

THE END OF OLD LUXURY AND THE RISE OF THE NEW PARADIGMS OF FASHION

by Francesco Morace and Paolo Ferrarini

The end of old luxury

Today's fashion system is undergoing radical changes, both in terms of economy and ideas. In order to fully understand the current evolution, it is necessary to retrace the dynamics that in recent years have characterized this sector, recognizing the pre-crisis and post-crisis phases.

Pre-Crisis fashion: between the democratisation of luxury and the enhancement of basic

We are now well into the third millennium, where the consumer experience is based on a normality that is built on exceptions: those *normal exceptions* that people define for themselves throughout the course of their daily lives, in search for happiness.

In aesthetic/visual terms and from the consumption experience point of view, what we are witnessing is a weakening of both basic and minimalism, where luxury acquires a new centrality and becomes an accessible experience: luxury is no longer an “aristocratic” prerogative. The happiness achieved from the acquisition of luxury items is in fact pursued by the vast majority of people who decide to consume in a lesser quantity, but of higher quality; searching for extraordinary satisfaction obtained through playful consumption, an “artistic” experience (as with the art or design inspired hotels), or from newly acquired access to “precious” and top quality products (accessible luxury).

Basic luxury

In their book-conversation *Les battements du monde*ⁱ, Alain Finkielkraut and Peter Sloterdijk devoted an entire chapter to this phenomenon, calling it *La démocratisation du luxe*.

Thus, we are witnessing a new reference world take shape, that of Basic Luxury: a “crucial luxury”, which is fostered by the fashion houses, and nurtured in part by the skill and expertise of important brands, but also thanks to the creativity of designers, stylists, architects and artists.

This perspective illustrates an unexpected convergence between democratised luxury that becomes a *quality of life*, and a basic luxury that is “enriched” and enhanced by new creative

visions: beautifully embroidered jeans or t-shirts that become pop icons are clear demonstrations of this phenomenon.

Within this context, both life and consumption occasions constitute potential opportunities to be stimulated with products and services that become “happy” by virtue of their surprise, thanks to the unexpectedness that they contain.

The exceptionality of the occasion is created through its emotive relevance, which becomes the echo of a specific experience, occurrence or consumption act: in this way, luxury on one hand and basic on the other, are regenerated and re-launched within the post September 11th scenario.

Defining stories that are capable of stimulating, proposing and inventing, that are able to *transmit emotive identifications for the occasions of life*, starting from the top (the experience of luxury) or from the bottom (the experience of basic), becomes the new and stimulating exercise for advanced marketing: a marketing that can only be produced and proposed by passionate managers and entrepreneurs (as in the previous stage of modernity), or from those shops that successfully demonstrate a certain level of “know-how” in terms of displaying, proposing and supporting “islands” of higher experienceⁱⁱ.

The love for everyday things

Within this perspective we see the relevance acquired by the role of the *amateur* who, recalling the etymological roots of the word, is driven by love and by passion, rather than by technical or specialist knowledge: as Cristopher Locke recalls in *Gonzo Marketing*ⁱⁱⁱ “opposite to professionalism lies what the maestro Zen Shunryu Suzuki defined *the spirit of the beginner*, the ability to look at the world with fresh eyes and an open mind”.

It is on this ground that the magical meeting between a new conception and perception of luxury is able to produce quality and excellence. A fresh interest is shown in the essential, in daily experiences, experiences that go beyond basic. Thus, the great theme of consumption is re-proposed as a profound global experience and style of thought, whose roots are deeply grounded in a place and a collective experience, which are then-channelled into an entirely personal feeling.

Everyday life becomes the workshop for this meeting between new accessible luxury and the evolution of basic, which Philippe Starck was among the first to pick up on when he launched his project dedicated to essential simplicity, and which Terence Conran pursued for years in his retail channels that ranged from the Conran Shop to Habitat, finally to end up in hotels and restaurants, which not by chance, have become emblems of accessible luxury. This type

of luxury starts from below, no longer being imposed upon us from above, and is still capable of guaranteeing an excellent experience.

Technically, if we think about the changes taking place within the retail sector, it is possible that the money savings originated by large retail chains (we are thinking here of Wal-Mart, Costco, Home Depot, Lowe's, Kohl's and Circuit City, in the USA) are being re-invested by consumers in the form of new luxury goods, of good taste.

Still however, in this area the Japanese are once again sharpening their knives, with the growing success of projects that start from the basic – such as Uniqlo and Muji – and extend into areas of joint venture or collaboration, for example Yamamoto's partnership with Adidas, which has proved to be such a commercial success.

