

Craftsmanship + Technology in New York City: Changing aesthetic, crafting identity

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Abstract

This research explores how innovators within the fashion and textile art realms engage concepts of cultural identity and community through craftsmanship. In the 19th century, New York City was a port of entry that served as home for thousands of immigrants, many whom had arrived with important knowledge and skills in their own native crafts. Today, in the 21st-century, the role of maker has flattened traditional hierarchies and escaped rigid categories of production through post-disciplinary practices and the innovative application of skills and techniques. In our increasingly materialist world and in reaction to ethical issues related to mass-production, building sustainable systems is crucial. Re-skilling needs to take place across both digital and craft practices; and in both, the creation and production of fashion products.

This project focuses on exploring the intersections between traditional craftsmanship, technology, cultural identity and creativity. Through a series of interviews of different artists and designers and studio visits, this on-going study explores the ways craftsmanship brings new modes of thinking and engaging within the New York City community. It considers the importance of collaboration by witnessing how traditional craftsmanship interlaced with technology can benefit humanity, society, and the environment, when tools and savoir-faire are exchanged. For the first phase of this research, I have interviewed ten New York based artists, designers, artisans and students.

This series of case studies allowed for a new understanding of making as an active way of thinking. For a bespoke tailor in Brooklyn, craftsmanship is about perfection, for another it is about emotion. A knitwear designer may explain that craft is a lifestyle, or an artist from Chelsea

describes it as a kind of therapy—meditative, relaxing and calming. Tools may be the most important foundations for a 3D printing designer, while a crocheter in Queens believes that the most important device is the hand; the physical labor of repetitive work. For fashion students, craftsmanship may represent the final frontier of luxury, especially in today's fast fashion system of production.

Contemporary Craftsmanship contributes to new interdisciplinary fields, personalization of techniques, develops a collective consciousness and creates new aesthetics. At Parsons, our students are more than designers producing clothes; they are innovators and thinkers. Using technology and learning a craft is vital to the creation of innovative fashion / material systems. The intent of this project, in the context of education, is to promote the infusion of creativity and advance concepts that will have a long-term impact on the curriculum.

I. Background / Theory

The initial idea for this research started from discussions surrounding the disappearance of certain “how-know” traditional hand skills artisans in big cities such as New York, Milan, and especially Paris. I started noticing a new wave of young fashion designers interested in crafts or at least developing new techniques related to materials. I first went to Montreal, Canada, smaller community where the art and design scene had been growing increase and changing the energy of the city. For two weeks, I interviewed young and established designers; talk to ‘Montreal Mode’, a fashion organization supported by the city, fashion editors, and the heads of the two most powerful fashion schools. At the end of my interviews, I found that Many young designers were influenced by Denis Gagnon, a somehow established Canadian designer all his career push and experimented with materials and techniques. Almost all the youth interned or worked by his side at some point at the beginning of their career—including me.

After presenting this initial research in Paris at the *Institut Francais de la Mode*, in 2012, I was interested to search and learn about the NYC community. Back in New York City, I was eager to research and start meet young member of the industry there. There was a cultural renaissance of ‘hands on’ work, since 2000, the fashion and design industry started to promote the skills, the participants instead of all the attention on the final products. As an Assistant Professor of Fashion design and Chair of External Projects, every year, I see multitudes of talents, thriving to innovate with new materials, and systems. Unfortunately, there is often a lack of a community-based crafts / design association for younger generation or resources. I kept mentioning techniques to my students without any contact or resource to go to in the city.

Largely inspired by the English arts and crafts movement and its spiritual leaders John Ruskin and William Morris, the arts and crafts movement began to thrive in America toward the end of the 19th century.¹ The 1876 centennial Exposition in Philadelphia exposed a combined effort to improve the quality of American handicrafts and applied arts.” (Ludwig. 1983) Simplicity, honesty and craftsmanship became a major force in American designs. This social movement always flourished in an age increasingly dominated by the machine. The historian, Coy L. Ludwig described New York City as a port of entry that served as home for thousands of immigrants, many whom had arrived with important knowledge and skills in their own native

¹ Ludwig, Coy L. *Arts and craft movement in New York State, 1890s-1920s*. Gallery Association of New York State: Hamilton, NY, 1983, p.12

crafts. He added, “New York State was selected by the craftsmen for a variety of reasons; [...] its system of railroads, which provided easy access to raw materials and network of distribution (...) the proximity of NYC offered unique marketing opportunities.” (Ludwig. 1983)

Craft as humanity

Learning a skill is important part of being human; different types of making connect people and transform our environment. Most objects or techniques we develop become an extension of your mind, of your physical self. It is the empowering nature of making and human instinct to create. Different authors propose various categories of makers: Reflective practitioner, Artist-craftspeople, designer-craftspeople, designer-maker, applied artists, decorative artists, and historical-pastoral-makers. Making is a universal way of thinking, no matter how you approach craft as a process, techniques, idea, or aesthetic.

The slow perfection of skills can be frustrating or challenging, but extraordinary skills lie behind labor, time and effort. By learning through repetition, exploring new ideas of materiality, the potential to discover new directions is very high which often leads to innovation. ‘Thinking through making’ is often pushed on the side in the education system. Charny explains, “Many people think that crafts is a matter of executing a form or idea. Making is an active way of thinking, something which can be carried out with no particular goal in mind (...) this is when innovation occurs.”² He continues, “Even when making is experimental and open-ended, it observes rules. Craft always involves parameters, imposed materials, tools, scale, and the physical body of the maker.” (Charny. 2011) The creator is problem solving, finding new design solutions.

Learning through series of actions is the most tangible way of thinking, often seen as more satisfying. Thinking and seeing an idea come to life in a three-dimensional form is very fulfilling. By using your physical body, the maker feels that his entire self is connected to the final products.³

² Charny, Daniel, Ed. *The Power of Making: The Importance of Being Skilled*. V&A Publishing and the Crafts Council, 2011.

³

Researcher, curator and author Matina Margetts, in her essay “Action not words”; considers the role of making is to create new ways of thinking, through engagement with materials, techniques and ideas. Ultimately, she proposes that making is a ‘revelation of the human impulse to explore and express forms of knowledge and a range a emotions’, with the reward of experiencing ‘an individual sense of freedom and control in the world’. (Charny. 2011)

“The reward of making is the opportunity to experience an individual sense of freedom and control of the world. Greeks believed that in order to produce effects, “human must bring their bodies in to the work’. Making is based on a sequel of repetitious acts, incrementally forming objects with meaning. The role of making is to give life to things, also at a spiritual level.”(Charny. 2011)

The social value of craftsmanship

Craft has been passed down from masters to apprentices for centuries. By sharing expertise, the body of knowledge remains in motion. Once the knowledge is achieved, one can experiment with the idea, movement, and materials.

