

## CONTEXTILE 2026 CONTEMPORARY TEXTILE ART BIENNIAL

### TEXTILE TALKS | Themes and Programme 6th and 7th september | Auditorium CCVF | Guimarães | Portugal

A key element of the Contextile programme centres on reflection and the exchange of ideas, placing textiles and their growing importance and prominent presence at artistic events within the context of international contemporary art.

Textile Talks provide an opportunity for artists, creators and researchers to present their artistic and/or research projects focusing on textiles, art and other disciplines. The Textile Talks will feature Contextile 2026 partners and guests, artists and guest speakers, and speakers selected through this call for applications. The encounters and conversations in 2026 will revolve around six sub-themes based on the concept of the 8th edition of Contextile: **BY A THREAD / Por um Fio**.

#### THEME

##### **BY A THREAD / Por um Fio**

The fabric of the world, once thought to be solid, is now revealed as vulnerable. The threads that compose it have been stretched to their limits by successive ecological, political, economic and social crises, appearing to be about to snap. We are approaching systemic breaking points as ecosystems collapse and livelihoods are threatened.

However, it is precisely in this thread – minimal unity, sensitive and open to transformation – that a regenerative power is inscribed. It is in this thread that possibilities for resistance, reparation, and reconfiguration of the future are intertwined.

This current edition of Contextile calls upon this ambivalence as a horizon: thread as a sign of urgency, but also as an instrument of invention, mediation, and proposal.

This is the thread that sews the Biennial in 2026, spanning artistic practices that problematize the devastating effects of the fashion industry, the accelerating consumption, and the extractive logic of textile production.

This reflection is not limited to merely denouncing: It acts as an affirmative gesture, proposing alternatives, designing possible trajectories, and summoning other materialities, whether they are ecological, sensitive or relational, repositioning the artistic creation at the centre of an ethic of care and sustainability.

## SUBTHEMES

### 1. Change in the Weather

In a social context characterised by the backtracking of governments, oil companies and the financial sector on their climate commitments, a critical reflection on the present and our collective future is essential. In light of the Land Ethic® concept, there is an urgent need to broaden the notion of community to include soil, water, plants and animals as an integral part of our ethical responsibility. Reimagining horizons and creating new narratives means recognising that caring for the Earth is inseparable from caring for humanity.

### 2. Narratives of Power

Textiles embody memory, resilience and violence. Contemporary textile art challenges dominant narratives and reimagines silenced stories, reflecting on agency, authority and voice. The relationship between textiles and technology not only enables personal empowerment and the ability to adapt to a changing environment but may also be linked to new forms of social control and authoritarianism through digital communication.

### 3. Textile Waste as Art

Contemporary art allows us to reimagine sustainability not as a constraint, but as an opportunity for formal and material experimentation. Giving new life to clothing by drawing on the emotional and identity-based connections we have with it, thereby reducing consumer pressure; reusing and reinterpreting the meanings of textile elements in new contexts; or utilising the industry's waste and production scraps – these are all expressions of the same act of caring for the planet as our shared home.

### 4. Dynamic / Changeability

Artistic narratives featuring dynamic expressions explore changes in the qualities of textiles—such as their colour, texture and movement—emphasising their capacity to transform over time. These practices reflect the notion of the thread in motion, in which textiles function as expressive and temporally situated systems. From this perspective, textiles adapt to contexts of social and climate change, seeking responses to new collective political and environmental challenges and to the need to create spaces for individual expression and self-affirmation.

### 5. Working Slowly and with Care

Art as an experiment in collective textile practice, built upon history, local communities and ecosystems, as opposed to extractivist practices that undermine social cohesion. An analysis of industrial heritage and its deconstruction, exploring the potential of pre-industrial forms of production, craftsmanship and small-scale manufacturing as more sustainable modes of production, made viable by democratic access to contemporary technology.

### 6. More Than Human Approaches

Shifting the focus beyond human needs. Contemporary art becomes a tool for coexistence, recognising the wisdom of animals and plants as active agents in creation. Textiles as a restorative practice in harmony with living things. It moves away from an anthropocentric, industrial or purely aesthetic approach to collaborate with nature, living organisms and traditional knowledge, creating eco-regenerative, biodegradable and symbiotic materials, promoting coexistence between species and treating materials as active agents rather than passive resources.

**PROGRAMME** (structure)

**SUNDAY**

6th September 2026

**10:00** | Greetings

- Presentation of Textile Talks, its objectives and methodologies;
- Presentation of the theme  
BY A THREAD / Por um Fio.
- Invited Artist

**11:00** | Coffee Break

**11:15** | Talks on the topic of "Change in the weather"

- Artists and Invited Speakers

**12:00** | Debate

**12:30** | Lunch Break

**14:00** | Talks on the topic of "Narratives of Power"

- Artists and Invited Speakers

**15:10** | Debate

**15:40** | Coffee Break

**16:00** | Talks on the topic of "Textile Waste as Art"

- Artists and Invited Speakers

**16:45** | Debate

**17:15** | Conclusions / Textile Talks Summary

**17:30** | Networking

**MONDAY**

September 7th 2026

**10:00** | Boas Vindas / Greetings

**10:10** | Bienal BAT

**10:50** | Coffee Break

**11:05** | Talks on the topic of "Dynamic / Changeability"

- Artists and Invited Speakers

**12:05** | Debate

**12:35** | Almoço

**14:00** | Talks on the topic of "Working Slowly and with Care"

- Artists and Invited Speakers

**15:10** | Debate

**15:40** | Coffee Break

**16:00** | Talks on the topic of "More than Human approaches"

- Artists and Invited Speakers

**16:45** | Debate

**17:15** | Conclusions / Textile Talks Summary

**17:30** | Networking