It is in this way that a new consumer culture is established, whose hallmark is in ones own "individual autobiography" within the context of advanced modernity. The consumer remains the interpreter of his own consumption, living more firmly rooted in the quality and culture of himself, of his personal story and of his history: in a certain sense he *learns to inhabit himself*, and in this way becomes receptive to "non-essential" everyday experiences (like in the designs of Patricia Urquiola), and to a category of products that we can define as "excellent commodities" (as in the products of Magis).

The new statute of luxury

Being up-to-date is no longer sufficient for a product today; it needs to have cultural and emotional substance as well. Consumption is acquiring new aesthetics and a new culture, in which the happiness generated by luxury is even conveyed into the world of basic^{iv}, which in turn moves away from the standard marked by the product's specific quality (materials used, the detailing, the manufacturer and the manufacturing process) and above all, by the emotions and the memory that it can arouse. In this way, luxury and its accessories gradually become expressions of a profound experience of quality, through which people can change their own identity and their whole attitude towards the world. Post-industrial modernity recalibrates the standard, in order to embrace radically creative experiences by giving notice to small details, materials and personal memory.

Based on these premises, and the changeover from *lifestyles* (in which luxury is status and privilege) to *mindstyles* (in which luxury becomes a profound and distinctive experience) that has already taken place, a number of key concepts need to be presented in order to define the luxury of the present and of the future. Fashion (and not only) will move into new scenarios based on happiness; offering interpretations of consumption, of luxury, and their evolution

over the last few years, which in many respects appears to have got stronger since the beginning of the new millennium^v.

The first consideration concerns the very statute itself of luxury, which is traditionally thought of as being in a separate, “superior” and inaccessible world – according to a process of aristocratic discontinuity from above, very close to the French tradition, and which guarantees happiness to only a selected few.

Today, a radical evolution is taking place: the world of luxury reinterprets and re-processes the stimuli that come from “below”, from everyday and accessible phenomena, in a totally Mediterranean logic of *re-creative creativity*. It is on this ground of “taste” that the new luxury comes into contact with the new basic, understood as an essential experience, as we see in the collections of Marc Jacobs, Opening Ceremony and even Puma and Adidas Originals.

Intensity and discretion

All of this, means that the codes of privilege are no longer governed solely by difference, but also and above all *by intensity*. If silence becomes the symbol of new qualities, then you won't need to take a vacation to a secluded place: all you will have to do is switch off your mobile phone, log-off social networks and become unavailable. If luminosity becomes a code of elegance, then you can buy a high profile jewel, which like DeBeers' Trilogy, will re-propose this essential and constitute quality of the product itself. It is also possible however, to can have fun with Swarovski crystals. It is in this way that we see a weakening of luxury's variable of externalisation from the classical point of view of the strategy of appearances, and a strengthening instead of people's relationship with and confidence in products that have “character” linked to their processes and more genuine and deeper qualities in exactly the same way as happened in the early stages of the Modernist Movement. Within this panorama, luxury does not perform a role of “recreation within superfluous”, but on the contrary, embodies its own ability to differentiate, discern, evaluate and select: what Francesco Guicciardini in the 14th century was already defining as *discretion*, the ~~very~~ opposite of *ostentation*.

The labels and fashion houses, the designers and brands of European design, can therefore only strengthen their own position within the market if they succeed in interpreting – in a profound and structured way – the potential for fascination, charisma and credibility that they possess within them (and that are linked to personal happiness), without limiting themselves

to the classical strategies of brand “extension”. This sets the backdrop for the-need to formulate new rules in terms of style, but also in terms of ideas.

The previous narcissistic personalisation of the 80’s and 90’s has now given way to a shared consumption that is ritualistic, and in which symbolical sensitivity, shared excellence and tangible aesthetic experiences successfully encounter a new civil conscience and an aesthetic of values.

These passages define the ways in which luxury has evolved, and help the market to go beyond the concept of basic, proposing instead a new vision of joyous luxury (the *playful luxury* of Paul Smith, Dior and Dolce&Gabbana), of the value and prestige of essentiality (in line with the Milanese design of B&B, Molteni and Cassina), of distinctive playfulness (as in the Mini car, in Alessi’s objects, or in Diesel’s communication), or of the comfort of prestige (as found in the homewear lines of Zegna, Loro Piana and Malo).

