

Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty

Volume 9 Number 2

© 2018 Intellect Ltd Article. English language. doi: 10.1386/csfb.9.2.197_1

M. GRAÇA GUEDES AND ANDREANA BUEST

Minho University, Portugal

The semiotics of fashion design: A proposal for higher education

Keywords

fashion design in
higher education
semiotics
fashion design
creativity in fashion
design

Abstract

Although the role of semiotics was established as a tool to interpret fashion as a communication system, as a discipline it is virtually absent from the curricula of graduate and postgraduate programmes. In this article, we argue that semiotics can provide epistemological support for the development of a framework for fashion design education. Semiotics is required not only as a tool for designers to (re)interpret the complex and often abstract or conceptual/emotional relations between the design object (clothes) and the wearer, but also as a creative tool. We propose a framework where semiotic analysis is present throughout the structures of fashion design higher education programmes, in order to offer adequate support to fashion design projects. We also discuss the facets of semiotics relevant for fashion design, with an emphasis on the perspective of higher education settings.

Introduction

How do we prize or value things today? Not only by their monetary value, nor even their perceived excellence of design, but also by what they ‘mean’ to us – the experience they provide. Value, therefore has material, conceptual and affective or emotional components. Consequently, fashion designers need not only to identify and create ‘objects’ but also to decipher, interpret and create meaning out of social and cultural landscapes, to interpret contemporary reality, make sense of it and propose meaningful solutions. What tools do they require in order to do that? It is proposed that semiotics is essential as a foundation for fashion design programmes, since it can promote a deeper understanding of the roles that signs play in the creation and diffusion, and decoding and reinterpretation of fashion. The discipline of semiotics has been part of industrial design university programmes in European and American design schools for several decades. In Italy, courses in semiotics are found in Bologna University; Università IUAV¹ di Venezia in Venice; Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche in Florence and Urbino; Milan Polytechnic; and other universities and higher education institutions. However, although the number of these studies has increased, the academic contributions to the field have been occasional rather than systematic.

In a previous study (Guedes and Buest 2017), we sought to identify the presence of semiotics in fashion design curricula in higher education. In the six cases studied, two things became evident.² First, the role design plays in different national, economic, industrial and commercial contexts ultimately influences the approach fashion design will take towards semiotics. The second finding was that semiotics as an approach was differently evident in the higher education programmes of European countries. In France, these approaches and insights had made little impact on fashion design education, exemplified by a ‘technique d’excellence’ promulgated there. In England, semiotics was entangled into cultural studies with an international perspective. Despite this inclusion of semiotics within art and design curricula, how far it has actually influenced making and production is debatable. In Italy, however, semiotics has been fundamental to the study of and training in design. The research showed that the two Italian programmes under investigation related semiotics to the very understanding of the fashion design process. One programme incorporated it in the structure, and the other directly as a discipline. The results of that earlier study have provided the impetus to further explore the relations between semiotics and fashion design within higher education settings. Through a framework composed of four relations between fashion design and semiotics, this article aims to demonstrate the educational importance of developing a holistic view that incorporates the local and the global and covers the processes of creation, production, distribution, and consumption within their social and cultural contexts. We propose that in educational settings, semiotics is not just a method for interpreting fashion objects or design processes. Rather, it is a valid epistemological grounding for fashion design practice in its entirety. It offers students a theoretical framework with which to think about their practice as fashion designers and an awareness that meaning is

1. IUAV – Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia.
2. Fashion Design and Technique at École de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne, Paris, France; Styliste Designer Mode at École Supérieure des Arts et Techniques de la Mode, Paris, France; Specializzazione in Fashion Design at Istituto Europeo di Design, Milan, Rome and Torino, Italy; Design della Moda at Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy; Fashion Design and Development at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London, England; Fashion Programme at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London, England.

embedded in dynamic code systems that are context-dependent. Products are also part of a contextual sign system within which users construct meaning.

The article is organized into three sections: the first focuses on the fashion design sector, and on the changes brought about by production, market and distribution models in the higher education sector; the second presents the theoretical semiotic perspectives that informed the study; the third defines and evaluates the four semiotic states of fashion design. It is followed by a conclusion section.