Michelle Baggerman, a researcher at the Eindhoven Academy, said, “Crafting together in a workshop, family, or group could help cross these so-called cultural boundaries. The social context of craft may offer us an interesting method to reflect.”⁴ Community-driven actions, movements have the potential to learn to real impactful changes. In a learning environment, such as universities, new forms of interactions are being created, an environment where proximity and infrastructure encourage collaboration. By exploring more processes and creating fewer products or producing unique objects, we will accomplish new ways of thinking. Perhaps in reaction to mass-production/ consumption, practitioners, as reflective makers, focus more on research than the past years.

Making relies on an accommodation between the handmade and the digital. We create new machinery as an extension of our own body. In 2013, the Museum of Art and Design in New York City presented “NYC Makers” showcasing artisans, artists, and designers who create objects or environments through elevated craftsmanship and skill. Curated by its new director

⁴ Baggerman, Michelle. *Social Fabric*. The readership in Strategic Creativity at Design Academy Eindhoven, 2013.

Glenn Adamson, the exhibition celebrated how artist, designers and artisans are now blending into one role: maker.

Craftsmanship as a ritual

The notion of repetition is fundamental to the meaning of rituals. Rituals are often defined as a set of actions marked by precise repetition and physical control. According to Sigmund Freud, the “notion of a fundamental tendency to repeat (...) is primary to pleasure principle. Only by repetition do a certain ritual action and realities it symbolizes become more enjoyable, hence efficacious.”⁵ Moreover, Freud examines how repetitive behaviors and actions are the base of any ritual practice. He ties an interesting connection between repetition and ‘positive affective experience’, the emotional tie. Importantly, repetitive behaviors also emulate an idea of power.

Craftsmanship in education

Walter Gropius in 1901 urged artists to “turn to the crafts”: a reaction against the industrial system of the day. In the early century, education believed of advancement of industry by the application of art. Charny explains, “For Walter Gropius and his colleagues the crafts were not something romantic and nostalgic, but rather a way to look ahead.”⁶ When they created the Bauhaus, it was to serve the industry. Anni Albers, textile artist and printmaker, who was a student of the Bauhaus school, tells “when I got there in 1922, {...} there was a lot of searching going on. It was a series of ideas rather than a school. Ideas, one could add, which set the agenda for the twentieth century. Ideas produced some fabulous manifestos, curricula, and archives. The school was discussing the dilemma, in a contemporary way.”⁷ The school was engaging with a new kind of artists, craftsman, or designer, at a time when the very word ‘products’ was changing its meaning.

II. Research methodology

This research consists of interviews and studio visits of different artists and designers in New York City. Interviews include discussions with master tailors, couture bead-workers, knitwear designers, hat makers and 3-D printers who create wearable garments. This study recognizes the

⁵ Gay, Patrick Volney. *Freud on Ritual*. American Academy of Religious Series: Scholars Press, 1979.

⁶ Charny, Daniel, Ed. *The Power of Making: The Importance of Being Skilled*. V&A Publishing and the Crafts Council, 2011, p. 9

⁷ Ludwig, Coy L. *Arts and craft movement in New York State, 1890s-1920s*. Gallery Association of New York State: Hamilton, NY, 1983.

importance of collaboration by witnessing how traditional craftsmanship interlaced with technology in the production and creation of fashion can benefit humanity, society, and the environment, when tools and savoir-faire are exchanged. A broader sense of expressive cultural practices is obtained through meeting a wide range of creative forces in the design community who are committed to social and cultural transformation. Through a series of interviews, workshops and “skill share” explorations, this research investigates how resources, environment, and craftsmanship impact one's discipline, industry, or profession—in this case, fashion design practices.

Interviews were conducted with the help of two research assistants: Reina Alvarez, MA Media studies, and Laura Peach, MA Fashion Studies. This paper examines the first phase of the case-study research, where ten interviews over a period of five months took place in various boroughs of New York City. Previous to the interviews, research was undertaken in various establishments, and libraries, such as, but not limited to, MAD (Museum of Art and Design), the Ratti Textile center at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Textile Art Center, American Craft Museum, Eyebeam, Textile Study group of New York City, Brooklyn Museum, and visits in the Garment district. Several Parsons' faculty members were consulted: Riet Peters, Howard David, Kathleen Maggio, Pascale Gatzen, Markus Huermer, and Senior technician, Marco Viteri.

This study look at the history of American craftsmanship and the implantation of the fashion industry New York, and research the key players in different sectors such as embroidery, beading, lace making, leather work, knitting, new materials, weaving, couture, pleating, master tailors, millinery, fur, textile art, wearable technology, Batik, new materials, etc. The participants were interviewed at the own studios, surrounded by their pieces, physical artifacts, and their teams. In this series of case studies, the participants shared their stories, tools, techniques, but were also asked to define craftsmanship in the 21st century, discuss the spiritual values, human connection to their work, describe the notion of time and repetition in their processes, tell us how scale and space play a role n your work and finally share their ideas on the future of their craft.

During the first phase of the study, we investigated with specialized fashion / textile workers in small communities with specific craft knowledge, compile any academic research and readings that might be relevant to the project and complete a bibliography for reference, interviewed key players in the craft, new techniques and share their stories, recording data through video and photography.

This research explores how new modes of thinking about and engaging with fashion design practice in the New York area community. This paper draws on concepts of craftsmanship as discussed by Richard Sennett and Glen Adamson, and is situated within the discipline of fashion studies by highlighting how innovators within the fashion and textile art realms engage concepts of cultural identity and community through fashion design practice with technology and craftsmanship. In this regard, it is an important contribution to the growing interdisciplinary field of Fashion Studies and design integration. One of the goals is to gain a broader sense of expressive cultural practices, while meeting a wide range of creative forces in the design community who are committed to social and cultural transformation and recognize the importance of collaboration by witnessing how traditional craftsmanship interlaced with technology in the production and creation of fashion can benefit humanity, society, and the environment, when tools and savoir-faire are exchanged.

The purpose of this research is to create a platform for students to explore various techniques but also open them to external collaborations with members of the New York community. One of the objectives of the research is to explore the maker movement (digital and hand) in NYC and connect communities of artists and designers. Local and global goals includes collecting social innovation practices, promoting collaborative projects, developing new teaching tools and eventually create discussions around social innovation initiative in forms of workshops or /and panel discussions. The changing curriculum at Parsons focuses on building an education experience where students interact with external critiques and collaborators. In 2015, the school will be unveiling / launching the Parsons Making Center where students will be experimenting with a diversity of tools, techniques, methodologies and machinery.

The initiative of making, touching, working together, the feeling of accomplishment is greater, bringing back “the making” as an important part of the design processes. At a time when the education system / approaches is being modified, opening a studio collaboration environment. This project aims to convey and support interdisciplinary practices, personalization of techniques, collective consciousness, and aesthetic enrichment.

