Spaces "to live" fashion brands

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Abstract

The current society of hyperconsumption, as described by Gilles Lipovetsky, is characterized by the pursuit of welfare and happiness, what even justifies the consumption of objects. Nowadays, we buy things not so much to boast about them, to show a social position, but to satisfy emotional, physical, sensory, aesthetic, relational, healthy, playful and recreational needs. We desire products "to live" rather than display. To satisfy this consumer's desire, products and services for sale are imbued with sensations and messages, by the incorporation of a brand: a set of meanings as well as emotional and aesthetic associations tied to the offer. The adoption of the brand allows the stimulation of feelings of happiness and the expression of identities through the consumption of products and services. The same are permitted by the spaces, through the incorporation of the brand values by the process of visual merchandising: the space planning in order to attract consumers. Brand management, or branding, is responsible for creating and managing emotional ties with consumers. Rather than worry about the logo and visual identity, branding today have turned increasingly to the global environment that involves the relationship between brand and consumers. In this context, the importance of physical spaces has increased, since they are points of contact that engage the consumer on a physical and emotional relationship with the brand. The space can imbue soul, personality and sensory appeal, transmitting the brand values through the architecture, furniture, color and shapes. This article offers a brief literature reflection about hyperconsumption society and links this subject with fashion brands, which, by the appreciation of ephemerality and their time, stimulate the consumption

selling more than products: change, novelty and happiness. Fashion, in this context, is considered the desire for the New and the appreciation of change, the present time, the aesthetic variability and sensitivity. Fashion brands incorporate these values in the spaces of contact with consumers, especially in stores, and most evidently in the so-called flagship stores, which are characterized by transmitting at a space the whole imaginary associated with the brand. The research method employed in this article is the literature search that covers the areas of philosophy – which deals with the consumer society -, fashion, branding and visual merchandising. The aim of this paper is to perform a literature reflection about the current hyperconsumption society under the bias of fashion brands, relating them with visual merchandising of stores and other branded spaces.

Key-words: Hyperconsumption, brands, branding, fashion, visual merchandising

Resumo

A sociedade de hiperconsumo atual, conforme descreve Gilles Lipovetsky, se caracteriza pela busca de bem-estar e felicidade, motivo que inclusive justifica o consumo de objetos. Hoje em dia compramos as coisas não tanto para ostentá-las, para evidenciar uma posição social, mas sim para satisfazermos necessidades emocionais, corporais, sensoriais, estéticas, relacionais, sanitárias, lúdicas e recreativas. Desejamos produtos "para viver", mais do que para exibir. Para satisfazer esse desejo do consumidor, os produtos e serviços à venda impregnam-se de sensações e mensagens, através da incorporação de uma marca: um conjunto de significados e associações emocionais e estéticas atrelado à oferta. A adoção da marca permite a estimulação de sentimentos de felicidade e a expressão de identidades através do consumo de produtos e serviços. O mesmo permitem os espaços, através da incorporação dos valores de marca, a partir do processo de visual merchandising: o planejamento de espaços com vista a atrair os consumidores. A gestão de marcas, ou *branding*, é responsável pela criação e administração de laços emocionais com o consumidor. Mais do que se preocupar com o logotipo e a identificação visual, *branding* hoje têm se voltado cada vez mais para o entorno global que envolve a relação da marca com os consumidores. Neste contexto, tem crescido a importância dos espaços físicos, já que são pontos de contato que envolvem o consumidor numa relação física e emocional com a marca. O espaço pode impregnar alma, personalidade e apelo sensorial, transmitindo os próprios valores da marca através da arquitetura, do mobiliário, das cores e formas. Este artigo traz uma breve reflexão bibliográfica sobre a sociedade de hiperconsumo e relaciona-a com as marcas de moda, que, por valorizarem a efemeridade e o seu tempo, estimulam o consumo vendendo mais do que

produtos: mudança, novidade e felicidade. A moda, neste contexto, é considerada o desejo pelo novo e a valorização da mudança, do tempo presente, da variabilidade e da sensibilidade estética. As marcas de moda incorporam esses valores nos espaços de contato com o consumidor, sobretudo nas lojas, e mais evidentemente nas chamadas *flagship stores*, que se caracterizam por transmitir num espaço todo o imaginário associado à marca. O método de pesquisa empregado neste artigo é a investigação bibliográfica, que abrange as áreas de filosofia – esta que trata da sociedade de consumo -, moda, gestão de marcas e visual merchandising. O objetivo deste artigo é desempenhar uma reflexão bibliográfica sobre a sociedade de hiperconsumo atual sob o viés das marcas de moda, relacionando-as com o visual merchandising de lojas e demais espaços de marca.

Palavras-chave: Hiperconsumo, marcas, moda, visual merchandising.

1. Introduction

The consumer society emerges from the industrial revolution, around the 80s of nineteenth century. According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 24), first, it is characterized by the mass consumption, made possible by the expansion of the markets through the improvement of the modern transportation and communication infrastructures, besides the improvement of the manufacturing machinery. These improvements have enabled the increase of productivity with lower costs and regular disposal of huge quantities of products.

But not only that, "the consumer capitalism […] was also a cultural and social construction that required the 'education' of consumers and needs the visionary spirit of creative entrepreneurs" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 24-25). A larger number of products has become available to a larger number of consumers. It was the time of mass marketing, department stores, national brands, packaging and national advertising: "standardized, packaged in small packages distributed by the national markets, the products pass to present a name, assigned by the manufacturer: the brand" (p. 26).

