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From Basic to Treasure

Artisanal Techniques as Slow Fashion Resource

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Abstract

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This thesis is focused on the relevance and use of artisanal techniques as a resource for slow fashion business.

To understand the relevance of the theme, facts are pointed out that expose the textile industry today and why the promotion of sustainable and fair work practices is essential for a better future.

The aim of this project is to look for answers of why slow fashion associated with artisanal techniques is relevant and a good practice for small entrepreneurs, argue for the values of artisanal techniques and how these techniques can become a great resource for slow fashion business. As well as to revisit handmade and artisanal techniques and their values through an experimental creative process and explore aesthetic possibilities for future projects.

The Experimental part is a creative laboratory, dedicated to making textile experiments and consideration of its applicability in fashion production. The experiments work as prototypes and give a good base to analyze the suitability of these techniques to produce future fashion collections. These analyses will be based on my own observations and experiences during this creative process.

Keywords: slow fashion, handmade, artisanal, sustainability

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Tässä opinnäytetyössä keskitytään slow fashionin merkityksellisyyteen ja käsityötekniikoiden käyttöön slow fashion liiketoiminnan resursseina.

Teeman relevanssin ymmärtämiseksi tuodaan esille faktoja, jotka paljastavat tekstiiliteollisuuden tavan toimia nykyään ja miksi kestävien ja reilujen työtapojen edistäminen on olennaista paremman tulevaisuuden kannalta.

Tämän projektin tavoitteena on etsiä vastauksia siihen, miksi käsityötekniikoihin yhdistetty hidas muoti on relevanttia ja hyvä käytäntö pienyrityksille, argumentoida käsityötekniikoiden arvoja ja kuinka näistä tekniikoista voi tulla tärkeä resurssi Slow fashion muotiliiketoiminnalle. Tavoitteena on myös tutustua käsityötekniikoihin ja niiden arvoihin kokeellisen luovan prosessin kautta ja tutkia esteettisiä mahdollisuuksia tulevia projekteja varten.

Kokeellinen osa on luova laboratorio, jossa tehdään tekstiilikokeita ja pohditaan niiden soveltuvuutta muotituotannossa. Kokeilut toimivat prototyyppeinä ja antavat hyvän pohjan analysoida näiden tekniikoiden soveltuvuutta tulevien muotimallistojen tuottamiseen. Nämä analyysit perustuvat omiin havaintoihini ja kokemuksiini tämän luovan prosessin aikana.

Avainsanat: hidas muoti, käsintehty, kestävä kehitys, luova prosessi

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1 Introduction

We live on a planet which natural resources have been overexploited almost to the last resource. The textile industry is said to be one of the main polluters in recent history.

As a textile designer my goal is to keep textile materials and their value in circulation for as long as possible as it is imperative to create products that are special, timeless and that we can use, value and love for a long time and pass them on from generation to generation.

The market demands sustainable business and products that are unique, ethical, and fully committed to environmental responsibility, from dyeing to packaging and fibre selection to finishing.

Companies are required to adapt to this new market, working with a transparent production system, ensuring ethical and non-exploitative production methods, creating products with ethical and socio-cultural values. This concept implies that companies that focus on quality over quantity, symbolic values, and cultural experiences. In this new scenario, unique, artistic, recycled and upcycled products produced locally, as well as people's manual skills, are going to be much more valued.

Timeless products are not just basic and made from plain textiles, but they are those that are made with care, using artisanal and handmade techniques. The ones that evoke emotions, sensations and tell stories. This is what makes a product valued, cherished, cared for, and used for a long time.

The aim of this thesis is to look for answers to why slow fashion associated with artisanal techniques is relevant and a good practice for small entrepreneurs. In addition, it also aims to revisit handmade and artisanal techniques and their

values through an experimental creative process and explore aesthetic possibilities for future projects.

This project is not about embellishments and decorations. It's about keeping traditions and skills alive and updating them for a new and sustainable future. It's about care. Care for what touches our skin. Care for the people that provided you the product. Care for the planet and for the next generations and for what it will remain after we are long gone.

Through experimentation with different materials and artisanal textile techniques, I'm aiming to gather a collection of surface designs suitable for slow fashion collections.

The starting point is the use of plain fabrics and surplus materials to explore the possibilities of surface design using artisanal techniques.

To understand why this subject is relevant, it is necessary to understand the textile industry and its socio-environmental impacts.

This thesis research and situates the contemporary textile industry and the slow fashion concept from a designer's point of view. In addition, the main focus is to find arguments that support my beliefs in why the use of artisanal techniques can be a good resource for small business. It also argues for how artisanal techniques can become a differentiator and a good alternative for small fashion entrepreneurs and why it is believed that artisanal techniques can contribute to prolonging the life of a garment.

I approach this subject looking globally but thinking locally. My goal is to learn from examples from all around the world and consider possible applications in the Finnish market.

