Shaping Speculation. Experimental Research Spaces, the Knowledge Economy and the Role of the New Fashion Augur.

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Biography.

Simon Thorogoodis Senior Research Fellow at the London College of Fashion. Distinguished as being one of the earliest fashion designers to integrate digital interactive technology into practice, his research is concerned with communicating fashion design differently. He has exhibited his projects extensively internationally and he was the inaugural Fashion Designer in Residence at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Abstract.

As we find ourselves in the midst of an escalating evaluation culture in art and design universities and colleges, there is concern from both within academia and the wider creative industries that any such assessment begins from an assumption that all creative expression can be conveniently and straightforwardly measured. As more open academic enquiry is being supplanted by evidence-based scholarship and agenda-driven initiatives, (digital futures or health & wellbeing, for example), places of learning may be inadvertently inviting a progressive institutional loss of risk-taking and adventure in creative research.

Much forward-thinking and alert Research and Innovation (R&I) is increasingly happening and at a much faster pace in industry, and creative institutions will need to protect and extend their original didactic calling in novel or differing ways. Expectantly then, can we acquire and foster new means, channels and certification of creative excursion for academia? This pursuit does not just implicate the agenda or the medium, but a broader and defiantly uncertain notion of conceptual exploration. Thereafter, can we perceive fashion not just as a mission to create accomplished garments, objects, or environments, but instead as the production of new philosophical and theoretical conditions in which the discipline can further adjust, evolve, and challenge in socially and environmentally responsible ways?

Within aspects of academic learning and research, this article argues for a need to replicate exploratory and open research models, centres, studios or creative initiatives that understanding how unanticipated or unforeseen breakthroughs can ultimately prove more valuable than outcomes of set or prescribed research programmes.

5 Keywords. Fashion –

Design Practice, Failure, Research & Innovation, SACRED, Uncertainty.

Introduction.

“The jobs in the greatest demand in the future don’t yet exist and will require workers to use technologies that have not yet been invented to solve problems that we don’t yet even know are problems.”

* **Richard Riley, former US Secretary of Education.**

Fashion has popularly been used to describe latest trends, manifestations of contemporary clothing, social movements or behaviour, ways of doing something or how something is made into a particular form. Within this definition, fashion designers, whether individuals or in teams, have traditionally practiced the application of a particular set of aesthetics and historical or contemporary ideas, sources and references to clothing, accessories and spaces. This proprietary process of interpretation for a client, audience or marketplace has largely come to determine the methodology and culture of the contemporary fashion designer, where they are often perceived and celebrated atop a triangular organizational model as the inspired personality, ego, auteur, and architect of ideas.

However, this hierarchical standard in the wider creative industries has been progressively challenged and replenished by expressions of co-authorship and co-design, as perhaps exemplified by varieties of home music-making software. Digital audio workstations such as GarageBand or Tracktion T6, for example, which allow users to manipulate pre-recorded musical instruments, voices and studio treatments to create finished pieces of music could serve as conceptual templates for new forms of fashion design software and means of “composing” clothing derived from museum archives or other pre-stored files of historical or contemporary collections.

Such developments and opportunities may give rise to an emergent breed of fashion designer, researcher or operative that sits within a new type of testing space and framework. This space may be represented by smaller types of pioneering, ideational, and research and innovation labs or “imaginariums”, that have, what I would term, SACRED aims, (an acronym formed from the words – Scientific, Artistic, Commercial, Recreational, Eudaemonic & Daedal).

These SACRED spaces and personnel may embody all the creative, technological and marketable ideals of contemporary art and design education, but where they also skilfully advance far reaching social and environmental responsibility, challenge models of material consumption, and enhance collective states of wellbeing for fashion.

As a template for more conjectural and entrepreneurial creative co-ops for academia, this may inspire convergence on more playful means of conceiving and disseminating digital, non-physical, conceptual, philosophical and abstract notions of fashion not purposefully conducted elsewhere. With talent and technology becoming the two principal drivers of innovation, researchers and practitioners will need the appropriate platforms and resources to creatively fuel more undefined, even ambiguous research areas. Dynamic, ambitious and original practitioners and thinkers should be nurtured as key assets within any organization, where a stimulating environment enables them to feel fulfilled, inspired and prized. Such a policy may deliver increased productivity in new, emerging areas of investigation and, in turn, lead to new markets and commercial opportunity.

