

CHALLENGES FOR FASHION

Call for papers

The year 2021 is a year of challenges. Still under the impact of the COVID19 pandemic. With political changes and tensions across the continents, one senses the unease yet at the same time there are also aspirations to uphold human rights, in different cultures and models of society. The model of sustainable development in its fundamental components: social, environmental, and economic is becoming more urgent and necessary.

The closing of borders, public spaces and workplaces has led to a redefinition of our lifestyle. Fashion is a global industry, which had already been grappling with multiple challenges:

- of a social nature, with the relocation of textile production and manufacturing to countries with less stringent labour laws;
- environmental challenges related to production – due to a high proportion of non-recycled and non-biodegradable raw materials – as well as associated logistics and transport with their reliance on fossil fuels, which have been further aggravated by the rise of online consumption;
- economic challenges, in a two-speed world, more conscientious and less consumption-driven consumers exploring new ways of acquiring and using clothing and accessories such as buying second-hand, renting, exchanging as well as novelty-hungry consumers, with great access to information, who continue to base their choices on impulse, personal satisfaction and the desire to flaunt their status.

These challenges become even more conspicuous in the political, economic, and social situation we are presently experiencing.

In this year of challenges, we invite you to participate in the online Global Fashion Conference from Warsaw, Poland, one of those countries, where Fashion has reflected political, economic, and social changes in very striking ways.

Poland is a country, positioned between East and West of Europe, characterised by the peculiarity of a monarchy, whose representative was elected, and which was beset by conflict for

many centuries. In 1795 the Polish territory was carved up between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, at the same time as the Fashion System began to emerge in Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Fashion culture in Poland was able to survive thanks to domestic textile production and the abundance of well-trained artisans living in Poland's largest cities.

When Poland became independent after the World War I, conditions were established for a fashion system to flourish. In 1918 Polish women won the right to vote. Following World War II, the implementation of socialism, the preference for domestic production and distribution and the utopia of people equal and united by wearing uniforms did not destroy Fashion. "Moda Polska", a state institution, was created in 1958 with the purpose of designing and producing modern, attractive Fashion. The regime hoped that, through its elegance, Polish fashion would stand out in Eastern Europe and establish itself as an alternative to Western fashion. And so, it did. However, links with Parisian Haute Couture did exist. In Poland translations of French and East German publications were censored, but published, and creativity was a positive value to be encouraged. Because of this, the author Anna Pelka¹ mentions that Polish Fashion had an important influence in East Berlin and beyond, since fashion events were promoted in Western fashion capitals and many women from the political elites of the nations comprising the Soviet Union flocked to Warsaw to buy their wardrobe. It is in this context that the first Polish fashion school emerges, in Łódź, with a close connection to Art.

The Polish brand 'Hoffland' could be considered the first Polish fast fashion brand and was unable to satisfy all the demand; the brand's design was modern, and garments were manufactured with low-cost textiles. It was launched by the journalist Barbara Hoff in 1963 and only disappeared in 2007.

After 1989 Poland is transformed, and the world is also altered because of this process of change. The Berlin Wall falls, Germany is reunified, the Soviet Union splits, and old cultural borders reassert themselves on a new world map. The Poles, who had always displayed great openness and creativity, witnessed the appearance of new, global brands in their country. Many investors saw in Poland the potential of centuries of its textile, clothing, and footwear tradition. With the development of the internet and later the advent of social networks, everything that happened in the world could and did happen in Poland. This openness also coincided with the emergence of social and environmental concerns, which led to the drafting of Agenda 21 and subsequently, in 2015, the prioritisation of sustainable development targets for 2030.

Poland remains a sizeable country where freedom and diversity in Fashion find opportunities. There is a major fast fashion brand LPP encompassing many labels that enjoy international success in Eastern European countries and Russia while embracing a sustainable program. Price sensitivity is relevant to many, but there are also people who value quality over quantity and find possibilities – between new designers, vintage, and second-hand shops and online – for owning fewer pieces of clothing, or pieces that can be swapped or upcycled. Poland, like many other countries boasts its own small brands incorporating the values of circular fashion, transparent communication, as well as attracting artisans who have survived difficult times. A lot of creativity is put into looking smart, feeling good and protecting the environment. At the same time, creative processes mean that with every year there are increasing examples of a creative and local approach, with a better understanding of Polish cultural heritage and what it might be in the future.

There are more and more fashion schools opening, but only a few public university colleges offer studies in fashion – mainly in fashion design. The Fashion Unit at the Department of Design of the Academy of Fine Arts from the University of Warsaw – collaborating in the organisation and hosting the present edition of GFC – opened just 10 years ago, although the Academy was created in 1812. The international team from the Academy aims to educate small groups of students through a close relationship and an individual approach in order to foster the development of each student. Considerable work is invested in making known the history of fashion, its link to culture and the market, bearing in mind design thinking and a critical and constructive approach. The Arts program is robust, with creativity being considered crucial.

