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**Report of the teaching and research stay in New York City.  
December 1 - December 9, 2018**

First of all, I would like to thank Dr Mary E. Davis and Pamela Ellsworth for this invitation and for the very effective organization of this week of study in New York. More broadly, I would like to thank all the people I met at FIT and the auditors of my conference in these premises.

The general purpose of this visit was: first to communicate to the FIT audience my studies on the Parisian fashion industry, and second, to access to first hand material on the Couture houses at the FIT library.

Besides, I intended to have short meetings in New York City in order to deepen my research project and also my knowledge of the fashion industry.

**Appointments and research at FIT**

**Working meetings:**

- Dr Mary E. Davis

This meeting made it possible to clearly define the general organisation of the week.

- Dr Deirdre C. Sato, Dean, International Education, Academic Affairs, Fashion Institute of Technology,

The meeting provided an opportunity to present the new developments at the French Fashion Institute.

- Dr Valerie Steele, director and chief curator of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology,

This quick exchange provided an opportunity to present my research project and discuss possible future collaborations.

### **Conference given on 4 December 2019 at the FIT**

The invitation followed a conference I gave at the GFM Paris Seminar. My presentation of the emergence of a Parisian fashion was considered interesting to present to a New York audience.

The conference was held in front of an audience of around 20 academics, mostly from the FIT but also professionals (for example a lawyer specialized in the fashion industry). The conference dealt with the evolution of the high-end fashion activity in Paris.

The purpose of this conference was to show how the profession of fashion designer could have been invented in Paris. Couture was invented in 1858 by Worth and worn by a professional organization in 1868. And then I presented the emergence of ready-to-wear, fashion designers. I then explained how these two systems had coexisted in Paris since 1973. A last point of my presentation was about the more recent statutes: corresponding members and invited members in the sewing calendar.

The questions made it possible to better present the specificity of the Paris fashion system (haute couture and ready-to-wear combinations). The questions also focused on the respective markets of Paris and Milan.

### **Research activities from December 4 to 9**

Another part of the stay was devoted to my research activities. The objective was to find information, if possible unpublished, on the France - United States fashion relationship and in particular on the reception and distribution of Parisian haute couture brands.

After writing my doctoral thesis in management sciences with the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode as a case study, which I defended in 2014, I wish, in collaboration with university colleagues, to write an article that will be submitted to an American academic journal.

The subject of fashion is particularly well suited to a study on the question of status from a dynamic perspective.

I already have a lot of data on France. On the other hand, I did not have the opportunity to carry out an in-depth study on the France - United States links.

This opportunity to study archives in New York was an exceptional opportunity for me.

## Special Collections

I was perfectly received in this department by Dr Karen Trivette and her team and I received assistance beforehand, during my visits and even after my visits.

I paid 5 visits to the Special Collections Library at FIT. The findings were particularly interesting.

4 different archives were used:

Beller & Co.

Bergdorf Goodman

Davidow

Nina Hyde

These 4 donations were very useful for my research.

The Bergdorf Goodman archives were, among other elements, composed of original sketches of Parisian Haute Couture dresses. These sketches assess that licensing was a long-term practice between Paris and the United States.

The Nina Hyde archives brought first-hand information on the relationship between Parisian Couture (especially Emanuel Ungaro) and the Washington Post.

Besides, I heard interviews and also had access to some of the transcripts of these interviews. The knowledge and analysis of this material has already been incorporated into a research article project.

The work on the four donations allowed me to discover important Parisian fashion distributors in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. This activity of distributing Parisian couture brands in the United States was not known to me.

I was able to consult many drawings by fashion designers. These drawings were made by people accredited by Parisian fashion houses and paid for by New York distributors. This showed that the sending of drawings of Parisian fashion shows was regular and concerned a large number of fashion houses. This is a system that ended in 1969. This made it easier to understand why an American fashion with an international dimension only emerged in the early 1970s.

I could see, through the archives, how, for example, the Ungaro company took care of the relationship it had with this journalist. The letters, typed or handwritten by Emanuel Ungaro and Sophie Xuereb bear witness to this.

This former journalist Nina Hyde, particularly for the Washington Post, played an important role in exchanges between France and the United States. I then deepened my knowledge of Nina Hyde's role with Didier Grumbach (Dean of the French Fashion Institute).

The archives donated by Bergdorf Goodman were also extremely interesting. Through Mrs Goodman's memories, I was able to see how well this department store was treated by some French haute couture houses. Given Bergdorf Goodman's important role in promoting Parisian couture, the consultation of these archives was invaluable.

These research visits therefore provided a better understanding of fashion business relations between Paris and New York.

This research has made it possible to identify the privileged links between French fashion and the American fashion industry (journalists, distributors, department stores).

It was a very rich and quite complex trading system. It is rare for French researchers to study contemporary fashion in the United States, so it was a great opportunity for me.

The Special Collections Department has written to me several times to give me additional documents (including interview recordings and interview verbatim). Consulting archives on the distribution of Parisian seam models legally copied in the United States is essential because this system ceased in 1969. The only difficulty I had was that I was looking for as many written documents as possible rather than images.

I will integrate this research into a presentation I will make at the EGOS congress in Edinburgh in July 2019 as part of the workshop on the social construction of status. This first-hand data will probably be one of the strengths of paper. The full article will be submitted to a journal in November 2019.

### **Appointments outside the FIT**

- Karis Durmer, CEO, Altuzarra

I also met the senior staff of the Altuzarra Brand, including its CEO Karis Durmer and its Vice President for Global Wholesale.

Altuzarra is an interesting case since its creator is French but the company is based in New York. This visit to Altuzarra's headquarters provided a good understanding of how a New York fashion brand that has recently started to operate in Paris and its relations with American retailers. I was able to see how a subsidiary of the Kering group operated.

- Dr Eugenia Paulicelli, Professor at Queens College & The Graduate Center, The City University of New York

Thanks to FIT, I had a meeting with Dr Eugenia Paulicelli. I had studied before Dr Paulicelli's writings on Italian fashion. Her work on the emergence of Italian fashion in the early 1930s had interested me particularly when I was writing my doctoral thesis. This meeting allowed us to get to know our respective home institutions better.

- Dr Alexis Romano

This meeting allowed me to get to know the network of fashion researchers in New York better and to keep this network informed of my research on Parisian fashion.

In addition, I will be happy to meet new FIT students at the Paris Seminar in March 2019 and present my knowledge of Parisian fashion.

At the end of this stay, I have a more precise vision of the FIT's activities.

I am very grateful to IFFTI for giving me a scholarship for this. This type of exchange is an exceptional opportunity to meet and acquire knowledge.

The exchanges established during the IFFTI Congress in Shanghai in 2018 were deepened.

Without this support, I would not have been able to meet these people and, from a scientific point of view, get to know the reality of Franco-American fashion exchanges so closely.

These exchanges could possibly be continued during the next exhibition on French couture at the FIT Museum.

Globally, on a research perspective, this visit enhanced my knowledge of the business relationship between the Parisian Haute Couture and the American Fashion Industry.

In 2019 other collaborations were made between FIT & the Institut Français de la Mode. Among other things, Mary E. Davis came to deliver a conference in January. Therefore, an interesting dialogue on the links between the USA and Paris as regards the high-end fashion industry continues.