ANIMISM AND TRANSHUMANISM: THE YIN AND THE YANG FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

For millions of years the human being has been the dominant species on Earth, molding the planet at its own will, transforming, taming, destroying. Global warming and other man-made calamities such as pandemics, are making clear that it's time for a radical change: either we evolve, or we accept the fact that we are doomed.

The evolution required from us as species isn't just about changing our lifestyle, it involves re-thinking the notion of human beings entirely. On one hand shifting from exploiting the planet to serving it, and on the other transcending the physical nature of our bodies – after all, hyper-consumerism powered by industries such as Fashion and Beauty is led by an obsession with the body, often at the expense of our spiritual nature. The embryonic phase of this evolution is known as Post-humanism.

Since the very concept of fashion is centered around the body, as well as the desire to impress other humans, it is very hard to imagine a future for this industry in a world in which mankind steps back in favor of other species that do not consume clothes. However, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, two major "movements" that could ideally represent a new expression of fashion are gradually making their way in the collective imagination. In the vocabulary of trend forecasting, these take the names of Animism and Transhumanism.

Animism, first introduced by Li Edelkoort in 2017 in her Anti-fashion Manifesto and later reproposed in her infamous 2020 interview for Dezeen, embodies all that is analogic, primordial and connected to nature. It stems from the belief that everything has a soul and advocates for a return to rural, artisanal practices. Transhumanism, which draws from transcendentalist philosophies throughout history, is deeply influenced by AI, virtual worlds such as the Metaverse, and the rise of avatars and digital fashion collections. From a Post-human perspective, it shifts from the physical to the digital in the same way in which Animism shifts from the body to the soul.

Animism and Transhumanism are the modern yin and yang: each one exists because the other one does, and in order to positively deliver they must be harmoniously balanced. This paper aims to analyze the declinations of this balance, exploring not only its current manifestations but also envisioning its possibilities for the future of fashion.

INTRODUCTION

As the world stands at a pivotal juncture, poised between environmental crises and technology advancements, fashion becomes a microcosmos reflecting the broader metamorphosis of human existence. Animism and Transhumanism, these contrasting forces shaping the future of fashion, offer a profound dichotomy rooted in the essence of nature and propelled by the possibilities of the digital.

The resurgence of Animism, championed by Li Edelkoort in her Anti-fashion Manifesto (2020), beckons to the analogic and the primordial, it rekindles the belief in the interconnection of all things, urging a return to artisanal practices and a harmonious coexistence with the natural world. Simultaneously, Transhumanism propels us into a digital frontier, where artificial intelligence, virtual realms such as the Metaverse, and the avant-garde concept of digital fashion collections, redefine our understanding of the human form.

The relationship between these movements is akin to a dance—you cannot appreciate the one without acknowledging the other. The exploration of Animism and Transhumanism within the fashion landscape requires an understanding of their aesthetic and conceptual nuances. Several fashion brands, sensing the shifts in society, have begun to align with these trends, not just in terms of stylistic choices but as profound philosophical stances.

This paper employs primary and ethnographic research methodologies to unveil the expressions of these dichotomies and forecast their potential trajectories.

The analysis is structured in two phases:

1. A primary research based on the experience and vision of two opinion leaders in the trend forecasting field:

- Marcello Bonvini: designer and trend forecaster. Creative and research director of Stardust research book.

- Alberto Costabello: trend forecaster and collaborator of the Milanese Trend Forecasting Agency A+A Design Studio

2. A secondary and ethnographic research focusing on brand strategies developed around three main areas:

Product: understanding the rise of awareness in product design simultaneously with the technological dematerialization of fashion.

Communication: analyzing the dichotomy between animistic and transhumanistic communicative brand's approach.
Retail: exploring the return to the essence of protection and primitive values together with the intention of expanding the digital progression.

The conclusion aims to delineate the intricate tapestry of Animism and Transhumanism, exploring not only their current manifestations but also envisioning the possibilities they hold for the future of fashion.

