HOW FASHION ENABLES CONNECTION AND DISCONNECTION, AND WHY ITS DISCONNECTION EFFECTS ARE UNIVERSAL

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How fashion enables connection and disconnection, and why its disconnection effects are universal.

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ABSTRACT

Community is a difficult to define and easy to assert term, that includes whole entities, symbols, languages, terminology, rules and guidelines and could not include any those indicators. Communities as a single outlet have power to influence individuals perception of selves, their emotional attachment, sense of belonging and social aspirations.

Fashion is a tool and semiotic notion for expression of personality and status through clothing and any wearable item; may be considered strictly individual or part of specific systems that make up community elements. Fashion doesn't exist out of cultural, historical, economic context, placing any individual into collective, unconsciously or purposefully. By communicating elements and ideas in clothing and wearables, fashion could enable connection within the communities and by adding up to the existing formations; fashion could also enable disconnection by distinction and by ignoring community elements and passions. The disconnection in fashion seems to layer onto universal social and economic disparities that are presented in global scape of any functioning system.

The work aims to describe how fashion as a system of business, passions and practices enables connection within existing communities and engagement from outside of given communities; how the distinctions and differences of communities are accepting and relying on identity expression; how fashion enables for disconnection within communities and why outside of limits fashion's disconnecting issues are universal on social global scape. The research questions and provides examples for further evolution of places for connection in digital and in physical. The thesis aims to not provide explanation, but rather have an introspection of the range and differences in historical and technological aspect of fashion and communities that were influenced by fashion and dress.

ESTRATTO

La comunità è difficile da definire e facile da nominare, che include simboli, lingue, terminologia, regole e nello stesso tempo non può includere nessuno di questi indicatori. Le comunità come un unico mezzo di espressione hanno il potere di influenzare la percezione individuale di sé, il loro attaccamento emotivo, il senso di appartenenza e le aspirazioni sociali.

La moda è uno strumento e una nozione semiotica per esprimere la personalità e lo status attraverso l'abbigliamento, che può essere considerato strettamente individuale o parte di sistemi specifici che compongono gli elementi della comunità. La moda non esiste al di fuori del contesto culturale, storico, economico, ponendo qualsiasi individuo in collettività, inconsciamente o intenzionalmente. Comunicando elementi e idee nell'abbigliamento, la moda potrebbe consentire la connessione all'interno delle comunità e aggiungendosi alle formazioni esistenti; la moda potrebbe anche consentire la disconnessione per distinzione e ignorare gli elementi e le passioni della comunità. La disconnessione nella moda sembra ricadere sulle disparità sociali ed economiche universali che si presentano nello scenario globale di qualsiasi sistema funzionante.

Il lavoro intende a descrivere la moda come sistema di affari, passioni e pratiche consente la connessione all'interno delle comunità esistenti e l'impegno al di fuori di determinate comunità; come le distinzioni e le differenze delle comunità stanno accettando e affidano come espressione dell'identità; come la moda consente la disconnessione all'interno delle comunità e perché al di fuori i problemi di disconnessione della moda sono universali nel paesaggio sociale globale. La ricerca mette in discussione e fornisce esempi per un'ulteriore evoluzione dei luoghi di connessione in digitale e locale. La tesi intende di non a fornire spiegazioni, ma ad avere un'introspezione della gamma e delle differenze nell'aspetto storico e tecnologico della moda e delle comunità che sono state influenzate dalla moda.

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INTRODUCTION

Fashion has power to build bridges and walls among people. Expression of personality and status through clothing and any wearable item may be considered strictly individual, however fashion doesn't exist out of cultural, historical, economic context, placing any individual into collective, unconsciously or purposefully.

By using certain forms of fashion, individuals are sending messages to others in community, creating such communities, communicating within communities and transforming communities into different organisations and scaling them up and down.

Every item of fashion is representing and communicating cultural values and beliefs, supporting value systems of given communities. Communities as a single outlet also have a power to influence individuals perception of selves, their emotional attachment, sense of belonging and social aspirations.

We as members of different communities are interacting with other members and learning the meaning of different elements used by those communities. Communication by means of fashion is a social and cultural interaction that constitutes us as members of those communities. Our membership is dependent upon learning and owning the significance of what we wear, how we wear it and where.

At the same time, not holding up to significance of fashion and means provokes the elimination from communities. By not paying any interest to certain fashion and cultural meanings individuals avoid interaction within fashion system. Sometimes, individuals that have a desire and interest in interacting and participating in communities and cultures find limitations and boundaries ones cannot overcome due to innate differences, societal biases and cultural customs that aren't allowing to interact and be part of fashion communities.

In order to explore «how fashion enables connection and disconnection», I will assert my research in two main parts by respectively demonstrating connecting forces and cases within fashion community and collectives; and how disconnecting biases and cases in fashion could be considered universal around the question.

To specify how fashion constructs and communicates notions and styles by and within communities, I will explore social studies regarding communities of practice, interest and places along with classification of examples and relevant case studies for most prominent communities in fashion system we can discover up to date. Upon this classification I will explore fashion communication and fashion theory topics in hope to highlight significance of sense of connection and belonging be means of fashion, how such communities help with building meaningful connections, exploring new interests and hobbies, socialising, sharing knowledge and skills.

Nevertheless fashion is also powering disconnection and we as part of communities let biases and human made boundaries judge and cut off individuals from belongings to the community. Feeding the disparity within fashion system provokes social, economical and cultural debates, that clearly describe overall social issues that are happening in the global sphere. To explore such indicators and limitations that individuals may encounter, I will again appeal to social and fashion studies and relevant examples within fashion system.

The duality of fashion system

Fashion is a term that is plagued by its many different connotations, and also by the unclear application of the concept. Fashion suggests difference, but also sameness. «Fashion involves becoming collectively with others» (Kaiser, 2014). It signifies the latest, as well as the returning to the old. «Fashion is the most immediate form of self-expression» (Corner, 2014). Fashion is an expression that lasts over seasons and connected to cultural and social movements, signs and symbols, class, age, gender, sexuality. As expressers of fashion, we bear our traits, differences and similarities, making up groups, breaking out of others. Fashion is a never ending process of deciphering and expressing ones selves in any given moment in time. As Susan Kaiser (2014) describes the ambiguities and contradictions of fashion, by stating individual subjects in relation to global economy, being both visual and materials visceral and tangible, local and global. Individual subjects expresses simultaneously gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, national identity, age and generation, place and other indicators or roles that are moving thought complex power relations.

Fashion embodies both freedoms and constraints, it is fast and slow, it is timeless and trendy. Such division in a term may be defined in dual nature, or duality of concepts. The definition of «Duality» in Oxford Dictionary of English (2020) — is and instance of opposition or contrast between two concepts or two aspects of something. We can underline the duality of fashion in taking into consideration opposing concepts within communities of fashion, of individuals and collectives and points of interest that describe opposite but not erasing each others subjects. By doing so, I hope to structure the connective tissue of research, compare connection points and movements with such of disconnection and answer the research question. The duality of the fashion system is main driver of change and a multi reading of meanings happening all at the same time, so that it becomes hard to take ahold of events in a global timeline.

The research question and research boundaries

The main objective of this work is aimed to discuss and explore the fashion community's points of connection and disconnection, providing an answer to research question «how and when fashion enables connection?». Following it by «who is a connector/creator/enabler of connection and who is a follower?», «how and when fashion creates point os disconnection?», «can we identity an enabler of disconnection?». Then whether we can find a common disconnecting stance, whether biases and issues that arise in fashion industry and on consumers side are universal? Why this duality cannot be eliminated? What are the benefits of connection? What are downsides of disconnection? Which dangers disconnecting points are holding? What happens when duality becomes disparity? What community traits enables disconnection?

To better understand the power dynamics in fashion system I will explore certain movements, artefacts and groups, that will be structured inside the framework of communities of place, communities of interest and communities and practice. The aim is to identify main forms of communities currently existing infusion system, as well as identify main point of disconnection within given communities. As fashion theory implying this research questions could be interpreted very broadly, I will narrow it down to only certain points within each view of community. This limitation serves to ensure the most concise way of citing examples from fashion system and relevant to the type of master thesis research without overdoing it.

The topic relevance

Community is essential to our well being. Most people today rely on community for practical purposes, yet many want to be part of a community because sharing something more substantial, than only geographical location, could create a more meaningful connection. One of the global trends that may predict the dysfunction of fashion system is a rising rates of isolation, happening as a result of many more people tend to move in to cities and live alone. As isolation epidemic conquers more and more people around the globe, the ways to reestablish meaningful, passionate connections are needed to be taken into consideration and talked about, especially for those who cannot change the existing paradigm.

Connection has a great influence not only on mental wellbeing, but also physical. «Just as social connection helps keep our entire physical apparatus operating more smoothly, self-regulation — the sum total of an individual's mental and physiological efforts to achieve balance — actually extends outward to other people. A well-regulated, socially contented person sends social signals that are more harmonious and more in sync with the rest of the environment» (Cacioppo, 2009, p. 19). Community saves us from isolation and alienation, in existing world order society connection help eradicate our differences and inequalities.

By nurturing human connection within the system of fashion, by creating new forms that could be connecting points, we are not only communicating individual identities, but as well perceiving such points of connection with others. In fashion there is strong link between expression, as invitation, and perception as acceptance to invitation.

Fashion is global community with endless entrances and communication lines. Consequently, if we not only see messages sent and received thought clothing and fashion, but also the meanings that are constructed and discussed by the members.

The force of different messages are shaping our reality, therefore our perception of fashion. As today we all are super connected though our mobile devices, we can more easily access entrance points to different communities, making fashion one of the most accessible ways to connect, as visual information is prevalent online and widely discussed.

Such wide acceptance and reliance on communal sense of taste and what is fashionable, hip and trendy can be damaging as it cannot be perceived equally, as global disparity only rises. Community is a self-regulating organism that evolves in value and confronting whatever doesn't reinforce anymore, that could be nourishing and at the same time damaging to other member, whose perceptions aren't taken into consideration.

I see main relevancy in exploration of change within fashion as indicator what is happening with society and its norms, as well as identifies new waves of globalisation and discourse around discriminations of any kind, while communities interested in fashion are enlarging. The main point of reference for me for the research was a loneliness and isolation epidemic that we were encountering even before current pandemic and how it was influencing social bounds and communication.

As fashion is a first system to catch any societal change, I hope to emphasise this change and find answers how society is reacting towards the «connected while disconnected» paradigm. Adding to citation (Cacciopo, 2009, p. 19) earlier, I believe that well balanced system will bring evolution and development to any industry, supporting its main point of difficulties, so that we may see disconnection points as malfunctions of a system rather than as part of dual paradigm.

1. FASHION IS CONNECTING

The fashion is a multi-billion dollar industry that employs a vast diversity of professionals, including designers, manufacturers, garment workers, retailers, merchandisers, stylist, make-up artists, photographers, models, journalists, not to mention administrative and managerial resources. But the fashion industry as we know it today cannot exist without the consumers, or the audience. We imply to them as non-professionals, or better, fashion enthusiasts, but as anyone who dresses can be conveyed as fashion messenger and receiver, also passive fashion users are part of the communication system.

The minimum requirement for community to connect, include those who introduce change in clothing and those who adopt at least a portion of proposed. Such communication of adopters and proposers in fashion system can be direct or indirect though mass media (Kawamura, 2004).

To line out the theoretical base we are about to explore, I will provide simple definitions to main terms we will be circling around along thesis paper. To start off, we will define the term of community, what makes up a community, what is a sense of community. The term of community is so widely used, yet is notoriously difficult to define.

A community is a group of people of a district or a country considered collectively, especially in context of social values and responsibilities; the condition of sharing or having relative attitudes and interest in common. Community in English language derives from the Old French «comuneté», which came from the Latin «communitas» which means «community, or public spirit», coming from Latin «communis» — «common» (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2020).

Public spirit or a more currently noted as sense of community is a conceptual center of community. For Sarason, psychological sense of community is "the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (Sarason, 1974, p. 157). McMillan & Chavis (1986) define a sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together.» They also identify four elements of sense of community: membership, as feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness; influence: mattering, making a deference to a group and of the group mattering to its members; reinforcement, integration and fulfillment of needs; shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

Attributes of community fit together to reinforce community emotional connection. As simple psychological example, we may state that people enjoy helping others just as they enjoy being helped. So communities include associations that are mutually rewarding. In fashion case, communities rewards and feeling of relation could be achieved as visual or verbal feedback online and in public spaces. As the representation of self is allocated in three dimensions: personal, intimate self; a social, relational self; and a collective self (Cacioppo, 2009, pp. 78–79), we relate to different communities on different level of self perception. Whenever we come in contact with a specific place, or we seek out information or feedback on specific item we are interested in the moment, or we are again looking for information or ready to share personal knowledge and skills — we are enabling elements of community to relate to us, reinforcing sense of belonging. Therefore acting and communicating within fashion sphere, or eventually in clothing and adornment sphere, we are automatically becoming members and representers of community related and interested in fashion. However, taken into consideration a complexity of fashion network, we should distinguish or at least try to set boundaries for communities that fashion users may come in contact with unconsciously or purposefully.

As stated previously, in a centre of fashion economy lies a concentrated group of enthusiasts who are both performers and audience to one another, making it circular in meanings system, or an ecosystem. Fashion ecosystem not only needs a range of retailers, stylists and street style, fashion media and its editors, journalists, bloggers, photographers, illustrators, cultural institutions to go with it. In creative department fashion need skilled design talent, merchandisers, manufacturers and textile producers of innovative materials and fabrics. Fashion need mass culture and consumers who want to be part of fashion expression, in a front row or following fashion tribes.

To clarify the definition and sort of limitation of types of communities that could

found linked to fashion industry or fashion identities, I would like to state that due to very broad diffusion of fashion senses, it could be hard to cut off the fashion industry influence on lifestyles that aren't necessarily directly connected to fashion, but are cultivating the following on their own. The following and the interest could also be defined as something being popular, or being in fashion. Communities in that way could be organised consciously by whoever is cultivating the points for connection; and could be formed unconsciously by the outside view in a sort of stereotypical labeling manner for identification. The identification of communities are coming in a format of naming, intersecting, rivalry, allowing for the inner connection and outer disconnection from others in order to be identified as singular entity. I will try to include as many communities that have both conscious and unconscious, intentions and passive existence.

In this chapter we will explore communities that are occurring based on place for contact; based of items, movements or institutions of interest; and based on sharing of practical and acquired empirical knowledge. Main communities with fashion reference points are relying on place, on interest and on practical skills sharing. Communities that are in any shape or way interested in fashion, clothing, adornment, lifestyle, are connected to fashion system — people that are shaping consciously and unconsciously the fashion scape. I have chosen these three main fields of extension for community definition, as them seemed more suitable for a kind of framework fashion system operates in.

1.1. Community of place

In definition of community previously in the research we primarily had a place indication, as geographical position, or practicing of a common ownership. Togetherness is an often identification of community, as a state of being close to others, sharing a space. Before advances in technology and transportation, the concept of space was limited to places in close proximity, was it a neighbourhood, a town, a workplace, public place for gatherings, a church, a market or any other specific space that people visit and share. Communities of space offer sense of belongings, broaden social relationships, support safety and familiarity; social awarding are founded on common efforts and contributions to the community.

After technological and communication revolution that later led to globalisation, the concept of place has evolved into digital, where distance is no longer a barrier to connect, therefore no limitations in interactions with others. However digital space creates limitations according to the functionality of the online place, by giving the ability to send a message and on the receiving part, to interact with or without feedback, to not interact directly, as to lurk around, or to ask for a message, hence creating a non hierarchical type of communication on open platforms.

Turning back to definition of community of place, we need to identify a place. A place should be imagined as a geographical location, meanings and value allocated to that place (Gieryn, 2000). Place could be materially formed, artificially made, be formed by an institution or a an establishment. Place is a space filled with value, cultural practices, things, structures and people. A place is a variable that could become a lens though which we see others, as a place convey meaning, it may have an impact of personal evaluation of self identity and others, values of place and practices or rituals. «The term community of place, or place-based community, captures what might be understood as a geographically bounded social community» (McKnight, Sanders, Gibbs & Brown, 2016). They proceed to reference (Flaherty & Brown 2010; Manzo & Perkins 2006; Nasar & Julian 1995; Puddifoot 1995; Salamon 2003a; Scannell & Gifford 2010a; Vorkinn & Riese 2001) to conclude that in contrast to virtual communities, community of place occurs in a geographical location where people actually live, interact, or share a sense of place identity.

Although, a place plays significant role

in a sense of community, the interactions happening at the place incorporate more meaning. Indeed, place can serve as a point of reference for service providers, commercial shops, markets, serve as a public space or even a workspace. What is interesting, is that activities are more likely to provoke sense of community, as in research (McKnight, Sanders, Gibbs & Brown, 2016) is stated that «perceived quality of community services is strongly linked to a resident's community attachment» and shows a strong association to an individual's level of attachment, or sense of community.

I would like to include virtual communities into a category of community of places, as the Internet is a virtual place in essence, but real or material place in notion. Virtual reality of the web is a recreation of real life places. In comparison to real life it has an interface though which we should interact with a place, but other elements are recreating functionalities and often visuals of real life objects and machineries. There is a debate whether Internet is a place or a thing; it is constructed in the physical world by cables and routers, as Heinrich Holtgreve (2017) questions whether internet is a place you can visit in his photography series by picturing «real» mundane side of the Internet — physical infrastructure of the web. He draws attention to how online has become inseparable from the physical world.

