

Eco-tech fashion: A visual platform to raise awareness about climate change

Yoobin Jung

Istituto Marangoni Paris / Manchester Metropolitan University, France

Abstract

The fashion industry accelerates climate change, and its responsibility is more important than ever. Fashion design practices have greater sustainable potential than commerce. Indeed, fashion designers can be activists through their design practices by choosing sustainable fabrics and creating fashion collections that raise awareness about climate change. To bring new visual impact and functionality, intelligent textiles can be an attractive option for fashion designers.

Previous research has only focused on either strategy for design activism or technological fashion material without bringing these two concepts together. For this, the concept, eco-tech fashion, defined by Scaturro (2008), can help design practitioners to create a novel, innovative, and sustainable collection.

This dissertation created an intelligent textile that reacts to atmospheric CO₂ through its color-changing characteristics. Chemical experiments were conducted to develop this textile, and the first focus group evaluated its practicality and visual appeal. Innovative textile experts shared their insights on the link between design activism and eco-tech fashion. The collection produced from this research is perceived as an attractive form of design activism to warn about environmental crises. The produced video as a campaign video of the collection was viewed by the second focus group and it proved its visual communicative ability to a new audience, the generation Z.

Following the results, this study suggests a new role of the fashion designer as an activist-design practitioner and proves the potential of active-type, intelligent textiles to function as an artistic expression. Moreover, it stresses the importance of visual impact to speak to an audience already committed to changing their behaviors to benefit the planet.

Keywords: intelligent textile, smart textile, interactive textile, design activism, climate change, color-changing, Eco-tech fashion, fashion designer, video communication

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