Focusing on New York City as a geographic point of reference, this research contributes to the international field and culture of research. There is too much focus on technology at the moment without thinking about the “making”. The new generation is modifying the way we use technology

to engage, make and design; fashion is a unique area of expertise that needs to be further investigated. This research focuses on the creative process, implanting this new system into a classroom environment. Students are more than designers, producing clothes; they are innovators, thinkers. Using the digital and physical hand as part of the design process is vital to the creation of innovative systems. The goal is to create a series of workshops, “skill share” exploration, and conversations that will allow the students to discover a great variety of techniques. This project conveys the importance of bringing people together, developing hands-on approaches to designing with social affairs.

III. Case studies: NYC Stories

Rory Duffy

Craft as history

On a foggy afternoon, in Williamsburg, we met with Irish handcraft bespoke tailor, Rory Duffy. As if he was stepping out of a 19th century period movie, the dapper gentleman welcomes us to his atelier where family photos, awards and rusty tools are gathered. You can almost smell the old Tobacco and hear the straight standing men mingle in their habits. After an extensive training at Savile Row, the craftsman moved to NYC. Rory talked to us about history, military influence, and his meticulous techniques that characterize his aesthetic.

Duffy grew up in the Irish countryside, a few hours from Dublin. One of five siblings, his mom taught all his brothers and sisters how to sew and knit. Her father was a tailor and she learned the art of making at a young age.

He shared his pearls of wisdom for few hours before showing us some antique pieces from his great-grandfather. Rory Duffy’s grandfather, Pat McCabe (1896), was an apprentice tailor and member of the Irish Republican Army. After having his own shop and practicing his craft—when the ready-to-wear market took over in the 1960s—his grandfather retired and had to take on another job.

After studying furniture design and industrial design, Duffy realized that his interest was about construction; it was sartorial craftsmanship that truly appealed to him. One day, Duffy found a tailoring book of his Grandfather, and became so enamored with its contents that he locked himself in his room. Days later, he emerged with a new three-piece suit. This hands-on experience

launched him into garment construction, and captures a strong interest or revelation; he immediately sought out tailors to apprentice under. Duffy naturally draws inspiration from Irish military garments. Military uniforms were the ultimate form of tailoring but also the origin of standardization of clothing. Now tailoring-bespoke and mass productions sit at the opposite end of the spectrum. Under Napoleonic wars, British Army uniforms trended towards extravagance rather than practicality. During the Irish war of independence men wore attires cinched at the waist, showcasing the upper body with panels and vents for movements.

Unlike most students today competing for design internships in the fashion industry, Rory's search for an apprenticeship was a much more elusive endeavor. After few months, he found a tailor in Dublin who was willing to take him as an apprentice. Being the youngest in the atelier, next to forty-three years old, he slowly learned the traditional craft of tailoring: how to draft patterns, under stitch collars, cut a sleeve. When I started, the great masters were afraid to teach young ones, afraid to lose their businesses. The family often keeps the families owned generational businesses—hard to enter.

His first apprenticeship was with a third generation bespoke tailor Joseph Martin, a Civilian & Military Tailor, on Ireland's west coast. He trained under the shop's master tailor, Eugene Foley. Later, he traveled between Galway, to apprentice under Savile Row trained tailor David Young, and Dublin based Louis Copeland & Sons, under the vigilant guidance of Peter Fletcher, Master Cutter. Years later, during his first visit to Savile row in London, the longtime dream of meeting Henry Pole was finally materialized. When he landed in Savile row, many encouraged Duffy to enroll in the London College of Fashion's Handcraft Tailoring program—so he did. After his 2 years training, he then gained experience in Henri Pole's atelier.

In 2009, he became the first of Henry Poole's apprentices to win first prize of the Golden Shears. Duffy continued his parcours and moved to New York to occupy a private workshop at Martin Greenfield's factory in Brooklyn—well-known tailor to American Presidents, Hollywood film studios, and is the tailor to classic American brand Brooks Brothers, producing their RTW suits.

In 2012, Duffy founded his own company Rory Duffy Handcraft Tailor providing bench made bespoke suits for both men and women from his Williamsburg Atelier. Most of his clients are disproportionate; rarely average size. Custom tailoring, one the oldest traditional clothing craft requires extraordinary skills. The younger generation of tailors / designers in Brooklyn is rarely

compared to the 5th avenue older generation. When describing the Tailor community in NYC, Duffy replied, “It is not like Savile row, where you sit in a pub and swap stories; they all knew each other. In NYC, there is not a hub of tailors, it is more spread out.”⁸

Contrary to the historical belief of Italy being the center for tailoring, Rory Duffy explained:

“From my experience, from meeting Italian tailors in the UK and Italian tailors in NYC, and tailors in general, there is not much that sets us approach, other than the old rubric—what we think is the difference. The Savile row suit can stand up in the corner, it’s stiff, it’s like a suit of armor, and the Italian is so soft, it’s like butter. You don’t even know you are wearing it.” (Duffy. 2014)

Bespoke tailors around the world often have the same suppliers. Everything evolved with time, they traded ideas throughout the years, and there are finer lines between the two.

Rory truly believes that craftsmanship is about perfection: “You always want to do better, and know when enough is enough. You have to know when you got to let that one go and move on to the next one and do better on the next one.” (Duffy. 2014) Rory Duffy makes his coats traditionally with minimal machine sewing. It usually takes eight hours of hand sewing before fitting; nine stitches per inch, with high consistency. The young tailor proposes, “Whenever you want to do something by hand, you want it to be better than machine, if it looks cleaner by machine, do it by machine.” (Duffy. 2014)

The notion of repetition and time is primordial to his work. “If you want to learn anything, you have to have patience, and do it over and over”, voiced the craftsman. Much often tailoring is seen as a dying art in society, especially in America. To preserve the craft, one has to learn the basic skills, and practice, through repetition.

He also added, “Whenever you make everything yourself, you become so protective of my work. I always want to create the perfect suit. I haven’t lost yet.” (Duffy. 2014)

Now in his Mid-30’s, Duffy is a lecturer of Tailoring at the Parson’s School of Design, pouring into future generations of master tailors so that the artisanal craft does not fade.

During the interview, he explained how his work has changed: “Since I started at Parsons, I always think I can make [my craft] better. Once you start teaching, you start thinking about

⁸ Duffy, Rory. Personal Interview. March 12th, 2014

everything; how you hand the cloth, the needle...All the techniques I use and teach today is a result of everything I have learned from all my apprenticeships from these great masters.” (Duffy. 2014)



Rory Duffy's Atelier. *Rory Duffy: Craft as history*. Personal Interview. March 12th, 2014.



Rory Duffy and Marie Genevieve Cyr, Williamsburg. *Rory Duffy: Craft as history*. Personal Interview. March 12th, 2014

Nino Carvato

Craft as stories

Having grown up in Italy, Nino Corvato, learned tailoring at the age of thirteen. In a small atelier on Madison Ave, close to his high end clientele, he welcomed us as his own children, telling stories and anecdotes of the past, showing us the way to perfect stitching, steaming, pressing, and cutting. An old school radio on a shelf is playing contemporary Spanish music. His love for custom tailoring and the quest for perfection have always fueled or motivated his aspirations to create. Religious photos and statues are situated amongst waxed thread, scissors, and patterns. His love for his craft is contagious.