From the second half of the twentieth century we see the birth of a new modernity. According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 07), is at this time that "the fever of comfort took over the place of nationalist passions and the leisure replaced the revolution". "If the phase I began to democratize the purchase of durable goods, the phase II completed this process making available to all, or almost all, the flagship products of the affluence society: automobile, television, household appliances" (p. 28).

> Performing the 'miracle of consumption', the phase II gives a discretionary purchasing power in social classes increasingly extended, that can hope, confident, the constant improvements of their resources; spread the credit and allowed most people to release from the urgency of

immediate needs. For the first time, the masses ascend to a material demand more psychologized and individualized, to a way of life (durable goods, leisure activities, holidays, fashion) previously exclusive of the social elites (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 29).

This is the time of the market differentiation, fashion, seduction, the ephemeral, the targeted marketing, focused on age and socio-cultural factors. "The whole society is mobilized around the project of creating a comfortable and easy everyday, synonymous of happiness" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 30): "there is also an entire environment of desire stimulation, the advertising euphoria, the image of luxuriant holidays, the sexualization of the symbols and bodies" (p. 30-31). Triumphs the exaltation of momentary pleasures. But in the last decades of the twentieth century occurs a new revolution:

> Relying on the new religion of continuous improvement of living conditions, the best-live has become a passion of the masses, the ultimate goal of democratic societies, an exalted ideal in every corner. […] Apparently nothing or almost nothing has changed: we continue to evolve in the society of supermarket and advertising, automobile and television. However, in the last two decades, emerged a new 'convulsion' that ended the good old consumer society, transforming both the organization of offer as the daily practices, and the mental universe of modern consumerism: the consumer revolution itself has undergone a revolution itself. A new phase of consumer capitalism began: it is precisely the society of hyperconsumption" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 07-08).

Consumers are becoming more demanding about the quality of life, communication, health, environment and social issues: "we want objects 'to live', rather than objects to show, we buy this or that not so much to flaunt, to highlight a social position, but to meet emotional and physical, sensory and aesthetic, relational and health, leisure and recreation satisfactions" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 36).

We are in the era of soul, balance, self-esteem, health, happiness consumption. The objects are now imbued with values, personality and feelings. Who assigns these adjectives to the offers are the brands: emotional and aesthetic meanings and associations linked to the offer. Similarly, recently, the branding started to pay attention to the spaces where consumers "experience" the brands: the stores and other commercial spaces. It is precisely in the relationship between the hyperconsumption society, the brand management and the visual merchandising - the planning of spaces in order to attract consumers – that this paper focuses.

2. Methodology of the Research Development

The goal of this work is to descript the hyperconsumption society in terms of its involvement with the fashion brands management, which is characterized not by the commercialization of products, but of change and novelty. The fashion, in this context, is considered the desire for the new, the appreciation of the change, of the present time, of the aesthetic sensitivity and variability. Therefore, the research draws on a literature search

covering the areas of philosophy – which deals with consumer society -, fashion, brand management and visual merchandising. The proposal is to develop a bibliographic reflection on hyperconsumption society and its implications to fashion brands, relating them to the visual merchandising of stores and other brand spaces. The paper starts, therefore, with broader and philosophical concepts, dealing with the phenomenon of hyperconsumption in the modern society as a result of the generalization of the fashion, and spans in an increasingly objective reflection on the management of fashion brands, that culminates in concepts more practical such as the visual merchandising of fashion brands spaces.

The research presented in this paper is based on literature research, observational and participatory, and the authors have practical experience in branding, fashion and visual merchandising activities. Regarding the delineation of the research, at first, to understand the topics covered in the theoretical foundation, it can be classified as literature research, because it is based on material already developed – current literature and reference books, papers and periodicals (Gil, 2007).

To integrate the theoretical results with the market reality of the brands, was carried a crusade observational research, where the researchers brought from their practical experience, concepts and actions performed by brands that can be validated in the society of hyperconsumption, which has "fashion branding" as effective application.

3. The Hyperconsumption Society

In the last decades of the twentieth century we see strengthen up a new consumption dynamic, characterized by the "pursuit of private happiness, the optimizing of our corporal and relational resources, the unlimited health, the conquest of personalized space-time". According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 37), "the apogee of consumption no longer has to do with the differential sign, but with the experimental value, the 'pure' consumption that functions not as a social signifier, but as a range of services designed to the individual".

> The cult of the body, the dietary care, the deification of nature, the philosophical or religious siyncretism, and the spirit ecology are expressed in all ages and social classes. […] These phenomena, abdicating nothing from spirit, emphasize the experience, interactivy, and human senses (Mafessoli, 2004; p. 149)

The consumer ceases to consume only products, and seek much more than that: "the hyperconsumer no longer demands the ownership of things for themselves, but above all, the multiplication of experiences, the pleasure of the experience for experience, the drunkenness of the new sensations and emotions" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 54). It is when objects become fetish objects.

According to Ugo Volli (2006; p. 178-179), "the fetishes are how a society (or an individual, in the psychological case) invests a thing of value, giving it a synthesis of heterogeneous principles, for example, moral, spiritual, erotic principles". Pietz (1986 *apud* Volli, 2006; p. 179) explains that fetishism "is the incomprehensible mystery of the power that material things have of become collective social objects that the individuals believe capable of truly embody certain virtues and values". It is, in fact, what the brands do. In this context, consumers have increasingly sought less the product and more the values, virtues, feelings and experiences that it provides.

