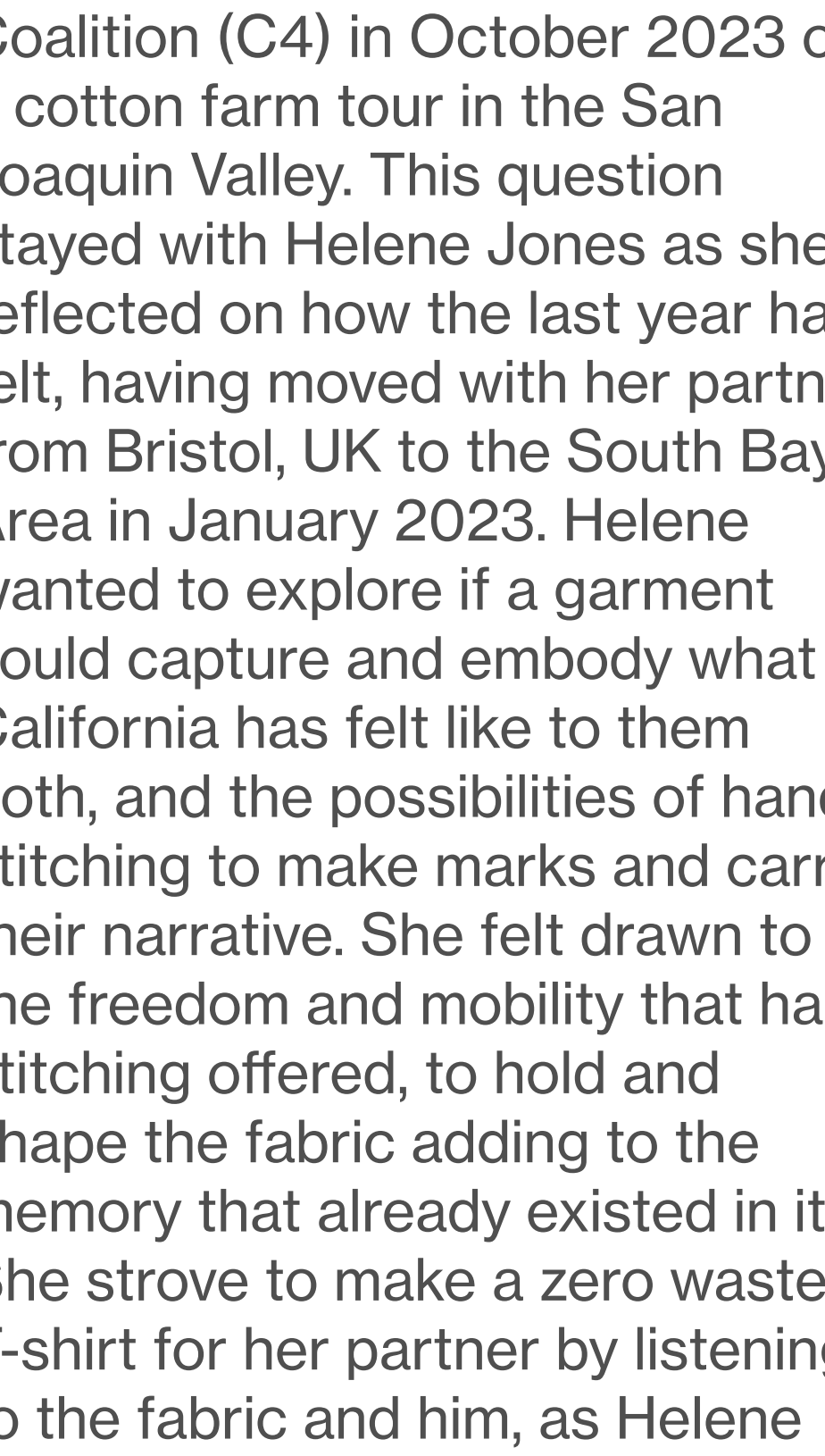
Flore Costumé

Sebastopol, CA

Flore Costumé's (they/them, li) visual work is under the practice m fèl ak menm, a tending to lifeways by following the wisdom of their hands. They are weaving pockets of breathable space with the teachings of their blood family, ancestors, the mountains who claim them, alongside the technology of environmental science in every act of creation. Their work with fibers is both an offering to the living world and a reclamation of their responsibility to the more than human world.



