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Culture, Fashion and Communication Design in Times of Emergency

Communication and Design Strategies for the Sustainable Improvement of the Fashion and Textile Production in the Indian Subcontinent

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Abstract
Within the scenario of contemporary design, we daily observe experiments to redefine the meaning and value of products and give rise to renewed consumer attitudes, with a more ethical approach, according to the logic of circular economy and inclusive practices. The territory takes value from the tradition and the identity of the place, the so-called *genius loci*, and becomes a symbol for local values through the enhancement of traditional knowledge. In this proficient competition between territories, design becomes the element of dialogue between different societies and cultures. Today, the prevailing system of the fashion industry has created many environmental, social, and ethical issues behind the glamorous facade. How to reduce fabric waste during the design process has become an urgent requirement for fashion designers, specifically in countries with an outstanding industrial production as India. Even while the country progresses with power looms and modern designs, India still continues to protect its handloom legacy, traditions and culture to sustain the craft and keep it revived. The essay tackles the duality between branding and environmental sustainability for a fashion project developed at GD Goenka University on the theme of capsule collections between textile tradition and green experimentation.

1. The Listening Design Approach for an Indian Craft Project Between Tradition and Innovation[1]

Talking about sustainability in India turns out to be complex in a continent that today is one of the countries with the worst air quality in the world, with air pollution levels leading to 1.24 million deaths per year and with 14 of the 15 rivers most polluted in the world according to 2019 data from the World Health Organization. But it is essential to do this in a Country that has recently overtaken China in terms of population and which has one of the fastest rates of economic growth on a global scale. Some multinational companies are already doing this, like Starbucks, which has as its priority to take the path of sustainability, launching a ten-year plan to reduce the impact of the supply chain. The goal of the well-known brand is to reach 2030 with a significant reduction in its environmental impact, in terms of consumption and pollution. The entire supply chain will be affected by new measures which primarily envisage the reduction in the use of water for coffee production and the reduction of waste and CO_2 emissions. Everything will start from the cultivation of coffee, which Starbucks wants to make as sustainable as possible, if not even organic, with particular attention to the use of water to impact as little as possible on resources and water basins. Just as the transformation of packaging will be the other key point, for a reduction in waste production, also through the adoption of recyclable, compostable and more natural materials. The listening design method is an approach that allows us to carry out innovative research in the most disparate sectors and that we will also apply to the case in

1   Authorship of the texts: chapters 1 and 2 Roberto Liberti; chapters 3 and 4 Rossana Gaddi.

question for an eco-sustainable design in the Indian sub-continent in the fashion sector.

Listening Design is an open, equal design methodology aiming at leading enterprises towards expressing the demand for innovation, defined from the design research group (Ranzo, Veneziano, Scalera & Rossi, 2013) and adopted in various research experiments in Italy and in different countries.

Recent research (Jenss, 2016) in the field of design shows that innovation does no longer originate from individual subjects but from *dialogic collaborations* based on the ability to bring together several competences. The aim of the methodology is to set up a creative ecosystem including designers, researchers, companies, users and local resources in order to connect competences which may, together, produce innovation.

The practices and tools of Listening Design include *collective* and *connective* intelligence in all the stages of the innovation process to guarantee a rich and complex interaction.

To spread empathy, it is necessary to listen carefully and to catch all the signals this listening provides us with. The next real innovation will lie in the ability of each and every one of us to listen and to collaborate *together*. Open listening is the central element of the methodology and it is crucial to identify the creative ecosystem which generates a framework of relations contributing to defining the information needed to construct the area in which the demand for innovation is shaped. The listening design approach was used for the project hereinafter called INDIAXINDIA, connecting Indian companies, Italian and Indian researchers, teachers and students of GD Goenka University involved in the project itself.

Starting from the analysis of the textile manufacturing industry in the Gurugram area, in the northern Indian state of Haryana, the open listening approach analysed various textile and manufacturing districts that try to approach the issue of ethical sustainability which is particularly important in the textile and clothing sector and delicate from the point of view of environmental impact.