Post-Crisis Fashion: mass avant-gardes

In the panorama of style, of fashion and of expressions of taste, today we witness the return of substance; understood as the search for consistency in projects and excellence in products. The great thought at this moment focuses on the theme of true qualities, which are the fruit of a new absolutely natural and necessary system. The world of fashion is re-establishing its new rules on parameters of authenticity, competence, virtuosity and the ability of realisation. Today, the world of style and fashion notes the need to look elsewhere to develop new strategies, and to rethink business models. This is a fundamental necessity that sees its reasoning in the roots of a success that has lasted too long. The importance of communication (and the imaginary) has played an essential role in this dynamic, and the sector should probably restart from here: experimenting with new paths and new languages, and re-shuffling things around, as with a deck of cards before a new game of poker. Video, for example, is already offering great opportunities.

Over the last 30 years, all the sectors have considered the fashion system as the pioneer in advanced communication, possessing the ability to sell and to captivate consumers. In the phase that we are currently living in, it should instead be the area of textiles and clothing that humbly learn from other sectors such as: technology, body care, the car industry and above all food. This looking beyond cannot be reduced to the classical mimetic that the fashion system is used to triggering by offering glimpses and stylistic provocations, but should instead aim for a comprehensive regeneration of processes and communication strategies.

With this difficult task they must look carefully to the worlds of music, cinema, art, and to those creative phenomenon that up until now have been limited by the emphasis of fashions power.

In this context, the boundaries between mass and avant-garde get thinner every day, thanks to an ever-growing diffusion of the Internet and social networks^{vi}. The most interesting innovations come indistinctly today from the well-established fashion houses and from emerging designers, in particular in regards to menswear. As Bardainne and Susca have clearly pointed out, “the avant-garde turns into mass and the mass turns into avant-garde”^{vii}: in other words, who is more innovative? An unknown future star discovered on YouTube or Lady Gaga?

New paradigms and the future of fashion

Trends are constantly evolving. They change at a slow pace, much slower than the fashion industry wishes to think. The present and future transformation of trends is ruled by a higher dimension, which we define as “paradigm”.

It is important to understand that work on paradigms goes in-depth, takes time and requires much reflection that is capable for example, of being permanently measured against social-cultural changes. The fundamental and foundational paradigms are four and have emerged in recent years: Unique & Universal, Crucial & Sustainable, Trust & Sharing, Quick & Deep.

Paradigm 1. Unique & Universal

The first paradigm summarizes and surpasses local/global antinomy, which for two decades has characterised opinions – often superficial- regarding globalisation. Take for instance the distorted idea of a globalisation that flattens out and makes products and experiences uniform, or instead think about the popular slogan “Think Global, Act Local”. In reality, both are visions with a foundation, just like the confused concept of globalisation, in which everybody can achieve all they desire. The paradigm that we are proposing – and towards which the reality seems to be orientating itself – underlines a local element that is capable of producing a character so intense that it could transform itself into a universal point of reference. In other words, a local reality that is capable of global unification. It is here that the paradigm Unique & Universal is born, as a method for valorising local realities. Archetypal consumption or the relevance of narrations within the scenario of storytelling can

be seen in a few direct expressions of this paradigm; in beauty, in home/living or with the phenomena of Hyper Memorable found in fashion and clothing. Italy constitutes a spontaneous laboratory for this paradigm: the particularity that distinguishes us, the small divisions that make Italy a unique and incomparable place, represents an aspect of strength that on its own distinguishes our market and makes it unique the world over.

This first paradigm is based on difference. Every subject is unique and universal.

The genetic difference between human beings from the same race and family is indeed greater than any other genetic difference between differing races. This paradigm, which is also a biological truth, scientifically proven, clears up any relative doubts regarding the differences and the similarities between men, ratifying the uniqueness of every human being and excluding all superior or inferior racial hypothesis'. Existing within every nation are people who bring about change or difference, and who often become great innovators. That which makes this evidence fascinating is that it is impossible to predict: each one of us, up until the end of our life could become a great innovator, above and beyond simply belonging to a race or class.

What makes each meeting with any human being an extraordinary adventure to live like irreconcilable and inconceivable permanent findings is not attributed to a general formula. Man is the measure of all things. Today, man measures all things in a way that is unique and universal. Each and every human being is so different that a constant and dynamic elaboration of certain universal principles is required, of which to measure ones self by, both singularly, as well as collectively. The right to equality that lacks liberty and brotherhood risks defining an unbalanced world, as happened during Communism. An imbalance is now emerging in the liberal western world that favours individual liberty, sacrificing equality and brotherhood. For the rest, the Catholic world of brotherhood pays an excessive tribute in terms of liberty. In short, the challenge of the future remains inscribed in a horizon of modernity that is advanced and mature, and in which, the triad of the French Revolution (liberty, equality and brotherhood) and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that sanctions the right to individual freedom and happiness, are still today considered to be fundamental principles. It is necessary for us to learn how to manage more carefully, the fragile equilibrium between uniqueness and universality.

