

Rethinking Innovation, Creativity and Craft in Luxury Fashion Goods

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Abstract

The luxury sector is an important element of the creative economy, and, as such, it makes a positive contribution to the development of knowledge through innovation and creativity (ECCIA, 2012; Foray, 2010). Innovation and creativity are central to fashion, which, by its very nature, is in a perpetual cycle of change. In contrast, key attributes of many luxury goods are timelessness and durability. Hence, there is a contradiction between the constant change of fashion and the qualities inherent in many luxuries. Indeed, it has been argued that some luxury producers eschew innovation and creativity (Roberts and Armitage, 2015). How, then, are innovation and creativity and the cycle of change balanced against the timelessness of craft skills in the production of luxury fashion goods from Burberry trench coats to John Lobb shoes? To address this question this paper critically rethinks the relationship between innovation, creativity and craft in the production of a range of luxury fashion goods.

Drawing on relevant academic literature from the fields of innovation, creativity and craft (e.g. Kelly, 2016; Adamson 2013), the notions of innovation and creativity are contrasted with the idea of craft. Four exploratory case studies of the production of luxury fashion goods are compiled from secondary sources with the aim of identifying the core relationships between innovation, creativity and craft in the production of luxury fashion goods. From this investigation a typology of luxury fashion goods classified according to the nature of innovation, creativity and craft employed in their design and production is constructed.

The paper will contribute to innovation and creativity studies through rethinking how craft and continuity can be accommodated in the production of luxury fashion goods. Moreover, the paper will be of value to luxury fashion companies because it will allow them to determine the appropriate balance between continuity and change in the production of their specific luxury fashion goods.

References

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Keywords

Luxury, fashion, innovation, creativity, craft