Growing up in a modest family of eight children—four boys, four girls— he did not choose tailoring, the future for them was to learn a trade in order to survive. His father made it clear to him: ‘you go to the tailor shop and you will learn’. Corvato didn’t know anything about tailoring. His first job, at seven, was to wash the floor at the tailor shop, the next day he picked up the basting of the jacket, and then prepared the thread for his master. At the young age of twelve, he started to prepare under collars and parts of the sleeves. At that moment, he became eager to discover more about tailoring techniques. Earning his diploma from the Sarto Tecnica, at eighteen years, he was the youngest graduate to become a tailor.

When moving to NYC at twenty years old, he started to work as a tailor with Brooks Brothers on the corner of 9th Avenue and 44th street. He was very proud. Working in the office, doing alterations was not for him and he asked to be transfer to the tailoring department. His manager answered: “If you want to make suits, you have to work in the factory.” Leaving the beautiful place with air conditioning, he chose to work in the factory—hot, humid, without AC. He became ambitious and decided to go back to school, then became a full master tailor in 1965—he was 25 years old. After spending years in the industry, Corvato decided to start his own business.

Corvato expressed a lot of his thoughts on the reward aspect of making. He emotionally declared, “What is more beautiful than to create something from scratch? To create something from scratch is a beautiful feeling in your heart and your mind. I have never felt like a fashion designer; I like to be called a tailor. The tailor does everything to create a garment, for me a designer is someone who sketch the idea.”⁹ A custom tailored suit requires between fifty and sixty pieces. Like a puzzle, the maker cuts, layers, assemble and press the garment. Corvato added: “As a tailor, you

⁹ Corvato, Nino. Personal Interview. May 3rd, 2014

never finish to learn; everyday I learn about myself. After learning the basic techniques, it is important to use your head, your own brain to your own mind, and see what you can do better.” (Corvato. 2014)

He discussed the future of tailoring: “an art to learn a skill today is what we are missing in the world again.” (Corvato. 2014) Recently, there are a lot of young people who want to learn a trade, because finally they can see the power of bringing life up to this world. Corvato declared: “I’m rich, and I’m not talking about money, I’m talking about what I do.” In his seventies, Corvato still uses his old tools. In his atelier, dozens of precious instruments are lying around with religious posters tapestrying the walls. “I don’t trust computer, when I do grading I use my parallel rulers and a divider. Some are like antiques; this one is one hundred fifty years old; nobody makes that anymore.” (Corvato. 2014)



Nino Corvato and Marie Genevieve Cyr. *Nino Corvato: Craft as stories*. Personal Interview. May 3rd, 2014



Corvato, 15 years old. *Nino Corvato: Craft as stories*. Personal Interview. May 3rd, 2014



Nino Corvato: Craft as stories. Personal Interview. May 3rd, 2014

Annie Larson

Craft as lifestyle

Her craft is her lifestyle. Letting her colorful sweater/outfit speak for her, Annie was quietly having coffee with a painter's friend on our arrival. The small studio, located in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn, looks over to the dreamy far Manhattan skyline. Bright colors and fun patterns are surrounding us; you can't help but smile. The quiet designer with a heart of gold tells us how she became a knitwear designer inspired by her daily morning bike ride. Growing up in Minneapolis, after attending art school she one day found the machine, a knit machine. It was the start of a dream.

Born in Seoul, Annie then grew up in rural Wisconsin. She lived in Minneapolis for several years, where she attended the University of Minnesota for apparel design. She worked for Target Corporation and got interested in knitwear. When she found a knitting machine in a basement of an old lady's house, in 2009, it was instant love. Immediately, she taught herself how to use it; the journey started with the machine.

Started in Minneapolis, before moving to New York in 2011, ALL Knitwear is a small, vertically integrated knitwear label. The slow-growing, idiosyncratic collection of handmade sweaters and hats is an ongoing study of color and pattern. Operating on a made-to-order basis, Larson knits each piece in her studio before shipping to customers all over the world. "I can come up with the idea, I can fabricate the idea, I can produce the idea and sell it to a person, I can shipped to that person. I like to be the one that is in control of every aspect. It brings me peace of mind."¹⁰

¹⁰ Larson, Annie. Personal Interview. April 11th, 2014

Larson buys all her cotton yarn in the United States: “I like to use stock materials. I have explored bamboo, cashmere, and few other, but cotton is a good standard— comfortable, casual and it comes in so many colors!”(Larson. 2014) Her creative process usually starts with testing pattern ideas and colors combinations. For years she studied and explored color combinations, using contrasting and complementary hues and values. She is fascinated with creating vibration between the colors, often optimistic and bold. “You start with the material and you completely fabricate everything you need, there is a lot of care, attention and time. I can start from an ideas and fabricate it in the same day.” (Larson. 2014)

She designs her pattern on computer software, and produces several knitting swatches.

“Technology is very old, most knitting machines I used are from the 90s, sometimes for home use. I use old software for the patterns, and download the file to the machines with reference numbers. It doesn’t always works, it is often problem”, acknowledge Larson.

These knitwear machines require a lot of body strength—very physical work.

Everyday, she is at the studio, manages her business; works on orders for individuals and stores, organizes daily production. It is very repetitive. She describes her daily routine as a motivating way of living.

“I like repetition, I like the idea of doing something over and eventually perfect it and find the most effecting systems possible. I like the idea that every single piece of knitwear of mine that exists in the world is something that I made with my own hand and comes from in my studio. I like to be in control.” (Larson. 2014)

Living a very isolated lifestyle, she uses social medias to connect with people that are or want to be her customers. By building a strong online community, people can relate to her business and she is daily sharing her work, her inspiration, and her intimate life with people.

Her discovery and love for Knitwear was accidental. “I found the machine and fell in love with it. I did not expect my life to change towards that. It might happen again, I want to be open to machines or different form of making....”(Larson. 2014), she tells. Her secret? The energetic young designer surreptitiously practices karaoke songs and dances when alone in her studio—destiny child, turn it up!



Marie Genevieve Cyr and Annie Larson. *Annie Larson: Craft as lifestyle*. Personal Interview. April 11th, 2014



Hand-made sweater. ALL Knitwear. *Annie Larson: Craft as lifestyle*. Personal Interview. April 11th, 2014



Annie in her atelier. *Annie Larson: Craft as lifestyle*. Personal Interview. April 11th, 2014



Colorful cotton yarn. *Annie Larson: Craft as lifestyle*. Personal Interview. April 11th, 2014



Knit pattern samples. *Annie Larson: Craft as lifestyle*. Personal Interview. April 11th, 2014

William and Steven Ladd

Craft as meditation

We found this artist brother-duo working in a beautifully lighted studio in Chelsea, waiting for us bright on an early and cold Friday. An amalgam of found belts, elastics, beadings, and other factory leftovers are covering the walls. One is beading on a loom, the other, assembling parts of a new installation. Their childhood stories, connections and love for handwork have transformed their lives into the daily mediation. “Our work is our therapy. It is very meditative, relaxing and calming.”¹¹ The repetitive process involved with their installations, is considered therapeutic: it can take hundreds and hundreds of hours making these objects.