Within an ever-competitive academic marketplace, open-ended research may also increase prospects of attracting the best emerging minds, particularly in growth areas such as digital domains but crucially in more distant and perhaps uncharted waters. It is for this reason that original, unusual or oblique forms of enquiry should be championed, alongside more conventional agenda-driven research, for its potential visionary influence and ability to further studentship, innovation, culture, enterprise and institutional influence.

Fashion and Uncertainty: A Creative Kinship.

Uncertainty, as discussed by Knight, (1921), is a term used in subtly different ways in a number of diverse research fields, including economics, finance, insurance, philosophy, psychology, physics, statistics, sociology, engineering and information science. It typically applies to predictions of future events, to physical or academic measurements that are already made, but it especially applies to the unknown and that which is yet to be known in a particular field of study. Uncertainty can also be seen to predominantly flourish in arbitrary and haphazard conditions and environments, and due to prescribed conditions of simplicity, ignorance, ingenuousness, imagination and prurience.

Almost certainly, there has always existed a relationship with uncertainty in most design disciplines, where the culture of designing itself is considered the exploration of ideas that conspire towards that yet to “be”, whether physical, virtual or conceptual. Here, it is understood that to be creative requires divergent thinking, where one generates many unique ideas, then with convergent thinking those ideas are combined into the best result.

Traditionally the role of the designer has been to engage design dilemmas through a rational process of analysis and utilization of tools and technologies or designerly tools. However, this procedure is often solution-centred - fixed upon an end product or entity - a tailored jacket for example. But here the design is largely understood and implicit - it is ultimately a manifestation of the future as a set of clearly defined scenarios.

However, design can also be considered as less about conventional goals or completion-orientated approaches but rather as developing strategies, technologies, ideas and thinking towards aims which do not clearly exist yet or cannot be fully formulated, understood, or appreciated. Moreover, for a discipline to find difference, it should habitually look outside its own industry and consider a process of unlearning. This can be useful in that it helps us to step outside any rigid perceptions we may hold. It can give us license to find new conceptual spaces in which to theoretically invent futures to conduct imaginative research outside the constraints of the market place.

A notion of uncertainty, as argued here, can be seen to coalesce from a diversity of sources and subject areas. But increasingly states of uncertainty are being informed and nourished by aspects of philosophy, something that may become a progressively applied aspect of fashion. Eastern, Buddhist or Taoist thinking, for example, teach us that the idea of “nothingness” may be considered definitive in order for us to extend our reach and scope of life. Depending upon one’s standpoint, such notions may be significant in that they can challenge conventional cultures of objectification, consumption and materialism and help focus awareness of what is left behind, unnoticed or disregarded.

Within academic research, some developing educational programs tied to set methods of testing, assessment, league tables and research frameworks, however successfully they might be argued and championed, or however they may be seen to aggregate research, do not always wholly reflect or support a diverse spectrum of unique talent and skills.

Successive and comprehensive governmental cuts in academic funding, especially in the Arts, has forced many UK Universities to uncomfortably re-configure themselves as businesses, where the customer-student with their attendant anxieties of employability has understandably become the primary focus. This can mean, in some instances, that other areas of the academic constitution become progressively compromised of energy, assets and funding and where ensuing policies may become less engaged by a procurement of knowledge for its own sake. In this peculiar setting, frontier or wild research may become devalued as non-physical, non-income generating frippery. Increasingly tying-up art and design institutions in systems and cultures of performance measurement may simply sustain standardised, overcrowded and understaffed learning environments, populated by a type of homogenous and perpetual student with growing lists of qualifications to their name. This is a theme extensively discussed in *Unsafe Space. The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus* (Slater, 2016), which vigorously argues that ideas, convictions and research, or indeed any condition of learning, must be intellectually dangerous in order to eliminate conformity and conventionality.

Where ideas are not sufficiently dangerous or adventurous, we are beginning to see, to varying degrees, the creative, technology and scientific industry sectors steadily assuming academia’s previous role as progenitors of new research, knowledge and instruction. A recent review of art and design schooling, *Creative Schools: Revolutionizing Education from the Ground Up* (Robinson & Aronica, 2015), has contended that such so-called “Fordist” models of academia are being seen to increasingly diminish and fail singular and uncommon creative voices.