For Solomon (2011; p. 43-44) "often, people buy products not for what they do, but for what they mean". This does not imply that basic function of a product does not matter, but that the role it plays in our lives goes well beyond. "The object loses its objective purpose and the respective function, becoming […] term of all significances" (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 146).

When the products are similar, for example, we usually choose the brand that has an image (or even a personality) that matches our own (Solomon, 2011; p. 44): "on one hand, the hyperconsumer wants increasingly disproportionate shows, more unheard artifacts, more hyper-real stimulation; on the other hand, yearns for a intimate or 'true' world that identifies him" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 57). The society is consuming, then, objects made by its own image:

> Be like me, says the seducer (or seductive merchandise), because I am like you. […] If you recognize being like me (acquiring me), I will be like you, I will save you of your identity, realizing you. […] This is the characteristic shape of the contemporary merchandise: to be made in our image and resemblance, like a decal that is also a portrait (Volli, 2006; p. 220).

"The post-modern company needs meaning and value". As Lipovetsky (2004, p. 280) explains, "the business world also lurks the 'spirituality', personality and morality: the personalization process at this time has no boundaries, 'works' the subjects like the company, imbuing products of ideals, personality and sense in the image of consumers".

The truth is that the consumption in increasing explained by the proportion of happiness to the individual: we seek positive, motivating, relaxing and emotional experiences. "The hyperconsumer does not merely acquire high-tech products to communicate in real time: buy also affective products, making travel in time to the childhood emotions", for example (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 63).

During the "re-enchantment of the world" (Mafessoli, 2004; p. 125), the objects are therefore imbued with signs that are not themselves, but that refer to other meanings. According to Baudrillard (2008, p. 26), "we live in this way under the signs and in the denial of reality. Miraculous security: while contemplating the images of the world, who would

distinguish this brief outbreak of reality of the deep pleasure of not participating of it. For the author, "the image, the sign, the message, whatever we 'consume', is the very sealed tranquility by the distance to the world and that eludes, rather than commits, the violent allusion to reality".

The consumption "tends to happiness by defect, eliminating the tension" (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 27). According to Volli (2006, p. 214), "the consumer behavior before the goods are no longer most times in fact technical, neutral, objective; not serves only to the benefits and cost of merchandise, the relationship between price and quality". Currently, "the affective level is central in every relation of consumption".

> The civilization of consuming welfare constituted the great historical gravedigger of the glorious ideology of duty. Throughout the second half of the century, the logic of mass consumption dissolved the universe of moralizing homilies, eradicated the rigorists imperatives and engendered a culture where happiness is imposed as moral command, the pleasure to forbidden, the seduction to obligation. […] The cult of mass happiness came to generalize the legitimacy of the pleasures and contribute to the promotion of the fever of individual autonomy (Lipovetsky, 2004; p. 60).

According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 36), "we no longer expect that things rank us in relation to others, but enable us to be more independent and have more mobility, enjoy more sensations, live experiences, improve our quality of life, preserve youth and health". This is the era of individualistic consumption: "the consumption of the individual 'for himself' supplanted the consumption 'to the other'".

People seek to exalt their individuality when consume, and the products come to meet their expectations: "currently, nothing is consumed in a pure and simple way, that means, anything is purchased, owned and used for a particular purpose (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 213), the objects no longer attend only to their functions, but above all, they are designed to serve your Excellency […]. Without the total ideology of the personal providing, the consumption would not be what it is". This is a "materialistic and hedonistic culture, based on the exaltation of self":

> A new civilization was built, which no longer intends to strangle the desire, but that exacerbates and apologizes it: the enjoyment of the present, the temple of the self, the body and comfort became the new Jerusalem of the post-moralist time (Lipovetsky, 2004; p. 60).

"The fragmentation of feelings and impositions of classes created the possibility of particular choices and opened the way for the free expression of personal tastes and pleasures" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 98). According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 227), "at the hyperconsumption society, people tend to place their interests and their pleasures, firstly, at the sentimental and family life, at rest, holidays and travel, leisure activities and other associate activities".

At first, it may seem that the values of pleasure, well-being and happiness are in the products, but we are who impregnate them with meanings: "the objects seduce us because they need us to exist. Without 'post-modern' consumers, that is, without people who take a fetishistic attitude in consumption, there is no seductive merchandise" (Volli, 2006; p. 217).

> In this respect, Nietzsche was right: the illusion, the fiction, the representations are necessary for life because it is necessary that life inspire confidence. Thus, it is wrong to look at the promises of the hyperconsumption society as a system of intimidation and guilt when they are, first, a complex of myths, dreams, imaginary meanings that, creating objects and promoting the confidence at the future, favoring the reoxygenation of a present often frayed (LIPOVETSKY, 2007; p. 290).

The object turns out to be a 'passive' subject that the individual uses to maintain his own identity. The man recognizes himself at the goods (Volli, 2006; p. 215), and their goal is not only "mechanical or psychologically drive a consumer reduced to the role of an object, but to establish a relationship of complicity, playing with the audience, making it share a value system, creating an emotional closeness or a bond of complicity" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 156).

The products came not only to seduce the individuals and make them to consume, but they were created by them to be offered to individuals that want to be seduced. People seek happiness, and objects do not "only stimulate the needs and conditioned reflexes, but also create emotional connections with the brand, passing the promotion of the image to be more important than the product" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 151). Culturally we have pursued an emotional closeness with the world that allows us to exercise our own individuality, and the brands came to meet this desire.