FROM ANIMISM TO TRANSHUMANISM

E.B. Tylor was the first anthropologist to conceptualize the term "animism" by defining it as "a belief in the soul and an afterlife" (Tylor, 1871: 25). He considered the soul as "the very cause of life, defending it as intangible, which has physical properties, can separate from the body, act, appear in dreams and even clothe the human body" (Tylor,

1871: 25).

Li Edelkoort (Edelkoort, 2020, 2022) establishes the concept of animism around the idea that everything has a soul. She defines animism as "the religion prior to all religions" referring to it as the most primitive of venerations and arguing that there is energy, beauty, strength, soul and aura in all objects. This should inspire us to conceive a new, more precise and slower paced, idea of design, creating objects that respond to a real function and need, "a new way of being and belonging".

Animism could today be considered a philosophy helping people redefine and rethink their connection to the world and build a positive relationship with nature and artifacts in a technological world, thus achieving a harmonious and symbiotic society (Gao, 2021). Through design, it bridges the gap between human and artificial intelligence, stimulating empathy and respect.

According to anthropologist Picq (2019) animist societies interact with nature, animals and machines in the same way in which they interact with humans because they believe that everything has a spirit, this shows that we might be entering into a world of convergence between the body and machines where intelligences, behaviors, ethics and responsibilities are confronted.

On the other hand, Transhumanism aims to improve and transform the human condition, as well as the physical and cognitive capabilities of the human species, through technology. Philosopher Nick Bostrom (2003: 5) defined the term as "an intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of radically improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and disseminating technologies that eliminate aging and greatly enhance human intellectual, physical and psychological capabilities". In this sense, Elise Bohan (2018: 43) defined it as; "a philosophy and a project that aims to make us more than human".

TREND FORECASTING EXPERTS

Some of the questions regarding the ying and yang dichotomy have been answered by two trend forecasters.

According to Marcello Bonvini, the dichotomy is the genesis of the conflict between spirit and technology. In his opinion, we are living in a sort of digital Middle Ages, where it "is not possible yet to dissolve the conflict that defines the distance between human consciousness and artificial intelligence."

Bonvini refers to the Japanese cyberpunk manga The Ghost in the Shell, where hackers in the form of cyborgs aim to take possession of the human soul to evolve into a superior species. For him, this metaphor represents the situation that could define the future of this new paradigm: we give a soul to what does not have one and infuse with technology what has a soul. "Marketing educates people to believe in things, to have faith; when fashion will communicate objects as things that have a soul, people will start to believe in this possibility." According to Bonvini, due to the ecological situation companies will not be able to continue producing the same amount of products; therefore, the future of fashion, and more specifically of luxury, will be focused on the dematerialization of products, transforming physical goods into ideologic and soulful experiences that can be enjoyed digitally. "Luxury will hyper-personalize immersive digital experiences for average consumers, and only the very wealthy will be able to afford physical products. The mainstream will be consumed digitally, thus catering to customers who cannot afford expensive physical goods".

On the other hand, Alberto Costabello believes that digital aesthetics are now outdated and in the near future digital as a tool will be a gateway to increased performance in order to make things more useful. "We have experienced 20 years of celebrating digital obsession. For every expansive phenomenon there is a regressive phenomenon. Gen Z. is fluid, but it will eventually become conservative". In terms of product, consumers will look for essential, archetypal products such as the caban, the Tuxedo jacket, or other solid classics that can be coded as timeless. Communication-wise, he foresees a return to the values of beauty, durability and modernity. However, in the field of retail, tech-

nology will have the possibility to tailor the shopping experience, creating more entertaining hubs and providing customized local experiences, with digital features enhancing both performance and personalisation.

According to Costabello's vision, 'going off the web' would be the right strategy to bring fashion back to an idea of uniqueness and desirability. "The work of designers like Demna Gvasalia for Balenciaga or Ricardo Tisci for Givenchy have made elements of pop culture global and super-powerful, while at the same time demystifying the cult of aristocratic aesthetics and haughty beauty. Today we need to go back to the solid values, consumers seek them again".