The fashion design sector and higher education in fashion design

Over the last twenty years, design has widened its scope beyond the classical beautiful/useful pair of values, aiming at a wider range of fields of activity: living spaces, working places, comfort, safety, interaction, environmental sustainability, inclusion, social innovation, accessibility (to services and information) and the whole sphere of social life. In 2015, Li Edelkoort, one of the world's best-known trend forecasters, published the *Anti-Fashion Manifesto* (Edelkoort 2015), which pointed out ten reasons for the failure of the current fashion system, which, according to her, still follows an industrial model. Edelkoort (2015) highlighted the incongruence between fashion design education and the fashion design market.

The former – fashion design education – trains individualists as creative geniuses; the latter – fashion design market – requires creative professionals who possess collaboration and interaction competencies. Edelkoort's (2015) 'manifesto' confirms that fashion design in higher education originated and developed within the industrial practice that defined a set of skills and knowledge of the craft to satisfy clothing production companies. As the global economic landscape expanded, spreading production globally (Becla 2012: 126), the working environment changed, demanding adjustments to professional capabilities – innovation, creativity and problem-solving (Bill 2008). The WGSN (World Global Style Network) report 'The Vision 2019' (WGSN 2017), for instance, elaborates the point that designers are not expected to create 'new products', but to create meaning, stories, and products with a purpose.

The definition of 'industrial design' adopted by the Professional Practice Committee of the World Design Organization (WDO) in its *29th General Assembly* in South Korea in 2015 reads:

Industrial Design is a strategic problem-solving process that drives innovation, builds business success, and leads to a better quality of life through innovative products, systems, services, and experiences. Industrial Design bridges the gap between what is and what's possible. It is a trans-disciplinary profession that harnesses creativity to resolve problems and co-create solutions with the intent of making a product, system, service, experience or a business, better.

(WDO 2017)

This definition moves the emphasis from the object to the user, and represents a shift from the logic of technological innovation towards a logic of social innovation. It places the human in the centre of the process. It aims to acquire a deep understanding of user needs through empathy and to apply a pragmatic, user-centric problem-solving process to design products, systems, services and experiences. Among the many definitions in the current debate on 'social innovations', Catoir-Brisson (2017) focuses on three characteristics that highlight their grounding in contemporary societal problems, and co-design solutions:

1. They are not primarily commercial but emphasize the common good.
2. They are created as a response to social needs.
3. They rely on new forms of governance in which the stakeholders are actively involved.

Thus, the fashion design sector demands professionals with a holistic view, able to interpret a much broader and hybrid landscape. According to Pink (2005: 2), those professionals are creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. Despite that, Edelkoort (2015) affirms that fashion design schools adopt a commercial model, and consequently, their students are educated to reproduce a standardized fashion model. They have lost the capability to transform and defy reality and hence the very idea of what fashion is. We accept that fashion design professionals need to balance the aesthetic and creative with practical functions, with the logic of markets, production, and consumption. However, technical and technological competencies are insufficient to promote anticipatory thinking, prospective behaviour and creative propositions. Under a global network framework, for instance, Esparragoza and Devon (2005) proposed that design practice includes in its programmes the study of hyperconnected and multicultural scenarios, offering pathways to prepare designers for ever-changing challenges. If we regard fashion design as a process through which clothes (as an ensemble of materials, shapes, textures, and silhouette) gain meaning, then it is appropriate to resort to semiotics to comprehend and transpose social codes into innovative and meaningful design solutions.

Theoretical framework/methodology

The theoretical framework adopted in this article considers semiotics as part of the constructivist approach (Krippendorff 1992). According to this approach, the meaning of reality is constructed through processes of social interactions among people and between people and objects, which are part of a sign system that indexes meaning. Consequently, design entails imagining a better solution, an improved reality (Folkmann 2011), continuously constructing or reconstructing reality, intervening in it, acting upon it.

3. 'Il progetto è quindi architettura del futuro perché si pone l'obiettivo di realizzare qualcosa in un tempo a venire, descrivendo lo stato dell'ambiente, le condizioni di realizzazione, l'inizio, il termine, la durata, le fasi di un processo' (Proni 2006: 1). Authors' translation: 'The project is therefore the architecture of the future because it aims to achieve something in a future time, describing the state of the environment, the conditions of concretization, the beginning, the term, the duration, the phases of a process'.