In fashion network, we can distinguish several physical and virtual spaces that could be identified as community of place, so to have a location, a meaning and a value (Gieryn, 2000). Fashion outlines specific functions to places that are linked to it, be it personal expression, commercial outlet, merchandising and marketing of a product or a brand, sharing the practice and style, ceremonial or ritual. We will focus on personal expression in online and physical public places from individuals side and commercial and public places from fashion brands and business side.

Figure 1 The Internet as a place. Holtgreve, Henrick. (2013, July). ZEIT Magazine.

1.1.1. Online expression in places for fashion

Thought the 20th century, the system of fashion industry, its media and society as a whole made it possible for a single designer to dictate what was fashionable. Times have changed and now no individual or no fashion capital has the clout to change the way a whole layer of society dresses. The rise in popularity of the web has allowed for easier real-time communication and connection to others, facilitated new ways for the information to be exchanged. An online community can act as an information system, with a network of members that can post, comment, give advice, collaborate. Such network include social networks, chat rooms, forums, discussion boards, social media, blogs, virtual servers, etc. There are different categories of what could be posted online and how people can react to it: there is content (articles, information, imaginary, videos, interactive media, etc.), forums, boards, blogs — platforms that allow to communicate wit delay, and instant communication — chats, social media, instant messaging, etc. We will focus mainly on content and delayed communication or comment on that content, as fashion communication online cannot be fathomed without visual recognition. Limitation to mainly visual forms of communication in fashion are bound to staged and unrealistic depiction of products and lifestyles connected to made up scenarios and stylistic imaginary. This being one of the main dangers of indirect communication online, made social media a platform with deep unbalance, when real people are subsequently follow fabricated unrealistic standards of reworked images from past examples, reinforcing these standards on audience and setting a new standard even for people that don't engage directly with fashion and don't work in the industry.

The audience however can be freely a spectator and even invited to online catwalk and presentations from brands that are usually directed toward professional fashion journalists, buyers and stylists. If we will look back to the late 70s, we can appreciate that it is not fashion and styles that have changes, but rather geography of it dissemination. As Paris still can be the centre of fashion, but we need to consider how few of its catwalk shows now display the work of French designers only (Polhemus & Lyyn, 2011). Will the Internet make it possible for a truly global fashion scene or westernised ideal will still reign? Seems like new platforms like Youtube and TikTok, that enables immediate (more for the latter) visual communication though video content could make visible a variety of creators and designers that otherwise wouldn't be made seen.

We will explore different types of communities accordingly to kinds of communication that allows for feedback, reciprocation, recreation (that lead to viral trends) and cooperation. Bearing in mind that not the type of content is a leading cause for the virality of trend, but exactly the social media platforms and its algorithms (Freeman, 2020), being designed democratising creativity of the user, or being user-centred.

1.1.1.1. Self expression with immediate feedback

When we talk about self-expression nowadays, we cannot not mention TikTok, a video-sharing networking service owned by ByteDance. App's design and ability is fostering promotion for creative community, catering to personal taste of a user enhanced by algorithms. Very brief (maximum 60 seconds) user generated video content is easy to produce, quick to get impressions back and, because the average length of the videos is so small, more data being gathered to be introduced into user preferences profile, as greater capacities of impressions collected rather than for 15 minute Youtube video. In a year 2020, TikTok became the place of many trends in fashion, overruling Youtube and Instagram on mobile. Online platforms are a tool for communities to connect more frictionlessly, not the communities itself, but could be considered as part of community identity when referred to, having and carrying specific traits.

Lockdowns around the globe facilitated dislocation of fashion catwalks into digital, whilst online space being still more or less democratised, it allowed for user to create trends and cooperation. People are interested in cultivation of their own fashion style, own dressing philosophy, that will communicate something of inner mood and identity to friends, peers and strangers. Being trapped inside took away this possibility, so online extension of personal expression bloomed.

Huge trend of this year that addressed fluctuation of emotions was «cottagecore», the aesthetic characterised by prairie dresses reminiscent of the outfits worn in Picnic at Hanging Rock, and wicker baskets filled with fruits and gingham tablecloths (Semic, 2020). The hashtag has 4.7 billion views, it influence extended beyond the platform into wardrobes with light dresses and silk headscarves during summer period. Nostalgia and comfort seeking is a great example of coping mechanisms during hardships, so it was no surprise similar trends flourished, but the velocity of the trends expansion has put a spot on online community expressing fashion styles.

Figure 2 Cottagecore aesthetic. Faithfull the Brand. (2021).

Figure 3 Picnic on the Hanging Rock, a stillframe from the film. (1975).

1.1.1.2. Digital presence, but is it for connection?

Brands are using social media platforms as a tool to market and sell their products and image behind the brand; digital place is only becoming an extension of advertisement space provided to brands on these platforms. Instagram is taking a big step toward shopping functionalities and refocusing the platform, that was mainly socially oriented, into a marketplace. Many brands already had a social media presence, specifically fashion brands mainly used Instagram for promotion and direct communication with followers and customers. Allowing the user to buy in-app with full checkout process within the app for shoppable contents, Instagram hopes to become a personalised shopping mall (Pardes, 2019). Such functionalists, again resurfacing the places and services, but in digital space. In addition to your personal interest on the platform, now you can explore a shopping sector with a possibility to buy and materialise products. Brands are now intertwined with the place around which you build a community of personal interest, connect with friends and family and perhaps promote your services or simply sharing images.

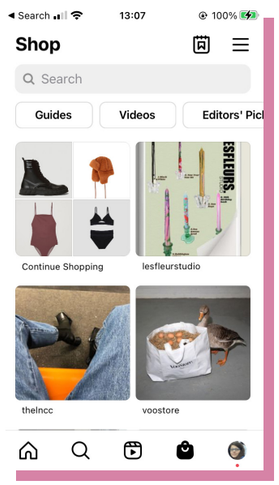

Figure 4a Instagram's shopping functionality, explore screen.

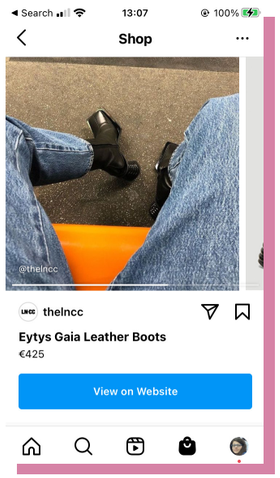

Figure 4b Instagram's shopping functionality, product screen.

Instagram shared by not only interest in visual content that user follow, but personalities or influencers, making their lifestyle a point of interest and promotion possibility for brands. Opinion leaders show and exercise influence though personal relationships in an informal way (Mora & Pedroni, 2017), an «almost invisible, certainly inconspicuous form of leadership, at the person-to-person level of ordinary, intimate, informal, everyday contact» (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2011). Bloggers commercial value measured in a number of followers on social platforms or by specialised websites, highlighting reputation and symbolic capital, thus blogs are worthy of brands and magazines attention as well as attractive to fashion readers (Mora & Pedroni, 2017). Influencers are producing low fidelity content in collaboration with brands; brand budgets are now aimed to connect with audience via more personal and informal ways, not to produce high quality content for billboards and magazines. Brands are targeted not to an audience with specification of age, style, social status, etc., but to an existing community around influencers.

TikTok doesn't have a fully integrated shopping feature yet, but brands are fascinated by its community and way the application connects and seeds trends. For this case a viral trend «Gucci Model Challenge» invited users to layer various garments from their own wardrobe while a voiceover distilled a Gucci aesthetic into a simple formula: a «random turtleneck, layered underneath a random shirt that doesn't match it, followed by a random vest, because layering is important; and finished with a very crucial headscarf» (Semic, 2020). Gucci embraced the gesture and even reposted videos to its own TikTok page.

Figure 5 Gucci Model Challenge. (2021). Photo credit TikTok.

As professional community could not travel and attend fashion weeks, all main catwalks and representations transferred online. Since this season the focus couldn't be more on clothes, designers looked for new ways to tell stories. Having live streams available paid off as a possibility to deliver their messages to anyone and anywhere (Perez, 2020). During traditional fashion weeks, the cities that receive these events embrace the surplus of attendees and fashion enthusiasts, but city community isn't specifically targeted and usually is left out. Access to events and their shift in storytelling and production towards digital first is definitely an advantage not only for a professional community, but to enthusiasts and any audience. We'll hope that future fashion weeks will incorporate both digital and traditional ways to better appeal to the masses. Live streams are allowing for direct communication, as many Twitch streamers are using the platform to create and support community of interest around gaming or music, but fashion brands aren't necessarily using this feature, so I see a huge possibility for further connection there.

Figure 6 Online runway show in a desert. (2020). Photo credit Saint Laurent.

1.1.1.3. Horizontal hierarchy of communication for creation

"Working for brands was so last decade, monetising content is the future" (Monahan, 2020).

As we previously explored possibilities for connection from influencers', brands' and users' position, we will investigate further possibilities for hierarchically horizontal connection, as a decentralised communities.

«A new wave of decentralised real concepts is transforming e-commerce into a mix of community, entertainment and shopping» (The Business of Fashion, 2020). Users are looking for ways for their communities to access and exchange products and services online. This shift is forwarding the ultimate «direct-to-consumer» (DTC) platforms for community marketplaces, exchanges, reselling. Platforms like Depop, not only fostering secondhand and circular fashion, but a community surrounding fastback access to same interests and practices.

To go even deeper into decentralised communities, we need to look into digital fashion and blockchain. The value proposition for digital assets is a tokenisation process, so a digital certification of 3D assets on a blockchain, NFTs (non-fungible token) allow to authenticate the owner, the designer, the artist and the edition, like «1 out of 100» and allow to retain the good even if the marketplace were to disappear. Tokenising digital items, creating NFT, is the best for consumer and brand monetisation, otherwise digital items can be copied, which diminishes their value for the brands. «Primary and secondary marketplaces for NFT-based items are the future of the fashion economy» says Megan Kaspar, managing director and co-founder of an investment and incubation firm focused on businesses in the blockchain sector.

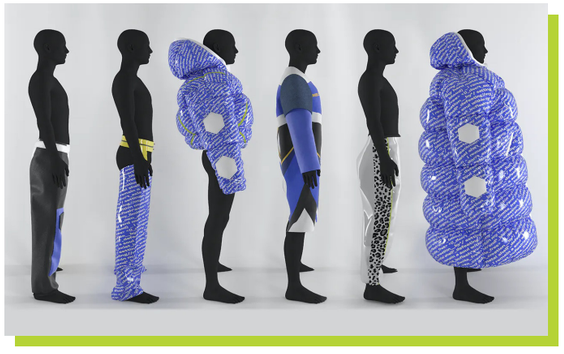

Figure 7 Carlings' virtual Neo-Ex collection (2018). Photo credit Carlings.

She adds: «not only will digital fashion marketplaces make money with primary sales, but for the first time, brands can participate in the secondary market for the life of a digital product» (McDowell, 2021). NFTs on some marketplaces could have different benefits for both the creator and the latter owner, like a percentage of further sales in crypto money or a linkage to physical pieces that could be traceable, when sold on secondhand marketplaces.

First digital fashion house The Fabricant (2021) founder sees the opportunity for fashion in creative freedom and reduction of waste. Digital fashion could be finally monetised in video games, as gamers have been spending a significant amount of money on virtual clothing for years. The Fabricant wants to democratise fashion, transcending trends, seasonality and sizing, allowing co-creating with users in a continuous dialogue and feedback loop, allowing designs to evolve collectively (Kovacevic, n.d.). Kerry Murphy, the founder, adds: «from the start, we believed that the digital-only fashion arena is a place of freedom, fantasy, and self-expression and that we can help brands and individuals to explore this place and its unlimited possibilities – wasting nothing but data and exploiting nothing but imagination". On a business side, it involves digital showrooms, shows, while 3D sampling will reduce costs for production up to 30% and new revenues will be created via shareable garments that do not require any fabric. Last year, The Fabricant auctioned their first-ever digital couture piece on the Ethereum blockchain.

Digital fashion also solves many of the issues the traditional fashion faces, primarily in relation to transparency and sustainability. The current complexity of supply chains makes the traceability of products extremely difficult. Without transparency, we are unable to hold brands accountable for any wrongful practices. Blockchain allows creations to be protected, in a peer-to-peer marketplace that is fully attributable (Kovacevic, n.d.).

Figure 8 Digital couture dress, Iridescence. Photo credit The Fabricant.

1.1.2. Localities for fashion

Every ambitious city that want to play on a global scene wants the spectacle of a fashion week. Throughout the modern history of fashion capitals, a key component has been the close connection between the design and production of fashion and its urban consumption (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2013). Such practices extends further the spaces of shopping, as important department stores and boutiques have already been in history for major cities street style. However the geographical power of world fashion cities have been reinforced and this symbolic power through the power of brands, media, fashion weeks and new digital forms have been put into established hierarchy. Major cities rely on shopping, fashion events and culture around the production where it's still prevalent, education and fashion influencers. The position of major cities still influence incredibly branded elite and consumption spaces, not even from presence of production, but as an exposition site for fashion novelties.

Digital and local are intertwined to such an extent now, that we cannot divide them and focus only on local possibilities for brands, communities of enthusiasts and consumers. Rather we will explore how brands are using cities, public places as a display and cultural exchange point for local communities, shoppers and tourists; as well as how commercial places owned by brands are realising new narratives for local communities.

1.1.2.1. Commercial spaces

According to reports of many fashion corporations, especially in luxury sector, retail continues to outperform digital channels in terms of conversion rates from audience to active customers, ranging from 20% for brick and mortar and 3% digital (BoF Studio, 2020). So how do fashion retailers could evolve retail experience or somehow merge it with digital to become the connection point for enthusiasts in the community an approach into obtaining material goods?

We will look into the generational theory that is being profiled to market to more diverse audience by brands. We will mainly explore Generation Z features, as they gravitate towards collaboration and community narrative. Generation Z is looking for immersive experiences, they want to feel, touch and experience products and services, they are willing to commute further to pick purchases up from a physical store, rather than Millennials, that seek instant gratification in places they live around (Aghadjanian, 2019).

Generation Z gravitate towards collaboration, they want to become part of creative process. The rise of direct-to-consumer brands could also be an indication of this desire to connect and communicate with brand directly. This generation is looking to establish sincere direct connection thought messaging, by means of community commerce. Community commerce is a new phenomenon, that mimics elements of social, with its ability to connect and communicate with others, and communities, with the sense of belonging and shared values (Khusainova, 2020).

Generation Z is also wiling to spend on products that reflect their values and beliefs. Organically they incline towards companies that share their values, in a way support their community. They have a strong radar for authenticity. While brands are used to dictate trends, the communication now is two-sided, facilitated by digital platforms. In-person events, whether it is a conference, swap party, product launch or performance — help forge a deeper connection between a brand and the audience. Those close communities around values and side-projects of brands are evolving to last. Lasting effect could solve the issue of seasonability of collections, when demand is global and at a speed of Instagram scroll.

Fashion commercial places should become not only purchase points, but a community hubs, allowing for collaboration and direct communication. Digital commu-

nication helps to establish connection, in presence events and experiences help to build a momentum for sharing and building connection. When browsing for examples, I couldn't find any vivid one in fashion, so I would suggest Apple Store as an example for something we could describe as community hub and a commercial place. While providing exposition of products and assessing functionality, the store remains a place for education about products, a place for events for creatives in music, photography and film industry. I hope for fashion brands, especially for ones that have a connection with a subculture or an already established community, to delve into this opportunity.

Figure 9 COS installation in Palazzo Isimbaldi during Salone del Mobile 2019. Photo credit Blomqvist, Henrick. (2019).

1.1.2.2. Public spaces for fashion brands or for people?

Along the commercial places, brands tend to invade public places, not only to promote their image and product, but to share experience in-presence with a wider audience, not only with fashion enthusiasts. Like pop-ups that are happening around the city during a cycle of events around specific theme, e.g. sustainability week, design week, music week, etc. Such fashion intertwinement happening during Salone del Mobile in Milan, a furniture annual fair, when furniture, design and fashion industries share city public spaces to showcase their designs and provide in-presence experiences not only for professionals, but to the masses. Fashion brands at that stance are presenting lifestyle collection of furniture, accessories, layering out the brand ecosystem.

Another interesting example of usage of public spaces is coming from Spain. Fashion e-commerce Zalando is using Google Street View to promote it latest campaign, Street it All, transforming digital streets and pretty mundane functionality of maps into interactive retail space (Pérez, 2021). User can click through the geolocated lookbook on Google Maps to explore and purchase looks. Pieces are worn by Spanish influencers in major cities. Taking into account the pandemic and as we have already stated that no communication can be submerged only to offline, brands are using virtual capabilities that imitate physical environments.