Recent research published by J. Safra Sarasin a multi-stakeholder initiative that works with clothing brands, factories, unions, NGOs and governments to improve working conditions in the clothing industry, shows that the Indian fashion supply chain is a sector that employs about 45 million people, and existing or potential abuses in the clothing industry in India are highlighted by analysing working conditions in the three major manufacturing hubs: Delhi in the north, and Bangalore and Tirupur in the south. From the research emerges the impressive data that from 2014 to mid-2019, 106 young girls committed suicide due to the stress and inhuman rhythms they are forced to work in Indian textile factories, those that produce the thread for sewing low-cost fashion clothes or T-shirts. The data collected return the image of factories in which labour rights are systematically trampled: young women, migrant workers and low castes work in inhumane conditions, to reach impossible targets, without rights or social guarantees, to produce for Western companies and very often for the fashion mass market.

Among the members of Fair Wear there are 130 medium-small European brands that produce in 160 factories spread across the subcontinent and support a different model of producing

Figure 1. Ecoloom factory, visit with GD Goenka students.

clothes, which does not necessarily involve the exploitation of workers in factories in India, China or Bangladesh.
In the listening design approach, we have therefore analysed companies of the Indian territory inserted in this modality of *ethical sustainability* of production and we have focused on two companies. In this first phase of listening to the territory we analysed Khadi India and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) which is a statutory body established by an act of parliament n. 61 of 1956, as amended by act n. 12 of 1987 and act n.10 of 2006.

The broad objectives of the KVIC, coming from Mahatma Gandhi ethical teachings, are:

- The social objective of providing employment.
- The economic objective of producing saleable articles.
- The wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up of a strong rural community spirit.
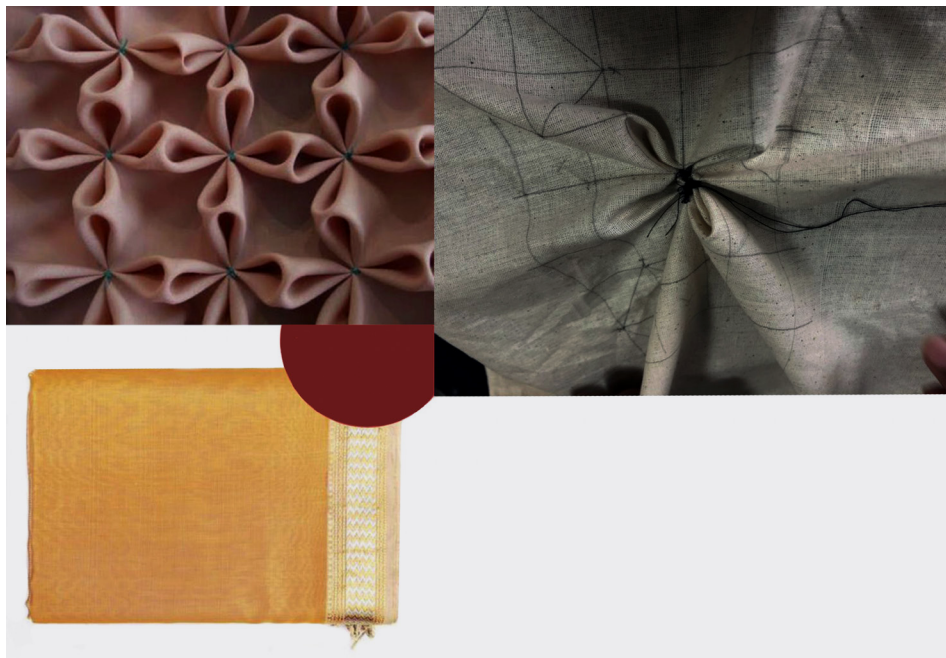
Figure 2. Experiments with Ecoloom Textiles, INDIAXINDIA project.

KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programs for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.

Its functions also comprise building up of a reserve of raw materials and implements for supply to producers, creation of common service facilities for processing of raw materials as semi-finished goods and provisions of facilities for marketing of KVIC products apart from organisation of training of artisans engaged in these industries and encouragement of co-operative efforts amongst them.

Government of India introduced the scheme of Market Development Assistance (MDA) on Production in place of rebate after experimenting with several pilot schemes. The scheme has been given effect from 1st April 2010, to help Khadi institutions to reorient their activities extending adequate emphasis towards increasing artisans' earnings as well as ensuring quality of Khadi to customers. Under MDA scheme 25% of assistance is earmarked for payment among spinners and weavers as additional incentive through their bank/post office account.