> At the first glance, the value seems to lie in things, but as soon as we fix the look a little better, it also appears to us as a derivative of our own desire, socially accomplished. […] Fetishism appears to us as a process by which the value is introduced in the world of objects, and, therefore, as the process in which the same value is, in a certain sense, created. […] The investment of value, for the worshiper of fetishes, is material. The value or, to be more precise, the life, the will, the desire, do not rely only on the object: it has in him thirst or coincide with him (Volli, 2006; p. 185).

As says Lipovetsky (2007; p. 131), there are two theories that attempt to explain the consumer societies. The first says that "resemble an endless system of stimuli of needs that the more promises happiness at hand, more causes frustration and disappointment". According to the author (p. 132), "a second model interprets the cosmos of over-multiplied needs as a consequence of the hedonistic principle, the exacerbation of the senses life, the prevalence of desires and the enjoyment of the pleasure here and now".

The second thesis argues that the system of signs created by the brands and consumption is no more than a reflection of the culture of the hyperconsumption society that

impregnates in the products their own desires for pleasure, happiness and ecstasy. Not only the market builds a hyperconsumer society, but mainly "a culture centered on the luddism of meat, on the festive effervescence, on the demand of sensations and ecstasies of every kind" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 132).

> Boorstin expresses the idea that we must apologize advertisers: persuasion and mystification not come as much from their lack of scruples, but from the pleasure we have of being misled: proceed less of their desire to seduce than of our desire to be seduced. […] The truth is that advertising (and the rest of the 'mass media') not eludes us: it is beyond true or false, as also fashion is beyond ugly or beautiful or the modern object, in its role of sign, is beyond the useful and useless (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 166).

4. The Fashion

According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 37), the third phase of the consumer society is the one in which "the recreational value overlaps the value of honor, in which the conservation of the individual overlaps the provocative comparison, the sensitive comfort the ostentation". The class struggle is no longer a justification for consumption, but the pursuit of individual happiness is, and more than that:

> We entered the hyperconsumption universe when the taste for change was spread universally, when the desire for 'fashion' surpassed the realm of clothing, when the passion for renovation acquired a kind of autonomy that makes secondary the struggles of statute competition, the mimetic rivalry and other conformist fever s" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 38).

According to the author (2007, p. 37) "the taste for novelties changed direction". He explains that "the cult of the new has nothing new, since it was imposed as early as the late Middle Ages, notably through the emergency of fashion". But states that, "however, for centuries, the rule of adopting the new did not exceed the restricted circles of the privileged, largely relying in its distinctive value".

Lipovetsky, in other book (1989, p. 29), states that there have always been differences in clothing as form of social distinction, but "there is no system of fashion but when the taste for novelty becomes a regular and constant principle". According to the author, "fashion in the strict sense does not appear before the middle of the fourteenth century, […] due to the emergency of a radically new type of clothing, clearly differentiate according to gender".

According to Lang (2201; p. 159), "if the clothing distinguishes man from animal, fashion defines him as citizen". This means that fashion is not only clothing: "clothing provides the exercise of fashion, and this works in the field of imagination, of signifiers, is part of the culture" (Sant'Anna, 2007; p. 74).

To Sant'Anna (2007; p. 79) "fashion […] should not be confused with the processes that trigger". It is, therefore, necessary to "distinguish clothing, the social action of dress, from what we call, properly, fashion". According to the author (p. 80), "five are the current

fields of knowledge that take fashion as theme of research: the economic field, which analyzes the mechanisms of consumption of fashion products; sociological, which emphasizes the role of fashion in the social dynamics; semiologic field, which sees fashion as a sign of society and imagetic field; the philosophical, which considers fashion an absolute social fact; and psychoanalysis and psychiatry, that explore the unaware relationship established between individuals and appearance (p. 80-81). The point of view that most concerns us here is the fashion as a value of the modern social imaginary.

"The fashion system would be the dynamic that produced modernity. This system was produced between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, in which a new set of anthropological conceptions, have joined, favoring its emergence. "Analyzing the changes that took place in the period, [the fashion system] revealed that them, as broke the medieval social logic, proposed another, the proper fashion" (Lipovetsky, 1989 *apud* Sant'Anna, 2007; p. 85).

Here are the changes proposed by Lipovetsky and referred by Sant'Aanna (2007; p. 85-87) that were processed during the mentioned period: 1. The disqualification of the past, and the prestige of the new and modern; 2. The belief in the power of men to create their own world, trying to dominate rationality as an affirmation of the human sovereignty; 3. The adoption of the change as a permanent rule of life; 4. The definition of the present as life temporal axis; 5. The acceptance of the aesthetic variability and the refinement of liking and aesthetic sensibility; 6. The consecration of aesthetic initiatives, of fantasy and originality as a positive differential between subjects".

Thus, we can conceptualize fashion as: "an ethos of modern and individualistic societies, that, constituted in significant, articulates the relationships between subjects from the appearance and introduces the new as category of hierarchyzation of meanings" (Sant'Anna, 2007; p. 88). 'Ethos', in this context, represent a worldview shared by society: the ethos of a people is their tone, the character and the quality of their life, their moral and aesthetic style and their disposal, it is the underlining attitude relative to themselves and their world that life reflects" (Geertz *apud* Sant'Anna, 2007; p. 88).

> One can empirically characterize the 'consumer society' by different traits: increase in standard of living, abundance of goods and services, cult of objects and leisure, hedonistic and materialistic moral, etc. But, structurally, is the generalization of fashion the process that defines it. The society focused on the expansion of needs if, first of all, the one that reorders the production and the mass consumption under the law of obsolescence, seduction and diversification, the one that passes the economic to the orbit of fashion-form (Lipovetsky, 1989; p. 159).