Collaborating for the past fourteen years, William started with beading and Steven with fashion design. They begun to make handbags, then became obsessed about creating textile with glass beads. They describe their collaboration as a daily stimulus: “The evolution of us working together and our process is always kind of a challenge, because we are pushing each other; we are trying to make each other better, and make the work better.”¹²

“We are very interested in materials”, explained William. “Often, we are responding to materials that are coming to your life. Sometimes, you come across yards and yards of fabrics or boxes of beads, or factories that shut down and that unload tons of materials for you. As an artists, being in NYC, there is so much around you.”(Ladd. 2014) They have been collecting materials for years. Their space is packed with shelves completely filled with beads, buttons, trimmings, or elastic bands.

Their creative process usually starts with a discussion—experience and memories—then get their hands involved. Inspiration is often found in childhood memories, through objects, but especially from the technical aspects of fabricating. “The techniques and the construction are constantly pushing us forward and driving us to different directions,” said Steven Ladd. Experimenting with techniques and tools is usually the creative drive behind each project. William explained the origin of the fascination for glass beading: “we really like to go to church, we create glass beaded textile, reminiscent of stain glass, from the church where we grew up.” (Ladd. 2014) They create landscape installations, offering a vision between function and fantasy. There is often a

¹¹ Ladd, Steven. Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014

¹² Ladd, William. Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014

performativity aspect to the presentation of their work, some pieces transition from a tower formation into a landscape, playing with scale and space.

Besides being crowned prom king in 1996, the most exciting moment for William Ladd was having a piece at Le Louvre. Another major moment for the Ladd's was a fruitful collaboration with Christian Lacroix in Paris at the beginning of 2000s. What's next? I asked them. "I'm dying to make shoes", confessed Steven Ladd.



Beading sculpture. *William and Steven Ladd: Craft as meditation*. Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014



Mural installation. *William and Steven Ladd: Craft as meditation*. Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014



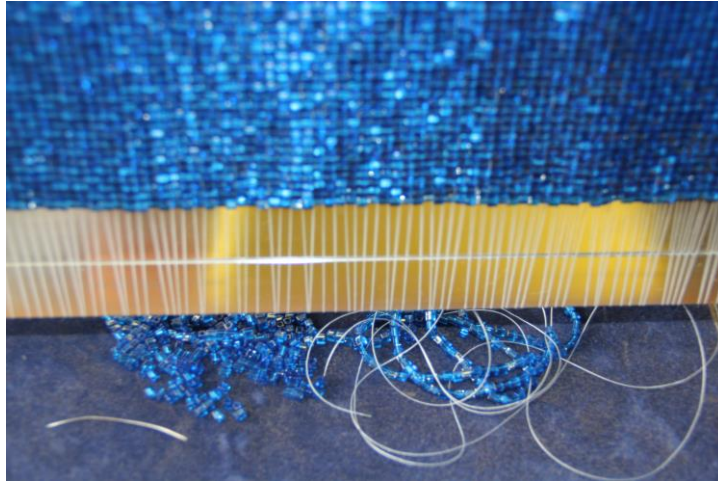
Beads. *William and Steven Ladd: Craft as meditation.* Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014



Belt leftovers from a Brooklyn Factory. *William and Steven Ladd: Craft as meditation.* Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014



Beading experiments. *William and Steven Ladd: Craft as meditation.* Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014



Beading on the loom. *William and Steven Ladd: Craft as meditation*. Personal Interview. March 19th, 2014

Francis Bitonti

Craft as process

Like walking into a Corbusier house, filled with 3D delicate objects, Francis Bitonti welcomed the team with black coffee. The minimal, headphone heavy space is filled of MacBook's. Makerbot 3d printers are making their way back and forth. Waiting for us, Francis—black hair, black V-neck shirt, shiny black shoes with a glistening smile—is cracking jokes. He discusses the technical evolution of 3D printing, and how it became his ultimate playground.

Francis Bitonti first got involved with 3D printing, doing a bicycle rack for the department of transportation in NYC. “As an architect I was attracted to creating complex geometries and forms, but the problem was producing my work. I couldn't physically make it with my own hands. Then I discovered this 3D car parts factory; they were producing 3d prototypes for automobile. I started to work with them.” The equipment and actual printing was very expensive, now the average cost of the machine, a few thousands of dollars could also print the same bike rack for one hundred dollars.

“Craftsmanship and technology are very intimately interrelated. Our tools are who we are. Technology is who we are. I always say technology is like humanity: you make tools

to be able to make things we cannot do. It is like the story of our weaknesses, the story of everything we want to be. There is no better parameter of who we are.”¹³

While describing his process, Bitonti’s approach is backward; he usually starts with nothing, and then sets up games with geometries, looking at patterns and behaviors. “Craftsmanship is a very abstract concept for me. To set up a problem is my craft. By playing with systems, I create games and rules in order to building something not expected.”(Bitonti. 2014) His obsession with patterns comes from his architecture background. He later became interested with the human body from working with Vito Acconci. Known as a designer, landscape architect, and a performance artist, Acconci’s fascination for the body have been present in his work all his life. “I spent 3 years with him. The body was always a conversation and there was a huge fashion library. When I left, I always had the idea of fashion in my mind and started to collaborate with people in the fashion industry. Katie Gallagher was one of them,” tells Bitonti. (Bitonti. 2014)

For his notable Dita Von Teese 3D printed dress collaboration in 2013, Bitonti created a spiral movement around the body, the same way as draping fabric—3D draping. The material was very light—the entire dress weighted less than 11 pounds. Equivalent to the sketching process, printing the product doesn’t always cost a lot, compare to haute couture, and you can have it custom.

Throughout the years, the evolution of materials in 3D printing has been remarkable, from using powder, plastic, and paper, to metals. “I’m not designing according to materials anymore; my work starts with codes, tools. Material become secondary; my work is not material specific as a result of that but more about codifying language”, explained Bitonti. (Bitonti. 2014)

The notion of time involved in the work is similar to traditional craftsmanship. “Time is something I battle a lot. My average prototype takes in average eight hours. We are not using industrial printers.” (Bitonti. 2014) The process of making his first 3D printed dress was very extensive. “The design process for the Dita Von Teese dress was interesting... I have actually never met my collaborator. We would speak through screen share and Skype.” “We created about 3000 chain mails, all unique for the dress. There was so much data to manage and check. There were millions of points, polygons, and we had to calculate the distance between each and check for errors. There was too much geometry to check by hand. Having 200 unique pieces is a very hard thing to have to track...”(Bitonti. 2014) The whole dress was printed in

¹³ Bitonti, Francis. Personal Interview. April 18th, 2014

three days, the production of assembling it was nine days, and the design process was few months.