As a semiotic process, fashion does not end with the designer's outputs. The wearer may adopt, adapt and change the meaning of a fashion proposal in ways that can be different from the original intent, and that might feedback to inspire the designer with new ideas and so on. With a semiotic approach, fashion design is not merely a directive process (which imposes the designer's view) but most definitely it is an encoding and a decoding one (it both proposes and deconstructs codes). It is a co-creative (constructivist) negotiation between designer and wearer, both of whom are situated in social and cultural contexts. Although materials, forms, and functions are at the core of fashion creation practice, fashion designers need to master the materiality of the 'problem', but also acknowledge the interpretative process in design, which places semiotics inside the project activity (Deni and Zingale 2017).

When looking for inspiration, designers are trying to comprehend and interpret explicit or implicit codes (and their evolution), so that they can change them or add new ones (Hall 2006; Folkmann 2011). We can say, then, that themes and topics traditionally belonging to semiotics are already part of the design process. For instance, the storytelling approach as a stimulus to fashion creation is the most widespread, but more marginal aspects of the semiotic theory are also evident in design thinking and in scenario-based design.

Semiotics already plays some role in the (fashion) design process, but its value needs to be recognized and its methods consciously and systematically deployed in educational settings. This is because it helps to understand its value not just as a way of acquiring knowledge or perceiving and interpreting reality, but also because semiotics opens up a prospective, open-ended imaginative form of questioning. In Peirce's Sign Theory, or S, there are certain dynamics of signs that open the creative process because they point to qualities of things, situations, and feelings, and therefore are not fixed in a solid definition of what this thing is, either in an actual situation or by habits or laws. Barrena (2013: 3) emphasizes that for Peirce the very concept of knowledge is semiotic since it is built on the interpretation of observed reality, through which new ideas are generated (imagined); meanings are created in an endless signification process, that then guides human actions. To imagine is to project, to know 'the present' and to propose a possible future and act to make it happen.

Folkmann (2010) also highlights that in order to create connections between the immaterial and materiality (to make ideas concrete in objects and produce designed solutions to design problems), designers deploy observation and (re)interpretation of what is known. Folkmann's (2010) view suggests that design is an inquiry-based activity that entails a level of uncertainty and anticipation. As the architecture of the future (Proni 2006),³ design projects not only indicate a particular finite solution but can potentially trigger new projects to answer questions that have not yet been articulated, or to address a known problem or question it from a different angle. Following this reasoning, we focus on the theoretical premise that, as Deni and Zingale put it, 'semiotics must be viewed as a "mechanism" operating inside of design rather than as a microscope to analyze the results of design'

(2017: 1294). As Chow and Jonas (2010) indicate, a close reading of Peirce's semiotics allows us to account for meaning-making as a truly creative process rather than merely the recognition of known traits in artefacts or situations.

Findeli (2012) distinguishes between research *on design* and *for design*. Traditionally, applied semiotics privileges studies *on design* in relation to industrial design products, services, communication, artefacts and spaces. It refers to analysing what has already been produced and how it functions or impacts upon social life according to some regulating categories and objective principles. Semiotics *for design* shifts attention from the design products towards specific problems and processes of the design activity. It aims at individuating methodologies for an effective design solution and is only practised in a sustained way by semioticians. Designers still largely consider semiotics only as an interpretive, analytical methodology, an instrument chosen among many others available for clarifying and evaluating the significance and use of a particular material or immaterial product.

Deni and Zingale (2017) question the traditional role semiotics has played in design projects, both as an analytical tool (semiotics *on design*) and as a project methodology (semiotics *for design*), and consider that design schools could provide 'future designers with theoretical instruments allowing them to understand, and thus exploit, the semiotic nature of design' (Deni and Zingale 2017: 1294).

A survey conducted by Darras (2015) among semioticians both in academe and in the commercial world confirmed that just under 50% of them regarded semiotics primarily as a method of analysis, and a similar proportion regarded it as a theory. When asked what kind of method it was, a clear majority (when aggregated across first, second and third choices) of 35% regarded it as a creative tool, followed by an evaluation tool (27%) and an R&D or consultancy tool (23% each). When asked about the usefulness of semiotics to design, even these respondents generally held to the traditional view of semiotics as a tool for analysing existing products or communications rather than as a tool for creative processes.

We contend that semiotics could potentially play a much more critical role in developing knowledge in fashion design education by distancing it from standardized models of clothing creation and production, and promoting a more subversive and challenging aptitude.