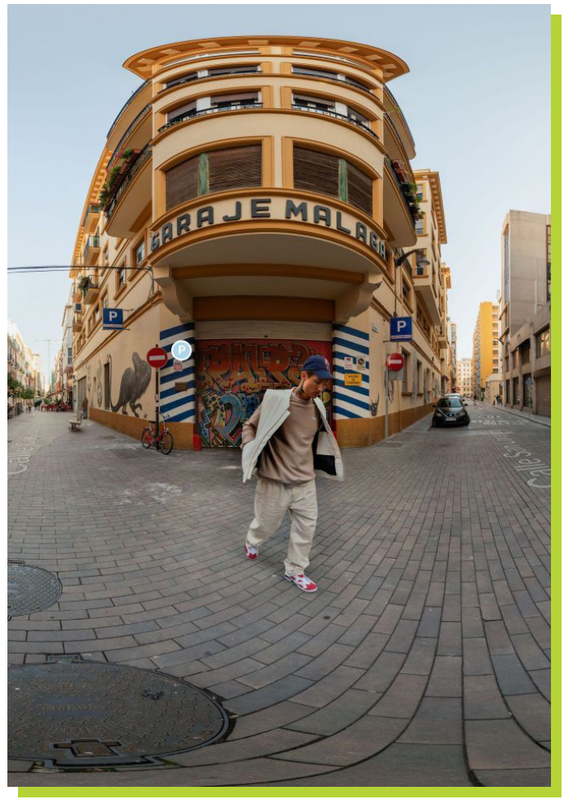

Figure 10 Zalando's Street it All campaign in Google maps. Photo credit Zalando Spain.

1.1.2.3. Co-creative spaces, collectives

Fashion is a diverse community that allows for collaboration in creative and other ways. We would like to explore possibilities for collaborative creation, collectives and maybe even communes, at least features of such. Commune is an intentional community of people sharing living spaces, interests, values, sometime property, possessions and resources. In some communes, people also share common work, income and assets. In the age of isolation co-living and co-working space are emerging in cities, where majority of working population are living alone.

We will talk about communities or collectives that are engaging with fashion industry or brands sourcing their creative freedom on collective efforts. Eckhaus Latta embodies the idea of a creative community, founded by Zoe Latta and Mike Eckhaus, who are the mom and dad launched the label back in 2011, and since then have been steadily gaining global recognition for their artistically led vision.

Other example could be Ace & Jig, brand founded by Cary Vaughan and Jenna Wilson, that facility the secondary market driven by the limited-edition, collectible nature of their garments (Sherman, 2017). The community has sprouted around the brand, creating community's unofficial swap parties, hosted by Ace & Jig fans across the US.

In 2020 Borbonese started working with Parsons Paris — the European branch of School of Design — on creation of the fully sustainable project, Savoy Faire. It took the tradition of tapestry in Sardinian craft weaving. Students developed a theme cherishing local cultures and using materials from controlled supply chains, they worked with women cooperative Su Trobasciu based in Mogoro, a small Sardinian town (Vogue Talents, 2021). This project provided for collaborative creativity among students and local artisans.

I also found fascinating this small passage on community in fashion and world situation, as I would like to cite, as I believe it incorporates the main influences under the trend. «Now that we're facing a time of no jobs for young people, terrorism, threats to the environment, crumbling national infrastructures, and crazed politicians on the loose, what on earth will happen next? There is no way of any of us avoiding that worry. I'd started thinking that the next step will have to be people getting their own people around them, and working out their own way of living, against the system, or alongside it. Self-created groups. Invented families. Communes, even. And actually, I am seeing that this is what is already happening. Galliano talked about it in our preview, speaking about the contrast between online virtual communities of friends, who are mostly alone with their phones and rarely — if ever — meet and the opposite reality of living together on a commune.» (Mower, 2017).

In the Bangladeshi village of Rudrapur, surrounded by lush green fields, was created Anandaloy «place of deep joy» by a German architect Anna Heringer (Bottenghi, 2021). She used local materials, labour and energy sources, an ideology made to be a catalyst for local community development. The Dipdii Textiles initiative was launched to support rural traditions and create work opportunities for the women living in the village. Along with therapy centre for people with disabilities and a studio for production of art and fair-trade fashion.

All the above cases could state that fashion can create communities around the cause and be a catalyst for community development for the brands, collectives or local communities.

Figure 11 Eckhaus Latta team. Photo credit Mayer, Aubrey. (2020).

1.2 Community of interest

Unlike the community of place, community of interest is defined by shared interest or passion, rather than a particular geographical area or technological platforms. Members of the community exchange information and ideas, improving their understanding of a subject and may not know or follow ideas, news and problems outside of main interest. Participation in such communities can be compelling and entertaining, educational and supportive of idea leaders; membership to the community of interest could be recurring or remained for extended periods of time. Often communities divide further into smaller ones on basis of specialised topics within the subject.

The activity of a community doesn't correspond to a collective practice, so the member do not expect to share their individually appropriated knowledge, however the minimum of involvement creates a process of negotiation of a meaning (Henri & Pudelko, 2003). In order to keep community functioning, it needs to balance out the participation and formalising the knowledge ratio. The members of community identify themselves more with a topic of interest of the group than with its members. Activity of the community isn't directed toward a collective productions, collective participation can extent only to knowledge construction and systematisation.

As in fashion, we become members of different societies and cultures by integrating with other members and leaning the meanings of signs used in and by those societies and cultures. Communication though or by means of fashion and clothing is a social and cultural interaction that constitutes communication with members of those societies and cultures. (Barnard, 2014, Chapter 6). We can say that fashion and it artefacts, historical movements and brands are realising the knowledge system of the community of interest. If we see fashion as a system, we certainly see the fashion myth, artefacts that support that myth and fashion mythology as a meanings system that are cultivated by members and audience. Meaning being more like a connotation, or as Roland Barthes (1977) conceptualised, a set of associations and feelings concerning the object. Meaning is the product of the interaction between individuals' cultural values and beliefs of clothing or fashion (Barnard, 2014). In fashion, although community of interest is not involved in production, but the meanings system is realised in means of artefacts, so the community can evaluate and structure a meaning system around them, by adding value to the brand, the designers and history and vice versa.

In community of interest we will explore what could be this artefacts and meanings behind that artefacts that conceptualise the myths, ideas and messages that assemble the community of interest in fashion system. We won't be able to explore all of the interests, as fashion meanings are stretched across history, countries and people that produced and are producing new interests to follow, so we will focus on more invasive interests and bigger communities around artefacts, around movements and around icons or brands.

1.2.1. Following an artefact

An artefact is on object that typically have a cultural or historic interest. In fashion artefacts are clothes, accessories, bags, shoes, sometimes furniture, cosmetics, lifestyle objects, etc.; anything that is produced and designed in fashion system to be used, collected, worn. Artefacts are a reproduction of meanings, brand myths, though at the same time are designed objects that are valued for its function. Artefacts are a stable form of communication, however connotations, meanings and functionalities of artefacts may change or become obsolete. Artefacts do not provide any combination of meaning, it is a sole entity, it usually communicate specific to itself message or a relation to a cultural or historical interest. In contradiction to other ways of communication, language has «combinatorial freedom» — ability to combine words into new sequences that communicate meanings that haven't been communicated before: clothing lacks this freedom and can only repeat existing and «pre-fabricated» messages (McCracken, 1990). So fashion artefacts are just an objectification of certain meaning according to the previous quote.

However artefacts are produced in historical and cultural context, so at least they are reproducing the pre-fabricated messages and fashion staples, their functionality or contextualisation can be changed, combined and altered, as they not only deliver ideas for the interest creation, but perform as a materialised object for the community to be interested in, collect, wear, use, without producing or practicing artefact reproduction. The act of wearing of an artefact is not essential to deliver or activate the meaning, just the value of the object and the relation to the interest is accepted in correlation with the interest.

That way, we will explore the artefacts that have a prefabricated meaning that is valued in the community of interest, that bring this value to the community's knowledge system and support the knowledge exchange between the members of the community.

1.2.1.1. Luxury items

The term luxury good is independent of the items value, they are generally considered to be goods at the highest end of the market in terms of quality and price. Classic luxury goods include haute couture clothing, accessories and luggage. The concept of luxury has been present in various forms since the beginning of the civilisation. With the clearer differences between social classes in earlier civilisations, the consumption of luxury was limited to the elites. Nowadays, with the increase in democratisation, several new products were created targeted to the middle class, called accessible luxury.

The idea of a luxury is not necessarily a product's inherited value or a price point, but a mindset that is expressed by a brand dedication to quality and perception of customer's aspirations for value and services (Danziger, 2017). What consumers perceive as luxurious change over the years, but there are three main drivers: a high price, a limited supply, an endorsement by celebrities (Kadence, 2020). A high price is contributing to price competition in a market, a status and wealth demonstration. A limited supply is an indication of exclusivity, the product being not easily obtainable is adding value by a scarcity effect, making the object feel special. Products being endorsed and worn by celebrities as a showcase of significance, appealing again to status play, as celebrities being the facade of entertaining and noteworthy lifestyles. The wealthy tends to be extremely influential, so such focus on exclusivity evokes a sense of belonging to an elite group.

Luxury items are depicted as status symbols, solidifying the interest of other groups that aren't effected or cannot afford these objects. The sense of belonging to the group is obtained by the value that these objects carry and the reaction and objectification of items being luxurious in other's impression. The artefacts are conveying the idea of luxury, by being a luxury object and by signifying the certain interest from target group and groups that are interested in luxury, or the audience. Same perception comes with celebrities, a very narrow social group, that is being celebrated and whose lifestyle is pooled in interest.

The codes of luxury are cultural, the luxury lies within the confluence of culture and social success (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). In addiction to social function, luxury is an access to pleasure. The duality of social and personal makes luxury concept very variable

and subjective, for both societies and individuals. For example Louis Vuitton, the most valued luxury brand, is considered by many a vulgar and unworthy of being in a luxury category; yet the very same group of people would be gladly accepting a gift with famous monogram (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Or Lacoste would be considered a top luxury brand in China, whilst in Europe — not so much.

The differences between luxury and fashion lie in positioning, when luxury being described as ultimate dream, priceless self reward, providing social elevation, while fashion — as tribal, social imitation, leading by seduction. We can conclude that luxury items are upper, ultimate level items that are followed by elites and valued by the society outside of luxury and elite category. There is a clear distinction of a community that follows luxury items to appear and approach to a specific lifestyle, that can be shared only by members that are interested in the same symbolic and materialistic meanings. The limitation of such lifestyle and interest lie in economic and social status of members.

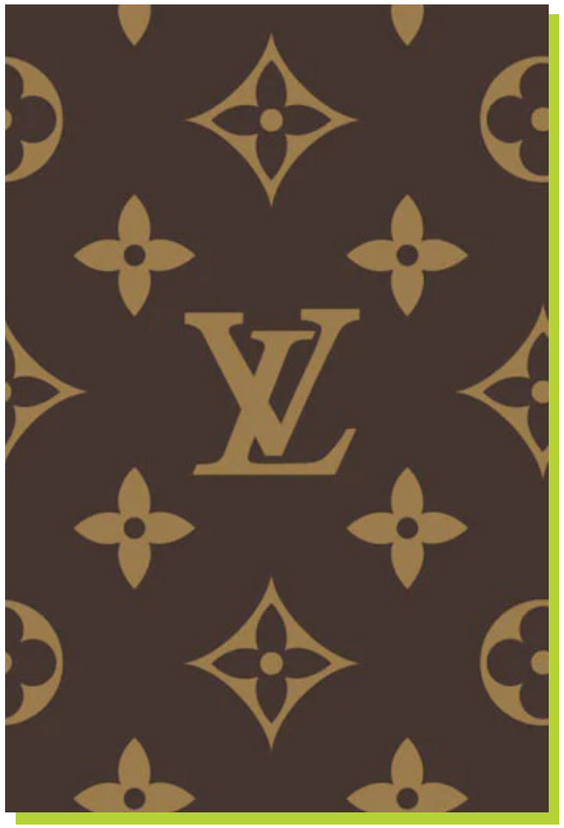

Figure 12 Louis Vuitton monogramed pattern. Credit LVMH.

1.2.1.2. Branded items

Designer label goods are considered not necessarily luxury goods, but items that are sold under a more prestigious marque, rather than generic or popular brands, accessible to wider public and targeted to different classes. Still, many consider designer labels as status symbols alike luxury items.

We could argue that branded items only carry their value as they have a label on them, and we also could not underestimate the weight the brand image, technologies and materials are layering on given items, but we also can argue that there are certain items that are made popular, but not necessarily iconic, without building up the brand myth. Also we cannot overlook the notion of any item that is being branded or labeled to be the point of the following. Such items not necessarily are going into category of artefacts that communicate a specific interest or cater to a specific group, but an exact idea of an item to be valued more, so to be of more interest, because of the label.

People are prepared to pay so much more for an item of clothing because of the label. Fashion consumers sometimes value the label or the logo of an object more than the object itself. Assigning the value in fashion is about authority of the brand or the person behind the label and recognition of people that follow and value what that brand represents.

Community of brand enthusiasts are coming for the brand or the myth of the designer, but not necessarily for the items, as representations of the brands values in a materialised form. So it would be logical to further explore the notion of a brand, rather than branded goods, as they do not carry the value by themselves to be attractive for following and building community around them. However there is a community that according to their ideology and shared meanings are only interested in branded items as an entity, rather than a brand behind them. For an item to be branded or to have a label is messaging the branded value, as read by community members, the combination of quality, heritage of the brand and design in added cost. Community member are knowledgeable of brand names, but not necessarily see the importance of specific brands behind the label, so just the categorised value of the brand serves as the indication of interest.

1.2.1.3. Sneakers and sneaker heads

Giorgio Riello in his thorough study of footwear of the eighteenth century, A Foot in the Past (2006), explains: «Footwear is an item characterised by a long history. In prehistoric times, it was a simple piece of wood or leather that was used to protect the foot». Today shoes are more than function, they convey a wide range of meanings associated with fashion, style, personality, sexuality, gender, and class (Riello, 2006).

The community that is driven by a very specific type of fashion item, that has their personal ideology and methodology, a knowledge spectrum. The interest that is connecting a community is materialised through footwear. So the community has a very focused interest, laying in fashion system, as footwear is a part of adornment, that also communicate social and cultural messages within and outside the community.

Community of shoe enthusiasts, specifically sneakers are identified by their footwear. It is not social background or occupation that shapes their identity. Wearing the «right» pair of sneakers elevates them socially, psychologically and emotionally; it puts them higher in social hierarchy within sneaker head community (Kawamura, 2016). The general public may not recognise the value of specific pair, only the community insiders are able to read the message.

Streetwear represents a lifestyle that was born in the early 1980s in New York (Kawamura, 2016). A community, influenced by skateboarding, punk, hardcore, reggae, hiphop, club culture, art and graffiti, was formed (Vogel, 2007). It has foundation in grassroots communities of like-minded people, ideal representation of community of interest that are converging into community of practice. We cannot state any other kind of footwear that binds people together as much as the sneaker enthusiasts do. It is a global phenomenon. The sneaker head community is becoming an institution with regular sneaker releases, blogs, events, speciality stores, publications and websites, all of which provide a place for the members to gather and mobilise.

Male population is the biggest consumers of sneakers, while clothing is becoming more unisex, shoes remain to be gender specific in designs, colour ways and sizes (Kawamura, 2016). Sneaker companies contribute to the community interest by constantly realising new editions, designs, collaborations. The market is dominated by youth who are hungry for new, cool and fashionable. The sneaker culture originally emerged from hiphop culture, that emerged from street community that carried their own language, own slang and idioms; same with sneaker community, that regulate their own language, slang and knowledge structure.

According to everything stated previously, we can easily declare the sneaker community as a community of interest with specific knowledge and materialised goods supporting the community system of communication, and being part of fashion system.

Figure 13 WNBA player Tamara Young and her sneaker collection.

1.2.2. Following icons and brands

According to Google Arts & Culture (2021), fashion is a culture we wear. The culture represents the unique and iconic styles, designers and fashion icons, personalities that wore unique and memorable styles that being encapsulated in history of fashion and public appearances. If we make a simple web search we will understand that icons in public view are someones that had an outstanding influence on the style and fashion in given historical period. For the majority of times, fashion icons were popular and famous people from the public sphere – movie stars, singers, politicians and monarchs, models. Their public appearance may be a result of personal sense of style that helped them to commemorate their public image and help with the career and popularity, as well as the influence of their style on audience and fans.

Fashion icons are publicly selected and favoured by many, the popular opinion is delivered by magazines, blogs, websites, other brands, designers and celebrities. The popular myth is being supported by the system of fashion. Fashion is defined here as "systematic, structured and deliberate change of style", as a "language of social mobility" (Polhemus & Lyyn, 1978). Fashion, as the adornment, in that way again fulfill the visual language of popular culture, their main members and influencers that reinforce the styles that are considered fashionable and popular in given time. The change of styles may bring change in fashion, but the identification of an icon wouldn't change. The icon is a historical constant. Therefore, Google Arts & Culture (2021) helps us discover historical and modern icons in fashion by proving a network of designers, models, celebrities and their legacy to learn, be inspired and informed about.

Fashion derives its meaning and significance from historical context (Barnard, 2014). Icons are identified as classic, timeless design, but nothing fashionable can be in fashion all the time and for all times. Classic is usually represented by idealistic notion of a dominant group's taste at one time and place, that is presented by the group and accepted by the majority (Barnard, 2014). The domination of celebrity and growing mass culture in 20th century made popular styles into a category of the iconic, thought movies, advertisement, news and popular publications. This historical acceptance of popular taste is still playing a role in determining what is considered fashionable, and then iconic, if made extremely popular and widely known.