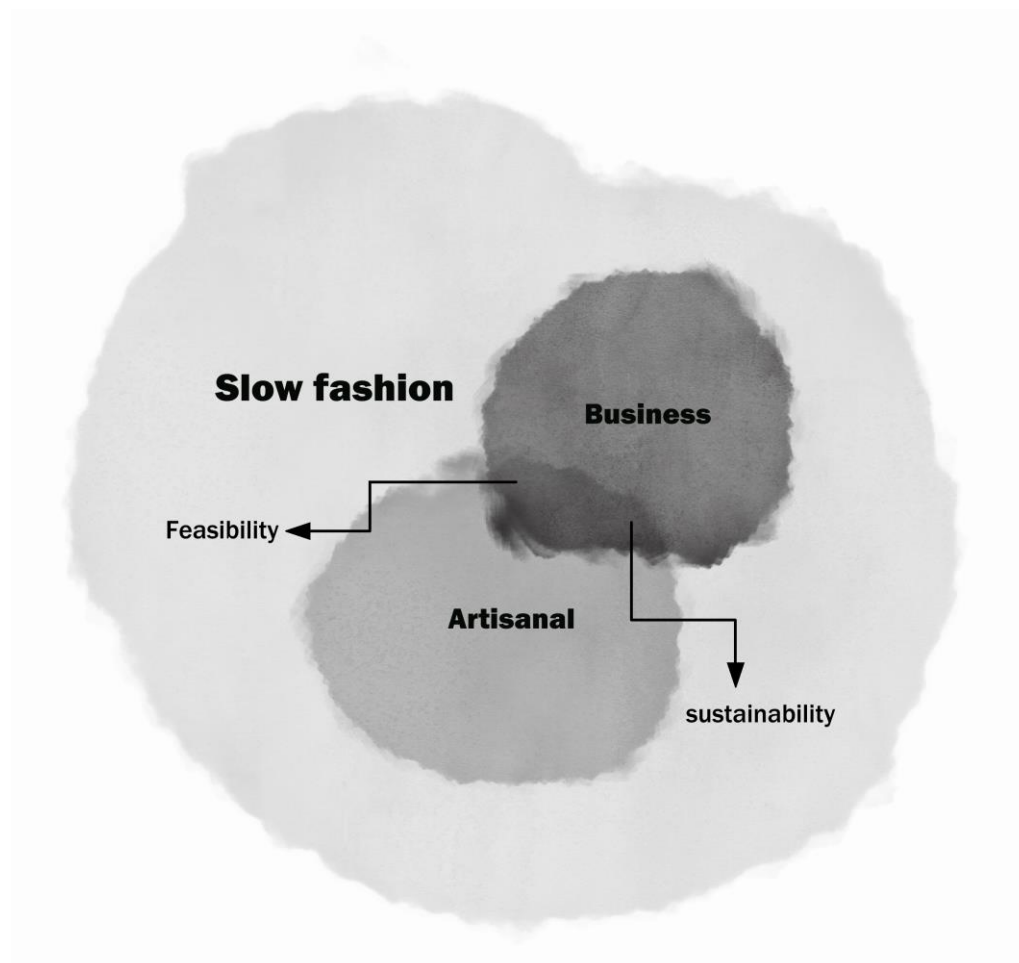
In this thesis, I will use terms like artisanal, handmade and handcraft to describe the production characterized by manual work, as individuals or in small groups,

in which the worker uses his/her skills as a means of production. I consider the use of techniques that are made by hands or with a use of machines (like sewing machines), but not automatized.

This project and experiments have been made with love for all handmade and artisanal visual expression.

2 Framework and Research Methodology

The framework of this thesis is the study of the concept of slow fashion, its feasibility and sustainability considering the use of artisanal techniques as a competitive edge for success in the fashion business.



This thesis is qualitative in nature. This thesis presents my own reflection and analysis of the subject as the result of this study, based on currently available publications and interviews.

The theoretic part presents facts that characterize the textile industry today, the concept of slow fashion and artisanal work values and characteristics.

The research aims to look for answers to why slow fashion is relevant and a good practice for small entrepreneurs and argue for the values of artisanal techniques and how these techniques can become a great resource for slow fashion business.

The thesis presents initiatives from entrepreneurs that use artisanal techniques as a main differentiator for their business, as well interviews.

The experimental part is a creative laboratory, dedicated to making textile experiments and consideration of its applicability in fashion production. The experiments work as prototypes and give a good base to analyse the suitability of these techniques to produce future fashion collections.

Before going to the heart of the matter and understanding why the concept of slow fashion is so relevant today, it is important to know how the textile industry operates and its socio-environmental implications at a global level.

3 The textile industry

The textile industry is responsible for transforming fibres into yarns and textiles. Textiles have been around us for thousands of years. Textiles are the closest thing to us, touching our skin, warming, and protecting us. They are found everywhere in our daily life, in our homes, cars, boats, public transport, public spaces and even in space stations. Textiles play an important role in comfort, utility, decoration, and insulation.

Textiles also gave us fashion. Fashion can mean clothes but carries a broader meaning. Fashion is our way of presenting ourselves to the world. Fashion tells who we are, without words. Fashion inserts or excludes us in political and social contexts. Fashion is about our identity, who we are and what we believe in. Fashion builds our own image and how we want to show ourselves socially, it helps us belong to groups and promote ideas.

You may not be interested in fashion, but every day, you cover yourself with clothes that tell the world who you are (Thomas 2015).

Unfortunately, the same industry that is so important to us, is also the same one that is responsible for serious socioenvironmental problems.

The fashion industry affects one hundred percent of the world's population, with socio-environmental impacts and a confusing and disconnected supply chain that ranges from agriculture to communication, overloading natural resources and socio-economically impacting many people (de Castro 2021, XIII).

3.1 Textile Fibres

Textile fibre is the raw material used to produce fabrics, whether of natural origin (vegetable, animal, or mineral), or of artificial or synthetic origin.

Unfortunately, in the current textile industry, there is not a single raw material that can be considered sustainable (Colerato 2022).

3.1.1 Artificial Fibres

Artificial fibres are man-made fibres, produced chemically, from natural raw materials. Some examples are bamboo, lyocell and viscose.

Artificial fibres are obtained through chemical transformation to extract cellulose from wood pulp extracted from wood from fast-growing trees, implying the use of various chemical products that can end up being dumped into the environment without prior treatment.

Viscose is one of the most used fibres in the world and its use is also causing a negative impact on the environment, (Colerato 2022) especially in Brazil, Canada, and Indonesia, where native forests have been cut down for viscose production, threatening the ecosystem and indigenous communities (Charpail 2017).

3.1.2 Natural Fibres

Natural fibres can be of animal or vegetable origin, extracted directly from nature and processed afterwards to provide softening and dyeing. Some examples of widely used natural fibres are cotton, linen, wool and silk.

For many, natural fibres are a clear choice when thinking about avoiding environmental issues, but in reality, with the market's high demands, despite the modern technologies its production can be as harmful as that of synthetic fibres.

Cotton production is the biggest villain of the textile industry, requiring an enormous amount of water, energy, and chemicals for its production.

Cotton is the champion in use of insecticides and pesticides. (Trent, 2020). Some of these chemicals are carcinogens, that put the health of rural workers at risk. Unfortunately, the organic cotton production is still very small, but it has been growing year after year.