From the analysis of this extraordinary emergency and ethical operation for Indian manufacturing production, Ecoloom, a company that produces respecting a slow dynamic that is the traditional one of Indian textile manufacturing has been analysed, starting from the Maheshwari textile weaving system and tradition.
Born along the banks of the Narmada River, the origin of the Maheshwari weave can be traced back to the early 18th century. During the reign of Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar, the quaint town of Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh underwent major changes by reintroducing weaving practices and inviting weavers from all over the nation to retrieve Maheshwar handlooms.

From that point on, generations and generations of weavers have recreated and reinvented the ancient Indian textile practice.

Figure 3. The INDIAXINDIA final shooting, took in L'Al Gumbaz muslim tombs, in the suburb of Sohna, Haryana State – in this picture, some picture from the Spicee Project photo shooting.

2. An Eco-Sustainable Fashion Capsule Collection

Starting from the study of the textile company Ecoloom reported in the One look-Greta publication
the INDIAXINDIA project has consolidated starting from the timeless and light hand-woven Maheshwaris inspired by historic Indian fabrics, and who over time are experimenting with an entrepreneurial path towards a logic of increasing sustainability.

The philanthropic weaving line of Ecoloom delivers several hand-crafted yards that have been selected for the capsule collections created in the INDIAXINDIA project. Through Ecoloom training of old and new weavers, new techniques are being taught by exploring possibilities for development in hand weaving, working alongside master craftsmen and various Indian weaving centres. In the fibre analysis approach, the dyes of the selected yarns were verified as ecological and sustainable, given that the pollution of rivers and air is one of

the main impact factors in India (the Ganges is one of the 10 most polluted rivers in the world, largely due to the wastewater from the textile dyeing industry).

In the research path conducted with the GD Goenka University laboratory, reported in *One look Greta publication: slow fashion researches*, if on the one hand we have developed the design selection and verification with a company like Ecoloom, useful for the listening design approach in the practice of listening to the aspects related to the Indian eco-sustainable textile manufacturing, on the other hand, interesting spin-offs have emerged with the lab inside the Indian campus for the experimentation of new sustainable approaches to the design process of a capsule collection. The experiments basically concern two aspects: the first is related to a series of experiments on dyes starting from traditional Indian techniques, and the second which is connected to the very advanced Indian computer and multimedia diffusion now widespread. The first aspect analysed a series of traditional dyeing techniques such as batik used to dye the fabrics, and which was created on contemporary geometric graphics using natural vegetable dyes. The dyeing in GD Goenka laboratory was done using non-toxic and chemical-free mineral-based dyes, and the process was done by interviewing craftsmen who are experts in Indian batik manufacturing.

This technique has made possible to re-verify traditional dyes that today are still widespread in the Indian manufacturing territory, but which are increasingly escaping to the advantage of digital printing techniques and which do not

Figure 4. INDIAXINDIA manufacturing experiments with batik dyeing technique.

Figure 5. INDIAXINDIA final shooting. Gaash Project. Heritage Kasmir handcrafts like Pinjarakari were the starting point and fashion inspirations for this project.

always control the sustainable aspects of the production cycle of dyeing the garment. This technique and that of embroidery that replaces digital printing were both adopted for the INDIAXINDIA project as an analysis of the slow Indian fashion system, compared to the dynamics of fast fashion so widespread on a global level. The second aspect that has been highlighted in the research project was the analysis of the most advanced digital printing techniques that can now be adopted also in the creation of fast prototypes, verifying the timing of realization of a prototype of a dress on digital printing, made in the fashion laboratory of the campus and sent to the company that sends the finished garment in real time for a shooting then done on campus.

Figure 6. INDIAXINDIA final shooting. Intricacy Project, inspired by the intricate works of Kalamkari, ancient Andhra Pradesh hand painted, or block printed cotton fabric, where only natural dyes are used. The dying process involves twenty-three step.

3. Inclusive Branding for the Enhancement of Local Territories

The development of the communication project proposed here amplifies a method already verified and used in different academic and professional contexts, such as the Master Degree Course in Design for the Fashion System of the Politecnico di Milano and the Master in Brand & Communication Management of the inter-university Consortium Milano Fashion Institute (Bocconi University, Politecnico di Milano and Catholic University), the EDC Business School of Paris (Ecole des Dirigeants et des Créateurs d'entreprise), the Premium Design Management Master Course provided by the Poli. Design Consortium of Politecnico di Milano and the Business School of the International University of Monaco. This model was also verified in a non-university context, for the creation of the brand identity of a design hub in Yucatan, Mexico, facing professionals and stakeholders.

