

Digital Crafting for Fashion Accessories. From Static Products to Open Interactive Experiences

The digital technologies' widespread has so deeply affected the design practice and more generally the entire fashion system, to be defined as a third industrial revolution. Today it is possible to design, to produce, to distribute and to communicate through the web: this has drastically changed the relationship among designer, product, production and final consumer. In this context the word digitalcraft refers to a varying production process, that combine hand and mind to digital media.

The aim of the paper is exploring the procedures of Making within the field of fashion technological accessories, demonstrating how in the liquid contemporary scene the boundaries between handcraft and digital technologies are increasingly blurred.

First, the work describes how the third industrial revolution has carried along a shift of the classic paradigms of design, such as the ones of materials, processes and languages, turning the different opposing dichotomies in a continuous spectrum: natural elements versus artificial materials, analogic versus digital, standardization versus personalization, artisanal attitude versus engineered, surfaces versus essences, form versus function. All the opposites blended in, cohabiting within the classic design categories. This has drastically changed the relationship among the different professionals involved along the value chain, as a constant collaboration across phases and disciplines, causing the spread of new boundaries productive realities.

Since the needs and desires of people always come first, in this context, our purpose is to show how digital-making transforms matter not only into products, but into valuable customer experiences.

The paper analyses case studies of best practice highlighting how sharing practices become the starting point value at the base of the systemic interaction. The digital artisans not only tend to share knowledge, but also materials, productive technologies, hardware and software tools, creative processes, methodologies and meanings in an integrated collaborative open system based on mutual connections. The introduction of new technologies, in terms of materials, algorithmic models and productive process allow to produce custom made pieces, complex systems, yet more responsive and intuitive in the use.

This has led to a significant redefinition of the nature of the fashion accessories, from being static objects to become open structures, not fully defined, interactive interfaces able to autonomously behave and be adaptive to the consumers' needs and desires.

Finally, the paper demonstrates how the deeper relation with the digital practice has not only strengthened virtuality, but also how it has enhanced physicality, creating a hybrid immersive experience. As a result, digital crafts rely on a hybrid nature of making, where virtual and physical practice overlay, surpassing and scattering the dichotomy, therefore sanctioning the dignity of virtuality as being as real as the physical reality.