Now a teacher at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Francis Bitonti explained: “From an educational point of view, it is hard for school to introduce 3D printing in their curriculum. It completely changes the way of thinking, the process of making and creating, (...) 3D printing (making) is changing the way we design.” “In the design process, the computer is an added thinking process.” (Bitonti. 2014)

In order to share his techniques and knowledge, he created a series of travelling workshops around the world, New Skins workshops. Travelling from San Francisco to London and lasting two weeks, it allows students to discover the relationship between 3D printing in relation to the body.

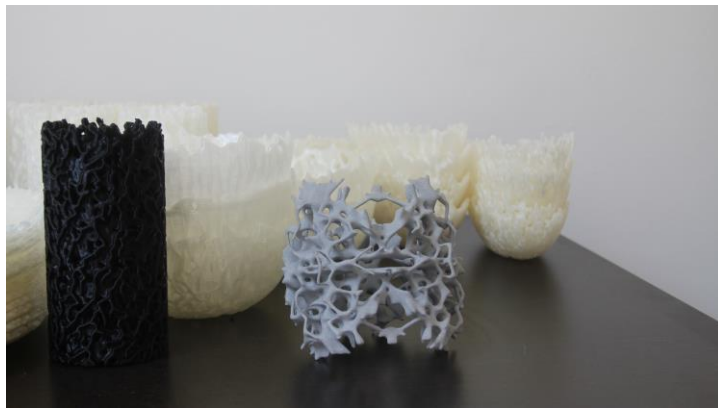
What is the future of 3D printing craft? I asked. “The ultimate test is to make textile. If we can recreate textile, it will change the world of fashion”, admits Francis Bitonti. (Bitonti. 2014) Many designers—not only Bitonti but also Bradley Rothenburg, known for his collaborations with ThreeAsFour—are trying to reproduce the structure of textile, knit, woven, stretch.



Marie Genevieve Cyr and Francis Bitonti. *Francis Bitonti: Craft as process*. Personal Interview. April 18th, 2014



Prototypes. *Francis Bitonti: Craft as process*. Personal Interview. April 18th, 2014



Prototypes. *Francis Bitonti: Craft as process*. Personal Interview. April 18th, 2014



3D printed garment. *Francis Bitonti: Craft as process*. Personal Interview. April 18th, 2014

Andrew Livingston, Knickerbocker Manufacturing Co.

Craft as heritage

Beating industrial wasteland, bean and pack, at the frontier of Bushwick and Queens, the young entrepreneurs founded this incredible business. The space is like entering a social club, a secret community, and a perfect off-hours party spot. A young tattooed crew makes things, hang out, and skates. The bright young co-owner, Andrew Livingston, shares the story of the factory, his love for clothing and timeless design from a very young age. His dad was a pro surfer in California, with a punk-rock style, skater mentality/lifestyle, definitely a great inspiration for Andrew. Building the concept on quality, the co-founder chatted about craftsmanship and dedication of small local production.

The objective of the new young factory is to stay small but slowly keep scaling up. “Starting a new brand in our world, you need to be sustainable. You should reach the point where you don’t want to grow a huge distribution channel. How to scale up but keep our vibe has always been our priority.”¹⁴

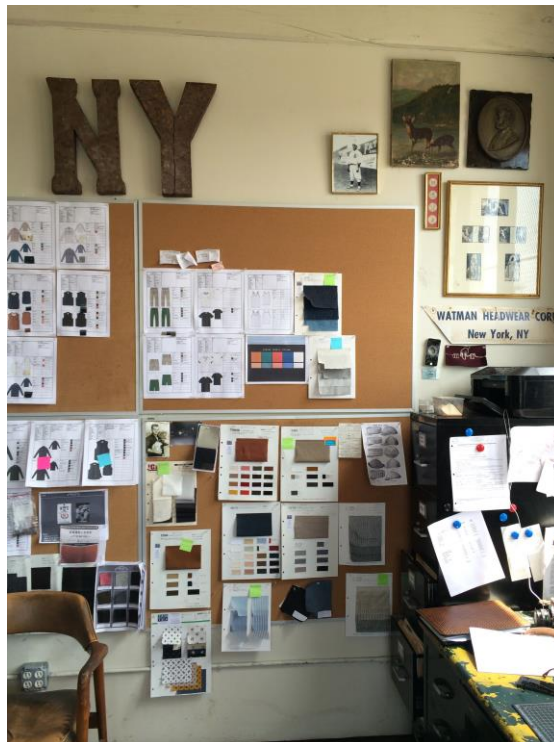
Surrounded by the sound of machinery: clicking press, blocking station, chain stitch machines, Andrew Livingston gave a tour of the factory: “every part of the process is handmade here. There is an eye on the product the whole way through; some people say they can feel it.”(Livingston. 2014) Craftsmanship requires the highest kind of skills on the “making” floor. Livingston believes that “it takes ten years to be a master at anything. It’s like knowing the process up and down. You need to learn the rules before breaking them. That to me is implementing change, [craftsmen] are leaders.” In this industrial decor, every piece is made exquisitely with a lot of sweat. He explains, “Mastering a craft is a desire to do good work and the ability to do good work.” (Livingston. 2014)

For Livingston teaching about the process generates more appreciation for quality. “You want to make something to be proud of, otherwise, what’s the point?” (Livingston. 2014) Now developing a new line, they aim to open their own retail store in NYC. Apart from selling online it is crucial for the company to share the tactile experience. While working on different projects with other artisans, they keep the essence of heritage, and quality products. “Make it well, make it better than everybody else” is Livingston’s mantra. (Livingston. 2014)

¹⁴ Livingston, Andrew. Personal Interview. June 13th, 2014



Andrew Livingston and Marie Genevieve Cyr. *Andrew Livingston: Craft as heritage*. Personal Interview. June 13th, 2014



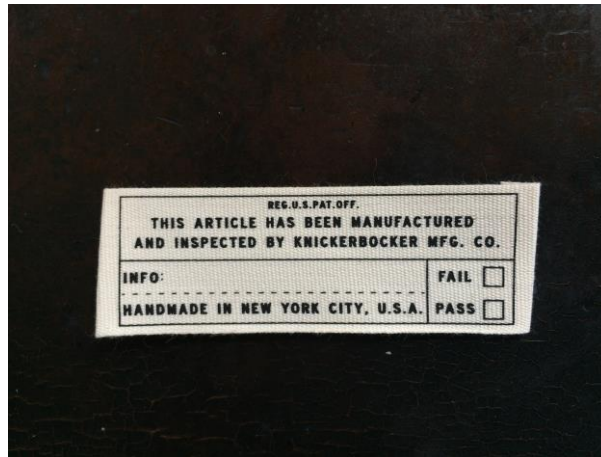
Studio. *Andrew Livingston: Craft as heritage*. Personal Interview. June 13th, 2014



Factory. *Andrew Livingston: Craft as heritage*. Personal Interview. June 13th, 2014



Garment samples. *Andrew Livingston: Craft as heritage*. Personal Interview. June 13th, 2014



Garment tag, Knickerbocker MFG, co. *Andrew Livingston: Craft as heritage*. Personal Interview. June 13th, 2014

Hiroko Takeda

Craft as Art

In a small studio downtown Brooklyn, the textile designer and artist, Hiroko Takeda, sat at her loom, ready to answer all our questions. The talented Japanese designer welcomed us with delightful little pastries offerings: we were her honored guests. Humble, meditative, and soft-spoken, Hiroko talked about growing up in Japan and the traditional education system. The sound created by the old wooden looms echoes outside the window.