The training model proved to be particularly effective in a specific context such as fashion design, strongly linked to communication, relationship and identity.

The enucleation of visual elements representing all the aspects of the brand identity provided ideas for the design, showing graphic evidence where certain visual elements (as colours, pictograms, keywords, typographic families, ...) were repeated, giving particular relevance to the element itself and providing useful visual design suggestions for a coherent and adequate proposal to the contemporary communicative need.

Right from the concept phase, the INDIAXINDIA project envisaged communication with a declared inclusive approach, to create an exchange relationship between the market and the

final consumer, territory and excellence, and therefore between economy and local resources.

Where the fashion design project creates a strong link between production and manufacturing, as recommended by KVIC board to face the extraordinary ethical issue and productive emergency of Indian manufacturing system, in the same way this link was found in the communication and branding part.

3.1. Centrality of the Relational Value for Social Inclusion in Times of Emergency

The construction of the relationship with the customer has acquired absolute significance in the last twenty years. We talk about relational value, in addition to the use and exchange values, and which underlines the importance of the bond that a product is able to establish with the consumer through the introduction of a narrative that can stimulate a real relationship with the brand, and consequently the overcoming of the classic concept of use or exchange value.

The final consumer today has taken part in the production chain and returns, in an era that is technologically interconnected and increasingly real-time, feedback and information to the brand, and therefore to the brand itself. Companies speak a more human language because people expectations are evolving, in a new *social contract* that frees the consumer from a perspective of absolute passivity. These are the known effects of the digital revolution: democratization on the one hand, disintermediation on the other. In the era of social media and big data, everyone can access and produce content, bypassing the traditional distribution chain and directly

reaching potential buyers. From the traditional distinction between B2B and B2C we have moved on to a broader concept: H2H, "Human to Human" (Kotler, 2020).

Today the culture of the project is understood as an exercise capable of restoring a simple but indelible ability to interpret the needs and desires of the person, to transform them into products destined to improve their life and social relationships. Relational goods -as fashion products are- are never anonymous and independent from the subjects they relate to. The identity, also visual, of these assets, everything that makes them unique and unmistakable, is a fundamental ingredient capable of producing a unique and unrepeatable wealth. Design today no longer confronts itself only with the only artistic or engineering disciplines but places its focus also on meaning and value/s, opening up to social and strategic/economic disciplines.

In the era of convergent culture, where the power of media producers and that of consumers interact in unpredictable ways, the origin and destination (meaning and value) of a design product (both visual and physical) therefore develops a strong relationship with the consumer.

A relationship that must be understood and built, already in a meta-design phase. Considering the trend that design is assuming, less self-referenced, more multiverse and open to other disciplines (Manzini & Bertola, 2006) and to training projects aimed at society in the making, the question arose regarding the need to reformulate academic training linked to branding, considering the strong disciplinary interconnections it carries within itself.

Consumer expectations are increasingly focused on a personalized relationship with the brand, and this requires companies to deeply analyse the shopping experience through the appropriate study of contact points that can use data in order to become more personal.

To create real experiences and authentic emotional bridges with the customer it is necessary that the promises join to the reality, so that the reputation of the brand does not lose loyalty and therefore authenticity. An arduous task, although still possible, given the complexity of the era of social networks and the "religion of the positive" (Lovink, 2012) which, more than analysing and researching reality, often reconstructs the truth through an infinite series of clicks.

At the School of Fashion and Design of Indian university GD Goenka, within the synergistic project carried out with the students of communication design together with fashion and textile design, the explicit request was to design brand identity and collections radically linked to the Indian territory in an inclusive approach as recommended by the emergence that India (and the whole planet) is experiencing, so that the local culture could clearly emerge in a more sustainable way.

In this case it was possible to address an aspect that is still little explored: the symbolic and cultural value of graphic elements such as colours and typographies that have a completely different translation of meaning compared to Western models. In this context, the extraordinary importance of research with respect to the reference markets emerged, which are characterized as unique not only for aspects related to their culture, society and atmospheres, but for different and

sometimes conflicting meanings and interpretations of the same graphic elements.

3.2. Sharing Communication and Visual Languages

Communication design must take into account all the aspects that revolve around a brand: the relational aspect and the complexity of a contemporary brand are often not adequately considered in the creative process, especially in the educational field. The design act, at an academic level, risks losing coherence between the graphic sign and the meaning -also and above all relational- that it carries within itself.