Fashion Failure and Fashion as “Perhaps”.

Historically, an understanding of achievement and success frequently identifies a particular (and perhaps mistaken) belief in perfection, conclusion and completion. Aligned to this, a conventional notion of failure predisposes many to habitually abandon or discard a fruitless venture, and which explains to some extent, why failure is often considered an unfinished effort.

Yet, in the realm of creativity, failure can carry a very different meaning and value. It is potentially the author of change and variation, allowing us to go beyond conventional assumptions, pre-conceptions and what (we think) we know. Failure hypothetically provides an amenable and adaptable space where rules can be abandoned and circumvented. There can be an understanding that, as a contextual framework we put around a research process or experiment, failure is ultimately enlightening.

As argued in *Deep Simplicity: Chaos, Complexity and the Emergence of Life* (Gribbin, 2005), the most interesting and productive place for a condition of learning and inventiveness is found neither in chaste states of order or chaos, but somewhere on the cusp of the two. Intriguingly, it is argued that many of the most significant discoveries in the modern era have happened at the borders between disciplines - a peculiar place where discovery and creativity can thrive and where there is opportunity for dynamic exchange and chemistry. History has shown that many inspired and creative figures behind significant scientific discovery have been distinguished as specialist interrogators, possessing a proficiency of inquiry and purposefully asking questions very few others were asking. As a result, they frequently uncover clusters of unexpected answers no one else is seeking. In *All Life is Problem Solving* (Popper, 2001), the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper observed how he believed science never actually achieves absolutes or eternal truths through linear investigation but instead gets closer to facts by disqualifying false ideas through non-linear approaches and the vibrant confrontation of the unknown, the incommensurable and the uncontrollable.

In quite a naïve sense, and when it is good, art and design education has had a profound way of changing society and developing spaces and mind-sets to contest, dismantle and experiment with culture. Certainly, throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s, the art school system prevalent in the UK disrupted what “art” actually was. Uncertainty arose as to who was the artist, what the craft or outcome was, where value would lie, and who held authority in this changed landscape. Again, when it is good, art and design education functions as a rich medium of difference, interrogation, ingenuity and surprise, nurturing a sense of unlearning, which can usefully destabilise what we think we know in life. However, this notion of non-knowing should not be mistaken for ignorance or illiteracy, but rather a particular evolution and accomplishment of knowledge.

Fashion has a long tradition of borrowing from Fine Art, and when it has it has often inspired some of its most compelling oeuvre, as can be exemplified by such designers as Elsa Schiaparelli, Yves Saint Laurent or Hussein Chalayan, for example. If fashion is similarly charged with asking both different and deeper questions of itself, might such attitude prove to nourish and sustain new kinds of “boutique” research programs? In such manifestations, we might see resonance with contemporary models like Google’s new start-up incubator, Area 120 or the Agency of Unrealized Projects (AUP) – an archive of unrealised ideas established in 2011 by e-flux publishing platform and the Serpentine Gallery London. Elsewhere, the Whitney Independent Study Program purposefully fosters the maintenance of critical space to challenge gratuitous academic and creative commercialism, profitability and marketability and Stanford University’s Knight-Hennessy Scholarship provides an unprecedented platform for those charged to “lead ambitious change in a complex world”. From the recent past, we could re-visit such programs as Experiments in Art and Technology (EAT), an organisation established in 1967to connect artists with engineers, or Xerox’s Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), an innovative R&D wing set up in 1970 to pioneer information technology research.

We might also witness a developing creative culture based around the notion of the Parcour. Recognised as an official sport by the UK Sports Council in late 2016, this movement began in the 1980’s by French teenagers in Paris who were physically and conceptually exploring their urban spaces in unique and challenging ways. Latterly, the discipline has been adapted as a revolutionary modular training program for professional athletes to enhance their mental agility, athletic prowess and acrobatic artistry. Intriguingly, the activity is also developing as an art form, advanced by museum curators as a means of shifting conceptual perceptions and attitudes within creative institutions. Indeed, Parcours is now a thriving urban intervention program as part of the annual Art Basel fair, (https://www.artbasel.com/).