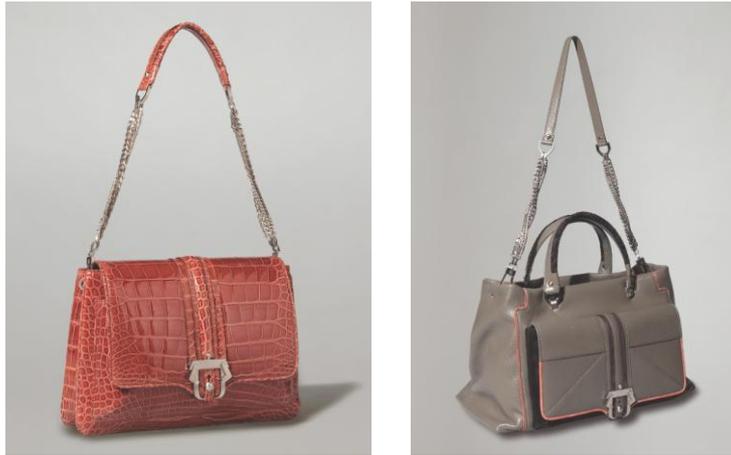
The first paradigm foresees the unique meeting spot between places and people and the strength of the *genius loci* (talent of the place).

Each one of us inherits from the place where we live certain energy and talent that we define as *genius loci*. This should be known and recognised, because in a dynamic way it shapes

characters and personal experiences. The magical encounter between unique places and people allows us to define the theme of collective and individual stories, of which the boundaries are impossible to trace with precision. Nevertheless, common and universal experiences exist – from dreams to languages - that make us different from any other living creature on this planet. It is from these universal experiences that we need to begin again, defining their meaning, the true luxury of the future is to understand the essential influence and the vital importance of the context. We must guarantee everyone a context of life that is more closely related to one's origins, but that includes respect for the universal rites of man. It comes down to understanding entirely the vital source that each place establishes for every subject, without however considering one's roots as a priority to defend. Ethnic symbolism and the very concrete reference to mother earth, provide an historical and emotional foundation that too often becomes a platform of resistance and closure, instead of openness and pollination. Only in this way, will we be capable of giving meaning to our experience.

Unique and Universal fashion: Paula Cademartori and Prada Made In...

Italian-Brazilian accessories designer, Paula Cademartori, toys with tradition in her signature line of handbags, which blends classic construction together with modern silhouettes in unusual combinations of leather, suede, deerskin and the like. Cademartori first studied Industrial Design at the Lutheran University of Brazil, then relocated to Italy, where she studied Fashion Management at Milan's Bocconi University. Cademartori continued her education at Istituto Marangoni, where she received a Masters in Accessories Design, before becoming a junior designer at Versace. Not surprisingly, Cademartori's talents were first recognized for a shoe she had designed for the Vogue Talents Corner, a project she was selected to participate in during September 2009 and which landed her on Italian Vogue's list of 140 Emerging Designers. Devoted to timeless elegance; each of her bags features incredibly precise detailing, durable fine leather and custom-crafted metal hardware. In addition to her seasonal collections, Cademartori also has Aristocracy, a made-to-order line, featuring high quality crocodile leather and beautiful detailing. The uniqueness of an emerging name, here meets with the universality of classic elegance.