The education of future generations of visual designers cannot fail to consider the relational aspect rooted in the contemporary design discipline as central. The social responsibility and the critical awareness of the visual project require a space that comes before the project. Already in the creative phase, communication must be structured in such a way that a brand takes into consideration not only itself, but its customers and the relationships that will be created between them.

In order for a project to be effectively inclusive, a sharing of languages must also take place at the design and meta-design level, which is necessary for brand values to be effectively oriented towards a clear objective.

In the current era, where emergency of global issues related to inclusion and sustainability continually pushes us to reflect on the legacy left to future generations, it is important to be able to find a common ground for exchange and sharing between market decisions and design guidelines, especially in territories such as the Indian subcontinent, where the emer-

gence of the uniqueness of the territory can be the reason for an inclusive development that can understand and consider as foundations the instances of such a complex, historicized and rooted culture.

The language of marketing and that of visual communication must be able to be shared, without excessive disciplinary overruns but giving the right importance to both approaches, which are often forgotten or underestimated alternately, depending on the disciplinary perspective with which the training is addressed, linked to the construction of the brand identity. In an era where the relationship between the business and the consumer is the key to a brand success, this is a risk that cannot be left to post-academic training.

The absence of this link with the perceptual aspects in the managerial field and the need for a greater focus on the complex relational aspects of a brand within the visual design of the brand, have provided the cue for an expansion of Kapferer analytical model, which could take into account the same elements but reread with a broader, more visual and therefore more pragmatic and design perspective. In fact, Kapferer's hexagon lends itself to contamination with the practice and practical-design models of visual design.

The analytical model studied by Jean Noel Kapferer in 2008 is certainly a useful tool for this purpose. According to him, the brand identity is made up of six elements, defined in a hexagonal scheme: the physical (the objective characteristics of the brand, what it offers); personality (the inner character of the brand); the relationship (the symbolic exchange of contents and meanings linked to the brand); culture (of which

the brand is an expression); the reflected image (the type of target that is associated with the brand); mentalization (how the target perceives itself).

These six elements offer an analytical model very suitable for understanding the complexity of a contemporary brand, because they take into consideration all the actors involved, and follow the sender/receiver transfer logic of communication. In addition, it returns those intangible and internal aspects related to the brand and its relations with the outside world. Aspects such as culture, for example, can speak of the country or more generally of the place of belonging, of a particular technology, of a certain way of being and of relating to life, or others such as mentalization (what one imagines reflecting by choosing the brand) or personality, understood as the emotional baggage that the brand carries with it.

The Kapferer model, which clearly returns the relationship between sender (business) and receiver (consumer), is used mainly in the marketing field for analysis, construction of the imaginary or repositioning on the market. However, it does not account of the graphic, visual and perceptive aspects that revolve around a brand, which make it an entity that is not only recognizable, but unique and personal. Only one of the six elements, the physical, takes into account visual aspects.

The design method of visual design requires that each type of visual communication bases its basic narrative on essential pillars as images, colours, typography and layout. They can be considered the fundamentals of visual language and the essential elements of any project, whether digital or not.
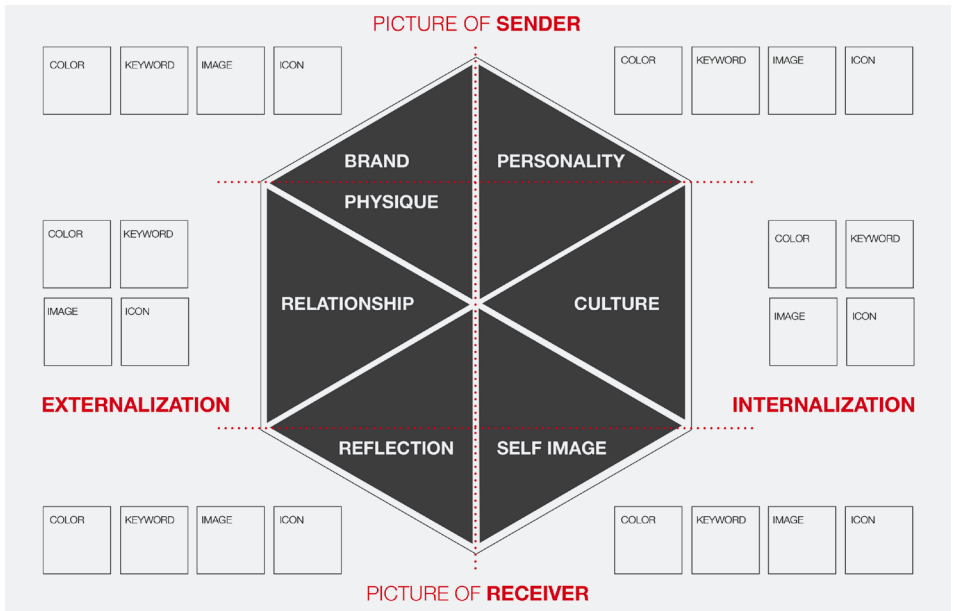
Figure 7. Scheme of the proposed methodological model: combination of the analytical variables of the Kapferer Exagon with the practical ones of visual design.