The semiotic state of fashion design

This section presents and discusses the four premises that form the *Semiotic State of Fashion Design* (Figure 1). We propose a framework that considers four facets of semiotics: reflective process; uncertain process; encoding–decoding process; and prospective process. These aspects cover the essential contributions of this discipline to fashion design and are thus recommended for implementation in higher education programmes to promote a transversal form of understanding throughout the fashion design process.

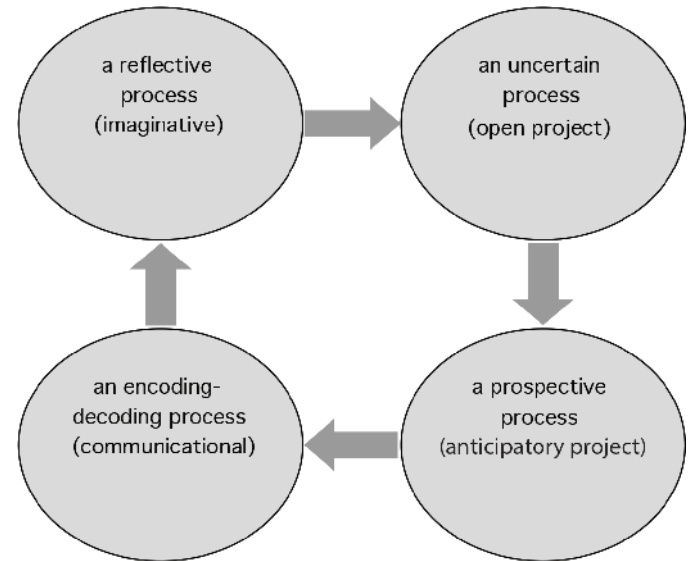


Figure 1: The Semiotic State of Fashion Design.

Semiotics as a reflective process (imaginative)

Understanding is a creative and constructive undertaking.

(Krippendorff 1992: 34)

Semiotics is an epistemology that provides a conceptual framework and a reflective method, from the very outset and throughout the design process. At first, there is an exploratory and analytical moment in which reality is observed and interpreted. According to Barrena (2013: 3–5), observing ideas that are already ‘materialized’ in the real world inspires new ideas, which are then translated into concrete applications. Thus, imagination is the ‘desire to know’, which Barrena (2013: 5) links with action. For Holt (2017: 30), the role of imagination in design is to map what exists and to alter it, creating new meanings. Folkmann’s (2010) study demonstrates that through conscious visualization designers develop the ability to intervene (create) in the physical world. Similarly, Hanke (2016) contends that design gives a visual form to what has been imagined.⁴ Such exteriorization of imagination (Deni and Zingale 2017: 1295) creates a connection between ideals and concrete contexts (Folkmann 2011: 30–32). In the process, signs use technology as a stratagem (such as mood boards, patterns or fashion collections) to transform nature into culture (Hanke 2016: 7–8). Semiotics can contribute a long-term view to this process that, through observation, interpretation and the development of a lexicon of knowledge, will inspire not just one concrete solution, but will convert this solution into resources for future projects.

During the exploration and documentation phases of a project, when the ‘unknown’ needs to be mapped, semiotics can guide designers to make sense of the world’s complex systems of representation (Prioni 2006: 6).⁵ While researching to develop the ‘next’ fashion collection, for instance, designers can start with available materials, or become inspired by ‘novelties’. Trend forecasts can inform about the psychological, sociocultural, economic and technological mood of the period. The product’s market destination (e.g. winter or summer clothing) suggests to student designers the expected requirements to be fulfilled. In fact, through imagining mental scenarios or experimentation possibilities designers would be able to transform what was previously observed, by devising methods of acting upon them (Jutant et al. 2013). This semiotic state of fashion design is motivated by the desire to know the unknown, and reflect upon it, to generate an initial mental idea (sign) and then successively improve, modify and adapt until there is a match between the mental and the resulting, actualized artefact – from idea, through image/plan, to object.

Semiotics as uncertain process (open project)

While reflecting on and making an effort to understand and interpret the unknown, designers have to face the uncertainty aspect of the design project, which is particularly important to acknowledge

4. In-form, related to non-things, which ‘flood our environment’, ‘immaterial information’, ‘word in-formation’, ‘form in’ things (Flusser, cited in Hanke 2016: 17–20).
5. ‘[I] successivi passi della progettazione, è un processo interpretativo che va a costruire la descrizione progressivamente più dettagliata (‘densa’) di un assente possibile posto come obiettivo’ (Prioni 2006: 6). Authors’ translation: ‘[I] successive steps of design project, are an interpretative process that is going to build the progressively more detailed description (‘dense’) of an absent possible place as a goal’.