Compostability



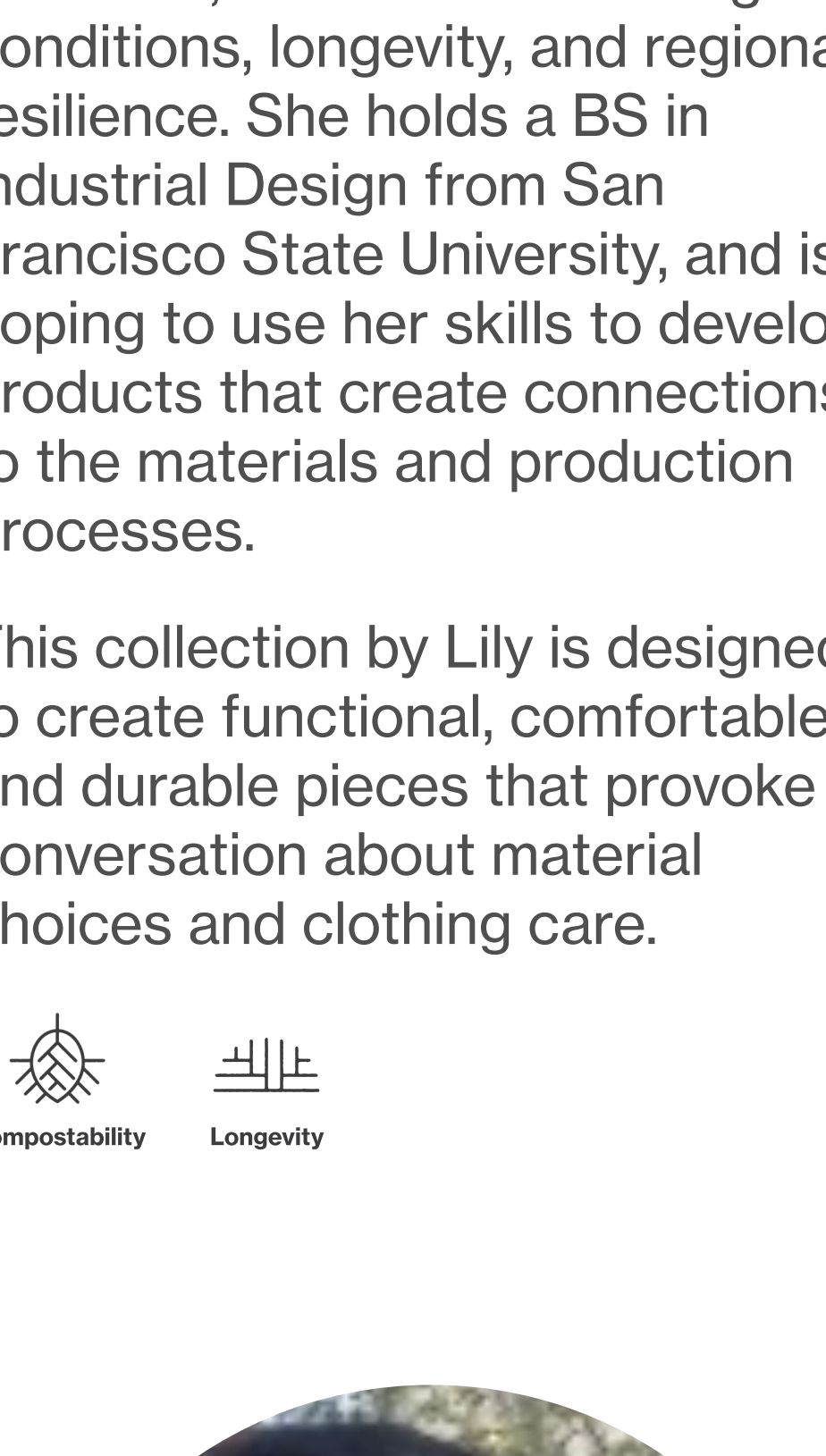
Helene Jones

Santa Clara, CA

“What does California feel like?” asked Lauren Tucker from California Cotton & Climate Coalition (C4) in October 2023 on a cotton farm tour in the San Joaquin Valley. This question stayed with Helene Jones as she reflected on how the last year had felt, having moved with her partner from Bristol, UK to the South Bay Area in January 2023. Helene wanted to explore if a garment could capture and embody what California has felt like to them both, and the possibilities of hand stitching to make marks and carry their narrative. She felt drawn to the freedom and mobility that hand stitching offered, to hold and shape the fabric adding to the memory that already existed in it. She strove to make a zero waste T-shirt for her partner by listening to the fabric and him, as Helene thought through the subtle and clean finishes she could achieve to realize a product quality she was proud of.