The popular culture and phenomenon of celebrities dominating the public opinion and fashion still to this day. Whoever has a public following has an influence of the way people dress, what lifestyles seem attractive, what music and cultures are popular, all through the messages that popular people (celebrities, influencers, designers) are spreading. The places these messages are spread are different thanks to social media; when before it was fashion outlets, magazines and popular publications, now it is a direct to followers communication.

There is a community that are interested in lifestyle of celebrities and influencers. There is an interest in what they are wearing and how they are styling their public appearances. Fashion designers are being mainly responsible for their styles, dictate what is fashionable and hyped in given time. The community of interest there is contributing to admiration of personalities that represent the aspirations and visual ideal, while also having a fashion taste and sense of style, that soon become the element of interest and inspiration in the community. We will then explore some examples of influence and communications these communities are experiencing, through celebrity culture, social media influencers and fashion designers that are performing as influencers themselves and also promoting their brand's design aesthetics.

Figure 14 Marilyn Monroe on the set of «The Misfits». Photo credit Arnold, Eve. (1960).

1.2.2.1. Celebrities and icons

Publicity has an extensive role in the significance of what someone is wearing. Celebrities from the screen actually helped to democratise fashion in the past; today there is a new relation of celebrities and luxury brands. Coco Chanel famously said once: «What Hollywood shows today, you will wear tomorrow».

Red carpet events is a new catwalk, for many top designers it has same importance as presentation and their own shows during fashion weeks. Film industry is a perfect combination of art and popular mass culture, that thrives on the visual storytelling. In the 20th century as film industry evolved, Hollywood stars were able and did in fact help to sell lifestyles, clothes, accessories, as well as establishing their own public image by appearing off-screen. The intense interest in Hollywood stars, which combines the offscreen on-screen persona with perfect face and body, has emulated the desire to know everything about their life for more than a century.

However there was a turn until 1990s in what celebrities were wearing on-screen, after it became off-screen life that significantly influenced fashion and perception of what was publicly desirable. Their popularity seems not to be related to commercial success of their films, in fact celebrities now generate intense media interest and function as fashion icons independently of their on-screen roles, with the help of tabloid media and paparazzis starting from 1960s and a more later celebrities first hand social media presence. Hollywood cinema and celebrity public appearance did not make any innovative silhouettes, as done by designers in high fashion, but made portrayed styles desirable at the mass market level (Gibson, 2013), thus spurring both manufacturing and retailing of clothes inspired by films and celebrities on and off screen.

There is a wide history of styles and designers that were included and inspired iconic looks and cinematic fashion tradition in Hollywood. The traditional relationships between designer and a star could be stated as examples of Givenchy and Hepburn, Yves St Laurent and Catherine Deneuve (Gibson, 2013). It was soon replaced by profiled American ready-to-wear from the 1980s. In the new millennium styles are seemed to be nostalgically influenced by cinema fashion of the past restyled by same fashion designers and sometimes futuristic ideas, but from the screen and cinema does not prevail anymore, when every new information about styles and fashion we are getting, from different types of screens and more direct communication.

Even though there is no organised community that is supporting this interest, the celebrity culture somehow is still prevalent in our lives and main media outlets and celebrities themselves are supporting the interest of people to know little more about the life of somebody else, then their daily routines. Celebration of stars is supported by magazines covers, that has a flattering and significance effect that would then become contemporary visual culture.

Speaking of icons, I would like to state that there are more recent fashion icons that are consider such, but as we know from the previous research, an iconic style is something that is not related to times, so we can only know what is iconic after some time would have passed. The greatest example of an icon would be Marilyn Monroe, which image created on-screen surpassed and lived on its own off-screen and established the most prominent iconic look. She was a leading fashion icon in the 1950s, appearing in film, on covers of magazines and was presented and exploited in public media because of her interesting, but wretched personal life. Her hairstyle known as the Italian demi-wave was the most popular hairstyle of the 1950s (Gibson, 2013). As the most photographed women of her time, she acted out her personal tragedies, her suicide became global news, books on her life are being published to these days. She used to have an uncanny ability to pose perfectly whenever before the lens, while her endless personal mistakes did not lessen the affection of the public.

The question of public affection goes beyond the understanding of fashion into a psychology and sociology of masses and the notion of popularity, so we won't be talking about the reason behind why the life of others is so compelling to us, but we stated the connection between how fashion and styles being displayed on a bigger screen has a power to connect different cultures and surface public gaze desires.

1.2.2.2. Influencers

A fashion influencer is novelty term for a media personalities that has any following, usually on social media. The term is partly influenced by a business notion of social media, as the influencer on any platform is someone that has visibility and thus influence on public opinions and could power interest to products, ideas and lifestyles. Influencers aren't celebrities because of their closeness and intimate relationship with audience, however the community that is gathered around them has certain interests in topics that influencers have opinions and recommendations, in that way communication is more precisely-oriented and frank. The community build around influencers are interest driven, it could be fashion, makeup, video games, photography, film, any other hobby or profession. The influencer is simply sharing online aspects of said interests and building a personal platform and then a community of like minded people, being a sort of moderator of topics.

In fashion world, fashion influencer is not so clearly distinguished from blogger. A blogger has their own platform, while an influencer is building a community of followers on existing social media platform. Fashion influencers seem to have a closer relationship, posting more real and instant pictures, sharing their real life, rather than celebrities, which life is hardly relatable for common people. Brands are seeing opportunity for promotion and communication for devoted audience and interest driven community, so they provide influencers with endorsements for their products and experiences.

One of the first fashion influencers that made out from her fashion passion a successful influencer business, is Chiara Ferragni. Her blog «theblondesalad» turned into a global retail business, she has more than 23 million followers on Instagram. Instagram now is a main source of content where she is sharing her looks and lifestyle, also promoting products that go along with it. The ego of documenting every aspect of life and digital entrepreneurship blend so much, you can't sometime tell the difference, where are real moments and where is advertisement. Such approach found her a devoted young audience, and fashion brands followed, trusting the numbers of followers, which are equivalent of money in influencers game.

Interesting case happened when during summer after the lockdown, Chiara visited Florence's Galleria degli Uffizi for a shooting with Vogue Hong Kong. While observing the paintings, she posed in front of the famous Sandro Botticeli's Venus and later posted a photo on her Instagram, recommending her followers to visit the museum (Dominioni, 2020). The same did the museum's account, adding the caption «Beauty standards change in the course of time», describing her as «a sort of contemporary divinity in the era of social media». The photos attracted handful of reactions, many were critical of Ferragni and museum's choice to feature her. The director of the Uffizi galleries, Eike Schimdt, defended their choice, reporting that after Ferragni's visit they have registered a presence of 9,300 visitors over the weekend and 27% increase for youngsters (Dominioni, 2020).

We can agree that such public figures, as Chiara Ferragni specifically and other influencers generally, regardless of their field of expertise, manage to stimulate young people's, and communities' around them, participation in cultural life and events. So the community, that first came around the person's fashion choices, attracted by their interest, now can be influenced in other choices and get promotion to great causes.

Figure 15 Chiara Ferragni in Uffizi Gallery for Vogue Hong Kong. Photo credit Vogue Hong Kong. (2020, October).

1.2.2.3. Fashion brands

Branding is an umbrella term for marketing as branding encompasses more than just advertising media; it includes the context of companies, performance, merchandise, design, consumers and stakeholders of the brand (Hancock, 2013). Fashion branding represents a major aim of fashion companies to produce a cumulative image that is reflective of stories, narratives and myths in popular culture (Vincent, 2002). The combination of physical and emotional cues is triggered when the audience is exposed to the name, logo, the visual identity, brand imagery and brand messaging (Huggard & Cope, 2020). Fashion brand use communication strategies on «platforms», though «channels» and using «media» to connect with brand audience.

Fashion is an industry of change. Trend and hype will go off tomorrow, it is therefore crucial for fashion brands to maintain cultural credibility and relevance to the audience that are following the brand or the designer itself in the first place. Consumers often use fashion brands as means to express their identity, perceived or desired (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015, cited by Huggard & Cope, 2020). In response, fashion brands are selling dream lifestyles and creating desire by tapping into emotions and separation of their audience, amplifying shared values and interests. All this is to create a sense of belonging to a community or a mindset their consumer admires (Abramovich, 2012, cited by Huggard & Cope, 2020)

For example Italian luxury brand Prada aligns with the image of intellectual modern woman, who is culturally and politically engaged, so this manifests in brand communication, collections and campaigns, as well as in the concept of Fondazione Prada, a modern art and culture institution and a platform that supports emerging artists, creating cultural spaces and events not linked to fashion directly, more like Art Basel.

Other brands are connecting with their audience by providing space for user generated content, so that consumers are telling brand's story themselves through testimonials, social media, shared photos and videos. User generated content allows brands to create communities who provide each other with advice and comment on, share and validate perception of the brand (Huggard & Cope, 2020). It not only generates engagement and eventually sales, but also creates strong visual content for the brand.

For example beauty brand Glossier focused from the beginning on product placement when launching the brand, is volunteering brand fans and consumers to share their how-to posts and providing authentic views of how the product is used by real people in real life situations.

Communities that follow fashion brands for the entity of a specific brand are highly engaged with visual and storytelling component of brand communication, however the community could feel single sided, as they are acting as an audience or consumers rather than a whole community with a brand.

1.2.3. Following a movement

Communities are traditionally concerned with important issues, such as national identity, ethnicity, religion, class or politics, they can also come together around much smaller, niche interest, hobbies, concerns. Today's communities are coming together in real life, but non-geographical bounds are even closer, as fashion creates a very diverse narrative from different perspectives. Mower (2017) suggests that such communal activity is, at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, a response to somewhat depressing conditions: no jobs for young people, terrorism, threats to the environment, crumbling national infrastructures and crazy politicians.

Amount different interests of communities — consciousness seems to be more significant, highlighting the importance of strong connection among members and the sense of belongings and acceptance (Huggard & Cope, 2020). This consciousness is led by improvement in mass education and accessibility to knowledge provided by both society and scientific community.

Social movements have a similar coming, defined as an organised effort in support of a social or political goal (Smelser, Killian & Turner, 2020). Movements may involve individuals, organisations or both. They represent more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined, but who share a common outlook on society. Many attempts of categorisation direct attention to the objective of the movement. Sometimes it is argued that the urbanisation that led to larger settlements and facilitated social interactions; industrialisation that addressed economic independence and mass education with freedom of expression is responsible for prevalence of social movements in modern culture.

With the development of technology, communication processes have become easier to promote social movements, common ideas, create platforms and even digital activism campaigns. Fashion is used in social context in a form of merchandising supporting ideas and sharing the activism or dissent in public without engaging in rallies and manifestation per se, but with the possibility to do so. Thus fashion activism extents practices across fashion commodities and the fashion system.

Fashion and dress is used as a canvas for laying out ideas and launching the act of dissent, as well as a creating a space for change and for social engagement by means of fashion industry. We will be exploring examples and case studies, how fashion is providing solutions, acting as a symbolic outfit and is questioning and comprehending the global trends that are changing the cultural, social and economical narratives, not necessary as part of activism and social movements, but as part of grande scheme of interests that could not be grasped by things happening outside fashion system.

1.2.3.1. Social

Social causes that are bringing different people together to form communities and resolve issues in fashion are driven by common social issues that lay outside of fashion system. Fashion is playing in a way a facade of what is happening in a society. This include global warming and ecology, given that fashion industry is the second polluter of the environment, many companies are powered by communal causes on local level that are trying to solve systemic problem; racial and ethical segregation and under-representation, as fashion was historically for elites, both to consume and to produce; there is a change, but fashion remains to be highly inaccessible and westernised industry; questions of gender and sexuality; political freedoms and rights; representation of ageing, etc. We will focus mainly on topics that include social representations and community support that fashion is helping with.

However fashion is also having a more symbolic stance in public social sphere. Fashion elements could become symbols of social movements, like Donald Trump's «Make America Great Again» hat, that is infamous for his supporters and has become controversial for opposing communities and being viewed negatively even without political connotation (Spodak, 2017). Or how the yellow vests are now identified with the French grassroots movement (Gilets Jaunes) whose fight commenced by the raise of fuel tax (Williamson, 2018). The symbol unified people against the government and any legislature to be unfair for the people. Such political use of fashion as a symbol helps to form and identify a community.

Figure 16 A MAGA hat. Photo credit Kamm, Nicholas (AFP/Getty Images).

Figure 17 Yellow jacket rally on Champs Elysee. Photo credit Barioulet, Lucas (AFP). (2019, January 5).

1.2.3.1.1. Ecology

To put it simple, ecological movement is a community of eco-enthusiasts, supporters of sustainable living and environmentalists. Their methodology and practices are spread across all fields of being and creation, inviting manufacturers, service providers, corporations and individuals to live with less impact on environment and leaving no and little trace to our existence in an ideal world. The trend has started at the 1970s and had a second wave recently after young Greta Thunberg refused to go to school on Fridays to protest on a global response on climate change.

Before these made the news, there was already a wide community that recognised the impact they were making and decided to change their consumption habits in food, technology, furnishing and fashion. As there weren't necessarily products and practices that were supported by companies, there was an individual effort that brought community to share and organise knowledge, techniques, places to buy and how to use and reuse. First came the demand, now we see the businesses offer so many more option for sustainable living for individuals, mainly in food and fashion industry. It changed the way countries discharge and manage waste. Now fashion industry main challenge is a sustainable and circular cycle of production, use, dismantlement and reuse.

The whole movement is basing on sustainability principles, not only referring to the environmental issues. Sustainability refers to the state of human living on the planet. Thanks to the work of activists and advocates, millions of people are learning about the social and environmental harm brought by industrial systems like textile and fashion industry. There is an evidence that the narrative of environmental concerns are eminent around the globe. According to the German Advisory Council on Climate Change (WBGU), the scientific body that advises the German federal government on Earth system megatrends, a global transformation of values has already begun (Fletcher & Tham, 2014, citing WBGU, 2011). A significant majority would welcome a new economic system that supports ambitious climate protection measures. Practice of protection of commons is reviving on a global scale, it has new names like sharing economy, transition towns, peer-to-peer economy: citizens are organising to take charge of their live and resources (Fletcher & Tham, 2014).

Without the community, that truly cared for the cause, there wouldn't be a public discussion, that is influencing other individuals that aren't directly interested, companies and corporations to change accordingly to the local concern. The concept of commons is all cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of society, like air, water and shared land. Commons are meant to be shared and sustained by communities, not privately. This movement is in definition serving to protect common resources and support communities by doing it. Fashion industry uses a significant part of common resources, so it has a direct responsibility.

1.2.3.1.2. Racial and national equity

As we stated previously, sustainability does not refer only the environmental and ecological issues. The health of global society can be assessed in systemic terms such as poverty or inequality, or individual measures such as mental health and obesity. It refers to the social conditions of human societies, particularly the poverty levels of at least one-third of the world's population.

Fashion is a phenomenon that exemplifies diversity across culture. It is dependant on time and place and commonly defined as the prevailing style at a given moment or place. While the media likes to suggest that fashion is only for the wealthy, it is really a commodity that is accessible to everyone.

The equal and fair access to the industry resources and possibilities is a big question of representation and facilitation of opportunities in fashion. The industry has a long history of insensible use, abuse and appropriation of non western imagery, concepts, techniques and people. The capitalism on a greater scale of operations is colonial and predatory. Fashion is accessible to everyone as visual representation of dress and adornment across the cultures, there is a mainstream and alternative media covering fashion and communities fashion represents. Representation of women's body now is the most diverse we have ever seen it in mainstream media, but there is always room for improvement.

However, this narrative of having typologies to represent set back the idea of communicating different cultural and psychological views on perception of fashion and beauty across cultures. Frances Corner (2014, Chapter 43) describes an interesting case following research from the United Stated that examined differences between white and black women's views of their bodies. The research concluded, that because black women are less represented in the media, they have a more positive view of themselves than white women. That being said, whilst fashion system must be encouraged to better represent all races, there surely should be a clear statement of equally desirable and free representation forms. Although this duality of being too much represented while doing harm and underrepresented while doing less harm is captivating to follow, as we could have found the points of reference for improvement and elimination of racial and national prejudices in cross-cultural comparison of unrealistic expectations.

1.2.3.1.3. Sexual and gender inclusivity

The abundance of voices in fashion and media that represents any type of adornment is likely to overcome, hold and come into a growing phase of accepting and reframing cultures and expectations within different communities and cultures. The public demand and commutates response for diversity in fashion seems to be working out. The fashion disproportion of resources and opportunities distribution we will discuss in next chapter, as there is an enormous issue fashion don't seem to overcome yet.

While we talk about inclusivity and diversity in fashion, we mostly talk about multitude of perspectives and support of it on companies vision and communities. The response for diversification and acceptance of any human forms of identities and direct interaction with specific traits and symbols that support different communities is encouraging both for communities and outsiders.

Fashion has always been symbolic for LGBTQ+ community as the way of self-expression. Take the rainbow flag, that helps to unite and highlight the message behind the community. The rainbow incorporates all the colours of all the flags used by community and their individual components. It helps to identify members and supporters in public. To some, due to opposing beliefs, a flag and symbolism behind it has constructed an excluding icon. However the meaning of the flag itself is acceptance and unification. Dress can play an important role in articulating marginal sexualities, for example, gay men have long used clothing and other forms of adornments to signal to other gay men (Entwistle, 2015). Masculine clothes also play a role in articulation difference within the lesbian relationship, alike

the difference around in heterosexual relationships. This is a reason why dress and adornment is a very important identifier for LGBTQ+ communities.