Prada “Made In...” is a capsule collection devoted to traditional craft and materials, tied to the history of fashion and Prada itself. In the early twentieth century Mario Prada (Miuccia Prada’s grandfather) travelled the world in search of precious materials, exotic leathers and luxurious fabrics, as well as to discover sophisticated craftsmen and manufacturers to create his designs. The first Prada products (bags, suitcases, gloves, walking sticks, bottles and glasses) were made by Alsatian and Austrian leather artisans, bohemian crystal-makers, English silversmiths, and by Italian artisans using materials such as rare ivory, tortoiseshell, ebony and precious stones and leathers from all over the globe. This curious connoisseur’s spirit remains at the heart of Prada, and translates into a sort of antidote to homologation and globalization so often seen among its competitors. Using Mario’s original approach, Prada collaborates with many different artisans to produce its designs utilizing the traditional craftsmanship, materials, and manufacturing techniques from a specific region. This choice is explicit in the “Made in...” project, a series of local products with special labels, declaring the origin of each piece. “Prada Made in Scotland” is a collection of traditional tartan wool kilts from UK workshops, made using traditional manufacturing and weaving techniques. “Prada Made in India” is the label for a collection of handmade garments from workshops that specialize in Chikan, one of the most ancient types of Indian embroidery. Items consist of handmade ballerina flats, woven sandals and artisanal handbags. A series of jeans produced by Dova, a leading denim manufacturer, will carry the label “Prada Made in Japan”. “Prada Made in Peru” is a line of alpaca wool knitwear from the most traditional workshops in Peru. The entire world is thus embodied by one single historic fashion brand.



Paradigm 2. Crucial & Sustainable

This is a paradigm that increases the value of plans and philosophies linked to a new conception of sustainability. To going back to the beginning and protecting everything that we are surrounded by in time: our economic, environmental, social and cultural heritages. Rediscover the importance of crucial resources, which prove to play a decisive role in our lives. It is from these core concepts that definitions of crucial and sustainable are derived. A paradigm that is based on a real and true changing of an era, signalling the new fundamentals upon which to construct future markets, which in time will guarantee more virtuous specifics (for example, being Italian). It is a rotation of the imaginary that has helped a new pattern of values emerge that will influence the behaviours of everyone: from single individuals to large businesses. It is as if, all of the sudden we have decided to reorient ourselves in the direction of wellbeing and quality, which is not only individual, but collective as well. Reasoning on and producing new point of views: the relevance and the sustainability of others, is based on a system of balances that implies a renewed relationship with time, space and quality of life. From this paradigm deconstructive phenomena emerge in consumption, wellness and the eco-living trend.

The second paradigm pertains to sustainability and affirms among other things, the differences between the post-industrial and the post-modern eras.

The post-industrial and the post-modern eras, which for twenty years were considered as one the effect and the other the cause of social change, in reality separated definitively due to an incapability to rebel against destiny: the post-industrial that continues to indicate the direction in which our society is heading, is joining in a view of environmental sustainability that does not betrays neither the real origins, nor expectations, but that simply makes a leap in quality and maturity in evolution, where the main character remains the emancipated subject with a

modern conscious; instead, the post-modern remains the definition of an era that is almost behind us, an era in which it was possible to both affirm and be contrary to everything, where image prevailed over substance and relativism did not offer any direction. The idea is to elaborate on the rules and new languages, heading in a direction of modernity that is convivial and that without decreasing in the community, is capable of offering a softer individualism that is gratifying and equipped to deal with the challenges of co-habitation, leaving behind the things we have learned in the last thirty years, revising and re-evaluating certain key elements/factors of our identity, the character of places and environmental and civil sustainability. The post-modern has however, demonstrated to be incapable of meeting these deep demands and therefore, unsustainable from many points of view, starting with a lack of responsibility.

The second paradigm recognises the importance of the body: there is nothing more crucial than our bodies, than our sensorial experience. At the centre of this more advanced dimension, we are again confronted with the body, which in the previous phase had been strongly penalised. The body represents the undeniable uniqueness of each person: nobody can live within the skin of another. The uniqueness of ones perceptions, feelings and personal emotions take over the scene, as sophisticated wanderings of our mind. There is always a part of the bodily experience that is not capable of being translated and that is never translated entirely into languages. Deep feelings and emotions are not completely capable of being communicated to others, because they represent an inexpressible part of our personal experience, which can neither be reproduced nor controlled from the outside. It is also due to this that all the experimentation performed on artificial intelligence, on synthetic bodies and on other forms of artificial life that in some form serve as substitutes for the most banal bodily and mental experiences have always failed.

