

Materials of Fashion

From
Analogue
Principles
to
Hybrid
Practices

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DUCTION

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INTRO- DUCTION

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Short Bio of the author: *Prof. Dorothea Mink studied fashion design and has worked for renowned fashion houses, including for Jil Sander. She was a professor of fashion design at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Hannover, Germany. In 2002, she was appointed at the University of the Arts Bremen, where she teaches integrated design with a focus on fashion. She is focusing her research on experimental design and the practical processes relevant to developing models. She has pursued questions relating to combinations of 2D materials based on methods provided by 3D body architectures and material sciences involving new technologies in a significant number of projects. Professor Mink has shared her work with the professional community at her conferences and accompanying publications such as "Out of Order" (Bremen, 2010/2011). She has published her groundbreaking research on Charles James in the widely acclaimed, eponymous book "Charles James ~ The Couture Secrets of Shape" in 2019.*

The interdisciplinary exploration project “Materials of Fashion — From Analogue Principles to Hybrid Practices” examines digitalisation in the field of materials research as well as efforts towards individualisation of body and clothing concepts. The project sets out to test fundamental changes in the process, as well as approaches related to methods and applications. The project also aims to advance observations of intelligent and automatic interfaces in the unfettered, creative design process.

The impacts of digitalisation on the processes of design and manufacturing raise fundamental questions. How could analogue methods be transferred to and into digital design and production processes? For example, at what points do frictions arise in the networked interaction of actors and systems? Or to what extent do digital technologies lag behind analogue approaches despite their increased scope for design work? Questions of sustainability and resource optimisation in relation to the limits of digital means are becoming increasingly urgent. And: what will remain of traditional, craft-based approaches in the future? Design and production will be based on physical models and the human body at least to some extent. From an anthropological and semiotic point of view, the body is a universal constant, always at the intersection of various lifeworld systems of meaning and structures such as gender, materiality, clothing, and communication.

As much as the design and implementation options for design, production and uses are increasing, new challenges arise on the technological and methodological level. But analogue processes can only be transferred directly to a limited extent. Going about by trial and error as well as the use of haptic and tactile approaches are still essential methods in design. Functioning synergies are rare. The advantages and ‘value’ of craftsmanship, of manual creation, appear again and again on different levels. However: The need to manually rework and improve the material and the design appears more and more uneconomical, requires a lot of time, and the resulting use of resources tends to make the process unprofitable. Leaving physicality behind is questionable for creativity. The human ability to perceive, the associated ability to judge, the instinct and, last but not least, the spontaneous spatial intuition of individuals are at stake.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ursula Zillig outlines “FOUNDATIONS”.

The lecture series “The HfK Bremen Exploration Project: From Analogue Principles to Hybrid Practices — Fashion Analogue and Digital” offered the following contributions from June 2022 to October 2023. We present them here in reviewed versions.

Anna Hadzelek showcased her sustainability project “RE-SHIRT: Brand New Temporary Prints”.

Aart van Bezooijen and Paula Raché discussed “A Possible Role for DIY Materials in Prototyping Sustainable Futures”.

Charlett Wenig and Johanna Hehemeyer-Cürten introduced “The Bark Project – Materials Research across Design and Natural Sciences. Exploring and Harnessing the Potential of Natural Materials: Tree Bark in Textile and Fashion Design”.

Carolin Pertsch tackled “Material as a Hybrid Experiment”.

Julia Catrin Eberhardt spoke on her research on “INTER/SECTIONS – Creating and Investigating Sartorial Culture”.

Katja Bernert offered an encouragement to “Think Outside the Box: Using Textiles in Between the Dimensions of a Blouse and a House”.

Matilde Frank explained “Textile Patterns: Exploring Identity, Culture, and Design”.

Karen van Godtsenhoven explored “Fashion Creation as an Embodied Practice: of the Kimono, Patterns, and the Space in-between”.

Franziska Müller-Reissmann presented on “METABOLISM – ‘Sustainable Materials’ in Design & Art”.