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“The ability to solve problems, comprehend new ones and look at old problems with new eyes”. (Micelli, S. 2011)

Textile frontiers. Materials before products. The shift of fashion design from products to materials

Textile making is one of the most ancient activities and an industrial sector that combines traditional manufacturing with the research of new methods and processes for the integration of up-to-date technologies. Today, facing a challenging future and discovering the new tools that science provides to deal with it, designers have the unique opportunity to explore this field, being facilitators of cross-fertilization processes, searching for new solutions to merge traditional and artisanal practices with a constantly evolving market.

Today, talking about fabric and not about clothes, about materials and not about products, might seem inappropriate; instead, it is the meaning we wanted to give to this special issue of Moda Palavra. Inviting the international scientific community to reflect on the fact that the clothes we wear every day are first of all transformed fibers, fabrics, which represent the wisdom and ability of men to transform a simple material into something extraordinary.

A fibre is the main unit that composes a garment. It is where everything begins. Based on the choice of the fibre used for a garment, you will have a completely different result, in feeling, sensation, colour, durability.

Many things have changed during years: the way of producing clothes, and then fibres have been completely converted, from the manual harvesting of cotton to the production of synthesized fibres with new and more complex features.

The past year (AA.VV. 2021, p. 10) will go down in history as one of the most challenging for the fashion industry on record, marked by declining sales, shifting customer behavior and disrupted supply chains. On top of a humanitarian crisis affecting the lives of billions of people, Covid-19 is the catalyst for a deepening economic crisis. Like many other sectors, the fashion industry finds itself in the midst of unprecedented adversity, with revenues and margins under pressure. Yet the shifting landscape is also creating pockets of momentum and, despite the ongoing, widespread impact of the pandemic, some fashion companies are developing new ways to compete.

Designers are remolding their actions touching the pillars of the contemporary, as sustainability, artisanal processes, ethical work, the availability of resources, the technological study of futuristic materials.

As Fletcher argues in *Designers, Visionaries and Other Stories: A Collection of Sustainable Design Essays*, (Chapman 2009, p. 29), we are not looking for mass answers, but instead, a mass of answers. This pluralistic approach leads us toward a more nuanced sustainable design culture, in which essential debate begins to unpack, question, and explore new ways of working with issues of sustainability through design. In this polemical context, design is reinvigorated with a rich culture of critique that directly reinstates it as the central pioneer of positive social, economic, and environmental change, instead of a subservient, end-of-pipe problem-solving agency, as has recently become the custom.

The contributions have been articulated in three themes:

Sustainability, as an approach to the contemporary textile and fashion design; not only linked to the

environmental vision but concerning the economy, respect for people's work, production.

Textile design and manual processes, considering fabrics as part of the ancestral history of the human being: for over two thousand years it has been the product of the handicraft with needles or on the looms and as a cultural artifact has accompanied the evolution of populations and territories. The manual aspects of the textile product and the complexity of its construction are still unchanged in their essence even where the most advanced technologies are involved.

The contemporary role of textile designers, with a creativity that has to navigate the infinite opportunities and possible directions of technological development, questioning the present to progress towards a conscious and improving future. How is this figure changing in the relationship with the actors of the textile sector, in understanding fluid contexts — more or less structured and industrial — in which they operate, in mastering the existing dynamics, opportunities, boundaries and the prospects of technical and technological evolution.

Maria Antonietta Sbordone, Regina Aparecida Sanches, Alessandra De Luca, Carmela Ilenia Amato in **Capability based-approach. Re-Invent people and materials viable relationships** argues on how the sustainability as an approach to the contemporary textile and fashion design it's not only linked to the environmental vision but concerning the economy, respect for people's work and production. Mention LeHew (2011), A new dominant social paradigm (DSP) would focus on creating apparel products that are more efficient in material use, production and consumer utility, as well as better meeting the human needs of the consumer base, inherently more social than material needs.

Similarly, clothing education in the dominant new social paradigm would promote the development of skills that would most likely include understanding human needs and ecosystem limitations, working collaboratively with the market rather than trying to dominate it and an understanding of local culture and tradition.

Cássia Cristina Dominguez Santana with **Illustrated Sustainability** bring us on a Brazilian context where the fashion industry has economic benefits for the country, however it is responsible for negative impacts on the environment. Through fashion illustration, as a way to spread reflections on the zero disposal of textile waste, the author presents an article where the illustration gives a new meaning to waste, inserting textile elements in its graphic composition deriving from the construction of artifacts of fashion. Therefore, illustrations can be explored through reflective symbologies that make contributions to cleaner and more sustainable fashion.

Martina Motta reports a qualitative investigation on the Italian fashion supply chain; in **Talks On A Sustainable Fashion And Textile System: A Qualitative Analysis On Stakeholders** the aim is to detect the hot spots where human interaction among manufacturers and designers is fostering sustainable practices, processes, products.

About the interaction among Industrial textile sector and different stockholders, in **Fashion Confronting Unrelated Sectors. The Ideal Model of Manufacturing Symbiosis Between Industrial Systems**, Maria Antonietta Sbordone, Barbara Pizzicato, Gianni Montagna, Sonia Seixas reflect on a possible symbiosis between the fashion system and unrelated companies focused on reducing textile waste. Through a review of the reference literature, with a critical, constructive, and real analysis of the strategies for the

construction of this symbiosis, the importance of collaboration, or vice versa, of the mechanisms for enhancing competition is highlighted. The aim is to contribute to a reflection on the development of collaboration and cooperation skills in an interdisciplinary, or even transdisciplinary, approach for the training and preparation of fashion design professionals, requiring a greater commitment from the Academy in creation. of interactions and interrelationships with very different disciplinary sectors.

About experience in the fields, Aline Monçores in **The Textile materiality in the graduation of the fashion designer** presents a methodological experience lived in a Fashion Design course in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, made with students from the last semester during the development of their conclusion projects. It presents the study of a tool for the creative process and some results obtained. The text also reflects on the importance of textile material as a creative element and not just as a means for clothing.

In research **Industrial sewing as a creative resource in the clothing Surface Design project**, Ana Cláudia de Abreu and Marizilda dos Santos Menezes seeks to explore the possibilities of industrial sewing to be considered as a creative resource to generate innovative surfaces in clothing, anchored on three pillars: in the design approaches of Surface Design, in the technical aspects of industrial sewing and in characteristics of textile materials. For this, an exploratory investigation was carried out, with the application of experiments using four techniques of straight industrial sewing in three weights of fabrics. The results have been cataloged through the effects obtained on surfaces as a graphic, structural, and graphic structural

function, proving to be a creative resource that can be explored at the beginning of the design of clothing products.

References

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