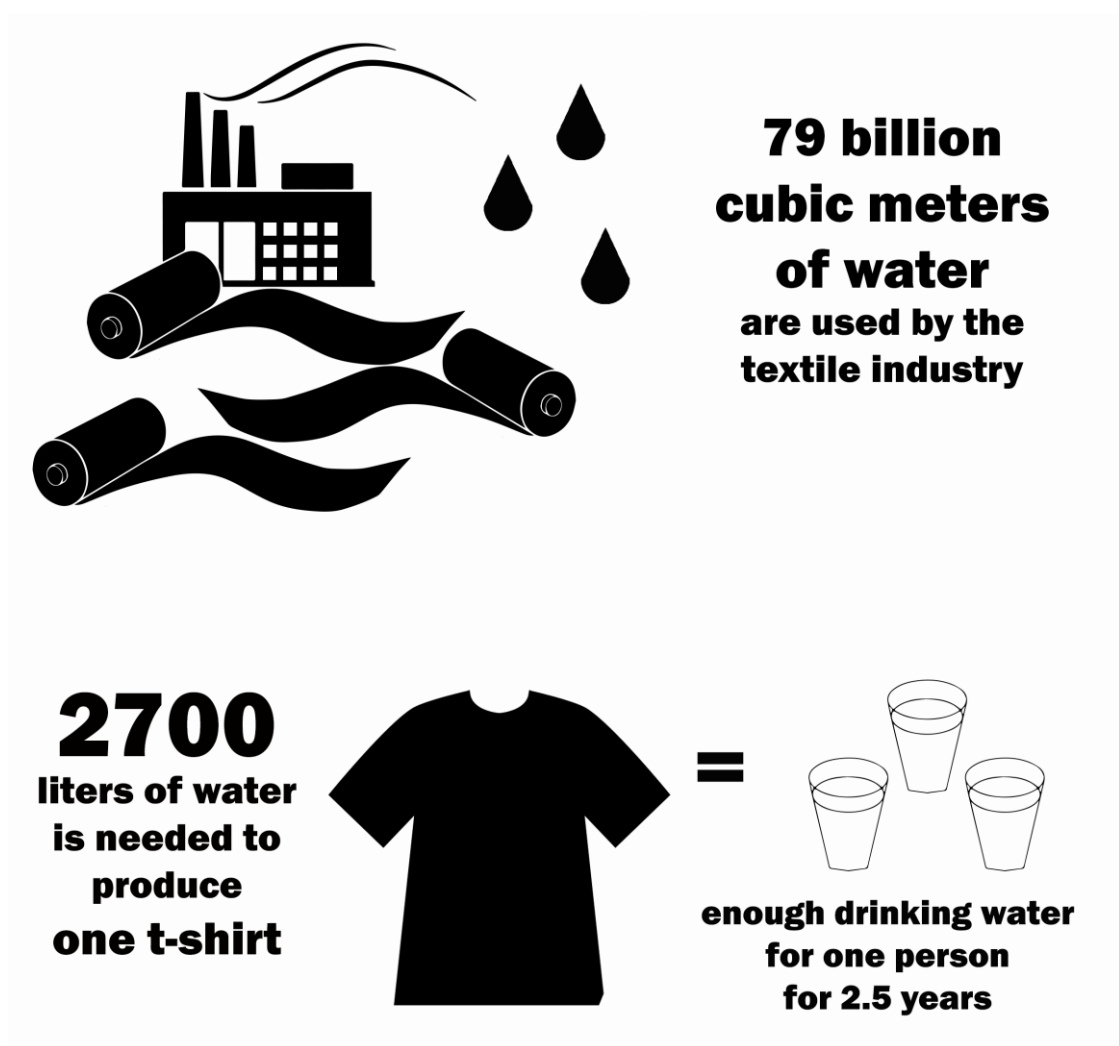


Figure 1: Water consumption for cotton production. Own illustration based on content from: European Parliament. The impact of textile production and waste on the environment (Infographic).

3.1.3 Synthetic Fibres

Synthetic fibres are also man-made fibres, composed of small molecules originating from synthesized polymers, derived from fossil raw materials, such as petroleum-based chemicals or petrochemicals. The most used synthetic fibre

is polyester and is also the most used fibre in the world right now, followed by cotton.

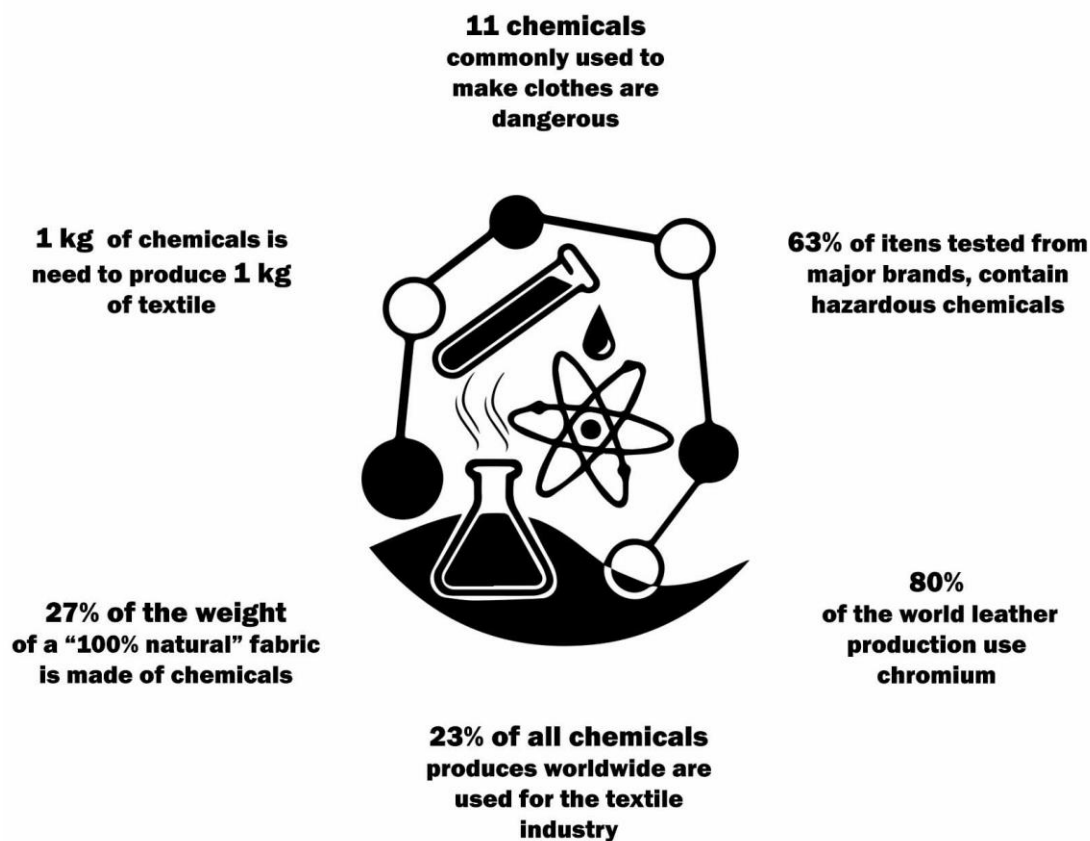


Figure 2: Chemicals used by textile industry. Own illustration based on content from: Sustain your style, 2022.

