

HAND TO MIND: The Paradigm Shift in Fashion Education

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Abstract

It has not been long since Lidewij Edelkoort, world's most famous trend forecasters, published her "Anti_Fashion" Manifesto, in which she challenged everything that is taught in a Fashion school. Critiquing the education model that sells the dreams of fashion's ephemerality and its dazzle- dazzle, she along with other fashion scholars/critiques of the time, have shown us the changing paradigm of fashion. "Anti_Fashion nevertheless captures the spirit of our times and suggests that the concept of fashion, as it has existed for past two decades, is ripe for reconstruction (Christopher Breward, 2016) and so is the model of Fashion Education. Fashion has moved in space and time; it is more interdisciplinary than ever. Scholars, academicians spanning science & technology, sociology, anthropology, ethnography are collaborating to explore different dimensions of fashion; visual, cultural, semiotics or socio-economic. From being a product of industrialisation, fashion is becoming more conceptual, a topic of interest for thinkers and intellectuals. Riding on this wave of change universities across the world are re- looking at their fashion curriculums and introducing new areas of study that encourages fashion students to pursue cultural investigation of fashion. Subjects such as "Fashion, Society and Culture" and alike are introduced at undergraduate level with a motivation to sensitise the students with this refashioning of fashion. In tandem with technical skills like sewing and pattern making, students are being taught thinking skills that enables them to explore socio- cultural aspects of fashion. It is safe to say that fashion education has truly moved from hand to mind. Now is the time to question established theories of fashion (trickle up/down/across) and label the present fashion system obsolete. The objective of this research is to understand the emerging patterns of fashion industry, fashion education and pedagogy by reviewing new and revised curriculums, scholarly papers in fashion journals. The research paper will discuss case studies pertaining to different methods to

teach fashion studies. The study will help fashion educators to rewire their approach to imparting knowledge and discover newer areas of research and education and conceive new theories of fashion, which will eventually contribute to next generation of fashion workforce that will contribute in community building through research, empathy and mindful fashion.