

Slow + Fashion: Revisited

Hazel Clark

Parsons School of Design, USA

clarkh@newschool.edu

Abstract

This proposal revisits ideas I first published in 2008 on the efficacy of slow thinking and practices as offering strategies towards more sustainable fashion design, creation and thinking.

The earlier article advocated for the valuing of local resources and distributed economies, more transparent production systems with less mediation between producer and consumer, and more sustainable and sensorial products. Recently I have begun to return to the lines of reflection to see if they offer a viable way forward for more considered and sustainable fashion design and use. This has led the investigation to consider three major perspectives: design, discourse, and re-definition (of 'fashion'). In the research to date, and to begin this re-evaluation, I investigate and analyze some practitioners whose work has originated or developed over the last ten years (since the original paper was published) who are local to where I am based. I argue that their practices and strategies open up some potential for new directions for fashion, design and sustainability. Included will be designers and makers friends of light, Study New York, and Eileen Fisher: Renew, which each in their different ways engage with issues of transparency and traceability, aesthetic sustainability and reuse. They also question fashion being exclusively concerned with the 'new', and feature collaboration, especially amongst women.

Moving forward also demands a coherent discourse for design practice and use. The paper will reference the work of recent writers and researchers who have considered the everyday, clothing ethnographies, storytelling and memories as ways of re-defining and broadening how we consider 'fashion' (for instance, Sophie Woodward, Kate Fletcher or Emily Spivak). Together their work has initiated and acknowledged garments which value style over fashion, touch over sight, comfort rather than restraint

Furthermore, many of the practitioners and thinkers in question are women. With this in mind, I will also consider the work of some feminist thinkers (such as Iris Marion Young and Luce Irigaray) towards the development of a new conceptual framework that assists in the re-definition of 'fashion.' This re-definition will recognize and respect the tactile and emotional relationships that women have had as makers and wearers, with clothing and cloth across cultures and throughout human history. I will argue that these connections offer the potential for recognizing and developing more permanent and intimate attitudes to

clothing which, in turn, offers the potential for stimulating a new discourse on fashion, design and sustainability.

Keywords: slow, design, discourse, re-definition, women

ISBN: 978-989-54263-0-0