Both trend forecasting foresee a significant role for the digital sphere in the future of fashion. Bonvini envisions the resolution of the yin-yang dichotomy as a fusion of analog and digital elements, emphasizing a harmonious coexistence; Costabello anticipates a distinct separation, with digital as a tool for performance but not as replacement for the emotion of analog experiences. According to Costabello, animistic values offer a remedy for digital saturation, countering a potential overdose. In contrast, Bonvini suggests that a synthesis of both realms could be the ultimate solution. Despite their differing perspectives, both experts concur on the multifaceted nature of the digital realm, recognizing its role in entertainment and as a potential tool for progress. Their visions add depth to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the intricate interplay between analog and digital forces in shaping the future landscape of fashion.

THE DUALISTIC FASHION ENVIRONMENT: BETWEEN HUMANITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Product paradigm

Given the acceleration of the digital world brought on by the pandemic, brands are currently facing numerous challenges. The main one is arguably the use of digital technology per se. Although we have always been used to a certain kind of consumption and to certain products, in the last three years these have undergone several changes fueled by the rise of digital technologies. The Metaverse, through which users gain access to a virtual world, offers brands a new and vast world to explore, giving them the opportunity to present themselves in a different way and above all, the possibility to create the most diverse kinds of products in the form of NFTs. The latter are unique cryptographic tokens that exist on a blockchain and cannot be replicated. They are usually associated with visual assets such as images or videos, but they are also used to record ownership of physical assets such as real estate, artwork and, more and more often, clothing. Fashion NFTs can take many forms, including virtual clothing that customers can wear in virtual environments, digital content that owners can interact with, and useful authentication assets (Forbes, 2023). Many brands have already joined this futuristic strategy, also to capture the attention of the younger generations who play a pivotal role in the current fashion market.

This presence in the metaverse and the use of NFT's has intensified over the last three years, with the rise of the need for interaction at a distance and the somewhat unconscious dream of having access to a parallel world -also - to detach from what is happening around us, has become. Needless to say, this full immersion in the digital world is the basis for Transhumanism. Animism can also be considered a consequence of the pandemic, originating from the desire for a deeper connection with nature fueled by being in lockdown.

The tension between these two seemingly opposed concepts is reflected in the fashion industry, including, but not limited to, the products. The fashion industry strives to respond to new demands created by consumers and seamlessly reconciling the drive of technology with a desire for nature and a genuine concern for sustainability represents a considerable challenge.

Transhumanism in the fashion industry: the new way to produce fashion

Transhumanism is a "technoprogressive" socio-political and intellectual movement that advocates for the use of technology in order to radically transform the human body, with the ultimate goal of becoming "posthuman." (Porter, 2017). This concept is deeply rooted in the fast-paced development of all things digital that has taken place over

these last three post-pandemic years, and which have ultimately brought change in all fields.

The efforts made by the fashion industry to keep up with the social transformations - which have had a strong impact on consumption - have been considerable; It is now possible to observe several brands are rapidly shifting towards this digitization, whether full or not.

The first explorations of a possible technological evolution of fashion actually began before the pandemic, proving that this acted merely as an accelerator. An example is the exhibition 'The Future Starts Here', which took place at the V&A (London) in 2018, displaying, among other artifacts, the "Electric Clothes" created by American company Seismic.Worn underneath normal clothing, these suits mimic the biomechanics of the human body, gently boosting the wearers when they get up from a chair, climb stairs, or stand on their feet for long periods.

Another, more recent example of products that aim to strike a balance between technology and human nature is 'Thed Holes', a digital fashion brand that creates 3D cyberpunk items. In 2021, Thed, founder of the brand, launched his first collection, 'Electro Muse', inspired by 90s social and visual culture, eventually defining the creation of digital clothes as a freer, more practical and quicker moment of creation compared to the traditional practice. (Red Eye, 2022).