In his seminal book *Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field* (Hadamard, 1953), the French mathematician Jacques Hadamard conducted a poll of the 100 great mathematicians and physicists at the time, including Carl Friedrich Gauss, Hermann von Helmholtz and Henri Poincaré, asking how they arrived at their pioneering scientific or mathematical breakthroughs. Only a handful claimed to use straightforward mathematical symbology at all. Surprisingly for the time, all claimed that their discoveries were chiefly made through imagery or figurative terms. Furthermore, approximately a third of these, including Albert Einstein, maintained that the origination of his radical ideas and theorems was directly due to physical play or engagement with concepts. Einstein curiously describes how he literally experienced the abstract spaces and themes he was dealing with directly through his body. Hadamard postulated that the scientists both created and solved dilemmas through a process of “sudden spontaneousness” and described his own mathematical thinking as largely wordless, principally defined by mental images that represented perfect solutions to problems.

This hypothesis was further sustained by biochemist Robert Root-Bernstein, co-author of *Sparks of Genius* (Root-Bernstein & Root Bernstein, 2001), who directed a study of 150 eminent scientists throughout history. He established that nearly all seminal inventors were also musicians, artists, writers or poets and determined that it was fundamentally because they were all creatively gifted that enabled them to make such innovative and inventive discoveries in their particular field. Root-Bernstein asserted that whilst science and technology seeks to provide clear and dependable answers about research problems, the arts and humanities subjects resourcefully employ more abstract notions of ambiguity, doubt and scepticism to address dilemma.

The New Design Augur.

Through his Copenhagen Interpretation experiment, Danish physicist Neils Bohr proposed a description of quantum mechanics as a phenomenon that can only be captured or made real when the particular researcher exercises imagination and decidedly captures a decision or result (Murdoch, 1989). Any result should therefore be regarded as unfixed, variable and determined only by the particular contextual frame the researcher resolutely places around the experiment. In other words, something is summoned into existence only when we imagine we observe it and where there are no definitive facts, only interpretations. This posits a notion whereby fashion experiments and discoveries might be made in similar capricious ways by “fashion augurs”, (an augur being an ancient Greek or Roman creative and religious figures with visionary powers who “listened” to the future).

Here, the insipient fashion augur might likewise no longer look to just create conventional, customary or functional fashion garments, items, artefacts, spaces, experiences or networks. Instead, they may look to cultivate and advance a particular abstracted argument, concept or manifesto, in the same way that much utopian 20th-century architecture was conceived as conceptual and never entirely intended as functional, completed buildings or developments.

The fashion augur might also be distinguished by an understanding of fashion that is subtly or defiantly disconnected to current or conventional practice perhaps with the task to locate new platforms and prototypes that define patterns of fashion as beyond consumer culture. Andwhere fashion has traditionally catered to the young, often affluent and mostly the able-bodied, the new augur might also be increasingly called upon to de-stigmatise certain societal notions such as aging or disability, incorporating informed and responsible aspects of psychology into their role.

Within fashion, key designers, studios or design houses have often operated as laboratories of ideas. If couture has traditionally functioned as the experimental wing of fashion, then the House of Worth, post-war Christian Dior, 1960’s Pierre Cardin, 1970’s Rudi Gernreich, 1980’s Comme des Garçons, 1990’s Hussein Chalayan, or 2000’s Balenciaga all embody the spirit of the augur – as individuals or collectives who, at key points in their careers, intently listened to a future. But it is often in adjacent design disciplines that we can find interesting paradigms for fashion to emulate and follow.

For instance, architecture in the 1960’s habitually created speculative space for open-ended, theoretical, and unrealised practice and philosophy. Examples can be found in the work of ideologue and writer Cedric Price, the avant-garde, neo-futuristic Archigram group, or the seminal visionary Le Corbusier’s Plan Voisin for Paris. From the world of music, we might take the case of the German digital art pioneer, Manfred Mohr, as augur role model. An early innovator of what he called “programmed expressionism”, Mohr championed the creative possibilities of algorithms throughout the 1960’s but he needed extremely large and powerful institutional machines complete with technical support to generate the type of artwork he envisioned. The Paris Institute of Meteorology would later offer him the use of their advanced meteorological computer so that he could generate his algorithmic art at night whilst the institute conducted its primary role of forecasting future weather patterns by day. This creative co-existence allowed Mohr to create what he called the “super-version” of himself and to find serendipitous creative arenas otherwise inaccessible. Similarly, the contemporary dance choreographer Wayne McGregor has latterly worked extensively with cognitive scientists and has compared his use of the computer to composer John Cage’s appropriation of the *I Ching* ancient Chinese divination oracle in order to bypass customary practice and decision-making.

