Curated By You: Madison Moore Makes Oona Dress in Wisteria Linen

Description

Oona dress in FS Wisteria FS Signature Finish Midweight Linen

Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do

I'm a maker in pretty much every aspect of my life. I work full-time in publishing as an editor of arts and crafts books, and spend all my other time working on my own arts projects. I'm an author and illustrator in the picture book & middle grade sphere. My first two books were published over the past two years (Bonnie's New Old Outfit is all about a girl making her own wearables!).

Then, I spend a lot of time "filling the well" (so to speak) with natural dyes, ceramics, gardening, knitting, quilt dabbling, and baking. And, of course, sewing! I started sewing seriously in 2022 (posting @_madmakes), and immediately fell in love.

Why do you sew?

I find sewing to be so self-indulgent—it feels nourishing, fun, and rewarding in my everyday life. I started sewing for myself mainly because I saw a lot of gaps in my wardrobe and nothing exciting to fill them. I was feeling a real disconnect with ready-to-wear clothing.

So, I sew for myself. I've always had interest in making wearable art, and sewing took this to a whole new level. I wear me-mades almost every single day, and feel so connected to myself, my style, and my tastes.

#ZW Gather Dress by Birgitta Helmersson

What do you like to listen to when you're working (and why)?

I usually watch something low-stakes while I sew. Fun animated movies, comfort TV shows (Bob's Burgers, New Girl, Adventure Time), or a silly rom-com series. Every once in a while I trade that out for slow music (folk, instrumentals, moody stuff).

As a child, what was your first encounter and memory of beauty?

I remember spending a lot of time outside, playing and crafting with natural materials—mud pies, flower soup, toad-spotting, creek-wading. Those tactile and messy memories are some of my favorites. I aspire to find the space to play in my work now, though it can be really tough to be that free!

Where is home and how does it affect what you do?

I'm a homebody, so I spend a lot of time thinking about home! I've lived in Chicago for more than seven years and am now scoping out new cities. An apartment can be a tricky place to take on so many crafts, and space (or lack thereof) has a huge impact on a creative practice. I'm very much in a make-do mode now, with spaces that can transform in accordance with my current project, but I'm working towards something with more permanent maker space in the future.

There's also a lot to parse between inspiration in an urban environment vs a nature-centric environment. There's a lot of beauty in both, and I often find myself missing or seeking one or the other.

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Name a book that you've recently read which inspired you and why?

Though I do read a lot of adult fiction, I'm inspired to choose a picture book: The Queen in the Cave by Júlia Sardà. This book is part mystery, part adventure, and part celebration of self-discovery, set against magical illustration after magical illustration. A trio of sisters climb over their backyard fence and face increasingly mesmerizing landscapes: a field of nettles, swarms and parades of insects and animals, bats, cats, spiders, witches, and even a funeral. The story is one of transformation, from one of lighthearted, familial adventure to something that asks young readers to reimagine what they know about themselves, and about their loved ones.

I love self-reflection (I spend every morning journaling), the fantastic amount of detail in the illustrations, and the determination of chasing wild dreams to the end.

What was the first thing you ever remember making on your own? Tell us about this memory.

I did a lot of drawing and painting as a child, but I particularly remember one of my first sewing projects very well. I learned how to make pillows shaped like letters, then decided I would make them into Christmas gifts—each person in my family would get their name spelled out in pillows with fabric that matched their interests! That was a plan for more than 30 pillows, and needless to say, I gave up. It's possible everyone got their first initial, but I'm not sure I even got that far.

Foraging Goldenrod for natural dye in a hand-knit #drinksonthepatiocrop by Shanakay Salmon

Who are your muses and inspiration?

I get so much inspiration from illustration, and from working in a variety of mediums. I have a really lovely positive feedback loop between my different makes—a color palette in a picture book might inspire a combination of fabrics, or a natural garden color might lend itself to a ceramic glaze combo.I also, of course, get a ton of sewing inspo from the sewing instagram community. I have used IG for other crafts and arts, and have not found any community more rewarding/helpful/practical/inspiring/friendly than the sewing community.

Nature is maybe my primary muse. The beauty of plants, sunlight, landscapes, and animals show up in all my work.

Do you have a community of crafters/ makers around you or do you find you are on your own?

I primarily am an independent maker. Making time is the perfect kind of alone time for me, so I really do enjoy working on projects by myself, though it can be great from time-to-time to host craft nights with friends. And, like I mentioned, I do love interacting online with makers, and so much inspiration comes from seeing what others are doing. I have a newsletter about making and creativity that is my favorite place to show up online and talk to other creatives.

I also do have a unique community as an arts & crafts book editor—I get to work directly and intimately with a wide variety of artists through bookmaking. I'm lucky to get that insight into so many different processes.

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How important is it to make something with your hands?

It's everything to me! Making is really my calling, and the thing that brings joy and meaning to my everyday. I love to think about what creativity does to us, and how we change as we pursue and revel in it.

I keep a maker diary that records details of textile and hands-on maker projects, and a creative blog where I explore making and creativity topics once a month.

What has been the most rewarding sewing project you've completed so far and why?

This is such a hard question! I think the best answer is my #ZW Gather Dress . It was an exciting project in so many ways, and an early project for me. I thrifted the fabric from a local store on a trip to HI—it was fabric that felt completely unique. Then, each part of the pattern was a dream to execute, and each step felt beautiful. I took so many process photos of this dress because I just felt truly in awe of each stage it went through.

I feel free, colorful, and comfortable every time I wear it. When I put it on for the first time, I just felt so much joy. It was a project that taught me I could do big things with sewing!

Runner-up Projects: Underwear & Lysimaque Fougere

What is more important to you – the process or the final product (ie your garment)?

I think with all kinds of making, both are important! But, in sewing, I usually think the final garment is more important because it's a big investment—sewing takes a lot of time and money. If your garment is not comfortable and appealing to wear, it's not going to serve its function for you.

But, at the same time, I need to enjoy making the thing, or what's the point? The process is also where you learn, experiment, and grow.

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What does success mean to you?

Success is feeling good in the everyday, and feeling motivated and inspired by the projects I'm working on. Success is in the process. If I can wake up most days and feel excited by the stuff I'm working on and fulfilled by my to-do list, things are going well.

What have you chosen to make out of FS linen and why?

I chose to make the Viki Sews Oona Dress! I wanted to choose a pattern that challenged me, and that would be suitable to wear on NYE in the Dominican Republic while visiting my partner's family. I was drawn to a dress that would look striking in the bright Wisteria linen color. It certainly was a challenging project for me, and I made a few alterations to the bust shape and side cut-outs to better fit my body, but it was exactly the look I was hoping for.

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