According to Sant'Anna (2007; p. 90), "the object is sacralized as it embodies the idea of the new and provides the sense of overcoming of itself by the technology that presents,

which is titled by 'fashion-form'. That is, the fashion-form is the absorption of the objects by the logic of fashion. "Therefore, it is understood that fashion is the appreciation of the new, of novelties and the constant change as a positive aspect of life, encouraging the frequent consumption of new products and services.

"Here is the key point for the definition of consumption", according to Baudrillard (2008; p. 113): 1. No more functional practice of objects, possession, etc; 2. No longer a simple function of individual or group prestige; 3. But as a system of communication and exchange, a code of signs continuously sent, received and invented, as language": the language of fashion brands. In terms of consumption in hyperconsumer society, "the brand is the central vertex of the constitution and preservation of the imaginary that is associated to a product" (Sant'Anna, 2007; p. 91).

> First, the appreciation of the incessant change in consumption has no longer social limits, having reached all strata and all age groups, and secondly, we want the new products for themselves, for the subjective, functional and emotional benefits that they provide. […] The curiosity became a mass passion, and the change for the change is now an experience by which the individual intends to test himself. The love for the new is not determined by the conformist passions but by experimental appetites of subjects (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 38).

"So emerge the new subjective functions of consumption" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 38), and the role of fashion in this society of hyperconsumption is to "assign to objects a symbolic value that, adequate with the society cultural referrals, will allow the consumer the affirmation of his personality […] as a factor of identity, cultural code, social message" (Sant'Anna, 2007'p. 91). What allows fashion to assign symbolic values to objects is the brand.

5.   The Fashion Brands

A fashion brand, active in the hyperconsumer society, is that in constant evolution, that accompanies the changes of its time proposed by the logic of fashion. The fashion brand is renewed to keep up with consumer trends. And to do so, immerse itself in values that are congruent with the current society and its consumers, conveying principles of novelty, change, beauty and pleasure for those who are eager to consume them.

The fashion, for allowing the exacerbation of individual identities, imbued consuming objects with values and personalities. This process occurred when the fashion ethos, searching for a "psychologizing of brands", began to explore "the impact, the mini transgressions, the spectacular theatricality that seduces" (Sant'Anna, 2007; p. 90-91). The brands end up becoming the instruments through which the products pass to pervade the logic of fashion.

Through this process, "the traditional client" became "the modern consumer, a consumer of brands that was necessary to educate and seduce". According to Lipovetsky

(2007; p. 26), "with the triple invention of brands, packaging and advertising, emerged the consumer of modern times […] that evaluates the products more by the name than by the texture, acquiring a signature instead of a thing".

> In this area, it is no longer much of displaying an outward sign of wealth or success, but creating an environmental of pleasant life and aesthetic which 'is like us', a friendly and personalized cocoon. No doubt that this cocoon results from the purchase of standardized products but, of all times, these items are reinterpreted, arranged in new compositions that express an individual identity, and what matters is not so much the value of the statute, but the private and single value of each one houses, made possible by the 'creative consumer' (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 38)

Is reinforced the logic of "emotional consumption" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 39), through the brands, "that brag about the merits of the initiatives that provide to consumers: affective, sensory and imaginary experiences", in which, "is no longer the cool functionality that is on agenda, but the sensitive and emotional attractiveness".

The brand management – also called branding – is the 'corporate philosophy', so to speak, that endows the offers with values and personalities that allow the creation of emotional bonds between product and consumer. According to Kotler (*apud* Tybout & Calkins, 2006), "branding is much more than naming an offer. It means making a promise to consumers about to live as experience in a whole new level, it means, 'to live the brand'". As stated Gobé (2010), "brands must connect with the culture and reach people's hearts".

Therefore, branding or brand management, is more than just making sure that consumers recognize a logo or the name of a product, it means creating an emotional association between consumer and product, service or company. According to Gobé (2010; p. 15), "brands must change from 'cummunication' and 'commodities' to *emotion* and *inspiration*". Thus, branding is:

> The set of action related to the administration of brands. These actions, taken with knowledge and competence, lead brands beyond their economic nature, becoming part of the culture and influencing people's lives. Actions with the ability to simplify and enrich our lives in a world increasingly confused and complex (Martins, 2006; p. 08).

According to Martins (2006; p. 279), branding describes "all actions related to projects of creation and management of brands". It is not a specific methodology, but rather a work philosophy that uses concepts from a series of disciplines, including the main "marketing, advertising and design" (Gomez *et al*, 2010), to provide products values and feelings inspired in the culture.

At the hyperconsumer society, not only the brand managers, but "the architects, advertisers, urban planners and designers want to be all demiurges, or better, thaumaturges of the social and environmental relationship. "People live among the 'ugliness': matters heal all

it" (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 225). They then pass to convey to brands images, concepts and values to create emotional and affective relationships with consumers and bring them a more pleasurable world experience.

The design linked to brands, for example, "emphasizes the slight, the mobility and adaptability, the association of functional and sense, of debugged and friendly, nomadic and playful", seeking "a sensory and psychological comfort". According to Lipovetsky (2007; p. 198), we watch, "since the 90s, the development of a design type polissensorial that has as objective to optimize the sensory dimension of products creating impressions of comfort and feelings of pleasure". The same is observed in relation to visual merchandising, advertising, marketing and brand management.