Most polyester is derived from petroleum, and its production generate greenhouse gas emissions. While not all polyester is produced from petroleum; only a small fraction of polyester is made from natural polymers. (Dottle & Gu 2022.)

Polyester is very versatile, used in sportswear, faux fur and synthetic silk. Polyester requires a lot of energy to produce, and its impact doesn't stop after the fabric is ready, because with every wash and use, polyester sheds microplastics that end up in rivers and oceans, endangering the health of animals and humans around the world. (Dottle & Gu 2022.)

3.2 The Textile Industry and its Social and Environmental Impact

With the increase in global population and the development of technology, production costs are being reduced while production is increasing at alarming levels.

Global textile production has tripled over a period of 50 years. Europeans consume an average of 31 kilos of textile products per year (EJF 2020).

Since its industrialization, the textile industry has been responsible for human exploitation, making use of slavery and child labor, even nowadays (Thomas 2019).

According to the United Nations (2019), “the fashion industry is widely believed to be the second most polluting industry in the world.”

More than ever, clothing is being produced at a frenetic pace. Of the total fibres used for clothing, eighty-seven percent are incinerated or sent to landfills, while only a fraction is recycled. In addition to the often exploitative and dangerous working conditions, fashion brands have been accused of destroying unsold products or filling landfills. (Dottle & Gu 2022.)

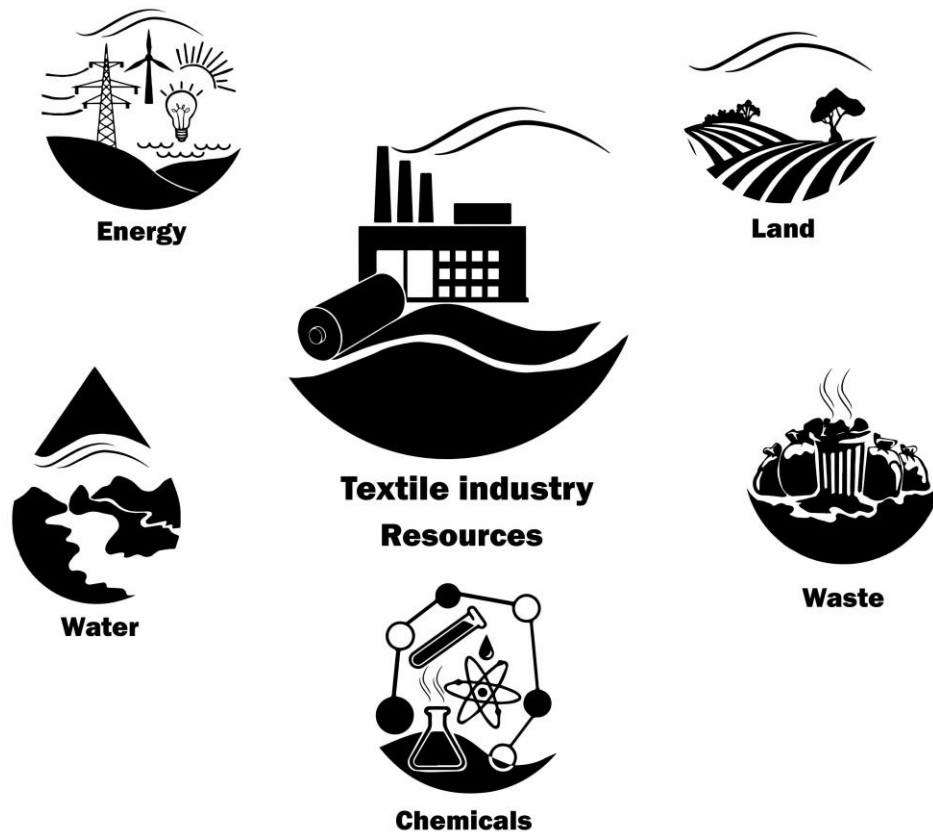


Figure 3: Own illustration of resources needed in textile industry

The world is demanding sustainable practices. To achieve sustainability in the textile industry, it is imperative that designers understand the components of the industry's production chain and commit to finding socio-environmental solutions that make the textile industry more sustainable.

Associated with the environmental consequences are the labor conditions. The social impact of the textile industry is also very alarming. Millions of employees around the globe are forced to work in conditions that specialists call modern slavery, in unsafe places for excessive amounts of hours and ridiculously low wages.

Slavery and exploitation exist at all stages in the making of our clothes, from harvesting to yarn spinners including forced labor, with little or no payment and inadequate contracts without workers' rights (Unseen 2022).

With such increasing production and exploitative work practices, it is also very alarming to think that very little is recycled, and a lot goes to waste.

Textile waste is the pre-consumer or post-consumer textile that has been discarded. Pre-consumer waste is the left-over material used in the fashion industry, such as fabric scraps and mock-ups and unsold products. It can represent up to 30% of the industry's production. Post-consumer is the discarded worn clothes. Xu (2020.)

As reported by Ellen MacArthur Foundation report (2020) – Redesigning fashion's future- "less than 1% of used clothing becomes new clothes. One truckload of clothes has been burned or landfilled every second. About 73% of textile waste is incinerated or disposed of in sanitary landfills."



**7 times
in average, a garment
is worn before being
thrown away**



**35 kg textile waste
is generated per
person per year in the
US in average**



**Only 20% to 30%
of the clothes of most
women's wardrobes
are being worn**

Figure 4: Textile waste. Own illustration based on content from: Sustain your style, 2022.

Though there are many initiatives to transform the textile industry into a sustainable business, we are far from the ideal. The textile industry is responsible for water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and landfill.

We need to ensure that products are made sustainably, but also that the disposal of these same products is reduced, and when they need to be discarded, that it is done in a sustainable way.

We cannot think that our planet offers endless and limitless resources. The pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and other environmentally degrading practices affect millions, if not every one of us.

A recent “study from the U.K. found that 1 in 3 respondents consider clothes old after one or two wears. (...) People throw out clothing after wearing items an average of seven to 10 times.” (Dottle & Gu 2022.)