Hiroko Takeda grew up in Japan; her father was an architect, her mother, a teacher. Her mother often made dresses in the house. Takeda was naturally attracted by textile construction as both, a cloth for garments but also for architecture.

During the interview, she started to describe craftsmanship and its relationship to art practice. “Craftsmanship: its not only appearance, you need skills and deep knowledge: the capability to realize things beautifully.”¹⁵ She talked about the influence of her Japanese education, craft movement, philosophy, and art. “[Weaving] is like a painting. You start from the bottom, [and go] to the top; you always think about the final piece. The yarn and threads are like paint, and you paint using the thread.” (Takeda. 2014) She often translates emotional experience into her work; it becomes texture, colors, and patterns. “It’s a great feeling; physically I can weave and see the sequence and effect of yarn. (Takeda. 2014)

¹⁵ Takeda, Hiroko. Personal Interview. June 6th, 2014

Takeda experiments natural fibers, metallic yarns, and the contrast, mohair yarns, sometimes used recycled materials. She likes to mix the contrasting mohair and metallic yarn together for interesting textures. After weaving, the surface is brushed to modify the contrasted texture of the mohair and shiny metallic thin yarn. The source of her materials comes from all over the world, Japan, Italy, England, USA.

For more than two decades, Takeda has been practicing her art. “There was no creative weaving community in Brooklyn, I didn’t meet anyone else except a few until this year. I realize that is now a trend. Fiber art is becoming popular, people are starting to weave.” (Takeda. 2014) Most of her collaborators are architects and interior designers, all site-specific projects.



Hiroko Takeda and Marie Genevieve Cyr. *Hiroko Takeda: Craft as Art*. Personal Interview. June 6th, 2014



Hiroko working at her loom. *Hiroko Takeda: Craft as Art*. Personal Interview. June 6th, 2014



Hiroko Takeda: Craft as Art. Personal Interview. June 6th, 2014



Tools. Hiroko Takeda: Craft as Art. Personal Interview. June 6th, 2014

Orly Genger

Craft as technique

In this studio / hangar, a young man spraying sculptures waved at us to come in. A girl is knotting a thick rope into cubes; another spray-painting layers of knot sculptures on the floor. Traces of past color palettes are covering the space. The beautiful artist, Orly Genger, is meeting us at the back for the interview.

When Genger saw on the bus a lady crocheting, years ago, she has no idea this would become the foundation of her art. “I became entranced by this movement. I believed that the most important thing for myself is to keep my hands moving as much as possible, and I usually figure out what it is that I’m doing after the fact. After extensive experimentations, I realized that I can make

sculpture using this process”¹⁶, said Genger. She then picked up yarn and started to practice finger crocheting. The repetitive movement produced a new kind of work.

After experimenting with a variety of materials that would translate this process efficacely, Orly found rock-climbing rope. “I love having to struggle with the material, to have a very physical experience [in my work]. (Genger. 2014) She later start using reclaimed lobster rope found in Maine—more accessible and less expensive.

Genger is known to create large-scale sculptures. The most challenging part of the making process is the scale. Repetition is represented as an added process. Her work refers to craft as a means of production of large sculptures. By repeating the movement, she is slowly accumulating, growing, and expanding her body. Using repetition, she has the ability to create something much larger then herself. It requires help from other people in order to make, move, and install her pieces. Due to the large scale, “ I rarely get to see the work finish until installed”, said the artist. (Genger. 2014)

Her work is highly influenced by male sculptors from the 60s and 70s. Expressing a very muscular feeling, producing objects demanding space, and often gravity. She is fascinated with the idea of wrestling, physical labor, the absurdity of super hero, and the ‘masculine’ idea of creating large objects. An important part of her work is showing the hand and what it takes to make an object; unveiling the hand.” (Genger. 2014)

When asked about her work being displayed in public space, she explained, “public settings, such as parks, the ability to reach people is exciting. There is a greater chance to surprise compared to gallery setting, where an audience is already prepared to feel and see a certain type of work.” (Genger. 2014) When she creates for a specific location, inspired by the location, she likes to pretend to be the piece, physically moving in the space.

Now collaborating on a jewelry line, Orly Genger works on a completely different scale. Her small intimate objects become more personal for the wearer / audience.

¹⁶ Genger, Orly. Personal Interview. March 18th, 2014



Orly Genger. *Orly Genger: Craft as technique*. Personal Interview. March 18th, 2014



Man spraying sculptures. *Orly Genger: Craft as technique*. Personal Interview. March 18th, 2014



Crocheted rope. *Orly Genger: Craft as technique*. Personal Interview. March 18th, 2014



Experimentations. *Orly Genger: Craft as technique*. Personal Interview. March 18th, 2014

Parsons students

Jessica Schroyer

Craft as luxury

“Craftsmanship is the last frontier of luxury!”¹⁷, immediately stated Schroyer. In today fast fashion, an overwhelming industry, the young generation of students understands the importance of conserving craftsmanship. She explained that making herself all her collection pieces was very rewarding: she added, “figuring out how things are made, very important part of designing.” (Schroyer. 2014)

While describing the future of craftsmanship, Jessica tells “it is very exciting at the moment, different areas, not only fashion, finally put artisanship at the forefront. Going forward, I see this being very important to my work in general. I do needle crafts, embroidery, knitting and presently getting into weaving.” (Schroyer. 2014)

¹⁷ Schroyer, Jessica. Personal Interview. June 24th, 2014



Jessica Schroyer: Craft as luxury. Personal Interview. June 24th, 2014

Jillian Mazzola

Craft as technology

“Craftsmanship is probably what drives fashion, it pulls from quality, technology, an process. In my work, craft brings a personal connection to my pieces.”¹⁸ Her main area of interest is technology. “Now I am really interested in experimenting with different kinds of 3D printers and different techniques, additive or subtractive.” (Mazzola. 2014)

Corrina La

Craft as material

Craftsmanship for Corrina La is to explore a certain trade, experiment with materiality. “To me, [craftsmanship] creates meanings, symbolic meaning to my work. I hope, in the future, that the design industry moves away from large manufacturing methods.”¹⁹ It is now a new era for craftsmanship, as a young student, Corrina is discovering embroidery, weaving, combining them with new techniques and creates new materials.