Animism as a balance to fast-changing tecnhology

The concept of animism has always been present in society, representing a vision that unifies spirituality and materiality (Tylor, 1871). As we move towards a complete digitalization of the world, the concept of Animism can be seen as a conscious form of evolution to help human beings find a way of dosing and managing technology.

Computer interfaces have evolved to replace several human skills, and considering how much we rely today and the interaction between human beings and technologies, finding a balance in this interaction is a necessity (Duorish, 2004), just as much as carefully evaluating the way in which we perceive and design technologic artifacts.

Arguably the best example of a brand that practices animism in order to balance excessive technology is 'Petit Pli'. Founded in 2017 by aeronautical engineer Ryan Mario Yasin, the brand comprises a team of aeronautical engineers, neuroscientists and designers, who address a fundamental phenomenon of life: growth. It is an innovative fashion company, with a multidisciplinary approach encompassing both humanity and technology. 'Clothes that Grow' represents its most recognized and important project, developed with a scientific approach in order to accompany the growth of the child, thus reducing the carbon footprint and the need to buy new garments. Also noteworthy is their most recent award-winning project which was developed because of the pandemic: MSK, waste-reducing face masks made from recycled plastic bottles specifically developed to protect the wearer from Covid-19.

A second example of a brand that has embraced animist philosophy is 'Bodies as Clothing'. Founded in 2021 by Allen Litton, its main objective is to appeal to the so-called seventh sense, that is, the sense responsible for making moral decisions directly related to sustainability. The post-industrial vision of its founder acknowledges the body as a first layer of clothing and clothing as a second body, thus placing the concept of sustainability in a context in which all things are interconnected.

Communication Paradigm

With the rise of new technologies, social networks have become the main source of information and the main communication channel, boosting brand engagement, and shifting the communication with its consumers towards a more direct interaction.

Image production has also adapted to this new context. Images are created much more for social media than they are for magazines, television or billboards. For this reason, fashion magazines are losing prominence and are being forced to question their role in this new digital environment, while on the other hand celebrities are gaining more

and more recognition with their new role as influencers. For this same reason, fashion brands are trying to reinvent themselves to better respond to a new form of digital consumption, which has a great impact on the entire fashion value chain as well as on communication.

The luxury fashion industry feels the need to attract the young audience (generation Z). The article "Gen Z and Fashion in the Age of Realism" (Schneider, Lee, 2022) refers to Generation Z as the first digital natives, a generation born under the prism of technology, with all its facilitating features. This new generation of consumers is dictating new trends, informing new styles and changing consumer behavior.

In this scenario, engaging and powerful storytelling is more than ever before vital as it represents a means to merge human emotions with technology.

The Power of Storytelling

Jean Baudrillard, an important philosopher and sociologist of the 20th century, argues that we live in a postmodern universe, a world subject to hyperreality in which entertainment, information and communication technologies provide more intense experiences than in real life because the models, images and codes of the hyperreal come to control the thinking and behavior of the individual (Kellner, 2006). For the author, people living in this postmodern world live under the influence of the media, technological experience and the hyperreal.

Storytelling still has a vital importance to establish emotional connections with consumers, transmitting brand values, purpose and identity. In this way, it allows to attract and capture the customer's attention so that they empathize with the product and the brand. In the end, it is about communicating stories that, in a sensorial, emotional and meaningful way, transmit the values of a brand or product. Fog, Budtz and Yakaboylu (2004) state that there are two complementary ways of approaching storytelling: as a branding tool and as a communication tool.

Anthropology defines this act as "Animism", which, when applied to brand management, gives birth to concepts such as DNA, mantra, or brand essence, used to define the "soul of the brand" or, more simply that specific statement that brands use as an inspiring unifier for all their activities. Using storytelling from an animistic perspective often means infusing objects with a unique spirit, and the power of this perspective lies in the narrative.

Animism and Transhumanism in Communication: Case Studies

The following analysis focuses on how fashion brands are adopting communication strategies oriented either towards Animism (Ferragamo and Dolce and Gabbana) or towards Transhumanism (Jean Paul Gaultier and Coperni). It also presents Alexander McQueen's as a brand with a dualistic spirit, connecting human nature with cyborg elements since its inception.