The job, then, of this evolving hybrid fashion augur will be to conduct uncertain experiments that establish compelling conditions for fashion innovation, even revolution, from initial states of ambiguity. The evolution of such a domain, where those individuals and teams developing ideas and strategies might operate as less of a designer/developer/maker and more of a researcher of newer, (and likely computer-augmented) fashion rehearsals. The augur might then be characterized as a blend of provocateur, pioneer, agitator, radical, revisionist, progressive or dissident.

Unscripted Auditioning and Nascent Imaginings.

In *The Savage Mind*, (1994), Claude Levi-Strauss introduced the idea of the “bricoleur” - an improviser with intent to plan, solve or create by working with whatever comes to hand, where a cognitive condition of free-thinking countenances positive outcomes.

Tied to the arts then, the notion of bricolage has long been played out through hybridized practice that has implicated technology and processes from other, often seemingly unrelated, fields and disciplines.

In *The* *Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Wolfe, 2008), Tom Wolfe discusses a progressive disappearance of the object through key movements such as Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, Conceptualism and Land Art. Much artwork from these episodes exhibits a distinct abstract, philosophical or even mystical quality, where certain artists have sought to draw attention to attention itself rather than to the physical object. For example, the work of the “spatial-light” artist James Turrell can be said to possess a deeply meditative condition that strikingly invites us to revise our perception of the natural world. This type of artwork, can be considered important for its ability to unsettle and provoke audiences and for the way it can potentially remove us from a current societal state and any conventional means of conducting ourselves.

The Internet has similarly proved instrumental in determining new manifestations, languages and places of community. Many of these have evolved as forms of post-capitalism (Mason, 2015), underpinned by a means to exchange ideas, knowledge and capital differently. Such imagined communities will continue to shape people, society and states, in which alternative forms of transaction and value continue to enjoy a renaissance distinguished by common-economies and forms of surrogate currency: for example, (co) ownership, time-banks, childcare, co-ops and self-management organisations, carpools, holiday-swaps and emerging digital crypto-currencies, for example.

These common-communities are extensively re-imagining how they fit in with the world and what belonging actually looks like, often in unanticipated ways. Through cultures of so-called “probabilistic inference” - that is, decision-making based on incomplete information - we will be likely to see an extensive re-mapping of the world.

The question then arises as to how creative practice, academic research and models of education and scholarship might learn from such economies? An interesting case might be found in the Mind and Life Institute in Hadley, Massachusetts, where after some 20 years of deliberations between the Dalai Lama and Western medical researchers, the institute now offers dedicated Summer schools in meditative training for scientists. The long-term objective of this initiative is to promote new forms of interdisciplinary scientific practitioners who are exploring contemplative practice on the mind, behaviour and health to enhance the human condition. Elsewhere, mindfulness training is now increasingly evident in areas of education, commerce, sport (the parcour) and entertainment, and this expanding realm of practice and knowledge will carry clear ethical, and economic implications and opportunities in developing research scenarios and markets.

Of course, merely finding facts or ideas is no longer, necessarily, the prerequisite for research and knowledge. It is rather how we use these facts and ideas. New generations of design students, or augurs, should know how to quantifiably synthesize information, how to inter-relate this, how to pioneer and engineer new creative questions, solutions, systems, networks and processes based on facts and data that are nowadays so easy to acquire online. They might interrogate facts by seeing how they piece together with diverse and more complex collections and arrangements of data, and where the ambiguous and nuanced offspring of these may take them. Indeed, many of today's students will arguably have access to more new knowledge and invention in their lifetime than historically ever recorded, and critical and creative thinking will likely be at the very core of this. Here, there is a developing opportunity, to disconnect the “fashion mind” from an endless fixation with self.

Through such cultural manifestations and shifts of the fashion mindset, we might progressively witness more humanistic digital economies, enterprise and market initiatives as ambient entities - where designers, or any future manifestations of these, may make a livelihood through a distributed hardware, software or registered application of their designs. In the same way, music artists receive royalties when their composition is used or sampled by another act - a distinctive bass line, for instance - forms of fashion royalties might be issued based on how and when a garment is “hired” – worn, photographed, perceived, discussed or engaged with somehow, when a design experience is conducted, reprised or when a particular mindset is instigated. Artists and designers have clearly inherited from scientists the notion of the experimental as a gateway to the new and perhaps more so than ever, creative co-existences will be vital to survival, with a prescribed emphasis on team ingenuity. And through emphasis on software development, coding experiments and forms of “edu-tainment”, fashion may find increased alignment with the shift from commodity capitalism to intellectual/code capitalism or data-economies.