Crucial & Sustainable fashion: Zilla and Yooxygen

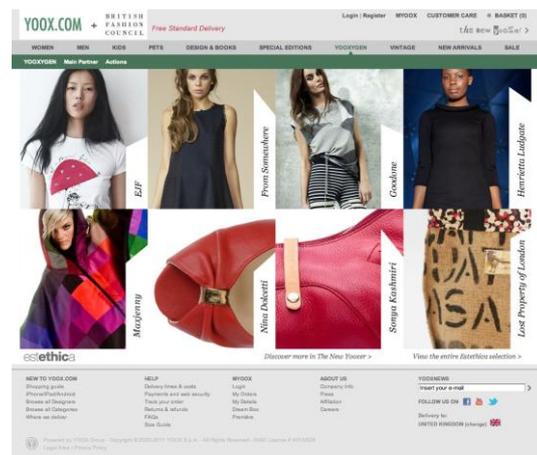
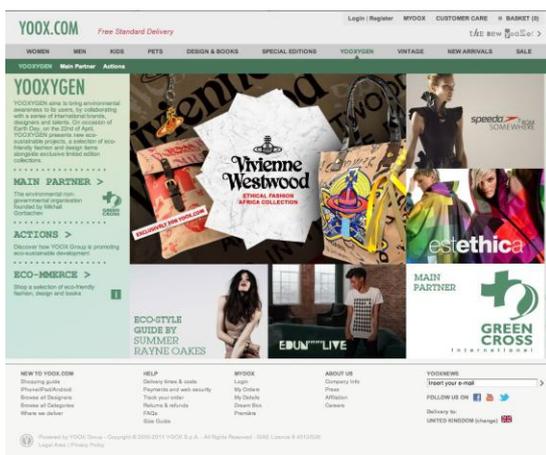
Zilla makes unexpected use of sponge, cork and other materials in a former architect's surprising handbag collection. Sylvia Pichler, a young Italian architect, prefers designing handbags to skyscrapers. Drawing on industrial materials typically reserved for insulation, interior decoration or even air filtering, Pichler creates curiously elegant bags under the moniker Zilla. The most recent Zilla collections consist of simple yet extremely feminine bags in a variety of styles. Special filters, natural cork, aluminium foils, bast fiber, rubber and

synthetic sponge combine with fine leather and linings for a collection that spans both day and evening looks. Zilla shows how fashion can be correct and tackle crucial themes.



With the project *Yooxygen*, Yoox.com has started down a path towards environmental sustainability with a new site area dedicated completely to eco-friendly and sustainable products: ranging from fashion, design, jewellery and including books and music. This window dedicated to ecology also becomes a showroom for designers like Katharine Hamnett and Stella McCartney, who for this initiative have developed exclusive collections, in limited editions, for Yoox.

The collection *Venetian Bags* by Ilaria Venturini Fendi is also very original - clutch bags born from the recycling of thin aluminium sheets, and the project *Aperitivo Bio*, a fun limited edition aperitif set, made-up of unique design objects designed by Pandora design, in Mater-Bi, a polymer created from maize and 100% biodegradable.



Paradigm 3. Trust & Sharing

The paradigm Trust & Sharing redefines a new chain of values taking form within all the

various sectors of the market: the reciprocity of the relationships proposes again an economy of non-equivalence, regenerating a relationship that is based on loyalty and on sharing with the consumer.

Sharing is a theme that just five years ago would not have been as relevant as it is today. Facebook was just beginning to take form and it was unimaginable that 500 million people could and would exchange stories, tales and emotions online, revitalizing and upsetting the concept itself of “friendship”. It is clear therefore that the dimension of sharing is and will always become more linked to the dimension of personal loyalty and in the future the dialogue and the sharing will continue using those instruments that will not only be visible, but always more often will be directed towards credibility. An enormous difference, if placed into context within the worlds of marketing and communication, which lived for ten years, bound to opposing beliefs that the images had placed upon any other logic, giving credit and life to the post-modern illusion. From this paradigm the phenomena linked to Conviviality in consumption, the Hyper-relational within living and to the Share Care of wellbeing, are brought to the forefront.

The third paradigm is based on the richness of the relationship between trust and sharing. If identity is considered as a permanent process of evolution brought about through meeting with others, who generate the same dynamic of life, we can then understand not only the necessity, but also the opportunity of confrontations with different people that offer enrichment and a definition for vital measures: which doesn't mean cultural relativism, but rather richness in being in relationships, according to the rules of Trust & Sharing. Also because, always playing around and doing it alone, is not very fun. It is on this ground that the post-modern dream of a subject linked to a collective identity and immersed in a virtual imaginary lacking responsibility has failed, after trying for 30 years. The post-modern drifting affirmed the end of modern narrations through a process of permanent and radical fragmentation, making its meaning interchangeable and entering into a world ruled by a pure circulation of signs. But, the worlds of signs and information don't tell us anything about the meaning of our experience and they leave us with empty hands, in regards to the need for wisdom that resurfaces every time that we ask “why”. It is in this way that post-modernism has demonstrated having nullified conceptual ideas, even before those that are cultural. We now live however in total modernity, which takes on fuller tones and shades, in which the process is no longer a hunt but rather a challenge, similar to that of the capturing of Bin Laden, where science is no longer religion, but instead the ability to make a conscious choice, in which technique is no longer a value, but instead a useful instrument in the strengthening

of our values, in which information and communication serve to aid human relations, always more frequently leading to profound experiences of sharing that are in tune with the tonality of loyalty and trust.