Unfortunately, big companies with big budgets and their smart marketing campaigns have been pushing us to consume more and more. “Nowadays, there is the culture that poor people wear old stuff, rich people buy new” (de Castro 2021, 11).

The good news is that there are a lot of positive things happening in the industry all over the world, with the development of new sustainable fibres, new recycling technologies and waste management. Lately, in Finland we have been watching the development of new technologies related to creating new renewable fibres and modern ways of production.

Companies like Infinited Fibre Company, Ioncell from Aalto University and Spinnova are creating innovative technologies that turns textile waste into a new fibre or producing textile fibres without the use of harmful chemicals (Fablehti 2021).

Spinnova, a company owned by Spinnova and a Brazilian partner and investor Suzano, already announced a collaboration with the giant fast fashion brand H&M (Spinnova 2022).

This commitment from H&M to sourcing sustainable materials is very good news. Though it is not a solution for fast fashion, considering people’s consumerism and working practices, it’s a beginning, showing that even fast

fashion brands are already understanding the value and impact that sustainability can make on their business. These innovative initiatives will help to spread sustainable products around the globe, minimizing the industry's negative impacts.

It is necessary to keep in mind that a large part of the Earth's population, even if they want to have a more sustainable consumption, cannot afford to choose what to wear, except by the price. Making these innovations reach the entire world population is the key to achieving the solution to the environmental problems caused by the textile industry.

3.3 Fast Fashion and Ultra-Fast Fashion

But where does all this production go?

With an increasing demand for more clothes, since the global population is continuously increasing, fast fashion industry focus on trends and inexpensive garments produced in subcontracted factories situated mostly in developing countries and sold in chain stores world-wide (Thomas 2019).

With new trends every week displayed in shop windows at low prices, fast fashion chains are motivating consumers to discard last week's trend and buy the new ones (UN 2019).

It's easy to see why fast fashion has become such a popular and profitable business. By producing quickly and cheaply, and using a powerful marketing method, they are able to offer consumers the latest, desired trends at affordable prices (Stanton 2021).

“There is no beauty in the finest cloth if it makes hunger and unhappiness.” Mahatma Gandhi

What is Ultra-Fast Fashion? Ultra-fast fashion is a quicker and cheaper way of making clothes that is trending right now. Ultra-fast fashion brands found in

social media a perfect way to market their goods, motivating and sponsoring influencers and TikTokers, that spread their ads disguised as content.



Figure 5: Fashion production. Own illustration based on content from: Sustain your style, 2022.

To meet Western demand, ultra-fast fashion companies outsource their production to Asian countries, such as Cambodia and Bangladesh where Asians, especially women, work under exploitative working conditions, defining what is conventionally called modern colonialism (Hannam 2022).

Ultra-fast fashion companies invest largely in marketing and research to understand customers 'needs and desires. And they work very fast, reproducing the latest trends from major fashion shows, within a window of a week. (Menon 2022).



Figure 6: The Tullahan River - Philippines. Detox my campaign (Greenpeace 2022).

In fact, it has become very easy for consumers from developed countries, to disguise the “throw away” clothes with charity intentions and put the not anymore desired items in charity boxes. What many people are not aware of, is that these clothes are filling landfills in African and South American countries, like Ghana and Chile. Fashion brands are also throwing out unsold items and it is very shocking to find out that a good part of the clothes in the landfills still have their price tags on. (Plastic Soup Foundation 2022.)



Figure 7: Textile waste in Ghana. Muntaka Chasant/Shutterstock.

On 24th of April 2013, the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with more than 5000 people, most of them manufacturing clothing for many of the biggest global fashion brands collapsed, killing 1132 people, and injuring more than 2500 (ILO 2018).

This horrible event showed the world that the massive production of cheap clothes meant the exploitation of labor at unacceptable levels. The ugly truth behind shining brands and smart marketing took the world by surprise.

Since then, initiatives like Fashion Revolution, founded by Carry Somers and Orsola de Castro have been growing and it became “the world’s largest fashion activism movement” (Fashion Revolution 2022).

Campaigns like “Who made my clothes?”, “Who made my fabric?” and “Fashion revolution week” have been gaining visibility throughout social media and in

major media vehicles, enlightening the common consumer with practices and concepts not before considered, like sustainability and fair pay.



Figure 8: Manifestation in Bangladesh after the collapse of the Rana building.
NurPhoto

Confusing supply chains hide exploitative working conditions and environmental practices that impact communities as well, the entire planet. (Fashion revolution 2022). Believing that transparency is fundamental to achieve real changes, Fashion Revolution also created the Fashion Transparency Index, which exposes and measures the social and environmental efforts of fashion brands.

Every year, the IR – (Index Research), researches concrete actions related to sourcing of materials, waste and circularity, supply chain traceability, among others.

Nowadays, there are numerous organizations and associations working in different sectors with the goal to transform the textile industry into a less harmful and shameful one.

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation is also working hard promoting and researching circular economy principles and practices. This means to ensure that fashion products are used more and once they are discarded, they can be fully recycled. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2020.)

We are running against the clock, as European Union strategy for sustainable and circular textiles aims to achieve by 2030 that all textile EU products must be recyclable and free of hazardous substances (European Commission 2022).

4 Slow Fashion

“The most sustainable clothing is the one you already have! ” Unknown author.

Kate Fletcher was the pioneer in the use of the expression Slow Fashion, comparing in 2007, a sustainable and ethical fashion industry with the slow food movement.

Ever since, the slow fashion movement has been changing businesses and consumers' relations with their products.

Slow fashion is a very broad concept. It promotes the idea of more sustainable and conscious production and consumption. But for this to happen, companies are required to have a real commitment to sustainable practices and total attention to the quality and origin of the materials used and respect for the environment, from the planting of natural fibers to their harvesting, processing, dyeing, packing and transport.

4.1 Supply Chain

Below is a picture that helps to understand each step of the fashion supply chain.

