



ReModelling Fashion: Future Scenarios for Systemic Change in Fashion

The Re-Modelling Fashion project is part of the UKRI funded, Business of Fashion Textiles and Technology (BFTT) Creative Clusters programme, seeking to deliver R&D in sustainable innovation with and for the UK creative industries. The aim of the project is to provide tools that enable a transformation of the fashion sector through radical approaches to product value and product service systems.

Control

Local

Global

Trust

Fig. 1. Development of inspiration boards inside the scenario building framework. These four scenarios will be starting points to design fashion product service systems that offer a transformative perspective on the industry.

Background

It is widely acknowledged that the fashion sector contributes to pressure on planetary boundaries, and that whilst the industry plays a crucial role in cultural and economic narratives, the trajectory of its impacts is diametrically opposed to global goals. Radical change is needed for the positive aspects of fashion to be sustained without contributing to increasing environmental challenges (Ellen MacArthur Foundation; Global Fashion Agenda). To respond to this challenge this research takes a transformation design approach, as part of a radical shift in perception, strategy, product and business model development for fashion.

Aims

Transformation design challenges designers to develop new frameworks and practices and to create new design spaces for their implementation (Teixeira). Thus the Remodelling Fashion project aims to explore:

- Design for extended value for products including novel acquisition and use practices
- Business model change and innovation for extended value
- New product-service-systems with value in economic, social, environmental and cultural terms

Methods

To embed transformative practices in the creative process, this research moves upstream of the design of products to consider the design of contexts for fashion systems. Using future scenario building methods in a co-inquiry with masters students, SMEs, and a large retailer, an iterated navigation tool supports the development of visions for the future that match the the 'mood board' stage in design, and instil it with key values for regeneration.

This follows the steps for scenario building defined by Peter Schwartz: first identify two critical uncertainties (geography and relationships), then what represents a 'low' and a 'high' for each (local/global, trust/control), and allocate these to two axes of a cross. The matrix thus delineates four scenarios, one in each quadrant. The scenarios can then be fleshed out to include key words and imagery to represent how this imagined context can feed the creative process.

Interim Insights

By actively engaging in co-inquiry with researchers and designer-innovators in the scenario development process, the framework was validated and enriched by the lived experiences of all involved. The workshops carried out with students and designers-innovators in small and large brands have demonstrated the value of rethinking fashion contexts and the value of fashion experiences, and business models beyond the garment. The next steps of the research will consist in fine tuning the methods and tools for this extended approach to scenario development for it to find uses with other groups of participants.

References

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Author: Dr Laetitia Forst
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