Animism

Brands use animistic conceptions throughout their narrative to convey their values and their roots as their very essence.

Ferragamo A/W 2023 Campaign: Renaissance:

Ferragamo's F/W 2023 advertising campaign goes back to the roots by returning to the brand's spiritual home: the city of Florence. To communicate this return to the origins of this, it delves into the Renaissance creating a dialogue between the past and the present and ideally reconnecting the essence of the city with the soul of the brand. This narrative also ideally places this specific Ferragamo collection at the same level of the Italian Renaissance, notably defined as a time of unprecedented creativity and innovation in craftsmanship and art. Needless to say, the collection was praised for its creativity and boldness.
Vídeo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2Rqz7O3vos

Fashion Show Dolce & Gabbana Haute Couture A/W 2023-2024:

Dolce & Gabbana presented its F/W 2023 couture show in Alberobello (Puglia), a Unesco World Heritage Site, conveying a narrative inspired by the town's history, by the nature surrounding it, and by traditional craftsmanship, the latter expressed by brand's signature embroidery and lace. The 87 looks of the showcase delicate handwork, enhancing the value of Italian craftsmanship and paying tribute to a long tradition that has become an admirable legacy. The designs are inspired by the traditional local conical-roofed buildings, the "Trulli". As the designers explained, "Symbolic elements and traditions exert a relentless influence on us".
Vídeo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJrHoTZUCek

Transhumanism

Through the transhumanist narrative, brands present collections or advertising campaigns in which the human and the technological converge.

Jean Paul Gaultier ready-to-wear 2022 campaign: Cyber

JPG's Cyber campaign pays tribute to the brand's archive with a capsule collection that reinvents some of the brand's most emblematic pieces inspired by the "Les Amazones" (A/W 95-96) and "Cyberbaba" (A/W 1996) fashion shows. Cyber is an example of the fusion between the transhumanist aesthetics of the past and the future, which - also - appeals to GenZ.
Vídeo: https://www.division.global/videos/cyber

Coperni and it's robots: S/S 2023:
Coperni's S/S 2023 show during Paris Fashion Week 2022 was one of the most anticipated shows of the season. The designers used an avant-garde and revolutionary technology to create a dress made of aerosol fabric on the model's body.
Vídeo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opF95jHtzDc

The dualistic narrative of Alexander McQueen

Together with names like Hussein Chalayan, Jean Paul Gaultier and Thierry Mugler, Alexander McQueen is one of the brands that, since its inception in 1999, has tried to explain the dichotomy between human consciousness and artificial intelligence. The brand's latest creative director, Sarah Burton, expressed this dualistic brand identity in her most recent campaigns.

Alexander McQueen S/S 2020 Campaign:

The purpose of this campaign is to show the essence of the garments and their simplicity. As Sarah Burton said: "to explain the connection between the garments is to show the time it took to make them," emphasizing the value of time and the importance of craftsmanship. Burton tried to channel in the narrative of the collection the fact that each garment has its own history; she also wanted to vehicle the necessity of reconnecting to the elements, hence she presented the collection in front of the sea, in drenched in natural light.
Vídeo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWcy72kG70o

Alexander McQueen S/S 2023: The Slash Bag Fashion film

The fashion film for Alexander McQueen's 2023 campaign, directed by Glen Luchford, offers a haunting look at a futuristic universe that explores the union between humanity and technology through a reinterpretation of the man vs. machine theme. The protagonist enters a dystopian world where she realizes that the artificial will eventually come to dominate mankind.
Vídeo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8d-MEDVsVI

Retail Paradigm

Within the ever-evolving landscape of fashion retail the prominent forces of Animism and Transhumanism, are shaping the industry's future. This section delves into the intricate dynamics of these contrasting philosophies, exploring their impact on digital and in-store experiences. Animism, rooted in emotional connections and narratives, finds expression through luxury brands' endeavors to infuse products and spaces with profound meaning. On the other hand, the rise of Transhumanism and technology prompts a detachment from traditional narratives. Luxury fashion retail seeks a delicate equilibrium, integrating animistic emotional resonance with the transformative potential of Transhumanism. The key lies in mastering this balance, responding to the evolving desires of consumers in a world where physical and digital realms converge.