Nevertheless, education in the different fields of fashion is an imperative as only a relatively small group of experts from Poland studies and analyses fashion at an academic level. There is also a growing awareness that education in fashion should start much earlier as fashion is related to the individual's identity and has an impact on society and not just on the work of designers or manufacturers. As can be seen from previous editions of GFC, such a need probably exists almost everywhere in the world. In Poland, as elsewhere, there is still a significant gap that needs to be bridged between sustainability theory and practice.

Could one find a better place for an international discussion and reflection on the challenges presently facing fashion?

We invite researchers from academia, industry, and professionals from the world of Fashion to take part in the GFC2021. The main goal of the conference is to build a community of professionals who share and exchange knowledge and experiences of a multi-disciplinary nature. For this reason, all contributions from the scientific community and from industry, deriving from different branches of knowledge and perspectives are welcome.

All contributions should be original works that have not been previously presented or published. Proposals may take the form of presentations or works in progress, scientific articles, innovative projects created by companies or business incubators, photographic or video work, as well as pedagogic or demonstration workshops. For each of these types of participation, the appropriate template to be used may be found below on the website of the conference: www.gfc-conference.eu.

The language used in the conference is English. Regarding publication, the use of English is also required, though other languages may be considered in future.

The first proposal to be presented consists of a structured Abstract or storyboard (for photographic or video works) with a clearly identifiable theme for the project/title, scientific references to previous studies, the developed research proposal, and results achieved/conclusions. Works in progress which already include preliminary results may be submitted. The number of words and images defined should be indicated on each of the specific templates – available on the conference website – according to the type of work to be presented, so that submissions can be accepted for review.

All submissions should be made in Word format (enabling removal of Author identification, thus allowing double blind review) to the e-mail: globalfashionconference@gmail.com

Proposals must be related to one or more of the four themes mentioned below:

Challenges in the current economic context

- New forms of communication during the period, when conventional solutions like fashion events and fashion shows have become impossible to hold;
- International distribution in the new reality;
- New approaches to ensuring swift responses, options for more 'conscientious' customers;
- Rethinking production and marketing strategies;

- Strategic approaches to the risk of recession in emerging markets, geopolitical instability, and trade tensions;
- New post-pandemic lifestyle and the demand/need for a new fashion supply;
- Slow growth and circular economy;
- Integration of production and distribution modes.

Challenges for the sustainable fashion production

- Resources and findings for innovation and technological development;
- Adoption of innovation within the industry – from small-scale to the large-scale solution;
- The meaning and expressions of made-to-order fashion, slow-fashion, handcrafted fashion, locally-made fashion, fair-made fashion;
- Legal ruling for producers and consumers: lobbying, implementation, convergence of intentions;
- Circular solutions for mass-produced clothes and for luxury brands;
- A second life for products: second hand, vintage, swapping groups and upcycling;
- Codes of Conduct and Sustainability Reports;
- Human rights and pro-environmental organisations and demonstrations' contribution to responsible production and consumption.
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Challenges for local fashion in the global world

- Local experience and inspiration vs. international needs and demands;
- Local law and practices vs. international agreements;
- Effective promotion of “fashion for local fashion”;
- Identity, expression of the ‘self’ and fashion;
- Local history and heritage as a source of creative fashion solutions;
- Crafts and fashion-making in a global world;
- Tradition in clothing, social and cultural appropriation and (re)appropriation;
- Diversity and inclusion;
- Respect for humankind and fashion social media and news.

Challenges for fashion education

- Use of online classes and workshops – unwanted temporary necessity or long-term solution?
- Need of artistic skills and workshops, as well as business and technological approach – complementary? Or distinct approaches?
- The material and immaterial resources of fashion studies and their role in fashion education – public and private policies, legacies of manual knowledge and oral archives;
- Freedom and constraint of fashion courses and education within academic institutions;
- Intellectual Property in Fashion;
- Technology and Design dialogues;
- Education for the youngest generations.

Templates and Authors guidelines at: www.gfc-conference.eu

Important dates:

Submission of Structured Abstracts: from the 15th of March to 31st May 2021

Feedback from Reviewers: April/May/June/July 2021

Full papers due: 30th September 2021

Publication of Proceedings: 30th October 2021

The Organisational Committee

Agnieszka Rożnowska-Jasiewicz – Artist/Associate Professor, Deputy Dean - Fashion Department - Faculty of Design - Academy of Fine Arts – University of Warsaw - Poland

Aleksandra Jatczak – Fashion History Lecturer and Researcher/Assistant Professor - Fashion Department - Faculty of Design - Academy of Fine Arts – University of Warsaw - Poland

Kirsi Niinimäki – Associate Professor Design and Fashion Design/Team Leader Fashion/textiles Future, School of Arts, Design and Architecture – Aalto University – Finland

Isabel Cantista – Associate Professor Innovation & Marketing/ Researcher COMEGI - Universidade Lusíada Norte – Porto - Portugal

ⁱPelka, A. 2014. Z [politycznym] fasonem. *Moda młodzieżowa w PRL i NRD in english* In [political] fashion. Youth trends in Communist Poland and Eastern Germany, referred in <https://culture.pl/en/article/politics-and-fashion-in-a-communist-poland> 22.02.2021