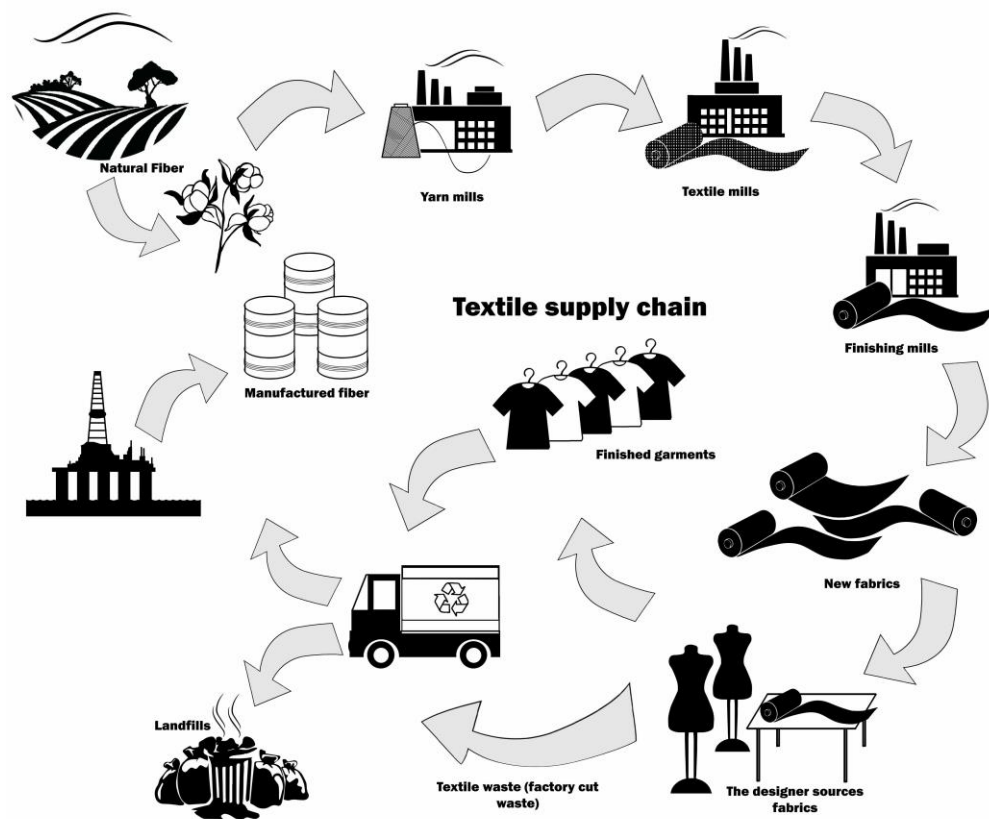


Figure 9: Own illustration based on Gail Baugh 2011 - book – The fashion designer’s textile directory, with some simplifications and additions.

The fashion supply chain is a long process involving many stages of textile production, from sourcing raw materials to producing fibres, spinning process to produce yarns, weaving, or knitting fabrics, finishing, dyeing, printing, garment manufacturing, merchandising and disposal.

To trace all the steps of the supply chain is not an easy task. Since the beginning of globalization in the 90’s, the production of textile moved to developing countries, (especially Asia), which makes it very difficult for designers to find sustainable raw materials that are produced locally. Usually, a good way is to rely on certifications. Certifications help entrepreneurs and designers to source raw materials since they guarantee the quality and socioenvironmental impact in the community in which it operates.

According to Kristiina Traeger (2018), there are many ways to define sustainability in fashion, but the simplest and shortest way is to find balance between people, planet, and profit (Traeger 2018).

Sustainable fashion is based on protecting the environment at all stages of production, reducing the amount of harmful chemicals that put people and the environment at risk, improve logistics, produce timeless collections with a focus on product quality, and promote the recycling and disposal of materials responsibly.

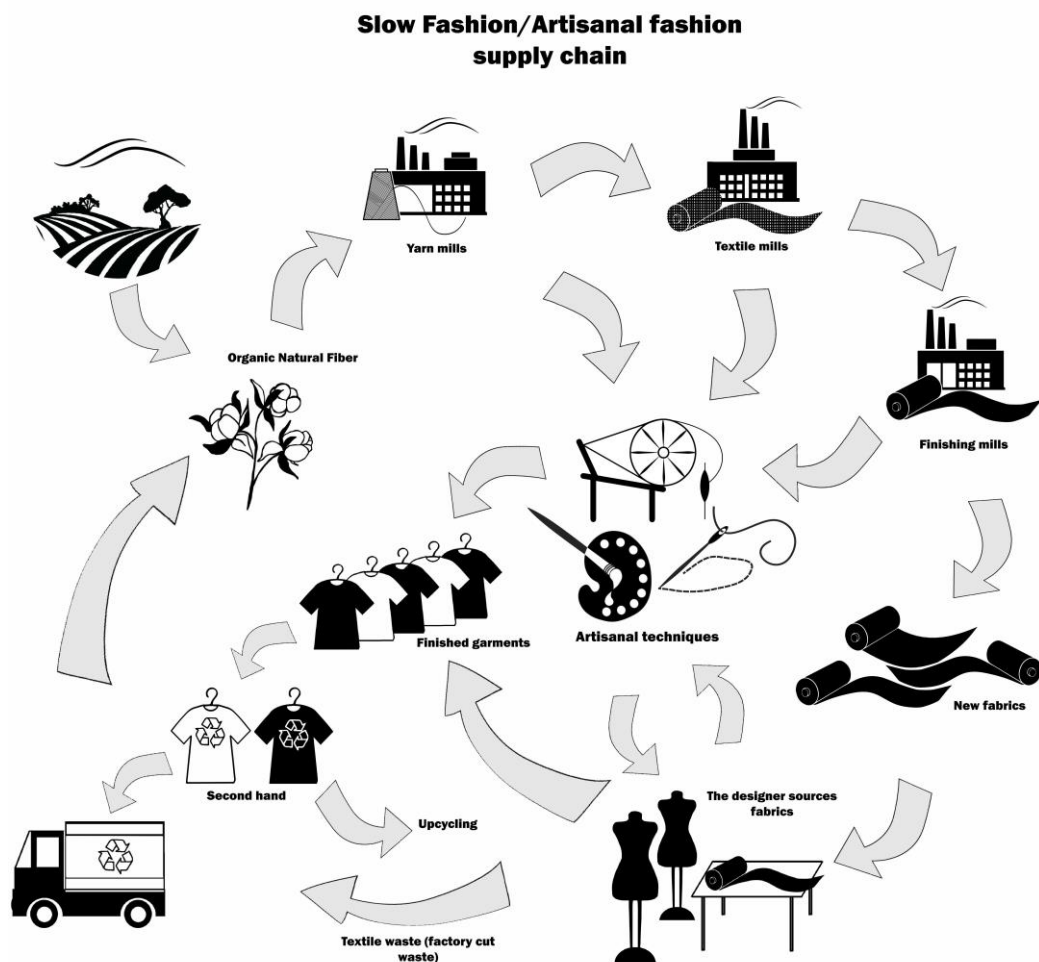


Figure 10: Own illustration based on Gail Baugh 2011 - book – The fashion designer's textile directory, with some suggestions of how Slow Fashion/ Artisanal supply chain can be.