The gender tradition is a visible part of fashion discourse, as we still incorporate division in men and women clothing, creating the strong visual association with femininity and masculinity in adornment and public perception. Yet clothing is used as a visual identifier and a way of self-expression, making the labeling of individual or a group limited into existing representations. Stereotypes encourage simplistic way of viewing a complex world. Unisex clothing is a manifestation of the multitude of possible alternatives to gender binaries, it is a reaction to the restriction of rigid concepts of sex and gender roles. The movement came outside of fashion in symbolic nature, to identity the community and unite people who shared similar ideas. The fashion influenced by movements and affiliated groups is a representation of social changes and cultural patterns, influenced by civil rights movement and sexual revolution (Paoletti, 2015).

Figure 18 Rainbow flag as a symbol of unity and acceptance. NYC Pride. Photo credit Jackson, Lucas (Reuters). (2019, June 30).

1.2.3.2. Economic

With over 80 percent of the global population living in poverty, on less than $10 a day, in practical terms fashion – is a luxury, while still being a commodity. The diversification and stratification of global population can be easily determined with the relation to fashion, how much attention we pay to seasons and change in fashion styles and how much change in our wardrobes we can afford.

Economically, our generation has a different approach to resources and perception of scarcity of certain things, while housing is becoming less and less affordable, generic things are evolving into having a luxury version. On the other hand, our consumption habits are reactive to so much information that we have to try and at all times seek new and cool, that feeds the business model of many fashion and lifestyle brands that cater to overconsumption. The quality was overplayed by quantity.

In opposition to western consumption habits came a minimalist lifestyle, that praises the use over ownership, as owning any unneeded possession is a literal weight and space occupier. This movement is searching purpose in giving up on abundance of material things. Another movement that also was influenced economically, is second-hand buyers. In addition to frugal lifestyle, second hand shopping provides an access to different historical styles, that aren't a novelty, but as we know of cycles in fashion – everything will come back again; it is turning down to quality over quantity overtime. There are different examples of economically driven movements that have a sort of organised rules, knowledge and advice sharing and turning the image of thrifting and limiting consumption to a cultural phenomenon or a fad around the world.

1.2.3.2.1. Minimalist

Minimalism movement is a response to consumption and capitalism mindset of owning and buying more. The minimalism sees the problem in assigning too much meaning to material possessions. It takes ownership over our health, our relationships, passions, career, our desire to contribute beyond ourselves. The meaning behind it is to find personal path to happiness and reestablish connection with yourself and community around. Creators of a Netflix documentary on minimalism are defining a movement as a system that helps to reconnect with people over possessions. «Minimalism is a tool that can assist you in finding freedom. Freedom from fear. Freedom from worry. Freedom from overwhelm. Freedom from guilt. Freedom from depression. Freedom from the trappings of the consumer culture we've built our lives around. Real freedom» (Nicodemus & Millburn, 2021).

The movement was clearly influenced by economic frustration and consumption culture in western countries. Formally, it may come from an art movement, that emerged in the 1960s as a reaction against expressionism and chaos of urban life. The term refers to anything that is reduced and stripped to its essentials, necessary elements. Famous motto of Mies van Der Rohe «Less is more» encompasses the idea behind the movement, that is reflected in arts, architecture, design, music and literature. Minimalism as a way of living may be characterised by individuals being satisfied with what they have rather than what they want, liberating from consumption habits that are directly tied with modern production models and fashion cycles specifically.

We see minimalism in a way of uniform in fashion styles. Community has been providing with advice and feedback around the topic, sharing and building knowledge foundation around the philosophy, influencing all different fields of life. Such lifestyle choice adherents with different personal reasons, like spirituality, health, work-life balance, financial sustainability, ecological sustainability, but in essence is a reaction to materialism and conspicuous consumption.

1.2.3.2.2. Secondhand

Second hand clothing has a long history, even before clothes started to be mass produced, but with increasing income, the general public's ability to purchase new, rather than second-hand clothing spread a second wave of second hand shopping, more idealogical than economical. But because of environmental issues along with a response to overconsumption, the option to reuse and prolongate the lifespan of already produced garment reemerged. The fashion industry is the second largest polluting industry, main causes on pollution involve chemical pollution from dying, washing and treating of fabrics; overproduction of low quality and short lifespan of such products; non recycling of materials, all that will result in products being thrown away and accumulated in landfills. Second hand or pre-owned shopping model works not only for fashion, so it's a global trend that coincides with nostalgic mood.

The technology provided a new form of community sharing and exchanging, launching an online peer-to-peer trading, also known as community commerce. The Internet connectivity also resurfaced many communities, that are tracing symbolic products with high vintage value, for the enthusiasts of video games, sport cards, scarce or limited edition sneakers, any sort of memorabilia and merchandise. Sites and apps like Depop are realising the strategy of easy selling to community members, interested in the specific aesthetics.

A new wave of thrifting and re-purposing textiles is due to popularity of TikTok community, that also implies sustainability efforts among the youngest. «Thrift flips» are types of short videos by Andrew Burgess (@wandythemaker) on TikTok, that shows the process of upcycling secondhand materials into new clothes (Bauck, 2021). One of the most popular «flips» shows him turning a star quilt pattern into a hoodie, another — turning a woven Nascar blanket into trousers. He is one of the content creators on the platform that are boosting the interest and making fashion options for a minimal impact on environment look cool.

Popularisation of lower impact wardrobes amassed a new wave into a community, that already was shopping second hand, knew how to navigate in thrift shops and use other platforms to resell already owned garments and to establish new reselling business model on marketplaces. The community support for new marketplace use is

accounting for the new fashion businesses, like Vestiare Collective, Depop, Poshmark, Thredup, etc. that work as reselling platforms that unite communities around vintage and second hand shopping with other community members.

Figure 19 Andrew Burgess, known on TikTok as @wandythemaker in an upcycled jacket. Photo credit Wondmagegn, Hanna for the FT.

Figure 20 Film «Clueless» fashion aesthetics. (1995). Photo credit Getty Images.

1.2.3.3. Cultural

Fashion is not isolated from social change, it is highly influenced by it. When talking about history of certain cultures and societies, fashion and adornment is often a part of anthropological exploration and historical material artefacts, that are telling a story of a community.

Culturally influenced fashion could be identified in trickle down theory as fashion that is not produced by designers and institutions, but rather the street and communities that share the same interest in music, film, photography, arts, sports, dance, theatre, literature, etc., anything that defines culture or the messages appreciated in given communities. From the early age, we seek for group approval and identification that comes in form of appreciation for the same music bands and artists, films, that will influence the overall style. As we mature, we dress more for ourselves, establish our style, understand what suits us and what we like, a sense for fashion changes, also influenced by the different type of culture we consume and appreciate around us, as the culture change with time and new topics arise. Such evolution of taste could conclude fashion to be a part of culture, especially when it is an identity messenger to other communities.

Rap music attire drives a lot of influence from streetwear and basketball shoes, pop music is very indicative of what is in fashion and the pulse of the most popular yet mainstream styles. Some films are resurfacing not too distant fashion from the 1970s, like it did American Hustle, by depicting the aesthetics of that times; or some movies has collected their own fashion aesthetics over time, like Clueless with Alicia Silverstone, which developed a cult following and continuing legacy. It has so much cultural impact, that 2018 Versace collection by influenced by it.

We will be focusing primarily on film and music, as this expressions of culture come to be more popular and mass appreciated, so it would be easier to diversify communities among music and film enthusiasts and how this communities use fashion and clothing specifically to identify and build system of symbols and ideas around communities. As culture studies are yet another very broad topic, we will only focus on communities that are primarily identified with music or film and have a definitive fashion styles.

1.2.3.3.1. Music

Music plays a significant cultural role in identifying communities and movements among genres and styles enthusiasts. Music had been intertwined with fashion since the beginning of music visual performance. Reciprocal influences of fashion and music have resulted in the dynamic visualisations in popular culture. The association of the genre or the performer and the designer's style is a confirmation of the subculture around given genre or style of music.

Punk rock was one of the most influential collaborations of fashion in music. It served as a representation of huge cultural movement that engaged with music scene and changed globally how people think and create. Punk stated in London in the 1970s, and became not only the music genre, but the lifestyle. Iconic band and their visual style represented the culture, with the Sex Pistols becoming prominent band (Lewis, n.d.). Vivienne Westwood created a legacy designer house on the punk aesthetic she used to sell in her shop at the time. Punk's iconic fashion styles included T-shirts with pin-up girls cards, homosexual cowboys, Queen of England's face with a safety pin through her nose.

Rap and hip-hop had a long history of cosigning fashion staples confirming the fashion culture of black communities. Run D.M.C hit song «My Adidas» was the reason the brand turned up the deal for being endorsed by the group itself. Along with this, Run D.M.C. had a branded line of sneakers with a group's logo embroidered (Dougherty, 2020). This get going the era of clothing deals in hip-hop. Now it is rare to see a popular musician without a brand deal or endorsement. Hip-hop communities however, represent exactly the street fashion, the bubble up trends and styles, that are collected as local and then spread into global and recreated by designers as part of inspiration.

Sneakers enthusiasts are adoring the rappers and brands collaborations and are hunting for limited and rare pairs for collections. The case of Kanye West and his now iconic designs of Yeezy, transformed streetwear as we know it now. Designs are worshiped by celebrities, sneaker heads, and Kanye fans; West seems to popularise the athleisure. Another iconic figure that merged his music and fashion career is Pharell Williams, he worked with brand like Bape, Adidas (popularising NMD sneaker and other designs) and luxury brand like Chanel. On top of that, Williams owns his own cult streetwear Billionaire Boys Club in collaboration with Bape's Nigo.

One of the most influential singers and performers Rihanna was known for her impeccable and pushing the envelope styles, that normalised wearing luxury brands with streetwear, colliding the high end designers with street communities. She was even awarded the special prize of CFDA (Council of Fashion Designers of America) Fashion Icon Award. This collision popularised brands within fans community and provided a new layer of visibility to the artist.

Relationship between fashion and music is embedded in and emphasised by the sharing of language (Miller, 2011). Correlation comes not only in forms of creative activities, but also as part of interests of both the audiences for specific brand and performers, which later dictate the tastes and consumer habits across communities of music enthusiasts. The fashions produced and influenced by music stars have significance for an understanding of music fandom; music and fashion present means by which fans can create cultures and communities and visualise their fan identities (Miller, 2011).

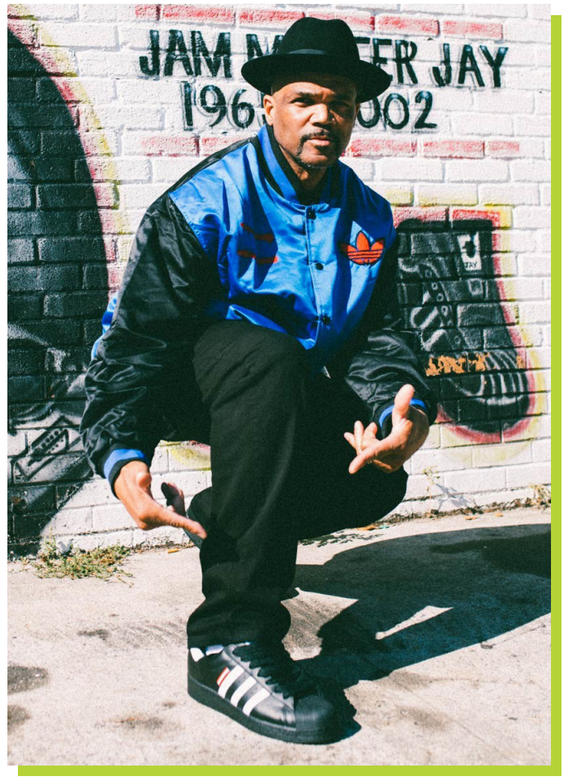

Figure 21 Run D.M.C. collaboration sneakers with Adidas. (1986) Photo credit Adidas.

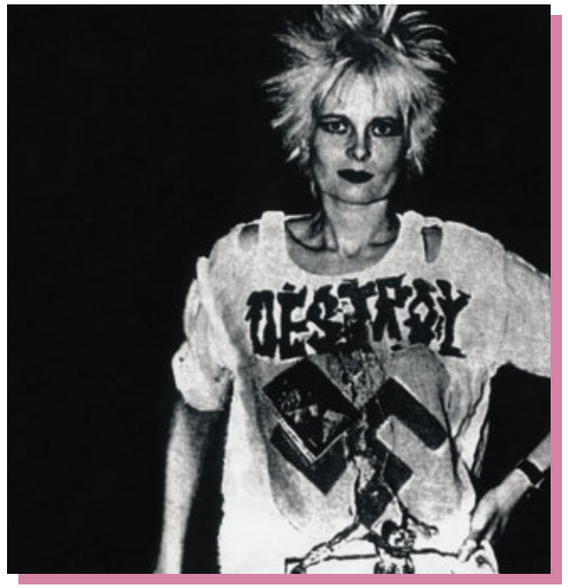

Figure 22 A younger Vivienne Westwood in the Punk era, taken by an unknown photographer. Copyright Vivienne Westwood Ltd. Retrieved from BBC Archive.

Figure 23 Kanye West in Yeezy sneakers and Athleisure styling. Photo credit Hypebeast.

1.2.3.3.2. Film

In film, costume is a very important messenger, indicator of a story and a timeline, a historical period and portrait of the character. Clothes and adornment are used to express character traits, emotions, as well as historical traditions. Film is a democratic art form for the viewing and, with evolution of technology and democratisation of distribution with platforms like YouTube, for the making. More movies are made than ever before. Fashion, like cinema is everywhere. As new «fashionscapes» described by Karaminas have authorise an ever-widening range of cultural intermediaries, with style coins developing a global reach the is more fragmented in the discourse and standards (Geczy & Karaminas, 2018).

Fashion was imported from France with adoration of haute couture to the American body image and sold in department stores; less affluent shoppers took similar styles, more cheaply made and adjusted them themselves or with local dressmaker. The fashionable woman used to keep track of style of Parisian couturier from season to season. Film had a greater influence of fashion that any other form of visual culture. We discussed a bit of film influence history in celebrity culture and following of icons. However, with rise of television and youth culture, cinema and fashion influence was in decline. Significantly, the beatnik style made it to Hollywood, as perhaps the first example of fashion style that was determined on the street by local communities, rather than by a designer (Geczy & Karaminas, 2018). The second half of the 20th century witnessed a radical decentralisation of viewing and production, and as a radical example of currently popular on-demand video that offers the possibility to watch whatever and whenever viewer wants. So the sense of community that was marked earlier viewing situations are shifting and becoming very individualistic, yet the individualism of viewing preferences is becoming the main indicator of new communities of authentic interest and more personal oriented taste.

Fashion could be inspired by film and be inspiration for the films' costumes. This what happened with Jim Jarmusch's Only Lovers Left Alive, a film that revolves around the story of vampire couple to survive in the contemporary world. The film plays on retrospective obsession on past in a present, as vampires life lasts centuries long, which was embodied in the costumes worn by the cast. The costumes were designed for the

film and have no direct connection to the work of fashion (Geczy & Karaminas, 2018). However the film was promoted by fashion publications particularly for sartorial choices, focusing how consumer could recreate outfits worn by characters in contemporary garments. This stance was a determination of fashion editors of direct communication with film enthusiasts and the way of promotion of the film, based on attraction to some visual aesthetic, rather than the film plot or the director's vision.

The formation of communities may be geographically dispersed, but united in terms of aesthetics and ethics. The majority of viewers are locked to blockbusters pushed by big studios, in contrast to groups of cinephiles obsessed with cinema that communicate and exchange their passion over the internet. The nature of audience power and new modes of distribution transformed by technology, made possible the development of national cinemas, like one of Nigeria — Nollywood with distinctive aesthetics and of course fashion. The 21th century witnessed the rise of new cinematic cultures, which encompasses a degree of diversity. This diversification erases the power of Hollywood perception, giving possibilities of different communities to tell their stories with displaying their cultures, and specifically fashion.

Figure 24 Only Lovers Left Alive still frame of Tilda Swinton. Photo credit Kopp, Sandro (Sony Pictures Classics). (2014).

1.3. Community of practice

Communities of practice are «groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis» (Wenger, 2002). «A community of practice emerges from collective activity» (Henri & Pudelko, 2003). In contrast with community of interest, whose principal activity is to build and support knowledge systems and relevant cultures, the challenge of community of practice is to develop and enrich practice by sharing complementary knowledge among the members (Henri & Pudelko, 2003). So the community of practice share concerns and common interests, they base themselves on communities of interest, but their communication is centred on practical exchange.

The knowledge accumulated becomes informal bounding value, accompanying the learning experience. The personal satisfaction of knowing other members and sharing perspectives on professional activities develops a common sense of identity (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). So as soon as shared practices could be identified as part of certain community, it becomes a community of practice. To develop any level of expertise, practitioners need engagement with others who face similar situations. Knowledge is not static, is cannot be owned, it resides in skill, relationships of members of the community.

The health of communities of practice depends on the voluntary engagement of members and on the emergence of internal leadership (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). The ability to support the knowledge as a living process deepens on informal communication and means of autonomous practices and sharing of such. Wenger (2002) also looks at community of practice in terms of organisational and managerial development for businesses and personal outlook for members. We will be focusing on benefits for members, by which he states in short-term and long-term values. For short-term improvement experience in workspace is included: a meaningful participation, a sense of belonging, challenges support, expertise access, connection. For long-term fostering of professional development: expansion of skills and expertise in public practice, enhanced professional reputation, strong sense of professional identity, employability, a network for keeping up with a field of expertise.