Figure 2: In a family event in Denmark: men and women, adults and children deem trainers to be properly acceptable gear.

and to deal with in fashion design activity. As Proni (2006: 2–3) indicates, design projects are inherently fluid and evolving.⁶ Instability and ephemerality define the semiotic state of fashion design as an uncertain process. Fashion design projects are complex, fast-paced and open to adaptability, so that a planned approach to accommodate change and uncertainty is beneficial. The semiotic state of fashion design prepares students and professionals to acknowledge, recognize and thrive within dynamic conditions. Each collection, each design is only a transitory solution, an ephemeral idea (Lipovetsky 2001), materialized in fashion objects that will be reinterpreted by the wearer, and in turn inspire new possibilities.

In this respect, fashion objects evolve not only during the design process but also when they are materialized in the world. The process by which fashion items are used by individuals to interact socially, adds an element of uncertainty which creates the excitement of fashion – its ‘newness’, the uncertainty of ‘how I will be seen’. The cycle of fashion (dissemination, adoption, and discarding) is never free of signification. It is a continuous process of (re)interpretation of signs, in the course of which meanings are exchanged, enhanced or devalued. In a semiotic state, the meaning of fashion cycles is never fixed but always in a state of flux, leaving an opening for uncertainty, the ‘unknown’, the yet-to-become (Folkmann 2011: 31). Items of clothing that signify a particular mindset (such as fur as luxurious, or trainers as casual) (Figure 2), may be transformed in time to signify environmental irresponsibility or preference for stylish comfort over formality, such as when leading actress Emma Thompson turned up at Buckingham Palace to accept a damehood wearing white sneakers.

Semiotics as a prospective process (anticipatory)

While ‘prospering’ in uncertainty, fashion design projects also entail an anticipative future-oriented mindset. Nothing is quite settled or definite; the evaluations of a designed object, and how this reflects on both creation/production and consumption, may change over time and by context. Faced with this, Proni (2006) resorts to Peirce’s concept of the semiotic as a prospective or predictive science. From this, we maintain that semiotics as an educational framework develops and structures a type of thinking and action that is necessary for fashion designers – an abstract one, based on divergence, on connotation, on imagination. It promotes a forecasting aptitude, both predictive and proactive, that pays attention to trends and markets, anticipating changes that might influence brands, companies or consumer expectations (Hall 1980, in Hall et al. 1980: 168).

Semiotics as an encoding–decoding process (communicational)

Communicational aspects are present in all the tools and processes involved in the planning phase of fashion design projects (e.g. mood boards, prototypes, technical patterns). They also support a

6. ‘Il processo di progettazione è però in sé un processo fluido, complesso e in grado di ritornare su sé stesso quando è necessario’ (Proni 2006: 3).
Authors’ translation: ‘However, the design process is in itself a fluid, complex process capable of returning over itself when it is necessary’.

7. The Ecole 42 USA college of software engineering and programming presents flexible routes and is industry-focused (<https://www.42.us.org>, accessed 6 November 2018); or the Moscow Architecture School, whose mission is to re-think architecture education (<https://march.ru/en/about/strategy/>, accessed 6 November 2018); or the University of the Underground in Amsterdam, which grants full scholarships and is design-thinking-oriented, aiming 'to disturb the system from the inside out' (<http://universityoftheunderground.org/about>, accessed 6 November 2018).

panoply of imagery in fashion shows, brands, products, events, the scenography of shop windows and so on. Lipovetsky (2001), for instance, analyses fashion as a communication tool that promotes lifestyles (as a show rooted in reality). Clothes, as fashion items, are used as communication tools by the wearer to share (or conceal) their aspirations, expectations, desires or states of mind within a sociocultural context (Tseëlon 1989, 2012). The communicational aspect is present both in the tangible (clothing) and the intangible (concepts, beliefs, sociocultural meanings) aspects of fashion design.

Fashion design products rely on the feedback and reinterpretation of users. Understanding how (fashion) design, as a signifying system, is used and interpreted by the wearer is the objective of social semiotics (Holt 2017: 337). Thus, the semiotic state of fashion design is reciprocal and socially constructed (Hall 1980, in Hall et al. 1980: 171). As social encoders/decoders (meaning makers/interpreters), fashion designers and wearers synthesize information and establish connections through clothes.