The third paradigm combines logics of responsibility and re-establishes the art of decision-making

The material qualities of consumption could be rationally constructed, measured and controlled: the human quality of the relationship implies however, a capacity to seize the occasion and read the context, which is both intuitive and emotional. The problem with politics today (correctly defined by the ancient Greeks as, the art of decision-making) becomes that of re-evaluating the conditions at the beginning in order to be happy and adapting concrete practices that make this possible. Sharing and trust demonstrate themselves as being essential to this challenge. In afterthoughts that have taken form, these assume a new central role; the quality of time, space and body. Meanwhile, economic, technological and consumption-based dreams are scaled down. The perspective becomes that of a new modernity that is everything but banal and standardised, and which proposes that every one possesses the revolutionary capacity to re-establish the borders of normality. Only a renewed political vision could allow for such a prospect.

Trust & Sharing fashion: Sartoria Vico and Camper Together

Sartoria Vico combines the worlds of fashion and product design together, with a small series of essentially functional clothes and accessories focused more on use than aesthetic. The brand is one of the projects by the creative collective Dissociate, comprised of Benedetta de Bartolomeis, Monica Battistella, Stefania Casacci and Cristina del Buono, four girls who met while studying industrial design at Politecnico di Milano. Sartoria Vico tends to shy away from the traditional concept of seasonal collections, in favour of changing materials or adding new designs, products and projects as they become ready, meanwhile reinvigorating and improving existing items as they re-conceive them. Since the very beginning, Sartoria Vico's core research has been aimed at reinventing Made in Italy knitwear and knitted accessories for the winter, which still characterizes the heart of the collection. Their most notable styles include: the Maglione Pancia (a sweater which extends to cover the legs while crouching), Vestito Manicotto (a mini dress with round neck and sleeves that can extend and cover the hands) and Collo (a composition of two collars, one narrow and one wider to wrap around the neck or shoulders). The colour palette consists of basics like black, gray and navy blue, combined with more vibrant colours such as green and dusty mustard. An industrial design

focus renders the clothing versatile and functional - each piece comes packed with a set of detailed instructions on the various ways it can be worn.



Creativity and culture collide in Camper's Together collections. With its rounded shapes, commitment to comfort and playful sensibility, the Spanish brand has defined a clear look that you're as likely to see at a Phish concert, as in an architecture studio. So it makes perfect sense that when the footwear label decided to collaborate they tapped on both, some of fashion and industrial design's more unconventional leaders, for a collection called the Together project that every season launches a new crop of colourfully ergonomic shoes. Collaborations include: Delvaux's art director Veronique Branquinho, French fashion designer Romain Kremer, Bernhard Willhelm, industrial designers Jasper Morrison, Jaime Hayon, Hella Jongerius and the Campana brothers. The trust of Camper is here re-launched and shared through the creativity coming from different "trusted" sectors, such as fashion and design.



Paradigm 4. Quick & Deep

It is this paradigm that is linked to the quality of daily life, and in which the axiomatic themes

of daily happiness and timeliness emerge with force. For years we were convinced that speed was the key element to achieving success, the parameter for which social and professional changes were measured. The reality however, is quite diverse. The decisive theme instead, is in fact timeliness: the ability to find oneself at the right place, at the right time. Within the vital experience there is an alternation between slowness and quickness. That is why it is often necessary to take a moment to reflect on things and slow down, in order to enable us to react better in times when it is really important. The concept is therefore linked to a notion of quick, to speedy reactions, but at the same time, it is also connected to an idea of deep, of our capability to be happy and have profound responses. Direct expressions of this paradigm are demonstrated by the Transitive phenomenon within consumption, the Massive Details in fashion, the Hyper-sense rituals in expressions of the body and the Hyperceptive trend within the home.