Communication and strong sense of community helps with education in any sorts of institutions. Big universities are paying a lot of attention and importance of community that is fostering talent, support of the group and knowledge and skill share to provide for the best results of each community member and the group as a whole. In fashion, the belonging to community of practice from the very beginning of our life comes in a form of play, that later could transform into hobbies. Such connection to heritage or nostalgic feeling that supports the practices also beneficial for further development of the personal identity and the practiced skill.

Communities of practice are pivotal for practicing fashion, not only wearing it, but putting the knowledge and time to learn the skill of producing garments, transform garments and alter the functionality of pieces. The skill of fashion could be learned in communal practices, like it was done before the industrialisation and emerging of mass production; in craft productions, as a primary women hobby and household skill along with cooking and housekeeping, in artisan workshops. The skill of fashion is still learned among many communities in practice, from master to apprentice, now community centres offer teaching and practicing of basic craft skill and workshops.

Institutional education in fashion is offering fashion skills that are complying with mass production or prêt-à-porter cycle of clothing and accessories. Teaching is often focused in providing common basic knowledge and applied skills for the industry inquiries. Many schools are specialised in fashion, rather than broad design practises. The community of students is known to provide not only a sense of belonging and peer-to-peer feedback, but also have a support system and better grades, if we accept grading as an indicator of good acquisition of skill, better attendance and finishing the school more regularly. The societal regulation and practice support comes in forms of creative collectives. Professionals that seek further improvement and creative collaboration are united around projects, creative outlets and hobbies.

Practicing together benefits in support the knowledge and community as well as preserving crafts, improving personal skills and augmenting knowledge in communities. We will explore examples of communal practices in fashion that are connecting professionals, creatives and hobbyists.

1.3.1. Bottom up knowledge share

Practices that are taught from the masters to apprentices, to the community of enthusiasts, establishing the community of practice around the crafts, arts and wider skills. Communities have an identity and could be named and categorised, but don't have an institutional value and may lack credibility in form of modern educational systems, but the high skill in craft production is often put less of a priority and worth than contemporary industrialised skills.

1.3.1.1. Artisan manufactures

Nowadays artisanal practices in fashion are labeled as slow fashion, as opposed to fast fashion. The manufacturing in slow fashion is powered by ethical and conscious practices of small manufacturers and producers that otherwise wouldn't survive the pace of fashion industry. Slow fashion is a movement toward thoughtful design, creation and consumption. A product's priorities are quality and longevity, minimisation of waste and maximisation of social impact (Donaldson, 2020).

The social impact that slow fashion brands might follow is in creating economic opportunities for communities and individuals. Fast fashion relies on cheap production costs in outsourced offshore factories, located usually in low income countries. Slow fashion is producing with the help of artisans and crafts men and women that inherited and learned skills from their families and carry a tradition that might dissolve on global scale. The conservation of traditions is crucial for certain types of textile practices, so the collaboration on providing to the new audience that could pay the fair price for sustainable and conscious production.

For example, Agua Bendita is a luxury ready to wear, which garments are produced by women artisan from vulnerable communities in Medellin and Antioquia region in Colombia (Donaldson, 2020). The artisans are empowered to build their small businesses working from home and proving for their families by their generations-old Colombian embroidery and beading techniques. Together with the brand they are looking to employ and distribute work among local women and community. The techniques and

1.3.1.2. Crafts and DIY

the time process for crafting each garment extend beyond the quality and fair pricing; the environmental impact of producing in-house is low, plus the brand doesn't support traditional fashion cycles for collection, by doing drops twice a year.

Mayamiko is a fashion workshop that sells products made and sourced by makers in communities in Malawi. They provide education centres and support for local creative community by turning it into sustainable activities and opportunities (Mayamiko Trust, n.d.). Other brand, SIKA (SIKA, n.d.) was founded in London to make a social contribution to Ghanian community, not only by producing and supporting the community, but engaging in collaborative creation with other international brands.

The engagement of artisanal communities around the globe has economical and societal benefits for both parties and supports the communities identity, conserve fashion techniques and practices, and serves to revive the visibility to vulnerable causes and enrich fashion visual global culture.

Sewing and other textiles hobbies are tools for finding own identity, expression and strength. The Do It Yourself or DIY movement is re-approaching as the leisure time passing and creative outlet. The advancement of technology and many people working and engaging in digital world made a desire to return to manual and analog practices a possible choice. Plus the mass produced goods and access to any possible types of products seem overreacting and endearing, so the desire to engage personally with belongings to make more meaningful connections by producing, altering or personalising.

Crafts that fall into category of fashion and textile are countless — batik, crochet, embroidery, felting, knitting, macrame, patchwork, quilting, silk-screening, spinning, tapestry, weaving, just to name a few most popular ones. The magic of human touch is an intension to capture in the digital era. For those who want to support crafts communities, but not necessarily engage personally, there are many places to access, thought local events and special weeks promoting crafts; online the fashion retailer Etsy is a key player with spreading the vintage and handmade items, connecting vendors and buyers around the world. Etsy trend expert Dayna Isom Johnson points to the ongoing popularity of customisation as one reason why we're gravitating toward handmade goods: «The beauty in handmade items is that each piece is unique and has its own story whether from the making process or the conversation that you have with the maker» (Agnew, 2018).

Other point if reference for crafts and handmade communities would be Stitch'nBitch groups — a collectives of women that meet virtually and physically, often in local cafes, to knit, stitch and chat (Minahan & Cox, 2007). The movement if evident in Europe, many parts of USA, in Australia. It is named after a book, Stitch'nBitch written by Debbie Stoller, editor if the New-York based feminist magazine BUST. Such groups are formed by and for women who get together to knit and socialise, in a from of creative leisure. The groups meet to discuss their projects, exchange skills and to chat. These groups are meeting in university campuses, clubs, pubs, cafes and private homes. Some gather for stitching, like embroideries, tapestry and weavings, some include social contributions to other marginalised communities. While groups are using technology as a form of communication, it used as enabler for resourceful practices and remedy for disconnected connection of the web (Minahan & Cox, 2007). So we could say that the practice itself is pivotal for community gathering, rather than the place.

There are other different ways crafts and DIY movements are connecting and enabling communities, so fashion is not only an adornment and an accessory that indeed have a message and a meaning, but a practice and a skill, that could be nurtured and valued in terms of building the community and exchanging the interest and knowledge, while also supporting and conserving the skill and the crafts.

1.3.2. Up to bottom knowledge share

Practices that are coming from a more hierarchical way of teaching and learning or a horizontal creative collaboration between professionals that share artistic and practical skills with a community that powers the interest and community identity. We will talk about the school system in fashion education and the importance of the place to practice certain levels of values and being submerged in the community of learning, establishing connections and network, obtaining a sense of belonging in an institution. Also we will explore possibilities of creative collectives in fashion and force of cross collaborations.

1.3.2.1. Creative collectives

Creative process is collaborational in essence, plus the vision of individual is never trapped in vacuum, but influenced by environment and surrounding people. For actual inspiration in fashion, designer never alone in researching and expanding visual creations. Behind every modern brand, collection or drop comes a collectives of like-minded creatives. Friendships and relationships that are bounded at parties, events, universities or through mutual connections play an explicit role in shaping the narratives and aesthetic of a brand, making it a cornerstone in embracing the community around.

Designer Maria Kazakova embraces her relationships and connections. Her brand JAHNKOY translates as «new spirit village» and rooted in various ideas, one of which is to foster global cultural exchange (Hall, 2017). «JAHNKOY speaks about the cultural unity of all nations» reads the official website. «It invites the individuals to move forward, unite and reclaim the world as one tribe. We see fashion as a mode of human togetherness and as a powerful platform for change». On a local level designer surrounds herself with collaborators and craftspeople, all help her realise collection rich with decoration and ornamentation, bold colouring and unconventional silhouettes.

Molly Goddard also surrounds herself with creative collectives, working closely with friends and family to execute a vision rooted in her adolescence. Her models are often street-casted or selected from friends. A recent exhibition «What I Like» at NOW Gallery invites fans of the brand to embroider and customise six dresses (Hall, 2017).

ONEBYME is a label founded by Miles Dunphy and Elsa Ellies that centres on the idea of functionality and minimalism (Hall, 2017). They are collectively involved with dance and performance community, that praise their clothes to be liberating and enhancing of the movements. Designers are now set to open Make-Labs, a studio that is open to customers to create their own garments by sharing their patterns to public.

Global publications, like i-D (2020) has emerged with a Summer School by giving access to collaborators, stylists, photographers, designers and directors to create creative narratives. The course was inspired by the «learn and pass it on» ethos. The magazine has teamed up with leading industry names in a series of video workshops, how-to guides and feedback for applications. It was totally free and accessible to everyone on Youtube.

Such examples are tangible and accessible ways of forming a creative community or a collective around the brand, the vision or a cause in fashion.

Figure 25 What I Like exhibition by Molly Gorrard. Photo credit Wonderland Magazine. (2016, December 7).

1.3.2.2. Fashion schools

Education should give students an opportunity to experiment, investigate, explore and experience to transform their thinking, build their skillset and confidence to overcome challenges in ever changing systems. Creative practices performed and practiced collectively and in formal and informal ways combines the ability to imagine new futures with the means to deliver them.

Schools and institutions are a good way of proving and assessing for research and problem solving among students. Extensive research has shown that there is a strong link between community involvement in schools and better school attendance, as well as the improved academic achievement of students (Fan & Chen, 2001). Researchers and practitioners have documented how schools and communities working towards common goals can be beneficial. Communities can provide schools with a context and environment that can either complement and reinforce the values, culture, and learning the schools provide for their students or negate everything the schools strive to accomplish (Smith & Bath, 2006, citing Ada, 1994; Bricker, 1989; Nieto, 1992). When students are engaged with their learning and their immediate community learning, they are more likely to spend more time on educationally productive activities, so the university community and co-students that are engaged around the same aim are beneficial in productivity. Smith and Bath are citing Li et al. (1999) when claiming that social integration (making friends, spending time on campus) and academic integration (interest in studies, satisfaction in university experiences) have a greatest influence on communication skills and critical thinking skills.

Fashion schools like central Saint Martins and Parsons not only providing and fostering highly engaging and proactive educational environment and experiences for students. They participate in partnerships with influential institutions and brands, scholarships and organisations, that are willing to invest in future talents, but that also creates highly competitive environment. However the long term effect for students that passed the examinations and were able to attend and spend time in the concentration of creativity will have benefits in their creative endeavours and network of valuable connections of like-minded people in the community.

Conclusion

This chapter continued as a descriptive exploration of different classification of communities, that could be layered on and indicative of fashion system's communities. We discussed communities of place and their identifications, online and offline; organisation and knowledge surrounding communities of interest and enthusiasts that follow consciously and audience that follows consciously or subconsciously, how these communities communicate and support knowledge and interest; how practice of fashion could be a form of communication and skill, allowing for connection in practice of the skill, learning and establishing connection within community by sharing and supporting knowledge and skill.

We discovered a variety of communities in fashion system and what is allowing for their organisation and communication within and throughout the fashion system. We seem to find the sense of belonging and acceptance as main emotional indicator of connection to the community. We could conclude that fashion and adornments, style and clothing allow a variety of ways to connect and send messages and conceptualise the public and individual identity.

2. FASHION IS DISCONNECTING

Being disconnected means to exist in a state of detachment and isolation. It also means feeling separated, not fitting well together or not understanding each other. While the isolation surely influences our creative, social abilities and emotions, the feeling of not fitting and not being able to read messages, communicate and connect with one another is more close to unveiling how fashion and really any other modern industry is enabling disconnection. In the previous chapter we focused primarily on cases and theoretical research that provided connection and community building. Some cases were made news just recently exactly as industry is beginning to understand and rethink issues that are coming not from the competition or the education, but basic human conditions that couldn't be changed easily.

The social disconnection and isolation affects how we function in a society. «Both as individuals and as society, feelings of social isolation deprive us of vast reservoirs of creativity and energy» (Cacioppo, 2009, p. 269). Social places that are open and inviting are more successful in making visitors and audience feel comfortable, that activity is helping to reinforce engagement among community members. Free and open places bring together a variety of different people to communicate, experience and learn differences in innate and learned cultures of one another. The constrained, closed and exclusive social places are tend to do the opposite. When we aren't able to learn and communicate from each other, communities are being labeled with the rise of prejudices. The closed social structures are tied to lack of opportunities for certain communities, that aren't engaged in specific economical and social groups and not explicit to visible role models.

Social background is a value and a meaning that are becoming a lens people see through, these lens arise biases, constraints of perception and interest. Such lenses support concepts that aren't familiar, common into structural system of biases. Fashion, usually being a visual form of communication consciously supports ideas and perception of majority being portrayed thought history of discriminative and limitative styles.

Fashion and dress have a complex relationship to identity: on one side the clothes we wear are expressive of identity, messaging our gender, class, status, etc; on the other, clothes cannot be read directly (Entwistle, 2015), since they do not encompass the language, just the code, that can be transcribed by knowledgable communities, and therefore open to interpretation on a wider scale. «Fashion embraces not only the desire to imitate others and to express commonality, but to express individuality» (Entwistle, 2015). There is a contradictory tendency in dress expressions of values and signals within the community, being individualistic and communal. Clothing and fashion are articulating group identities and deployed to mark distinction between communities.

Fashion is allowing for a visual facade of familiar and popular motives, cultural, economical, social to occur. With the history of mainstream and popular being predominately from a western view, now we encounter problems that we weren't subject to due to constraints of communication. Globalisation cured some things, but also resurfaced the visual and blatant representations of social and economical disparities, beauty biases and ecological problems that are critical for the most vulnerable and unprotected.

In this chapter we will discuss the problem of disproportion in representation, beauty biases and how geography still dictate the economical stability and influence future success, all with help of examples of fashion industry. So we won't be able to tackle every social and economical issue, but the ones that seems to be prominent in the contemporary fashion discourse of different communities.

2.1. Social issues

Social problems include anything that involves discrimination of any kind, access to education, labour rights, immigration, religion intolerance, etc.; everything that has to do with basic human rights, essentially. Social problems extend further the individual control and ability to solve them. Different individuals, experts and societies have different perceptions of such problems and ways to change the picture. Social issues may not be a tangible problem that needs to be solved, but rather a discussion topic. Different countries have different issues that arise in community, as they also inherit the social system and traditions and laws that organise their lives differently; different countries have different possibilities for different populous groups, different groups are presented with different opportunities, etc., the list goes on and shows the hard classification that isn't simple to insert the problems that we will be talking about. I would like to discuss briefly how the same problems are influencing and reinforcing issues in a from of activities and traditions happening in fashion and inflicting on visual and material narratives.

2.1.1. Strict representation

Diversity is not a new narrative in fashion, that historically was bound and approved by and for wealthy and European. The Council of Fashion Designers Association (CFDA) in the USA has announced at the beginning of the 2019 that its focus would be on diversity, sustainability, body positivity and equality. Although the CFDA is not the first to address these issues, the institutional and traditional fashion industry that are still bound to the image of young and predominately European, seems to finally take deeper considerations. This year, after summer events that lead to Black Lives Matter movement to change the narrative and finally address the American systemic racism in different fields of state and public organisations, brands started to actively issue the diversity pledges and commitments, but the shift in paradigm in race questions is a valuable step to discussion.

Performative representation in organisations, companies and institutions which are displaying generic photos of 'diversity' are often doing very little to ensure true cultural inclusion in workplaces and in fashion advertising, that revolve around same figures of diversity and inclusion in publications, blogs, magazines websites, fashion film and editorials. The stories of people that are already working in the industry are often told through the only available lenses.

Today it is easier to see a shift in visual representation in magazines covers, ad campaigns and runway shows, rather than in executive boards and behind the scenes (Times, 2021). Such platforms rely on freelancers and contractors to work with already, so decisions on hiring new talents are quick, but temporal. Not to say that diversity and representation also comes under spreading the diversity in gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability. Many traditionally build brands are still rely on a myth and mystery, so the transparency that is needed to see and insure the change comes in contradiction with creative independence.

For example modest fashion, dressing less skin-revealing clothes for reasons of faith, religion or personal preference, is still not visible in mainstream publications, despite a wide Muslim market and spending. Fashion is broadly secular, yet Christian symbols are used voluntarily as gimmick or background for mystery.

The issue of representation is diverse and while minorities are less in population percentage, there shouldn't be no representation at all, as lessening the question to be minor problem. The «othering» happens whenever the tokenisation and categorisation of performative diversity is put in practice, making communities limited to whatever brands already represent, but not making it available to mainstream public or not inviting to bigger companies. This isolates and divides communities.

2.1.2. Geographical boundaries

While fashion decentralisation and acquisition of traditional fashion cultures is symbolic to defocus and shift the narrative from classic fashion capitals of Paris, New York, London and Milan. The focus on diversified industry on global scale should conceptualise «not so global» cities, places and nations as dispersed nodes with potential of distinctive fashion cultures and industry retention and mobilisation (Geczy & Karaminas, 2018). Local fashion industries also acquiring economical power and the possibility to compete in shifting global economic dominance from Europe and North America to Asia, South America, Africa and the Pacific.