While fashion designers are expected to be able to decipher complex social and cultural codes, acknowledge their meanings and re-fashion them into design objects, within design education it is still not clear how they will be equipped or facilitated to do so, except through some kind of 'inbuilt' intuition or talent. Their 'creations' carry not only what was imagined as a design project, but also the potential for a decoding process to take place between the wearer, the clothes, and the designer. At the communicational level, the designer and the wearer share the capacity and opportunity to decode and encode (fashion) design creations through social and cultural relations (Flusser, cited in Ferreira 2011: 153–55). A semiotic approach to design education would highlight those relationships.

Conclusion

As individuals seek more nourishing and personalized education, from a lifelong learning perspective, 'new' models of education are emerging,⁷ not least in the design, architecture and information technology areas of knowledge. To a certain extent, these aspirations defy or confront the prevalence of an industrial model of curricula design, and theoretical/methodological focus (WGSN 2017a). This article argues for the adoption of a semiotic approach to both analysis and the creative process overall in fashion design programmes. The semiotic approach to fashion design education presented here is overdue, if it is to keep pace with changes in the fashion industry and the wider culture, and to prepare future designers for the challenges they will face. The consideration of all semiotic facets proposed here would enable programmes to adopt an anticipative, instead of responsive, stance in relation to the changes and the complexities of the fashion sector.

Acknowledgements

This work is financed by FEDER funds through the Competitivity Factors Operational Programme (COMPETE) and by national funds through FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology) within the scope of the project POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007136.

References

- Barrena, Sara (2013), 'Reason and imagination in Charles S. Peirce', *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, Issue 2013, vol. 1, <http://ejpap.revues.org/575>. Accessed 22 April 2018.
- Becla, Agnieszka (2012), 'Information society and knowledge-based economy – development level and the main barriers – some remarks', *Economics & Sociology*, 5:1, pp. 125–32.
- Bill, Amanda (2008), 'Creative girls, fashion design education and governability', Ph.D. thesis, Auckland: University of Auckland.
- Calefato, Patrizia (2008), 'On myths and fashion', *Sign Systems Studies*, 36:1, pp. 71–80.
- Catoir-Brisson, Marie-Julie (2017), 'The quantified self and mobile health applications: From information and communication sciences, to social innovation by design', in N. Bouhaï and I. Saleh (eds), *Internet of Things: Evolutions and Innovations*, Computer Engineering Series: Digital Tools and Uses Set, vol. 4, London: Wiley, pp. 139–68.
- Chow, Rosan and Jonas, Wolfgang (2010), 'Case transfer: A design approach by artifacts and projection', *Design Issues*, 26:4, pp. 9–19.
- Darras, Bernard (2015), 'Semioticians and design: Results from an international survey', in 11th *European Academy of Design Conference*, Descartes University Institute of Psychology, Paris, 22–24 April.
- Deni, Michela and Zingale, Salvatore (2017), 'Semiotics in design education: Semiotics by design', *The Design Journal*, 20, sup1, S1293–S1303, doi:10.1080/14606925.2017.1352658. Accessed 23 April 2018.
- Edelkoort, Li (2015), *Anti-Fashion Manifesto*, Paris: Trend Union.
- Esparragoza, Ivan E. and Devon, Richard F. (2005), 'Developing the global design curriculum in Latin America and the Caribbean through multi-national projects', *Proceedings of the Third Latin American and Caribbean Conference for Engineering and Technology*, Cartagena, Colombia: LACCET, 8–10 June 2005, pp. 1–7.
- Ferreira, Suelen O. (2011), 'Flusser, seu mundo codificado e o design' ('Flusser, its coding world and the design'), *Revista Lumen et Virtus*, 2:4, pp. 149–58.