The fourth paradigm revives the game of happiness. The control variable needed to define the rules of the game is constituted from an idea that everyone creates their own personal happiness: the parameters needed for defining this happiness are constantly changing and in this moment, constitute a cultural challenge of great significance. We are in fact, currently moving away from a focus on the economic dimension that has prevailed in the last ten years – in terms of collective perceptions -- and heading in the direction of a dimension in which, the quality of human relations will acquire a strength that is equal to, if not greater than the material quality of consumption. The challenge of politics becomes that of guaranteeing everyone a sufficiently rich context for building relationships and life conditions that allow access to potential happiness: a guarantee to both the body and the mind of every living person, dignified life conditions by which to depart on our own extraordinary existential journey. Individuals in fact, move about in search of a meeting with themselves, in which aspects of the experience are not reducible to instrumental rationality: the body, emotions, the languages of everyday life, all follow the thread of Quick & Deep. It is upon this delicate terrain that politics must return, absolving its role as mediator in regards to the happiness of people and taking on the task of selecting the minimal quality of life conditions that are to be guaranteed to citizens.

Quick & Deep fashion: Lemuria and Ocho Bags

Lemuria is Shape-shifting experimental knitwear from a family-run Italian label. The mythical land of Lemuria is a lost continent whose inhabitants were mentally pure hermaphrodites, ethereal spirits, and able to shape their bodies using only their minds. The

knitwear project bearing the same name reflects the spirit of the vanished land, with each single piece organically transforming into multiple new shapes and styles. The *Tuta Mucca* dress from the *Libero Arbitrio* collection easily goes from a strapless harem pant singlet, to a long-sleeved dress depending on how it's worn (there six combinations in all). Made in Italy, the quality of Lemuria clothes is absolute. Holding and touching the garments is quite an experience because of their softness and steadiness, but also because they appear to be designed for aliens, having three or more sleeves, geometric shapes, asymmetries and overall strange cuts. Every piece comes with a DVD full of video tutorials explaining in the simplest ways to use the pieces. This intertwining of communication, style, research and production perfectly embodies the Quick & Deep paradigm.



Born out of Genova, Italy's school for industrial design, designer Arianna Vivencio founded Ochobags in 2006. Starting from a modular and customizable bag, Vivencio describes her mission as "obviously to combine function and aesthetics." Starting from the idea of a useful, yet fashionable object made of functional and mobile compartments that can contain and separate each one of the objects a woman carries, she gradually refined the concept to come up with a simple system. Consisting of six modular pockets in a range of fabrics, the pieces combine into personalized purses for the ultimate in adaptability. The resulting all-purpose bags can be worn by girls and women of all ages, because of their simplicity and variety of materials. The customer base also includes boys and men who use the bags for running or biking. Her inventiveness also includes inspiration taken from Antonio Marras Kenzo, by mixing in alternative fabrics and materials such as foam mats, old kimonos, fringed inner tubes, classic Prince of Wales wool, plastic lace and cotton. Channelling a modern Japanese attitude, colours and materials create unexpected blends of contrasting assonance. With a new

line of shoes drawing on the same principles, Ocho hints at a new way of urban dressing, both “quick” and easy, but also “deep” and functional.



Conclusion: The Passage from Trends to Paradigms

To sum up our discussion on the evolution of luxury and how it is contending within today’s fashion industry, it is useful for us to (in a synthetic way) clarify how the paradigms will operate in the years to come, and why we have chosen to shift our focus from trends to paradigms; therefore, establishing a rise in quality that in our opinion is decisive at this moment.

In his book “*Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future*”, sociologist Edgar Morin discusses this matter: “The play of truth and error not only functions in the empirical verification and logical coherence of theories. It also functions profoundly in the invisible depths of paradigms. (...) *Order* in determinist concepts, *Matter* in materialistic concepts, *Mind* in spiritual concepts, *Structure* in structuralist concepts are the master selected/selecting concepts that exclude or subordinate antinomical concepts (disorder, mind, matter, event). Thus, the paradigmatic level is the level of the principle of selection of ideas to be integrated into the discourse or theory, or refused and rejected.”^{viii}

The moment has come, to close the circle and venture a reflection that does not negate the responsibility we have to provide new insights into the understanding of present and new paradigms of the future--instead of simply focusing on seasonal trends; at least in terms of possible orientations that are in our opinion probable for society (intended both as a civil community and business organizations) in order to be happier and more equipped to take on the future.

In this way, it is not only possible to use the paradigms as descriptive and analytical

dimensions, but also as conceptual and generative dimensions, through which future-oriented projects and products in the fashion system can be formulated.

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KEYWORDS

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Fashion

Paradigms

Basic

Excellence

Research

Made in Italy

Consumption

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^{viii} E. Morin, *Seven complex lessons in education for the future*, Unesco Publishing, 1999. Free download at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001177/117740eo.pdf>