Animism in retail

The concept of Animism within consumer behavior refers to the connection that individuals develop with fashion items. These items often hold sentimental value. For example many people, develop an attachment to their Levi's jeans, which fosters loyalty to the brand and leads to repeat purchases.

Another driver comes from the concept of "reassurance" that strives to create specific experiences and environments within fashion spaces. A shopping environment designed in a certain way can trigger emotions and make consumers feel "at home". An example of this are the Apple Stores: their minimalist, clean and seamless design creates an atmosphere that encourages customers to explore, with exploration potentially evolving into purchase.

Fashion luxury is indeed trending towards a more animistic approach in the field of physical and in-store experiences. Luxury brands acknowledge the value of creating emotional connections with consumers by embodying deeper meanings in products and spaces. For instance, Louis Vuitton's "Objets Nomades" collection features designs that incorporate both functionality and an emotional narrative, reflecting the animistic idea of "objects with a soul." Along this line, by preserving the original apartment of Coco Chanel, Chanel's boutique in Paris displays the brand's everlasting connection to its founder. Such experiences channel heritage and storytelling, creating a connection with consumers on a profound level, and ultimately demonstrating the growing animistic trend in luxury fashion, where products and spaces become vessels of meaning and emotion.

While e-commerce has reshaped the fashion industry, it's also unlikely that it will replace fashion flagships and stores in full. Many luxury and heritage brands recognize the importance of physical stores. Purposely so, Hermès, known for its commitment to craftsmanship and artisanal practices, remains faithful to its brick-and-mortar boutiques. These stores offer an animistic experience, where each item embodies a story and a connection to the brand's traditions. Similarly, brands like Gucci emphasize experiential luxury in their physical stores, blending digital and physical elements to create immersive environments. While e-commerce is essential, these examples show that animistic in-store experiences and the emotional connections they encourage are likely to persist alongside digital channels.

The implementation of animistic experiences changes across different segments of the fashion industry, reflecting the unique characteristics and consumer expectations of each one of them. For example, fast-fashion brands like Zara are known for rapid turnover, but they can still embrace animism through storytelling. Zara's "Join Life" collection, is focused on sustainable materials and practices that connect with consumers on a deeper level by emphasizing environmental awareness.

Premium brands such as Ralph Lauren often blend heritage and modernity. Ralph Lauren's flagship stores, like the one on Madison Avenue in New York, feature curated spaces that showcase the brand's history, creating an animistic connection to its iconic lifestyle.

Affordable luxury brands like Michael Kors bridge affordability and luxury. Michael Kors' retail strategy involves creating visually appealing store layouts with immersive displays, offering a taste of luxury within a budget.

Moreover, high luxury brands like Louis Vuitton use Animism to elevate the shopping experience. Their stores feature exquisite craftsmanship and storytelling (exemplified by the aforementioned Objets Nomades collection) making each piece a work of art.

Transhumanism in retail

The consumer behavior in fashion retail is increasingly influenced by the growing trend of Transhumanism and digitization, particularly by the integration of digital screens and technology in the shopping experience. These factors are reshaping how consumers interact with fashion brands and make purchasing decisions.

Transhumanism is a movement that seeks to enhance human capabilities through advanced technologies. In fashion retail, this is clearly represented by the use of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to create immersive shopping experiences. For example, Gucci's AR app that allows customers to try on virtual sneakers and see how they look in real-time, thus boosting the shopping experience.

The proliferation of digital screens in fashion retail spaces is another significant trend. These screens serve various purposes, from displaying product information to showcasing interactive advertisement. Uniqlo, for example, employs large digital screens in its stores to provide customers with real-time style advice and outfit recommendations, engaging with them in the shopping process.