- Findeli, A. (2012), 'Searching for design research questions: Some conceptual clarifications', in S. Grand and W. Jonas (eds), *Mapping Design Research*, Barcelona/Basel: Birkhauser Architecture, pp. 123–34.
- Folkmann, Mads N. (2010), 'Enabling creativity in design. Imagination in design processes', in Special Interest Group (SIG) on Design Creativity and Design Society, *1st International Conference on Design Creativity*, Kobe, Japan. 29 November–1 December 2010.
- (2011), *Inner Border Crossing: Imagination in Design*, Genk Cumulus Working Papers, Publication Series G, Cumulus Working Papers series, Helsinki: Aalto University, School of Art and Design, pp. 30–35.
- Guedes, Maria G. and Buest, Andreana N. M. (2017), 'Fashion designer as a social decoder', in Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas - Universidade Nova de Lisboa, *Congresso Ibérico de Semiótica Modas, Modos, Maneiras*, , Lisboa, Portugal, 23–25 November 2017.
- Hall, Stuart (1980), 'Encoding/decoding', in Stuart Hall et al. (eds), *Culture, Media, Language*, London: Hutchinson, pp. 128–38, <https://we.riseup.net/assets/102142/appadurai.pdf#page=202>. Accessed 14 October 2018.
- (2006), 'Encoding/Decoding', in M. G. Durham and D. Kellner (eds), *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 163–73.
- Hanke, Michael (2016), 'Vilém Flusser's philosophy of design: Sketching the outlines and mapping the sources', *Flusser Studies*, vol. 21, pp. 16–43.
- Holt, Matthew (2017), 'Semiotics and design: Towards an aesthetics of the artificial', *The Design Journal*, 20:1, pp. 332–41, doi: 10.1080/14606925.2017.1352860. Accessed 27 October 2017.
- Jutant, Camille, Gentès, Annie, Béjean, Mathias and Mivielle, Cédric (2013), 'Design, meaning making and constructive fixation: Conceptualizing semiotic conditions to the process of designing', in International Association of Societies of Design Research (IASDR) *Conference: Consilience and Innovation in Design*, 26–30 August, Tokyo Japan. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01133769>. Accessed 2 November 2018.
- Krippendorff, Klaus (1992), 'Transcending semiotics: Toward understanding design for understanding', in S. Vihma (ed.), *Objects and Images: Studies in Design and Advertising*, Helsinki: University of Industrial Arts, pp. 24–47, http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/295. Accessed 2 November 2018.
- Lipovetsky, Gilles (2002), Catherine Porter (translator), Richard Sennet (foreword), *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Pink, Daniel H. (2005), *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age* [Kindle edition], New York: Riverhead Books.

- Proni, Giampaolo (2006), 'Per una semiotica del progetto', *Ocula*, vol. 7, pp. 1–10, <https://www.ocula.it/rivista.php?id=18>. Accessed 23 April 2018.
- Tseëlon, Efrat (1989), 'Communicating via clothing', Ph.D. thesis, Oxford: University of Oxford.
- (2012), 'How successful is communication via clothing? Thoughts and evidence for an unexamined paradigm', in A. M. Gonzalez and L. Bovone (eds), *Identities through Fashion: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Oxford: Berg.
- WDO (World Design Organization) (2018), 'Definition of Industrial Design', <http://wdo.org/about/definition/>. Accessed 20 July 2018.
- WGSN (World Global Style Network) (2017a), 'The future of education', https://www.wgsn.com/content/reports/#/Future+Trends/w/The_Vision/27150. Accessed 20 July 2018.
- (2017b), 'The Vision 2019: Part 2 – Purpose Full', WGSN Vision Team, https://www.wgsn.com/content/reports/#/Future+Trends/w/The_Vision/27150. Accessed 20 July 2018.

Suggested citation

Guedes, M. G. and Buest, A. (2018), 'The semiotics of fashion design: A proposal for higher education', *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty*, 9:2, pp. 197–211, doi: 10.1386/csfb.9.2.197_1

Contributor details

Graça Guedes has graduate qualifications in Philosophy and in Geography from Oporto University, and post graduate studies from Minho University (MSc in European Studies – Social and Economical Development, Ph.D. in Textile Engineering – Design and Management).

Prof. Guedes teaches BSc, MSc, and Ph.D. courses on Fashion Marketing and Branding, Fashion Trends, Communication, and Fashion Design. She coordinated several projects in co-operation with research centres, and Social and Industrial Associations mainly oriented within the Portuguese Textile and Fashion Industries. She has developed and coordinated national and international company/university co-operation projects for more than twenty years.

Her research interests are in the areas of communication, fashion trends, fashion marketing and branding, and inclusive design. Her current projects examine global market change, fashion design for all, trends in fashion consumer behaviour, and new trends in fashion design teaching and learning.