In agreement with the culture of the current hyperconsumer society, brand management has made emotional and sensitive objects of research, designed to "differentiate the brands within a hypercompetitive world, and on the other [hand], promising a 'sensory and emotional adventure' to the hyperconsumer that seeks varied sensations and better welfare in the level of senses" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 39).

> What I call 'emotional consumption' does not correspond entirely to products and environments that explicitly mobilize the five senses. It is an expression that means, apart from the effects of a marketing trend, the general from that assumes the consumption when the act of purchase, no longer controlled by the conformist concern relative to the other, acquires a deinstitutionalized and internalized logic, based on the search for sensations and a subjective best-being. Phase III [of the consumer society] represents a new relationship between individuals and the things that establish the primacy of feeling, the change of social and individual significance of the consumption universe that accompanies the urge of individualization of our societies (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 39).

Currently, the brand management, in accordance with the aspirations of individuals, "accomplished the post-moralist feat of combining heart and marketing, jingle and seriousness, integrity and performance, ideal and seduction" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 303). In the society of hyperconsumption "is not so much the social image and become noticed that matters, but the imagery of the brand" (p. 40).

In assent with the logic of fashion, "what is sold is not a product, but a vision, a 'concept', a lifestyle associated to the brand" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 40), that will allow individuals to express their own personalities and worldviews, which have in the new and changing a mundane pleasure: "name, logo, design, slogan, sponsorship, store, everything should be mobilized, redefined, endowed with a new look, in order to renew the image profile, to give a soul or a style to the brand".

"All these contents are reduced to overlapping signs, culminating in the super-sign that is the brand: the unique and true message" (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 197). The brand in the "post-

moralist period coincides with the widespread of fashion, who managed to phagocytize its own moral dimension, transforming values into objects" (Lipovetsky, 2004; 286): "we are in the era of marketing of values and promotional legitimacies, the last stage of the post-moralistic secularization" and the generalization of fashion.

> Nowadays, the enthusiasm for the brands feeds from the narcissistic desire to enjoy the intimate feeling of being a 'person of quality' by comparing ourselves to others, finding us in advantage, being better than the masses, without bothering about the approval of others or the desire to provoke envy to them. The contemporary cult of brands represents a new relationship with luxury and quality of life (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 41).

The branding, then, transforms products in 'identitarian' objects, in the time when covers them with the logic of fashion. This allows consumers to use them as signs of their own personality, as fetish objects that represent more them themselves: meanings linked to the new, the desire for particular change of the proper individuals, which, as stated Lipovetsky (2007; p. 41), now give themselves "the luxury, the superfluous, the quality brands".

"What seduces us, at the time of purchase of non-current products, but, at least in part, the new emotion, however small, that accompanies the acquisition of a thing?" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 57). The fashion brand, then, provide the taste of the emotional novelty to a new product. By being coated with the character of novelty, the change, it gives consumers the property to say they are 'fashionable' individuals at the time they consume, rather than objects, values, meanings and ideals of today's culture, represented, in the society of hyperconsumption, by the appreciation of pleasure, happiness and senses. The fashion brands have their importance residing not in the product, but in the values they represent and the experiences that provide:

> The attraction that have the more expensive brands do not translate both the historical continuity of distinctive strategies and the rupture which constitutes the formidable social dissemination of democratic and individualistic aspirations to material happiness and the good life. […] The obligation to spend money with objectives of social representation lost its old vigor: we no longer buy expensive brands because of a social pressure, but because of moments and desires, of the pleasure that we withdraw therefrom, not so much to display wealth or a position, but to enjoy a qualitative relationship with things and services. Even the relationship with the brands psychologized, disinstitutionalized itself, became subjective" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 42).

"It is in this sense that consumption is playful, and the playful of consumption gradually took the place of the tragedy of identity" (Baudrillard, 2008; p. 263).

6. The Fashion Brands Spaces

Just as fashion brands have incorporated the playful and sensitive, the fetishist and experiential, in the same way do the spaces where these brands are displayed and/or sold. The

brand management, rather than attempt to the offer – products or services – have turned increasingly to the general environment that encompasses the relationship between brand and consumer.

The brand management "has always been the creation of emotional ties between brand and consumer. Like in any relationship emotions are based on the information captured by our senses" (Lindstrom, 2007; p. 112). Which moment is more conductive to the stimulation of the consumers senses, if not the time of purchase? In stores or other points of sale, it is possible to create an atmosphere, an environment propitious for the transmission of brand values, meanings and associations that can encourage good emotions in consumers and boost sales and create an emotional connection with the brand.

Through the visual merchandising, a tool that studies and develops the best way to expose the product within that environment, it is possible to plan the façade, the entrance, the soundtrack, the furniture, the arrange of objects, decoration, lighting, colors and the placement of products in order to encourage wellness through the senses of the consumer. "The visual merchandising with its tools is a contribution to build this space that seeks to attract the consumer" (Lehmkuhl, 2007).

More than attract, the visual merchandising wants to manage the touch points with the consumer, as a tool of brand management: "merchandising is the planning and operation of activities that take place in shops, […] as part of a marketing complex of consumer goods, aiming to expose them or introduce them properly to create the buying impulse in the minds of consumers or users, making more profitable the operations in all marketing channels" (Demetresco, 2004; p. 17). Thus, the effects of visual merchandising go beyond the store, influencing the consumer impressions and feelings about the brand long after.

The purpose of visual merchandising, besides stimulating the purchase, is to create a branded space where consumers breathe the brand, listen to the brand, touch, feel the brand and see it. The knowledge about the positive aspects of the visual elements of a brand is known long ago. The use of names, colors, symbols and the like help consumers to perceive a product consistently with the brand intentions (Tybout & Calkins, 2006; p. 27). But have grown studies showing the effects of other senses in brand communication.