Even luxury fashion like Louis Vuitton are investing in high-tech, futuristic experiences. The Louis Vuitton X exhibition in Los Angeles, for instance, featured immersive digital displays, augmented reality experiences, and interactive elements, emphasizing a fusion of luxury and technology. This might indicate, in the long run, a potential shift from Animism towards a more tech-driven approach also in luxury fashion retail.

Online shopping has reshaped consumer behavior, offering convenience and a wide product range. Notably, Amazon has disrupted traditional retail, forcing brands like Nike to focus on direct-to-consumer e-commerce strategies. Luxury brands have also adapted; An example is Burberry, which renovated its digital presence to provide immersive online experiences while retaining the essence of its physical stores. However, the ultimate solution is a seamless omnichannel approach, where online and offline retail coexist. Brands investing in robust e-commerce platforms while creating unique experiences are more likely to thrive in the evolving retail landscape.

The implementation of transhumanist experiences in the fashion industry is poised to impact various segments in distinct ways:

Fast-fashion brands may take advantage of wearable technology for personalized shopping experiences. For example, H&M experimented with interactive mirrors that allow customers to request different sizes or styles without leaving the dressing room.

Premium brands might focus on smart textiles, offering garments that monitor health or adjust to environmental conditions. For example, the Ralph Lauren's PoloTech shirt which tracks biometric data.

Affordable luxury brands could explore augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) for immersive online shopping, following the line of ASOS's AR app, which allows users to virtually try on products.

Finally, luxury brands might invest in exclusive Transhumanist experiences. For instance, Dior partnered with AR company Snap to launch Snapchat filters during its fashion show, allowing users to virtually wear Dior accessories.

The future of luxury fashion retail is fighting for a harmonious blend of animism and transhumanism. While physical stores will continue to evoke emotions and narratives, e-commerce will leverage advanced technologies to provide seamless, personalized, and immersive digital experiences. Successful brands will master this balance, catering to the evolving desires of their discerning.

CONCLUSIONS

In the intricate scenario of fashion's future, Animism and Transhumanism engage in a captivating dance, reflecting the profound shifts in human existence. Animism, heralded by Li Edelkoort, beckons a return to craftsmanship and ecological harmony, resonating as a response to our environmentally challenged world. Simultaneously, Transhumanism propels fashion into a digital frontier, exploring realms where artificial intelligence and virtual experiences redefine the very essence of the human form.

Trend forecasters Marcello Bonvini and Alberto Costabello predict a nuanced coexistence of analog and digital with different nuances: while Marcello Bonvini emphasizes dematerialization and digital experiences opposing to tangible and very expensive products, Costabello highlights a return to traditional values while also recognizing the importance of digital as a performative tool for progress in the fields of personalization and efficiency.

Delving deeper into the realms of product, communication, and retail environments, the fashion landscape unveils a dynamic interplay. Animism finds expression in emotional connections and narratives, leading to immersive in-store experiences with a focus on heritage. Transhumanism integrates technology, employing AR, VR, and digital screens to redefine the shopping journey.

As luxury brands navigate this dualistic terrain, successful strategies embrace both Animism and Transhumanism. Physical stores become vessels of meaning, emphasizing emotional connections, while e-commerce adopts advanced technologies for seamless, personalized, and immersive digital experiences. Perhaps human beings will privilege the physical contact and real experiences event though the digital progression towards to humanless will educate them to prefer the tecno-produce "multiverse" sensations.

However, we are uncertain whether the yin-yang dualism of animism and transhumanism will converge into a unified vision of the future or persist as an eternal divergence between body and soul. The uncertainty inherent in philosophical inquiries is undeniable. Yet, in the ever-evolving and unpredictable realm of fashion, stories must be told. Those who wish to listen or align themselves with these narratives must adapt to a language that is in a perpetual state of flux—whether it centers on the human experience or leans towards the cyborg narrative. Regardless of the outcome, the need for storytelling remains a constant, shaping the narrative of fashion and its enigmatic evolution.

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