

## **Darwin in Fashion, Fashion Innovation as a Co-evolving Cultural Process**

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In this paper the Darwinian framework of variation, selection and retention/speciation is used to assess the possible success of fashion innovations. For this, the question about 'fitness criteria' in the realm of consumer products is addressed. Moreover, not only consumers are selectors. First of all firms select product ideas which are further developed and presented to a market. And on the market experts, opinion leaders and peers (other consumers within sub-cultures) co-define the value of - especially - fashion innovations. For different fashion items this system works differently, according to different aspects of value which play a role: functional, emotional, symbolic, social. We can ask ourselves to what extent new technologies (the e-part of the 2006 IFFTI conference) have an influence on this process, or to what extent they are mediated by certain selectors. Moreover, as different actors - co-selectors - attach value to different products, they co-create value. Increasingly they are also rewarded for this.