E-mail: mgg@det.uminho.pt

 identifier: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5456-992X>

Andreana Buest graduated in Fashion Design with a Master's in Technology and Society and teaches in the HE and VET sectors, both in online and onsite environments. Currently she is a Ph.D. candidate at University of Minho in Portugal. Her research interests are fashion design education and learning in collaborative and online settings.

E-mail: anbuest2@gmail.com

 identifier: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5476-4968>

M. Graça Guedes and Andreana Buest have asserted their right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the authors of this work in the format that was submitted to Intellect Ltd.





The Artist as Culture Producer

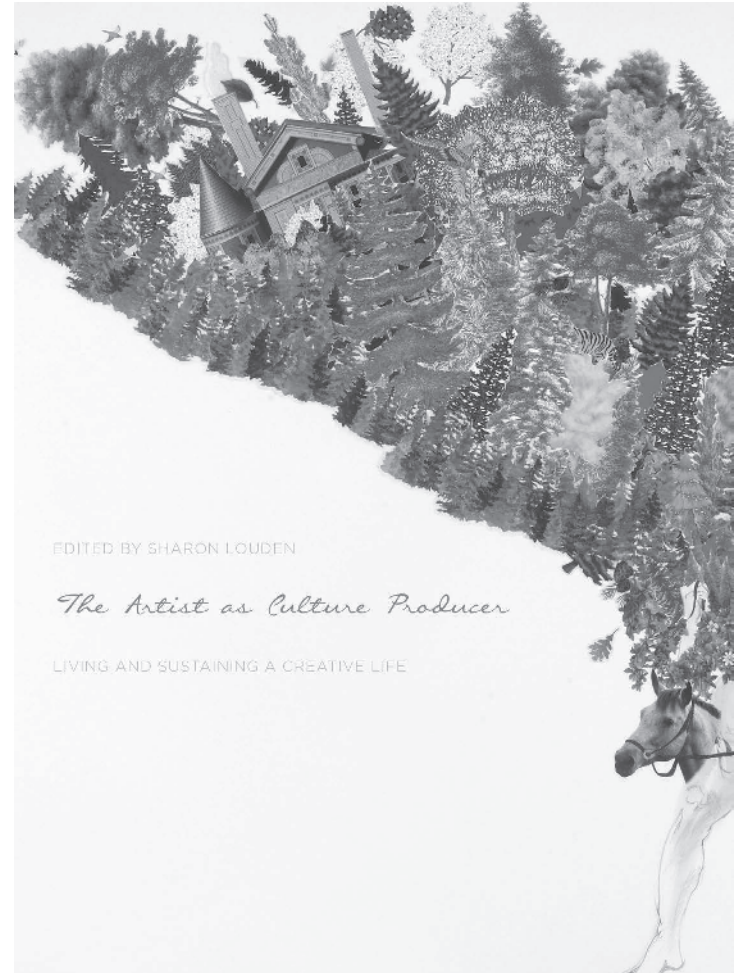
Living and Sustaining a Creative Life
Edited by Sharon Louden

ISBN 978-1-78320-726-8
404pp | £30, \$42
Paperback | 170 x 230mm
Published Spring 2017

When *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life* was published in 2013, it became an immediate sensation. Edited by **Sharon Louden**, the book brought together 40 essays by working artists, each sharing their own story of how to sustain a creative practice that contributes to the ongoing dialogue in contemporary art. The book struck a nerve – how do artists really make it in the world today? Louden took the book on a 62-stop book tour, selling thousands of copies and building a movement along the way.

Now, Louden returns with a sequel: 40 more essays from artists who have successfully expanded their practice beyond the studio and become change agents in their communities. There is a misconception that artists are invisible and hidden, but the essays here demonstrate the truth – artists make a measurable and innovative economic impact in the non-profit sector, in education and in corporate environments. *The Artist as Culture Producer* illustrates how today's contemporary artists add to creative economies through out-of-the-box thinking while also generously contributing to the well-being of others.

By turns humorous, heart-breaking and instructive, the testimonies of these forty diverse working artists will inspire and encourage every reader – from the art student to the established artist. With a foreword by *Hyperallergic* co-founder and editor-in-chief Hrag Vartanian, *The Artist as Culture Producer* is set to make an indelible mark on the art world – redefining how we see and support contemporary artists.



Copyright of Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty is the property of Intellect Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.