As uncertainty continues to develop as a sanctioned research strand in technology, science and industry R&I, fashion can be similarly motivated and extended through cultures of unrest, new forms of innovation and new types of collaboration. It then becomes imperative that these new models of invention are put into practice and begin to inform a wider world. In *Aims of Education*, Alfred North Whitehead candidly expressed “knowledge does not keep any better than fish. The vitality of thought is in adventure. Ideas won't keep. Something must be done about them”, (1929, page 98).

An Uncertain Conclusion.

In formulating notions of fashion uncertainty, both Literature and Conceptual Art remain rich sources of inspiration, with the idea as overall champion. Where a revolution of thought and deed may not necessarily be written or described in the language of today, perhaps we can develop creative synergies of the future and the present. Here we might prepare conditions and spaces in which uncertain fashion futures can be tested and where these futures are not already a thing of the past at the outset of an investigation.

But to find these futures, we must surely establish more distinct experimental places in fashion education where creative people can be fundamentally dignified and trusted to pursue their creative instincts, and most importantly, where they are allowed to fail.

So, if “the question” becomes the essential driver to that yet to come, any future might increasingly concern itself with the totality of a product, situation or state, with the unreal as much as the physical and with behaviour and experiences. Modernity does not only consist of new things, new materials and new processes, but often of old things made smart, wherethe integral knowledge content of something is essential to the definition of a future. But it can be further argued, that it is essential to establish and cultivate such uncertain, audacious and even privileged spaces to pursue indistinct invention. It will become the responsibility of those determined to find this undefined to communicate it to students and to help them identify emerging spaces, dialogues, niche or boutique opportunities and markets.

However, alongside the rather ideological missive outlined here, it is important to remember that any ambition to counter consumerist cultures or evaluation models will have implications for commercialism and capitalism as pro-genitors of creative progression. Arguably, it is through practices of consumption, both of abstract and physical commodities, that reality happens. We also might acknowledge that uncertainty can be hard to define and distinguish. For many, the absence of the familiar can be more palpable than the presence of the unfamiliar and often it is not until something begins to attain context that it can assume presence and later cultural significance, currency and value.

So there arises a dilemma about how we locate and nurture such places of creative inconsistency for fashion. As stated previously, it is the known and unknown in exact tension that can fuel real operational discovery and which can establish principled yet practical utopias. It is the expectancy and the journey to and engagement with unfamiliarity that will matter, as it always has done. In effect, it is more important for an ideal or strategy to be captivating than for it to be right. And the assertion stands that where creative progress is nourished, new markets are opened up.

Returning to a perceived state of anxiety within UK academia, as universities focus on student employability and the demands of the market place, there is a danger that some educational programmes may neglect the procurement of knowledge for its own sake. It then becomes vital, surely, that educational institutions preserve their primary didactic calling and energetically champion a role as risky learning spaces. If free expression in research declines there might develop a dangerous precedent indeed – a gradual release from open or playful creative thinking. Moreover, questions can be raised whether assessment cultures should themselves be regulated and evaluated and whether smaller, more diverse and more speculative forms of research are seen to operate alongside larger thematic agendas. If creative academia is left unchallenged in this regard, we may be submissively led into prescribed commercial futures potentially determined by those not actually in academia.

However, we should be careful not to fetishize any particular notion of future fashion. With any creative conjecture to find the “next”, we should also remember to disturb the present and re-frame a past. To employ Alfred North Whitehead’s line again, “the vitality of thought is in adventure” – we must seek new means, channels and certification of creative excursion. This does not just mean the manifesto or the medium, the rhetoric of digital futures for example, but a much broader, deeper and defiantly uncertain notion of conceptual exploration to cultivate new paradigms of surprise for fashion, as the unanticipated made necessity.

To further develop Whitehead’s words, “error is the price we pay for progress”, can we rationalise correspondingly that “progress is the prize we earn from error?”

**4622 Words.**

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