Longevity



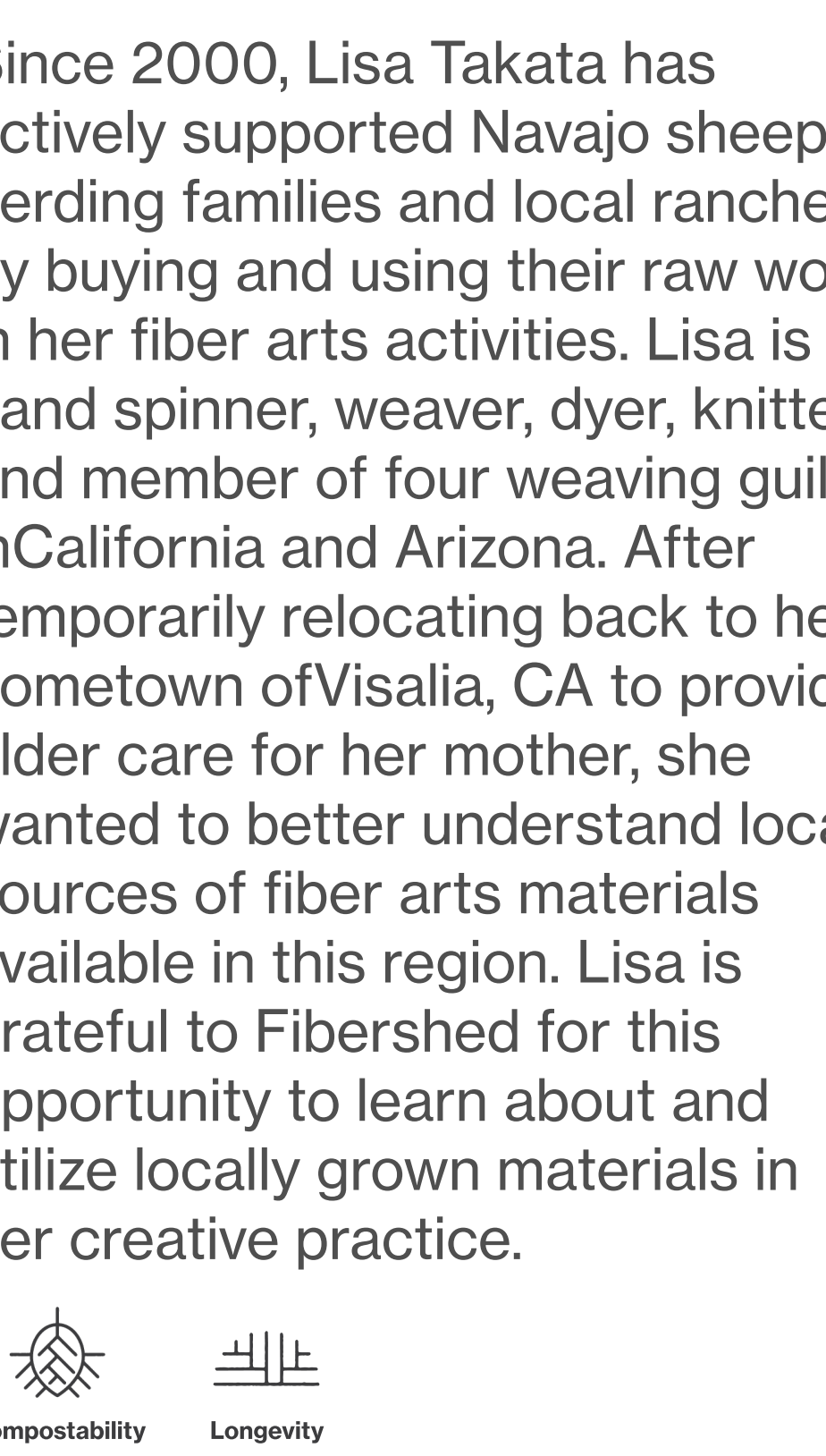
Kelsey Chen / Sessile Clothing

La Honda, CA

Sessile Clothing is a project inspired by collaboration with local materials, ecology, and farmers to create a soil-to-soil clothing brand from small local farms that features transformable, playful, modular design that is adjustable for fit and shape.