Each of these elements carries within itself the possibility of communicating contents, emotions, meanings, symbols. Often many of these elements go beyond the subjectivity of the recipient and his personal aesthetic taste, because they are pure perceptual elements therefore linked to the vision and not to the interpretation of the contents, or because they are objectively linked to a specific visual culture that immediately and without subjective mediations carries the eye in a specific and very well-defined dimension. Not only that, they tell through keywords and visual forms (graphic symbols, icons, glyphs, families and typographic forms, ...) specific values inherent in the brand and so they are relevant not only to the brand as issuer, but to the target as recipient, today always more active in the building process of any brand identity.

The use of the pillars of communication design to define and to tell through images, colours or chromatic contrasts, key-words and graphic signs each of the six elements of the brand identity defined by Kapferer, has given convincing results, because the definitions of the key to the DNA of a brand have been associated with simple and immediate visual elements, which often go beyond subjectivity and reach the consumer directly as a further confirmation of the coherence of a communication strategy.

Figure 8. Moodboard and application of the model for the development of a fashion brand, Dravida, inspired by Dravidian architecture (from South India and Sri Lanka).
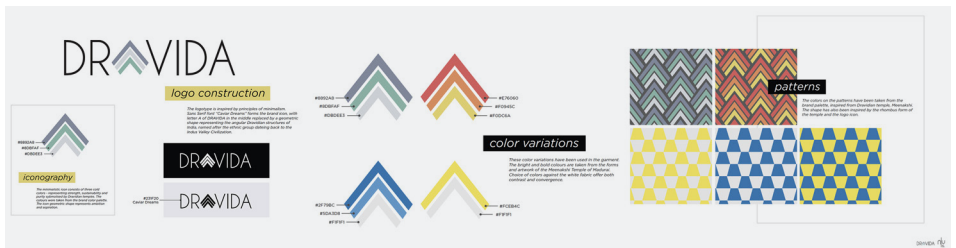
Figure 9. Dravida Project Brand Identity: logo construction, colour variations and patterns for the fashion collection.

Figure 10. Dravida Project: capsule collection, final garment and final shooting,

4. Conclusion

The mentioned model explores new teaching tools and methodologies, contaminating pure theory and practical design sectors, theoretical model and design practice of visual communication and fashion design.

This model seems to be valid both for academic purposes, for a real and better understanding of the values of a brand, and for planning purposes, for the creation of a brand from scratch or as a tool for investigating the actual adherence of brand values to contemporaneity. It is a possible and verifiable contamination with respect to the actual correspondence between brand values and the contemporary market.

Thus, disciplinary convergence opens up strategic sectors for the relaunch of the national economy, first of all the fashion sector in a highly complex country such as Indian subcontinent, one of the aspects on which universities can work to raise awareness of both public opinion and private companies on the green economy, social inclusion and sustainable approach to the production.

This approach has allowed a fertile convergence between fashion and communication, aimed at a necessary plurality of

thematic orientations in the context of the practice of design culture, which must today represent the contamination between pure theory and sectors of practice.

The contamination of languages and operational focuses of the two disciplines has allowed students to experience, already in the academic field, a less sectoral vision on their future profession, but more open to external disciplinary stimuli, in a more experimental, participatory and inclusive logic that contemporary logics requires to the design profession.

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He is an Italian product designer. In 2015 he graduated in Design for Innovation at the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli". In 2019 he obtained a Doctoral Research Fellowship in Environment, Design and Innovation at the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli".

Main focus of his line of research are parametric design, medical design, and advanced manufacturing – knowledge acquired during his academic path. The Ph.D. course with industrial characterization has allowed him to carry out and consolidate his research activity, as well as at his university, also at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería y Diseño Industrial (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain) and a company from Campania, based in Gricignano di Aversa, to design a system of innovative orthopedic devices through parametric design.