Yet the majority of new clothes, luxury or mass market, is manufactured in Asia. Brands are doing it to keep margins high while production costs low. Bangladesh has a minimum wage of $38 a month, making it attractive to many retailers and brands (Corner, 2014). It also has horrifying negligent health and safety legislation. Vulnerable garment workers, 80% women, work long hours in inadequate facilities, without benefits and underpaid. According to a 2012 report from International Labour Right Forum, over 1000 garment workers have been killed since 1990 in preventable factory fires. Bangladeshi law enforcement do prosecute very few violations, allowed by corruption in government and factory owners control over 10% of the parliament.

On 24 April 2013, just outside Dhaka, the eight store Rana Plaza factory collapsed, killing 1138 garment workers and injuring over 2500 more. Extensive media coverage and outrage around the world helped the Clean Clothes campaign and global union convince many Western brands and retailers to sign the enforceable Accord on Fire and Building Safety, which should improve the working conditions in all Bangladeshi factories.

Fashion Revolution (2021) organisation are asking to spread awareness throughout communities, cultures and borders, demanding brand to answer «who made my clothes?» And following up with brands transparency on workers fair wages, working and safety conditions, gender equality and labour rights. The Labour Behind the Label (2020) explains, the vast majority are occupied in fashion not by choice but through enduring gender discrimination: «Women are desirable in the garment industry because employers take advantage of cultural stereotypes — to which women are often obliged to adhere — that portray women as passive and flexible».

The geographically disadvantaged groups and communities are taken advantage of by the lack of opportunities, rigged social and justice systems and capitalistic western industry practices. The lack of fair wages and real support of communities in collaboration and coalition are disconnecting points for different communities, that are influenced by background and geographical boundaries within modern day global world.

2.1.3. Gender norm and duality

As we mentioned previously, fashion manufacturer's workers are 80% women. However there is an increasing number of clothing and accessory manufacturers that are removing discriminatory practices that prevented women from taking what is considered men jobs in emerging economies, with a usual practice of men jobs being payed more generally. In emerging economies women are founding start-ups and cooperatives, that have a significant effect on family planning and female education, which in turn should improve the health and well-being of women and children. Women are behind many of the online fashion businesses that exist today, precisely their founders were looking to balance work around family life. Established businesses need to work harder to provide similar flexibility. The future of the fashion industry holds real opportunities for greater equality, diversity and achievement, something that would benefit all consumers and producers, men and women.

Whilst women opportunities have tangible and feasible accomplishments, the gender normality in displaying identity has been shifting. The facet of fashion has inextricably implicated ways in which gender has been constructed and reproduced as governing social categories within modernity (Geczy & Karaminas, 2018). The exaggeration of gender attributes on open display has been labeled as exploitative as part of female sartorial code, but using male forms of clothing we are perpetuating the domi-

nance of masculinity (Barnard, 2020). When we talk about queer communities, queer fashion represents as fluid and paradoxical. It aims to shape gendered and sexualised identities, but also aims to blur boundaries in categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality, masculinity and femininity, passivity and activity (Barnard, 2020).

For example femme or feminine fashion goes against both straight and lesbian fashion and challenges any clear categories of fashion, gender and sexuality. It calls for mobility of identification and multiplicity. That being said, gay and lesbian fashion was and still is a way to speak about their sexuality thought clothing and style. The notion of queer fashion coincides with the ideas about modern society as a society of appearances (Barnard, 2020, citing Sennett, 1992, p. 152–153) and clothing as a language like institution from which individual styles are differentiated as parole (Barnard, 2020, citing Barthes, 1990).

Gendered fashion comes much more as a limitation, rather than a connector. The division of clothes into men and women categories in store and e-commerce seem dated and goes beyond the notion of identity. Some brands are advertising their clothes to have no gender, while not being unisex, so that there is a duality or a balance of feminine and masculine in attire. No gender or gender fluid or gender neutral clothing is something of a gimmick, that seems to invite acceptance and neutral gendered diversity or cater to somebody that do not want their adornment to be identified with any of gendered normative. The norm of gender narrative is that gender identifications should be unambiguous (Mair, 2014). But we see identifications different from what is considered the norm.

The gender question is on-going debate and discussion without right or wrong outcome, but there is backlash from either communities, that want their clothes identifiable. The discussion is open, but still do not provide same visibility and opportunities for all sexualities and genders to partake and change the narrative of community representation or the deconstruction of it.

2.1.4. Age discrimination

The global population is growing older and living longer. With age comes more responsibilities, more financial stability, more diversification and specialisation. The ageing population has it needs and the market that provides for them, in production and services. However, high end fashion believes on youthful image to promote their brand. While fashion has a power to shape societal standards; we are programmed to believe youth and beauty are synonyms, but older population has more spending power, has their prioritises and sense of style figured out, they live vibrant and active life. Fashion still sets apart older demographics, at least for visible part of communication, like runway shows.

Despite a handful of runway moments featuring older women, data shows that only one out of every 200 models during spring/summer 2020 shows were above the age of 50 (Arnett, 2020). Brands are prioritising youth over realistic representation of their customers. Balenciaga has used multiple models aged over 50 for its last three shows in Paris, older women are a regulars at Sies Marjan and Eckhaus Latta in New York, Dolce & Gabbana and Danila Gregis repeatedly presented age-diverse catwalks in Milan (Arnett, 2020). There should be a natural progression of brands customers into different age groups, but the brand communication does not aligned with different communities.

Some restriction around the youngest age models are forming. Kering decided to stop work with models under 18 last year. Condè Nast announced a similar policy, banning photoshoots of girls aged 17 and younger unless they were the subject of an article (Arnett, 2020). Fashion fetishisation of youth is spotlighted in documentary Girl Model (2011), depicting industry tendency to pick underage girls from foreign countries and take financial advantage of them.

The ageism is a social concept referring to constructed way of thinking about the older persons based on negative attitudes and stereotypes about ageing; the tendency to structure society based on youth and young assumptions is not new in fashion and in society in general, it just wasn't visible. From personal experience I could certainly state an example of my mother not being seen and taken seriously in different situations and not being represented and cared for as a customer, a visitor or a viewer. Fashion is traditionally caters for a younger

look, so models would retire in their late 20s. There is no shortage of «mature» talent, as supermodels of the 90's are approaching their 50s now, but it still rare to see age inclusive representations on runways.

By not including and not referring to different age groups accordingly and equally, fashion industry disconnects themselves from reality of communities and creates limitations and certain stereotypical images around ageing and different age groups. The issue is so not tackled, that the industry is not making much progress in the most mobile types of visual presentations.

Figure 26 Senior model Yasmina Rossi portrait. Photo credit Metro Models.

2.2. Economic disparity

The economic disparity after several crises seems to only become worse. Explicit display of wealth appears sometimes insensitive. The crucial difference between our perception of wear advised by media, and the polarisation of wealth perception is a global access to social media. Fashion is a status and class identifier. The displaying of wealth seems to be coming in forms of downplaying and mimicking the middle class or even the streets. Luxury norm core has become a stylistic phenomenon; norm core was acquired from the streets in a sort of visual downshifting— high fashion houses like Chanel, Dior and Gucci slogan tees, tracksuits by Vetements, collaboration with luxury and streetwear brands like Louis Vuitton and Supreme (Walsh, n.d.). High fashion exploitation of low effort pieces with high price tags is ostentation of branding and so highlighted the divide of class even further of using the same pieces. Whether wearing a tracksuit or s simple T-shirt is no longer a no name comfort clothing, but an opportunity to make a status statement and how much you afford to spend.

2.2.1. Status roleplay

In the late 20th century, fashion no longer was created in fashion capital cities like Paris and Milan. Thousands of brands and organisations in many countries are producing a wide variety of accessible choices for the audience. Plus the development of technology and media changed the distribution of fashion and redefined the issues of democratisation of clothing. Fashion system in the 19th and early 20th century clothing expressed the social position of women and the position they aspired to look like. Class fashion was reliable on centralised consensus on styles and silhouettes of small number of designers. Class fashion was expressed in strict systems of rules, stating how and on which occasions certain items should be worn.

Class fashion also expressed social ideals of feminine attitude and behaviour (Crane, 2012). Underlying acceptance of such fashion was fear of exclusion on the basis of nonconformity, that signified ignorance and unawareness of the correct behaviour and norm. Clothes for the elites had to be perfectly executed, since customers were in the spotlight at social gatherings. Fashion was only adopted by upper class and emerging celebrities, like Hollywood actresses.

Consumer fashion replaced the class fashion bringing along stylistic diversity, there is no consensus on fashionable state. Instead of orientation toward the tastes of social elites, consumer fashion oriented on social groups at all social levels. Haute couture was secluded from consumption and replaced by luxury fashion, industrial fashion and street styles (Crane, 2012). Luxury fashion is still very much presented in the media as setting fashion styles each season, there is often little consensus on direction, but designers are producing large numbers of propositions instead. Industrial fashion adopts some styles from luxury fashion, appropriating innovations from working class and other subcultures which later sells ideas to more privileged groups.

Luxury fashion reflects on increasing differentiation between lifestyles on social classes, specifically of levels of disposable incomes and standards of living. Wearing fashionable clothes is still considered prerogative of certain social groups, including the young, celebrities, sports stars, influencers, successful professionals and executives; generally lifestyles where it is important to exhibit taste and status. Designer clothes

are sold in interiors conveying the image of high culture, dividing the role-play even further.

The disappearance of consensus on fashion as widely accepted social and cultural ideas in favour of pluralism of fashions, that sometimes are conflicting and deviating values and symbols identified with specific communities, makes certain communities feel alienated and disconnected from a global narrative and deeper differentiated.

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2.2.2. Cultural appropriation

Fashion elements and pieces in modern western visual culture are part of appropriation mechanism. Designers take inspiration from other cultures, from material culture and techniques of low wage regions; the appropriation is woven into the system. Cultural appropriation is not a new phenomenon, but it only recently has become highlighted in popular discourse (Marcketti & Karpova, 2020).

Cultural appropriation — is taking aesthetic or material elements from another culture, different from their own, without giving credit or profit. The taking is like stealing or plagiarising, often done without permission and acknowledgement. Typically, appropriators of elements and ideas in design profit from them, while the originators make no profit and may be humiliated, disrespected and harmed because of the process. Cultural appropriation is possible because the appropriator usually is in a position of power and influence, whereas those who are being taken from, may not have the same or easy access to legal resources or enforcement of copyright. Appropriation is dangerous and offensive, it could be culturally insensitive and reduce a living culture to an aesthetic expression or fashion statement for sale.

Cultural exchange is different in aspect of respectful and mutual interchange between cultures, giving and receiving. Power dynamics in the industry often make such exchange tricky and challenging. When a more popular and known brand is collaborating with a less known one, it could be seen patronising or as example of tokenisation, like Belcourt and Valentino, that condemned for Valentino as a way to legitimate the appropriation of Native American elements by using Belcourt (Marcketti & Karpova, 2020).

A similar discourse in the US on cultural appropriation has generated considerable media attention and public debate. In 2011, the Students Teaching about Racism in Society (STAR) at Ohio University launched a poster campaign called «My culture is not your costume» (Marcketti & Karpova, 2020). The campaign aimed to sensitise individuals about wearing Halloween costumes that appropriated stereotypical and insensitive use of other cultures. Posters included images of young white people dressed in costumed versions of Native American attire and headdresses, Mexican sombreros and ponchos and Islamic veils, combined with a student representing the culture looking downhearted.

Cultural appropriation is a tricky concept that depends on number of perspectives and circumstances that are hard and complex to be analysed adequately and on both sides. The attention to the context is crucial in understanding and non invasion. There are examples of exchange, but cultural appropriation is still prevalent in unbalanced fashion system, that reinforces disparity and classism.

2.2.3. Gatekeeping

Gatekeeping in fashion system is a controlled and limited access to publicity and approval by people in position of power, like editors, photographers, stylists and buyers that once decided which designers and brands would be put in front and dictate the mainstream styles. Public validation is helpful for establishment of designs and sales, but the body of people deciding who is making it to be displayed in front of public prior makes the industry overly competitive and compromised. It may come in forms of nepotism and corruptive practices, that are totally against the common rules of competitiveness.

A case of Proenza Schouler designers who made it to the American Vogue was a turning point for the brand. The designers duo was photographed by Mario Testino, posing formally, conveying business ambitions and representing, according to magazine «the voice of a generation». A few month later, the duo would sell a stake of their business to prolific investor, a year after that they would open their first store on Madison Avenue. Everyone was betting on them as a representation of the future of American luxury fashion. They had Anna Wintour's approval, celebrities love, accounts for influential departments stores across the country, awards from CFDA and Vogue Fashion Fund (Ferdandez, 2019). It was a good representation of industry support and how doors could open with approval from industry main figures, but they were lucky ones.

Gatekeepers in fashion control not only what is fashionable, what is making it into an issue, what celebrities would wear during editorial shoots, what buyers would be considering; but also distribution and information. The same type of validation is no longer carries the same weight because how information and imagery travels across and through the internet. Social media, blogs and forums shifted the power balance from gatekeepers to audience by direct communication with creatives and celebrities, endless options in e-commerce across countries.

The audience has become savvy in research of products and brands, they traded magazines for Youtube experts, fashion bloggers and Instagram influencers. These referents amassed larger following than traditional media, the validation became numbers of followers. Fashion gatekeepers cannot any longer maintain traditional one-way conversation, communities moved on without the approval. Just like the streaming music services, that account for what people are listening, have influenced radio rotation; or Internet subculture and online communities influence fashion styles and taste.

Validation still matters for people inside and behind the scenes of the industry, as they can not fully rely on public and support of the audience like new brands do. The

gatekeeping for young industry professionals are still very much present. This includes the endless unpaid internships, economical aspect of important fashion schools being private and the overall competitiveness of the industry, that in the core seems to be working in the same direction, but forgets about the human experiences. Vulnerable communities in fashion still struggle with gatekeeping and unavailability of information around common industry practices.

2.2.4. Waste

In annual report of 2018 Burberry brought in $3.6 billion in revenue and destroyed $36.8 million worth of its own merchandise. The brand admitted demolition of goods as part of its strategy to preserve reputation of exclusivity. The audience was outraged and vowed to boycott Burberry over wastefulness, members of British parliament demanded to forbid such practices (Lieber, 2018). Later, French government issued a law banning the destruction of unsold luxury. Brands in other countries are still destroying products as a way to maintain exclusivity through scarcity.

Disposal nature of fast fashion, destruction of unsold luxury and throwaway of used goods are resulting in a serious environmental, social and economic problem. The textile industry is a high energy consuming and natural resources demanding practice, which contributes to the generation of the post-consumer waste (Shirvanimoghaddam, Motamed, Ramakrishna & Naebe, 2020). The landfills are filled with polymers and man-made textiles that will take decades to decay. The textile industry generates a substantial environmental footprint from cultivation, manufacturing, disposal and faces resource challenges that will cost us money and eventually health. The environmental impacts of waste textile, fast fashion and consumerism could potentially put profits ahead of human welfare. The concerns on health from hazardous chemical and dust, noise and workers practices to ethics of low wages, forced labour, lack of safety laws and requirements.

The Oxfam report reveals that from the amount that an Australian spends on clothing, only 4% of it goes to the garment workers. The low wages influence the financial security, health, productivity (2019). Paris Agreement contents the vision for the industry to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and defines issues that should be addressed: decarbonisation of the productions, climate friendly and sustainable materials, low-carbon transportation, improvement in communication of climate and waste awareness, financing communities and policymakers to develop scalable solution in circular economic model (Shirvanimoghaddam, Motamed, Ramakrishna & Naebe, 2020). The waste problem is again a dividing factor in fashion industry, inline with environmental impact, highly influential on economy and development.

2.3. Beauty bias

The beauty of the human body has always been considered important in society, although beauty ideals were changing throughout the history and across cultures. People want to match the ideal of their time and culture creating the body zeitgeist (Mair, 2014). Appearance affects our lives in complex of ways.

The role of beauty and physical attractiveness is determined socially and culturally and highly valued in fashion and in society. When women don't conform to the current ideal they can feel alienated. An individual perception of attractiveness is subconsciously saturated with other positive qualities such as being stronger, healthy physically and mentally, more poised and sociable, dominant, sexually appealing, intelligent and socially skilled.

The problem that in reality, highly attractive people are rare, but are over-presented in fashion, media and entertainment, where they are portrayed as desirable, credible and inspirational. The notion that beautiful is combined with normalised idealistic picture lead individuals to seek ways to dramatically change their appearance to convey more ideal features. The beautiful women of the 21th century are sculptured surgical-

ly, generically neutral, all irregularities fixed, all particularities regularised, thus she is a non-disabled, de-racialised and de-ethinicised ideal (Mair, 2014). The current ubiquity of visual representations has contributed to an appearance oriented culture which supports a pervasive objectification of women.

2.3.1. Physical disabilities

Ableism is defined as when able-bodied individuals are viewed more beautiful and thus superior to those with a disability. This from of bodily discrimination comes from the youthful and able visual ideal portrayed in fashion and brand affiliations. Discriminations in various forms influence the visibility of disabled people that are able to work in fashion. Not granting access to runway shows, status and social statements erase the disable community from the fashion audience according to the industry. The fashion has always been a visual signifier of ability or inability to socially assimilate for vulnerable and marginalised (Fox-Suliaman, 2020). It is crucial to advocate for an industry in which all bodies are worth designing for and included in campaigns.