Compostability



Lily Hourigan

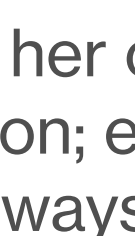
Petaluma, CA

Lily Hourigan (she/her) aspires to design everyday, functional items centered on regenerative materials, sustainable working conditions, longevity, and regional resilience. She holds a BS in Industrial Design from San Francisco State University, and is hoping to use her skills to develop products that create connections to the materials and production processes.

This collection by Lily is designed to create functional, comfortable, and durable pieces that provoke conversation about material choices and clothing care.



Compostability



Longevity



Lisa Takata

Visalia, CA

Since 2000, Lisa Takata has actively supported Navajo sheep herding families and local ranches by buying and using their raw wool in her fiber arts activities. Lisa is a hand spinner, weaver, dyer, knitter and member of four weaving guilds in California and Arizona. After temporarily relocating back to her hometown of Visalia, CA to provide elder care for her mother, she wanted to better understand local sources of fiber arts materials available in this region. Lisa is grateful to Fibershed for this opportunity to learn about and utilize locally grown materials in her creative practice.

Compostability

Longevity

Mira Musank

Castro Valley, CA

Mira Musank (she/her) is an interdisciplinary textile upcycling artist who transforms textile waste into custom garments. She focuses on overconsumption and waste in her climate art expression; exploring radical yet relevant ways to extend textile lifespans that benefit people and the environment. Her works can be found on www.FAFAFOOM.com.

Through this Fibershed Design Challenge, she executes simple, geometric garment designs derived from square shapes in compostable, regionally produced textiles. She is grateful to Fibershed for this opportunity!

Compostability

Longevity

Zero Waste



Lydia Wendt

California Cloth Foundry (CCF)

San Francisco, CA

California Cloth Foundry (CCF) by Lydia Wendt is a collaboration with fashion and nature.

Having previously worked as a designer for prominent fashion brands, she grew disenchanted with their widespread use of plastic fibers and petrochemical dyes and coatings. Recognizing their toxic effects on our health and the environment, Lydia crafted a solution by creating textiles and apparel using natural fibers and dyes that are good enough to eat — as cotton is a carbohydrate, wool a protein and her green chemistry's ingredients predominantly found in the kitchen!

Learn more at clothfoundry.com and follow CCF's work on Instagram [@caclothfoundry](https://www.instagram.com/caclothfoundry).



Compostability



Natalie Walsh

San Francisco, CA

Natalie is a digital designer by trade and maker by passion. She has a degree in fashion, knows her way around a shop, and has dabbled in most creative mediums. She is currently evolving her art practice to minimize impact by using natural and found materials and applying circular design thinking. The Fibershed challenge has been a perfect way to apply these principles, explore the world of natural dyes, and engage with California's regional fiber system.

The pieces included in this show are inspired by climate anxiety, grief, and hope.

The sweater is a data representation of the world on fire. The embroidery is a graph of temperature anomalies from 1948 - 2023 in 5 year increments, sourced from NOAA. At first the data reads as an abstract pattern, however 2023 was such a departure that visually it appears like an accident. This intentionally highlights the uncharted territory we are quickly entering on a rapidly warming planet.

The dress is a visual representation of the world on fire. Black created from biochar fades into fire engulfing the green of the forest, finally fading to a clear blue sky. The hood can be put up to allow the wearer to hide from the reality upon us in grief and fear, or be worn down to look out in hope and action. Both feelings are natural reactions to the uncertainties ahead, often experienced simultaneously.

When Natalie isn't sewing, she does freelance brand and digital product design for climate companies, and co-leads Climate Designers, an organization focused on empowering designers across disciplines to take action on climate.



Compostability



Zero Waste

Thank you for visiting our final *Borrowed from the Soil* Design Exhibition.

If you would like to learn more about fiber and dye systems, climate beneficial agriculture, Fibershed initiatives, and more...

- Visit our website, fibershed.org
- Join our [email newsletter](#).
- Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Read: [*“Fibershed: A new “farm-to-closet” vision for the clothes we wear”*](#) by Fibershed Founder and Executive Director, Rebecca Burgess
- Listen to the [Weaving Voices](#) podcast
- Read our [blog](#)