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Elena Pucci

A graduate of the CDLM in Fashion System Design, is interested in art, music and writing. She coordinates the virtual lab at DIDA (Department of Architecture) of the University of Florence (Italy), Design Campus section. Currently she works in communication projects of and for CDLM in Fashion System Design. She was involved in "Metamorphic Fashion Design" offering her contribution in the design of environments, as well as in the collection and organization of material.

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Graduated from the Master's Degree in Design at the University of Florence, currently a PhD student in "Sustainability and innovation for the built environment and product system design (cycle XXXVI - a.y. 2020/2021). During his research interests concerning the development of methodologies applied to creative processes.

He is currently engaged in the research project: "Design, Art and Business: innovation, strategy and sustainable channels for the creation of value", which focuses on the analysis and collection of information relating to the mapping of the relationships between Design, Contemporary Art and Companies starting from the Tuscan territory.

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She was a Visiting Professor at the Politecnico di Milano (Italy) and was awarded a CAPES PVEX scholarship (2019/2020). She is the Editor-in-Chief of ModaPalavra e-periódico (UDESC), Coordinator of the laboratory FPLab - Futuro do Presente (UDESC), Collaborating Researcher at the University of Lisbon (CIAUD/Portugal), and Integrated Researcher at the TrendsObserver platform (Portugal).

Her areas of interest are focused on the following themes: Fashion Design, Trend Studies, Scenarios, Consumer Culture, Qualitative Research, Methodologies.

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Giulia Scalera

Designer and PhD, is a Research Fellow at the dept. DADI of the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli". She is the author of "Il design nella società estemporanea" (2015) and "Open Brand. Nuovi linguaggi visivi per la moda" (2019); two monographs that represent her two main strands of research. One oriented to the study and innovation of design and production models of the design oriented industry and the other to innovation and experimentation, including design, of branding.

Since 2015 she has been teaching fashion and communication design courses at the Accademia delle Belle Arti di Napoli. Since 2009 she has been working as a professional visual designer and in 2017 she is co-founder of the Pluff design studio specialized in visual communication projects of national and international importance.

Among the main projects are the visual identity of the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2015) and the creative direction of Milano Book City.

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Juliet Seger

She is a vocationally trained tailor, clothing engineer and designer. Her academic path at The University for Applied Sciences Hamburg (Clothing – Technology and Management B. Eng., 2019) and The University of Edinburgh (Design for Change MA, 2020) was paired with diverse practical experience in the fashion industry. Following placements in bespoke tailoring and an extensive tailoring training with the HOLY Fashion Group, she worked as technical designer and studio manager for menswear designer Alex Mullins in London and spent one season with Proenza Schouler in New York. For several years she led sewing workshops for children and supported the student sewing lab at HAW Hamburg. Her label PAID VACATION functions as creative platform for contemporary tailoring and made-to-order fashion design. Since Autumn 2020 Juliet is based in Berlin where she works as fashion product developer.

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Renato Stasi

He has been involved in the creation of clothing and accessories collections for the fashion segment for almost thirty years, as a designer and responsible for the development of the collection, he has worked for several companies including the LVMH Group, Redwall, Hettabretz. He is an adjunct professor at the DIDA - UNIFI Department of Architecture, in the CDL in Industrial Design and CDLM Fashion System Design. Lecturer at IED, where he is the coordinator of two three-year courses. He has carried out supplementary teaching activities at the Politecnico di Milano for several years. He has held seminars and workshops in various universities. Stasi is Coordinator of the Steering Committee of the Master's Degree Course in Fashion System Design of the University of Florence - School of Architecture - DIDA.

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Her research interests concern the heritage/creativity sphere within the digital evolution; thus, the application, impact and opportunities that lie in the relationship between digital technologies and cultural heritage. She is currently working on a research project titled "Living archive. Disseminating and reusing the Fashion cultural heritage" founded by Regione Toscana.

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Kellie Walters

She is a color, materials, and finishes (CMF) designer at Garmin International and previously at Newell Brands spanning professional experience in consumer electronics and home goods. She is also a published researcher on trend forecasting and CMF trends as well as a published theorist on future aesthetics after artificial general intelligence is created and society heads toward artificial superintelligence. Kellie is focused on the direct impact that social and political events have on future aesthetics and their relationship with the economics of design.

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