The sensory branding – the use of scents, sounds, textures and other sensory resources – improves the consumer experience with the brand or product. Lindstrom (2007; p. 112), after conducting extensive research on the subject, said that "what increases the chance of achieving the goals [of a brand] is a message that appeals to several senses. The study

BrandSense confirms that the more positive synergy is established between the senses, greater is the connection between sender and receiver" (Lindstrom, 2007; p. 112).

"Fundamentally, brand is concept. Consumers make concepts about products the same way they do with everything else. […] Define a brand as a concept helps us to understand a critical aspect of branding that deals with perceptions. Consumers are constantly forming and using concepts. They are actively trying to categorize products. Crucial to this categorization is the psychological process of perception. And the perception is the capture of information through our senses (Tybout & Calkins, 2006; p. 28).

An ideal place to get the attention and engage the consumer senses, holding his perception, is the store. Through the visual merchandising, "everything is simply a work of seduction and temptation – a real marketing puzzle for brands, because it is the case of please, seduce, cause the consumer to see the product as something that he needs; finally, take advantage of the minimum towards the maximum" (Demetresco, 2004; p. 28).

Charming is the word. Surprise the consumer expectations, wrap him in an environment that strongly associates shopping, entertainment, leisure and pleasure. To make it possible it is necessary to create a well-planned space that conveys the client a homogeneous language and a surround atmosphere. In other words, the store, or whatever the space in question, needs to transmit sensations to play with the senses, conveying the brand values and stimulating feelings of well-being. More than selling products, a store must sell the brand.

The brand "focuses the strongest aspect of the human character, the desire to transcend material satisfaction and experience emotional fulfillment. The brand is only established to comply this task" (Gobé, 2002; p. 19). So, brand spaces – the places where the brand is sold or displayed – need to worry not only with sales, but with the set of associations that are being transmitted through the visual merchandising, and that will have an effect that lasts much beyond the purchase.

> Create brands not only concerns the omnipresence, the visibility and function, but also the emotional connection with people in everyday life. It is only when a product or service causes an emotional dialogue with the consumer, that we can really qualify it as a brand (Desgrippes *apud* Gobé, 2002; p. 17).

The stores, booths, kiosks and any other brand spaces, regardless of size and nature, function as brand windows. In the case of fashion brands, in addition to transmitting the brand values, these spaces need to incorporate the character of change and novelty characteristics of fashion. Besides representing the brand through the soundtrack, fragrance, lighting, colors and shapes of space and furniture, or even the appetizer served to consumers, this environmental

must also bring innovation, be in accordance with the present time, updated with the current sensory and aesthetic tastes of their consumers.

The spaces of fashion brands need to dramatize the brand. The art of dramatizing the presentation and exhibition of products and brands is the invitation, the fascination, the entertainment that are offered. And the dramatized exhibition is to present products and brands with a storyline and emphasize the look through architecture (Silveira, 2008; p. 04). Furthermore, they must still incorporate the new, so consumers may recognize the space as modern. This is an additional challenge to fashion brands, because if their brand spaces are outdated, they no longer are recognized as innovative, modern spaces, and it weakens the identity of fashion brand.

Thinking about it, many fashion brands have invested in the creation of spaces that transform their brand values and meanings in architecture, through great visual merchandising projects which are characterized by the expression of the brand in all sensory elements that compose them: the façade, the furniture, layout, lighting, fragrance, music, taste. These innovative spaces received the name of flagship stores: shops "where the essence of the brand is represented in an innovative way, due to the very high level of investment involved and the revolutionary concept, demonstrating its magnitude and position in the retail segment to which it belongs" (Amê Consulting, 2010).

Figure 1. Farm flagship store at Rio de Janeiro's Jockey Club, Brazil.

An example of Brazilian flagship store is the store of the fashion brand Farm, of the clothing segment, located at the Jockey Club in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The store conveys the essence of the brand, which is the natural beauty of the city and the muses of Rio de Janeiro, since its target audience is the "carioca" girls (born in Rio). For this, the ground is covered with synthetic grass, there are several coconut trees (typical of the city beaches) in pots scattered around the store, as well as other plants as "buchinhos" and diverse flowers, of all colors. Moreover, the actual items of clothing exposed are stamped and colored, made of lightweight fabrics due to the tropical climate of the city, matching the décor, and especially and primarily the concept of the brand. The other details of the furnishings are mostly made of wood, and even the walls are covered with vegetation, all to create a natural and tropical atmosphere, and to put consumer in the "climate" of the brand.

Even the associations of fashion brands being able to be expressed in all stores, at the flagship stores they become more evident, since this kind of store exists to establish and communicate the power and strength of the brand, carrying the huge impact of the new (Amê Consulting, 2010). Thus, they are not only aligned with the brand, but with the proper logic of fashion.

The stores of the American fashion brand Abercrombie & Fitch, also a clothing business, are recognized for the innovation that presents. Unlike most stores (and the basic premises of visual merchandising), a store of the brand is dark as a nightclub. The only sources of light are focused on the products. Also, the background music is composed by electronic music played at high volume. The store also exhales a strong scent, the male fragrance of the brand called Fierce. At the same time, the store if full of pictures of boys and girls of pretty faces and toned bodies, often half-naked. Even the store clerks are models hired by the brand. Despite going against most of the rules of visual merchandising, the stores, and the brand itself, make a huge success.