¹⁸ Mazzola, Jillian. Personal Interview. June 24th, 2014

¹⁹ La, Corrina. Personal Interview. June 24th, 2014



Corrina La: Craft as material. Personal Interview. June 24th, 2014

VI. Conclusion

With this research I hope to undo some of the polarization that comes along with the loaded concepts of technology and fashion. In an attempt to push these mediums forward I would like to bring the values of traditional craftsmanship and to promote longevity of craft; passing down the techniques and but also demonstrate the importance of traditional hand making and digital unifying into methods of designing. I am very interested in technology, new materiality and exploring new ways of furthering the production of fashion. Parallel to this study, I started learning a new craft myself and documenting the process. Showing, a teaching, practicing is an important part of the project.

The performativity of craft, learning craft yourself is an area I want to also explore and document. By practice a new knowledge, in my case, Tibetan carpet weaving: experience learning a skill, understand a technique and connect to history and culture. I am interested in producing physical pieces presented in a live performance/ installation/ digital form, to redefine traditional craftsmanship and experiment on how the new technology can enhance creativity through new ways of producing fashion (making and creating.). Performance can be a conduit for both technical and conceptual references to coexist in a single piece. A large part of our process is auto-didactic, and I feel that even more can be explored in workshop type settings. The objective of this study is to re-creating values surrounding traditional craftsmanship and advanced technology. In addition to this paper, the research results as a narrative video series, through an online platform.

By interviewing a variety of artists, designers and technologists, we were able to compare the definitions and applications of different approaches to craftsmanship. During Nino Corvato's and

Rory Duffy's interviews, we learn that craftsmanship brings a meaningful sense of achievement when the maker finally unveiled before his eyes the finished object of his own labor.²⁰ Producing things manually is perhaps one of the most rewarding feelings.

In "Manifesto of Bauhaus and Program" (1919), Walter Gropius underlined the importance of "the crossovers, between the crafts and digital technology—a way of reuniting the crafts with manufacturing and with 'industry of one'". Through historical and cultural studies, traditional textiles, as well as the recent technologies advancement and production techniques have always co-exist when invention. During the 1990s, designers and artists were directly inspired by technology; therefore, the 21st century saw a growing trends and development in the 3D printing, laser cutting.

In a highly influenced digital world, the level of risk in making is higher then thinking. In comparison to writing or drawing 2D, making objects in 3D can be an overwhelming project for some. Daniel Charny describes that the idea of Craft in the present times represents contradictions (...). The single object, the 3D printer, represents perhaps the most profound challenge to what we today call 'craft', because we will be able to make things with it that presently can only be created by hand."²¹ Sometimes, in other contexts, manufacturers turn to handcraft simply because machines cannot reproduce the intricacy and refined eye of a craft. The luxurious Hermès handbags are still being produced in factories around France by artisans paying special attention to intricate detail and high quality handwork performed only by individuals. Perhaps in reaction to mass-production ethical issues and the growth of building sustainable system, young designers are expressing their cultural and social identity through their research, process and work. This curiosity will bring value to the global system.

The research project explored the notion of time, space and collaboration. Spending months on a piece with no intention in sight, or precise goal seems not suitable to the current fast moving world. Efficacy is usually seen as the highest status in terms of production. The luxury of time is often seen as something of the past, that we sometimes envy. As Christopher Fraying mentioned, "an emphasis on short-termism, a stable notion of function, and obsession with the social status of the artist and designer, an educational model where fine art's role is to stimulate

²⁰ Sennett, Richard. *The Craftsman*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2008.

²¹ Charny, Daniel, Ed. *The Power of Making: The Importance of Being Skilled*. V&A Publishing and the Crafts Council, 2011. p. 16

design and a splendid isolation from other related institution—these defining features are clearly no longer right for today.”²²

Today, schools see a growing level of creative and technical ambition. As mentioned earlier, The Making Center at Parsons, will be a place where not only fashion, but also product, media, and communication students can meet and exchange ideas. In addition to this upcoming new initiative, Eduardo Statszowski, director of the Parsons DESIS Lab (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability) at Parsons, created in 2009, expressed: “It has been proven that innovation comes from the type of cross-collaborative, knowledge-based exchanges that the Centre for Social Innovation seeks to foster. We look forward contributing to this exchange, by leading put programming that builds upon the bottom-up approach to innovation we have...”²³ Proximity is an important factor when creating a movement; empowering students to express and make changes is part of the future goals.

In a near future, by providing the space, time, and resources, it will possible to create a deeper dialogue with other teachers, designers, artists, students and other fields that reach beyond the fashion discipline; benefiting both our work and the global landscape as a whole. Braking down the barriers between design drawing and making; creating a “total body of work” is the main purpose of this research. Design, in this case fashion, can influence and impact of other disciplines. Hiroko Takeda and Orly Genger collaborated with other disciplines; such as architect, interior and jewelry designer. Designers, artists and craftspeople are moving closer to one another all the time.

Inter and intra collaboration is the future of our education system. I suggest ‘making’ research projects used as a formula / strategies and joint projects across programs.

This research explored how innovators within the fashion and textile art realms engage concepts of cultural identity and community through fashion design practice with technology and traditional techniques.

Today’s students are solving their own intellectual and visual problems, express a strong identity through design, open minded and understand the challenges of the current world: building

²² Frayling, Christopher. *Art and Design: 101 Years at the Royal College of Art*. Richard Dennis Publications and Collins & Brown Limited, 1999.

²³ DESIS, Parsons The New School for Design: <http://www.newschool.edu/desis/>

sustainable systems, meaningful intelligent designs, a purpose for creating products. In Germany, Bauhaus, was a ‘the place where people build things’; where students made one-off or prototypes for the industry. Would building a Parsons local factory in the education system be beneficial for the community, a place for forward-practitioners—researchers, faculty, students—would work together under a workshop as laboratory?

To favor a culture of innovation within the education system, we need to increase emphasis on action research as well as teaching. While describing the future of education, Frayling understood the importance of “meeting-points between disciplines, research and development and especially action research, on close partnerships with other institutions, galleries, museums. Team of graduates will be encouraged to create a niche for themselves rather than slotting into niches, which are ready-made (...)”²⁴

I am interested in exploring the shared knowledge and apply it to fashion design. The second phase of the project will consists of researching NYC artists and designers who are working with communities, in the US or Abroad. The short-term goal is to engage with different communities globally. Some of the questions at the moment included: What happen when you give a laser cut machine to a group of women in New Guinea? Or, what happens when you give banana yarn to group of young New Yorkers and ask them to weave hang bags? This series of exchanges will allow us to discover a great variety of skills, explore the notion of cultural creativity and its global value. Through experimentation, workshops and “skill share” exploration, the research investigates how resources, environment, and craftsmanship impact one's discipline, industry, or profession—in this case, fashion design practices. This research proposes possibilities of collaboration with different members of the New School Community. These multiple projects could result in an exhibition and a written piece.

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²⁴ Frayling, Christopher. *Art and Design: 101 Years at the Royal College of Art*. Richard Dennis Publications and Collins & Brown Limited, 1999.

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