Simpler and more sustainable logistics, as it seeks to strengthen the relationship between the various elements of the supply chain, and a closer relationship between partners and producers of local raw materials, when possible, can be an advantage. Closer commercial ties with small producers strengthens the local economy, a significant foundation for slow fashion. The reduction of intermediation between producer and consumer, in practice, means less interference in product prices, which can make an impact on the final price.

In a global effort, the United Nations has also been working to promote a more sustainable fashion industry, with the program Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, which aims to stop fashion's social environmental destructive practices. The alliance is improving collaborations and analyzing the efforts to make fashion sustainable. (Geneva Environmental Network 2022.)



Figure 11: Impact of the fashion industry on the SDGs (UNECE, 2018)
(Geneva Environmental Network 2022)

The entrepreneurs of sustainable businesses always need to research new technologies and new materials. With technologies always evolving, for the concessions made today, the solutions can appear tomorrow. One of the biggest challenges of a sustainable business is to source sustainable materials and ensure that the people involved in production has received fair compensation, in a safe work environment.

Entrepreneurs, regardless of how sustainable they want their business to be, are forced to choose production processes that they can control. It is not always the ideal, but it is what is possible.

Faced with this market demand, Brazilians Denise Frade and Gabriela Marcondes Schott founded Ecomaterioteca in 2016. Ecomaterioteca (that here we can translate as “Eco material library”) is a company that offers several services for companies that intend to walk on a sustainable path, such as consulting, collections, educational actions, sustainability workshops and entrepreneurship mentoring, among others. They have already cataloged more than 800 eco-material samples from 50 different Brazilian companies, making it possible and easily accessible for entrepreneurs to purchase these products (Ecomaterioteca 2022).

Ecomaterioteca's goal is to socialize and democratize knowledge, research and innovation of sustainable practices using responsible materials available in the national market” (Ecomaterioteca 2022).

Same principles, the business-to business online platform Sourcing Playground's mission is to give the brands the tools to connect with sustainable producers and helping fashion companies make responsible sourcing decisions. With initiatives like these, fashion companies can source sustainable raw materials in an easier, faster, and smarter way. (Zafar 2022.)

As the natural resources are not endless, the textile materials are also not disposable. Designers need to consider that textile waste can be used in creative ways in new products. Katie Krebs (2022) advocates that “waste is a design flaw. The ability to create circularity of all materials eliminates waste and builds a sustainable world.”

The use of surplus materials and care with waste must also be considered, adding a very positive point that can generate countless opportunities for the slow fashion business. Rethinking the disposal and use of production leftovers

can generate new business opportunities with a lot of added value. As in slow fashion, the items are produced on a smaller scale and with greater attention to each piece, it is possible to have a dynamic collection, celebrating creativity with unique and exclusive pieces, which becomes a great differential compared to fast fashion companies.

Brazilian stylist Gloria Coelho, who has worked with fashion for 47 years, believes that the pandemic has greatly accelerated an awareness process. “I feel that people are thinking more inclusively, more ecologically, more sustainably,” she said. Her brand, for example, is reusing old fabrics instead of new ones. “This company is 47 years old. Now we have decided to use all the old fabric deadstock, which I feel is a huge obligation. What I do is give new meaning to it,” she stated. For her, “these types of attitudes are small, but it's a start.” (Coelho 2022). (Free translation).

Small actions like this, done every day can make a big difference over the course of a year. Like this, alternatives for changes in consumption and production behavior can impact the environment on a small and large scale.

“Textile waste is not garbage; it is raw material!” Unknown author

Zero waste Daniel is New York fashion designer that uses pre-consumer cut-outs from New York City’s garment industry, to create colorful and genderless patchworks and appliques. Daniel’s business is based on a zero-waste concept and his mission is to send as little to landfill as possible. (Silverstein 2022.)

Brazilian upcycling brand Re-Roupa is working with surplus materials from major Brazilian clothing brands. The brand is a production laboratory promoting a collaborative chain of designers and artisans (Re-Roupa 2022).

Another beautiful Brazilian example is Oficina muda. Oficina MUDA (2022) (translates as CHANGE workshop) is an upcycling fashion workshop that selects, reuses and repairs discarded pieces, parts, and deadstock from major partner brands, giving new life to old, discharged products. Their mission is to promote the circular economy in an innovative and creative way. According to

their website, approximately 450,000 pieces have been re-signified through upcycling to this date.

The Oficina MUDA connects companies and artisans from all over Brazil for the creation and development of sustainable and creative solutions for the reuse of waste. They believe in the transformative power of collaboration. The parts received are analyzed and carefully selected. Then, the type of repair and modification that will be carried out on the clothing are defined. In addition to creating new garments, the workshop also produces accessories and home decor items (Oficina muda 2022).

The idea is that the clothes are renewed, and a new cycle begins. After upcycling, clothes and accessories gain new life and meaning, increasing the lifespan of the piece, in favor of a more sustainable future.

It is necessary to have a deep knowledge of the target audience and what this audience wants to use. Ethically conscious companies become spokespeople for sustainable ideas and encourage an ethical conscience in others, creating conscious consumers. Every brand, through its marketing, makes an emotional invitation to consumers who identify with it. It is important that the brand is truly committed to these values, in order to create a loyal target audience that is engaged in the brand's values. Brand transparency makes consumers understand that there are real concerns and real actions being taken, aimed at solutions to sustainability problems and dilemmas. Very commonly we come across facade values, used only as a marketing tool, or greenwashing, to induce sales.

Clearly Zero waste Daniel's and Oficina MUDA's consumers are very aligned with their brand's values. They are not just buying a product. They are investing in these values.

“Throughout history, clothes have been regularly thrashed, unpicked, re sewn, rejuvenated, reconditioned, cut up, repurposed, revived, re worn and remade, because, until quite recently, frugality and efficiency made economic sense: clothes were expensive, designed to last, and their wearers were implicit in their longevity, repurposing and upcycling not as a fashion statement, but as celebrating the

creativity and the craft of maintaining, we have always focused on the shame of poverty and need” (de Castro 2021, 11).