Figure 2. Abercrombie & Fitch flagship store in London.

While most of the visual merchandising manuals state the value of the wide lightning, that not only focuses on the products but also lights up the store environment in order to create a welfare sensation on the customer, besides the need of background sound being low, so the sellers can be easily heard and the costumers can talk to their accompanying, the same way the sellers need to know about selling, the sector and products they commercialize, Abercrombie & Fitch created just the opposite to their stores.

All of the visual merchandising characteristics in any of their stores, despite of unusual, are, even because of that, innovators, incorporators of the new and the change, agreeing with the fashion logic, and agree with the brand concept and values, which the target audience are the young and teenagers (despite the brand please people in diverse ages). Both lightning and sound remind us a nightclub, place where young people usually attend, and the scent exhales sexuality, positive value for their customers. Furthermore, the attractive models look just like how the clients look or wish to look, and attend them using a casual vocabulary, proper of the popular the young group. This way, the stores atmosphere transmits the values of beauty, youth, popularity, health and sexuality of the brand, which attract and seduce their target audience. At the brand flagship stores these values become even more clear in each

visual merchandising element, such as in the example of the London flagship store, in England [see figure 2.].

According to Sant' Anna (2007; p. 91), "stores and life styles take over the anchoring strategies applied to the commercial brands, so they can serve a market that is hungry for material objects, social belonging mimetic signs, in a certain way, virtual". In combination with the fashion logic and with the desires of change, newness, welfare and happiness, sensations and emotions, typical of the hypermodern society, the fashion brand spaces, as example the flagship stores of Farm and Abercrombie & Fitch, nowadays seduce, more than they attract, the customers.

What is that that turns the consumption into fun? […] Was many times underlined the way as publicity eroticized the products, as created a party environment, a mood of daydreaming and desire permanent stimulation. This situation is still seen. We watch the selling stations become a theatre, animation in many kinds, the 'experiential marketing' with the goal of creating ambiences of conviviality and desires, of associate the pleasure to the selling spaces frequentation. (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 57)

The fashion brand spaces, therefore, transmit, beyond the personality and meanings of the brand, their own values of innovation, changing and modernity that construct fashion itself, as the social fact it is. More than simple selling and brand exposition place, new brand places are friendly contact stations that seduce the consumer's senses and emotions, and bring welfare and happiness sensations, a consequence of the hyperconsumption, that aims, beyond material needs satisfaction, to try emotional desires realization.

7. Conclusion

To the brand managers, it becomes more and more important to study the social relations of their time. To know the human behaviors, the ways of interactions between them, their world vision and life style, is primordial in order to understand why people consume. Now a days, the customers do not buy products looking to their functionality, but for the experience they offer and the emotion they create. In consequence of that, the places where these products are shown and sold need not just to attract the customer and stimulate the buying, but also to transmit the brand values and personality through senses stimulation, becoming places where you can "live the brand". To do that, the brands need to pay attention to the customer wishes. In the hyperconsumption society they are, mainly, emotional satisfaction, welfare and happiness.

Fashion the logic itself that moves this society, with an *ethos* a total social fact, characterized by the appreciation of the new, of the ephemerality, of the present time and the simple pleasures. Fashion, therefore, stimulates consumption, acquirement of objects as a form of signification: not as pieces in a classes fight game, but as signs that refers to the own brand personality and customer individuality. People want to feel pleasure and emotions while consuming, and based on these sensations, restate their identity to the world, proving that are watchful to the changes, the innovations, that can proportionate them more satisfaction and happiness.

Brands, in this society, are the vehicle through which people fill the products with values, and its name, logotype and image become to represent a group of subjective attributes, ludic ones, customized. The same way they need to create the brand spaces, which seduce the customers perception, stimulate sensations and feelings of welfare and happiness, through exhibition of innovations: the new.

To be able to reach this accomplishment, it takes study about the present society and all the history that drove it to its development. In the hyperconsumption society case, only understanding fashion constitution and strengthening, to be able to understand how it is the logic itself that stimulates the consumption relations. Starting from a deep understanding, it is possible to manage the brands and design places based on the subjective wills of the customers.

Fashion brand places, do not even attract customers as much as they look for it, as a hanging around and entertaining place. The stores since long ago are no longer selling stations. As example the flagship stores, they are becoming little urban playgrounds, where customers, not only the products, but consume also welfare and fun. "Still not such an emergency or "life denying" resource, but more like a mental stimulating, a dash of adventure, the consumption attracts us itself, while source of newness and excitement" (Lipovetsky, 2007; p. 58).

In order for the fashion brand spaces to still be up to date and innovative, transmitting values of newness and change characteristic of fashion, the brand management must be aware to the dynamics of the hyperconsumption society, the logic and the values that define it and the imaginary of its individuals. This way managers will be able to enhance, in the brand spaces, sensations and emotions which the customer will be willing to consume. Because the product is almost worthless towards the experience:

On phase III [in the hyperconsumption society], in which the basic needs are satisfied, the buyer appreciates, of course, the functional value of products, but is simultaneously, more

and more, searching the renewed pleasures, of esthetic or sensible experiences, communicational or ludic. What is being sold is the excitement and several sensations, and what is being bought is a life experience, resembling every single customer more or less to a 'experiences collector'. […] It is like a nowaday hedonistic intensification process through the everlasting renewal of 'things' that we should think the consumption on phase III. An esthetic of the ceaseless movement and the elusive sensations commands the practices of the hypercustomer. (Lipovetsky, 2007).

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