An industry entrenched with ableist values, the fashion industry is disconnecting with communities because of narrow beauty standards. As consumers of fashion, beauty and entertainment, disabled community need representation in mainstream media as much as everyone else. Inclusive representation will not only boost sales, but also normalise disabled bodies in society.

Stephanie Thomas, which blog grown into a disability fashion lifestyle platform, started out as an effort to organise and create content, so media and brands could put out more inclusive photoshoots, with an ultimate goal to destroy negative perceptions of people with disabilities (Katz, 2020). The blog has grown and Thomas has been recognised as a talented stylist and fashion consultant, shaping new industry norms.

2.3.2. Size discrimination

Fashion has been portraying thin and young ideal endlessly. However only 1 in 40,000 women meets the requirements for a models size and shape. Naomi Wolf argued in 1991 that such ideal of the female body is unrealistic and impossible to attain, so striving to attain it can lead to feeling of shame, poor body satisfaction and low self-esteem (Mair, 2014). The exposure to fashion ideal imagery have increased dramatically as result of interest advancement and spread of social media. The bodily ideal becomes the norm to compare and asses not only body form, but individuals's worth. Preoccupation with weight and shape has been found to lead to physiological distress and eating disorders in girls, in boys it leads to dietary restrain and binge-eating (Mair, 2014).

The stigmatisation of obesity and overweight is present in medical professionals as well as the general population. People affected by obesity characterised other people with obesity more positively, whereas people without obesity linked negative characteristics with obesity. Patients with obesity were considered to be lazy, non-compliant, unsuccessful, unintelligent and lacking self-control (Tapking, Benner, Hackbusch, Schüler, Tran, Ottawa, Krug, Müller-Stich, Fischer & Nickel, 2020). The same perception of obesity and weight is spread in the media as well, the stigmatisation can affect phycological and physical health, it has been shown to impact socio-economic status.

In addition to smaller body sizes, fashion magazines has a significant amount of content on dieting and exercise (Marcketti & Karpova, 2020). Thin ideal is communicated via other media outlets, such as fashion shows, tv ads, music videos, it influencing our perception consciously and subconsciously all the time, impacting beauty ideals and how women should appear.

The larger sizing in fashion often comes in extra expenses for brands, like hiring another model, creating more patterns and using more fabric. Luxury brands have resources, but they do not convey into the idea of more inclusive body sizing for their designs. This could lead a supposition that luxury brands aren't seeing plus-size adequate for exclusive and high valued goods, again making the idealistic stereotype grow. However we see some shifts into plus-size visibility on runway shows and in the size charts, but the issue of fat phobia among industry that relies on body dissatisfaction aren't even scraped on the surface.

2.3.3. Fakeness and idealisation

Exhibiting the latest trends in appropriate clothing for women of seems not to be the primary goal of the magazines; instead fashion photography offers a kind of visual entertainment analogues to other forms of media culture, like Hollywood films and music videos. The influences of ideal beauty conveyed in fashion are reinforced by advertising and marketing, the message is positively correlated with happiness and success. Women, and increasingly men, are targeted to purchase products that promise youthful perfection.

Fashion photographs generate enormous dissatisfaction among women, by creating unrealistic expectations that most women are unable to meet. Feminists argue that media images of women are always directed toward men (Crane, 2012). They view femininity incorporating masculine standards for female appearances that emphasises on physical attributes and sexuality. Another version of femininity can be found in traditional standards of feminine demeanour, when women are expected to be constrained and passive, but not sexually available.

Postmodernist fashion does not offer women a specific identity. Instead the heterogeneity of contemporary styles allow women to assume a diversity of possible contradictory identities. Thus the content conveys such contradictory messages to the audience. In general, older women are more critical of media representations than younger, women from different social classes or ethnic groups tend to respond positively or negatively to certain aspects of visuals accordingly to the relevance and significance for their lives.

The unrealistic image that fashion conveys still is very prominent in our lives and causes great dissatisfaction and inadequacy for women and men, disconnecting the audience of fashion from the association with styles and desires of fashion myth, as well as the primary notion that fashion is associated and truly accepting only of people that are considered into the fashion norm and strive for this unattainable ideal. This concept is causing disconnection and disassociation for many communities.

Conclusion

Poor employment conditions, over consumption, very narrow stereotype of beauty, the duality of gender norm, economic and social boundaries promoted by the industry have ethical implications that are challenging the communication and connection. The problems are touching different communities differently, but the overall notion of disproportion and stratification is evident and could be seen as universal to every other community in physical and emotional impact on disconnection, alienation and not providing connecting points to establish a sense of belonging and create community, that is supporting interest and practice. Instead these problems are universally impacting by the discriminatory and biased ideas and messages, that aren't portraying the real and authentic communities identities, so no communication of cultures and identities can be established.

These problems aren't oriented toward a certain group, rather they are indicative of the differences that cannot be fathomed and assigned normal by traditional and idealistic fashion media ideal. We hope to explore the majority of problems that are currently disconnecting and reassuring stereotypical insensitive behaviour in order to understand and structure the possible recommendations.

3. FUTURE FASHION COMMUNITY

When done with a quick research over the internet, there were several visions for future of fashion. Some considered further technology diffusion and infiltration of data-driven algorithms, machine learning improvement for trends forecasting, consumer demand prediction and retail management. Others' talks concentrated on sustainability and circular fashion, from research and development, manufacturing, retail, post-consumer handling, adding reuse, re-purpose, recycle and restock. Third field of future moves in digital, by implementing virtual fittings and showroom experiences, wardrobe organisation, VR and AR immersive shopping experiences, 3d prototyping and digital fashion. Some also mentioned the seasonality that will certainly change after pandemic, but it was for a long time a problem that was in talks, but was never considered as less collections would result automatically in less sales in old scenario.

We will be considering future types of communities, that certainly are omnipresent in digital and local, they are using digital as a augmentation of the communication and for practiced experience in communities of interest and practice; communities of places are looking to have a transformation of place context, as digital space is so much more entangled with real world experiences. Also experience of place would soon step up to another level of technology introduction and simplification, as it was with the democratisation of the internet — same will happen with AR (augmented reality), as it is already possible to use majority of smartphones to project through the camera viewfinder objects into the real space. The technology needs more implemented and easy to use, penetrative applications to take off.

Considering further elimination of ignorance and augmentation of context information flow, communities will only become more consolidated, but at the same time easy to communicate with; entry threshold will become easy and democratised with technology and digital connection. We will look into some examples of possibilities for connection, whereas disconnection would be considered as communication malfunction.

We will discuss main trends that are influencing social global context and have an enormous impact on economies and communications.

Migration has augmented drastically, the number of international migrants increased from 153 million in 1990 to 272 million in 2019 and continues to grow. The growth rate of global migration has exceeded the growth rate of the world's population, therefore their share in the total population increased from 2.9% in 1990 to 3.5% in 2019 (Electric & Presium, 2021). Migrants have strong indicative identities, for example, Bamboo Network is describing relationships between Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia. The Chinese diaspora is considered the most numerous and influential in the world, with about 50 million people worldwide, and their total net worth is estimated at $2 trillion. Another trend is the migration of the most educated and skilled citizens from developing to developed countries. In particular, developing countries are faced with the departure of medical personnel and IT industry specialists.

While right-wing populist political movements around the world have disputed against the liberal migration regime and illegal immigrants, multinational corporations have defended open borders to maintain relationships with consumers and numerous diasporas.

With the appearance of the personal computer and the Internet, the amount of data generated began to skyrocket. Already in 2007, 93% of all information in the world was presented in digital format (Electric & Presium, 2021). We found ourselves in a world where the volume of information that we encounter on a daily basis is growing at a rate that does not depend in any way on our ability to consume and comprehend it. As organisations store more unnecessary data, we find ourselves in an over-saturated environment, and the business is losing efficiency, in opposite to increasing, thanks to digitalisation and automation.

Recent studies show that by the middle of this year, more than half of the world's population will be using social networks. Social networks have become not only popular, they have also captured all our attention. Today, on average, we spend more than 2.5 hours on social networks every day and this figure will only grow (Electric & Presium, 2021).

Despite the fact that the interaction between people thanks to social networks has multiplied in quality and quantity, the feeling of loneliness has intensified, as a study from the University of Pennsylvania shows. It is millennials who more than others (by 11%) note this trend (Electric & Presium, 2021).

Social media anxiety disorder — a syndrome leading to anxiety and, as a result, chronic depression — refers to social anxiety disorder, the third most common mental illness in the United States, which affects 13-14% of the population. This social isolation leads to the fact that a person begins to develop various cognitive distortions. Such people can perceive the world as more dangerous, expect negative consequences from interacting with people, and also remember more negative information. The disorder entails pessimism, panic attacks, stress, low self-esteem, people develop cognitive distortions, make less effective and coherent decisions and finally, affects human health.

Fashion of future is definitely lies on communities as authentic and devoted audience, that has their strictly interests in line with brands, personalities and influencers, correlation with major lifestyle presuppositions and philosophies. Fashion, is more than ever, an identity tool in a global world, which information context is becoming more and more open.

3.1. Connected virtually

Fashion is becoming a tool to proclaim self digital identity with means of technology and fashion practices, as we have already discussed, many social media communities, that are sharing user-generated content with tips and tricks on upcycling and altering material goods and clothing, as well as, visual identifiable communities that share the same aesthetic.

We will again touch on TikTok, as being the main and most democratised tool for creating an online place and platform for people to connect. The visual aesthetics that are prevailing on the platform are part of fashion identity for the wearers and creators; at the same time is a key to identify a specific community of styles visually. The platform is allowing for connection by being anything but exclusionary. The application is used in 150 countries and 75 languages by 500 million users. Many creators are naming the platform the safe haven and explain, it is exactly why new styles in dressing have emerged. TikTok's community feels like early Tumblr or even earlier MySpace, it has its own terminology and style, but comes with inclusion values. The TikTok representatives are telling that they are «embracing and supporting all forms of creative self-expression, as long as they're in line with our policies and community guidelines» (Lanigan, 2019). The way that creators are sharing their creativity and unique styles inspired by previous stylistic subcultures like goth, K-Pop, cosplay, etc. Everything shared is rather real and spontaneous, reflects on diversity and inclusive community. The original and irreverent aesthetics are belonging on the platform as an online place.

The aesthetics as a term has completely changed and now align more with a collection of visuals that represent a broad array of concepts ranging from historical era, locations, genres of fiction, music and previously existing subcultures (Mirny, 2021). The most relevant aesthetics gain popularity on a slight sense of escapism and opportunity for realisation of self in commonly accepted visual identity. The unique form of self expression also allows for connection as being easy to attain and open to appropriate, as the aesthetics do not harm or profit from, being created by diverse online community. The visual aesthetics provide a way to elude from world filled with turmoil, death, deceases, racialised violence; growing that way the opposition to the conventional practices of fashion industry (Mirny, 2021).

For those who are willing to proclaim their online identity and use the platform for political self identification, the tools of digital fashion are allowing for demonstration of stances on everything that digital tools could imagine to create. Like technology of augmented reality that allows to place a clothing piece on a picture, or a singular product into a frame; the Swedish retailer Carlings has released the Last Statement T-shirt. The T-shirt has become a canvas for any sort of statements and messages (Aouf, 2020). The T-shirt is blank in real life, but while viewed through the phone it styles an animated design that comments on political topic of the day. The wearer can choose a range of graphics created specifically for the T-shirt accessible through Instagram and Facebook applications, where it works on same principle as face filters. The messaging is intended for online audience and for online identity, making the physical environment not essential in identity expression.

We could see that online identity and therefore online community reference is deemed more important and also easier to execute for more and more people. The identity could be distinct or vague, still the outside identification of the community is present as we are examining the distinctive features of the representations, how connection is being build. For the future communities visual identification would be prevalent, as online presence is firmly visual, and we will see what will come our way next in tool and ways of new and existing cultures that are being formed around ideas and interests.

3.2. Connected locally

Local styles and cultures are emerging from the ground and old, rapturing the nostalgia to later be remade, renamed and re-conceptualised into a reminiscent niche, that would be an identifier for the local on global scale. These work with community language, symbols, knowledge and practices that are transforming the audience and the perception of the place.

The ways to build new intertwined and inclusive networks, resilient and sustainable globally, relying on equity — is by pursuing cooperative and co-creational internationalism, by sharing resources and skills, for profit of as many as possible. We could begin to see the attempts in re-purposing of local charity shops garments and using as the materials for becoming the luxurious collections for global audience. It isn't the novelty for fashion students and thrifting teenagers, but after the pandemic hit it became a necessity with shortages of materials and closing of suppliers across Europe. The shift to use whatever is already in disposal and reusing ideas through several season is no longer rare to see on runways and mass market rails. COS and Arket have introduced capsule collection made from e-commerce returns and worn garments gathered from customers via in-store recycling bins (Indvik, 2021). Outdoor apparel producers Patagonia and The North Face both sell refurbished garments and bags that were returned by customers. By using and reusing local materials, brands could rethink and remade items and ideas for the global scale consumption and establish re-purposing circular model that is backed by consumers and communities.

Another topic that is sort of combination of local and global in terms of a place and visual interpretation that is emerging — so called «phygital». In digital era mobile commerce is proving new paradigms for brand to communicate and engage their audience. The term phygital conveys the integration of digital technology with personal communication and physical in-store interaction, bridging the gap between the two (Duhan & Singh, 2019). Phygital components can provide more personalised experience and would further result in increased in-store visits, enhances loyalty, value co-creation, engagement. Such elements could be implemented in stores for digital interaction with physical environment and enhance dynamism and human perception.

Or by providing a hybrid experiences of

physical fantasy that couldn't be otherwise archived through the digital. During the pandemic brands were transporting viewers to deserts, châteaux, theatres, discos, etc., places are usually not easily managed to accommodate fashion audiences. The difference in producing digital first events is it's still a catwalk, but the could be enhanced by adding effects and moderating the view points, producing sort of a fashion movie, that connects impossible creativity and real life event. Plus it adds up on media engagement as being produced for social media platforms with free attendance. For example Balmain's phygital catwalk was presented alongside the press with 58 video screens, creating a digital front row of figures who could not attend (Fury, 2020).

Conclusion

The future of fashion industry and communities affiliated with fashion interest, practice and places for connection relies fully on further integration and extension of digital and online. For creation of communities it is becoming way easier to reach out online, with arise of language, terminology and aesthetics that are influenced by global digital scape. The future of industry lies in rethinking and expanding sustainable practices, focusing on local practices and scaling them to global reach.

The digital augmentation of reality will be next technology to gain traction and more popular implementation, fashion could be at frontline of using such technologies and providing inclusive access to fashion and clothing to many more people, creating in a way loyal following or even creating community based on interest and adaptation of such technologies.

CONCLUSIONS

Fashion is a phenomenon that exemplifies diversity across cultures. It is dependant on time and place and commonly defined as the prevailing style at a given moment of place. Fashion is one the most interesting forms of global culture fluidity. Globalisation has shattered stable hierarchy, the mobility has increased and the means of communication have become places for social life (Geczy & Karaminas, 2018). While the media likes to suggest that fashion is only for the wealthy it is really a commodity that is accessible to everyone at various levels of quality and distinguishable styles.

I wanted to outline the range of views available in fashion, from contributors and consumers, communicators and audience points of view, how fashion can forge relationships for brands and beyond business model, how fashion conveys lifestyles and aesthetics, how fashion and audience generate content that resonate both sides. Fashion is an important cultural mediator, that can be used different ways, for good and for evil, or without understanding the context and without being tone-deaf to problems that are not aligned with modern day narratives.

Social influence of fashion to bring communities together is enormous, again both ways, the duality of fashion discourse gives the power to subjectively form narratives of gender, race, beauty, disability and fashion practices. Fashion communities allow for connection and interconnection, exchange of cultures and messages, building for new cultures and messages. Fashion and its elements are commodities enabling for communication. Fashion also enables disconnection on terms of misunderstanding and misinterpreting narratives within communities and beyond. Disconnecting points are universal and are relying on stereotypes coming from the evolution and fashion of lifestyles, globalisation and accessibility of information about all the cultures, without realising the diversity of the global narrative, as we could even account for global narrative as a thing. The narrative need to have a narrator, as we cannot locate the global centre or the orator of something that could represent everyone and everything at the same time. We could only account for diversity and pluralism of meanings and cultures. The communication and the common realisation of common interest, places and practices could lead to more global and inclusive discourse; fashion could be the platform to hold a discussion and evolve the industry as a business, a community, a social group, a country, a non profit organisation, a other forms of communities that are yet to come.

The dismantling of fashion industry disconnecting issues are good turning points for tackling economic, social and environmental problems. The universality of issues fashion addresses are an indicator of a fashion still being a facade and the most quick industry to change and evolve for new standards of global pluralism and neutrality.

Fashion has a dual connotation of being used as a tool, it is connecting and disconnecting, some entities and notions in communities identities are the reason for both connection and disconnection, when the messages are read correctly and when they aren't. Fashion is a tool for connection. Disabling some disconnecting stances, whenever they become dangerous will only contribute to consolidation and enhanced communication between cultures and communities, bringing enhancement to the fashion system as a whole.

Communities and social organisation is a future of any type of movements and evolution, it involves democratic and humanistic stances, it involves all the voices that want to be heard and be accepted. The acceptance is critical for the sense of community that we are building the future of really connected and understanding society.

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