Let's think, for example, what the fashion industry was like until about 40 or 50 years ago, in the 70's or 80's, before the emergence of fast fashion. Most clothes were produced locally. There were some big brands, some very small ones, and there were seamstresses, tailors and dressmakers. These professionals worked on demand, sometimes serving an entire family. They were doing a one-of-a-kind, unique work. Clients could have their wishes transformed into pieces of clothing, or the expertise of these professionals pointed out the best style, the best fit, the best fabric that suited the body type, the occasion, the client's needs in a very personalized and exclusive service. As a daughter and granddaughter of a dressmaker, I also know that the surplus materials from their productions were used in very creative ways to dress their own family, also to dress myself. Beautiful patchworks were created to give life to new clothes, bags, bed covers and all kinds of product in need. Sadly, my own super-talented mother never felt valued as a dressmaker as she should have had, and refused to teach her own daughters to sew, just because she wanted for them a more appreciated profession.

In a way, I believe that slow fashion is rescuing or revisiting this business model, when people knew each other. Companies knew their customer by name, as the customers knew who produced their clothes. In other words, I could say that in a slow fashion business model, clothes are made by people for people.

Finnish brands Jatuli and KatiVee share their shop and workspace in the heart of Helsinki's design district. Having their production space there, makes it possible for them to offer to their clientele adjustments, customizations and made-to-order pieces. In addition, they promote workshops to teach their consumers to adjust their clothes themselves. These are new business opportunities generated by the advantage of being a local business close enough to understand the customer's needs.

Also, Finnish Fashion designer Anna Ruohonen works with no stock and her collections are made for the customer on-demand only. Her basic objective in manufacturing is to produce no surplus or unsold garments, nor unnecessary stock or prototypes (Ruohonen 2022).



Figure 12: Own design – slow fashion values and characteristics.

4.2 Slow Fashion and Its Challenges

According to Brazilian Fashion designer Ronaldo Fraga, it is very difficult to implement sustainable measures and the biggest barrier that prevents brands from producing more sustainable collections is price.

“In this fast-paced and maddened production in Asian countries, where people fight over price all the time, 2 or 4 euros in mass production is a lot. As people are not sensitized to these issues, the girl who wants the new outfit for the weekend party will not care.” (Fraga 2022). (Free translation).

Fabi Pina (Pina) points out that "according to a 2018 survey by Good Must Grow, 44% of consumers found that socially responsible products cost too much." This becomes a problem when consumers turn to fast fashion brands to attend their needs. The real challenge for slow fashion business is to promote values of the brand and achieve a profitable successful business.

According to Nina Jatuli, fashion designer and founder of Jatuli, fast fashion has been the standard for how much clothes should cost in Finland. It has become impossible for Finnish entrepreneurs to compete with the low prices practiced by the big chains, especially when it comes to local production, using sustainable materials, which also makes the production of artisanal pieces almost unfeasible. (Jatuli 10.18.2022.)

Nina also points out that it is not an easy task to source sustainable materials when most of the big suppliers have very big demands for minimum purchase. In addition, the quality of products and services are not always consistent. Nina has tried 4 different print houses in the last 6 years. (...)

"I wish I would find one good one that I know that would do their product in time and everything would be perfect. (...) It is very difficult to find sustainable materials, and the question of what exactly is sustainable." According to her, the directions should be clear about what actually is sustainable, then just looking at the tag and say, "this is GOT certified!" (Jatuli 18.10.2022.)

After all, it is almost impossible to compete with the exploitative practices of fast fashion, and that is why initiatives that raise public awareness, are very welcome. (Somers & de Castro).

4.3 Slow Fashion and the Human Factor

A very important element of the slow fashion business are the people in the supply chain.

The people involved in the production play a very important role. People's skills and crafts should be valued, appreciated, and paid fairly. Entrepreneurs should nurture a positive company culture and consider how well they know the workers, how do they live, and if the salary they receive is enough to pay their bills. Valuing the people involved in your business is in the very core of slow fashion.

It is very naive to think that slow fashion businesses, producing locally, paying fair wages to their employees can compete with the fast fashion business model and its low wages. Even among European companies, there is the use of labor from economically disadvantaged European countries.

"Fashion has to reflect who you are, what you feel at the moment, and where you are going." - Pharrell Williams.

The slow fashion concept motivates consumers to buy local and less but make a better choice and promotes the understanding that fashion is not disposable.

As time goes on, consumers have been becoming more aware and concerned with sustainability issues, to the point of giving up mass fashion clothes. They find in fashion a way to express their values visually. It is a very demanding group that understands the importance of buying less but paying for the work and the values that the piece contains. They are aware of what the product is providing to the local economy and respect the hands that made it.

This new type of consumer does not care about the no-repeating clothing culture. They are not adept at impulse buying for momentary pleasure and do not care about a low price if this price comes with negative socio-environmental consequences. They understand that raw material comes from nature, that it is

harvested by someone, processed, designed, sewn, packaged, and transported by someone. According to McKinsey and company (2020) – The State of Fashion 2020- report, almost two-thirds of consumers are willing to buy from brands based on brand values.

A 2020 survey commissioned by Fashion Revolution (2020) inquired 5,000 people in the five largest European markets, to find out how sustainability impacts EU consumers' purchasing decisions when shopping fashion items. The results were encouraging, showing that consumers are aware of the social and environmental challenges regarding fashion and expect real actions from brands to solve the industry's problems. (Fashion Revolution 2020.)

5 Artisanal

“The objects we make, and use, say where we came from, what we are, and maybe say something about the future.” Noel Frankham

Artisanal making has its own history, aesthetic, identity, and values. This work intends to study these characteristics associated with slow fashion production.

5.1 Definition and Characteristic

The Cambridge dictionary defines “artisanal” as - made in a traditional way by someone who is skilled with their hands and defines “handmade” as – made using the hands rather than a machine (Cambridge dictionary 2022).

The history of handcrafts in the world begins with the history of man, as the need to produce goods for utilities and routine use, and even adornments, expressed the creative and productive capacity as a form of work. Handmade products are part of our history, our present and will be part of our future.

With the development of technology and industrialization, craft techniques were devalued, isolated to the condition of “handicraft”, with the connotation of cheap consumer goods made by people with manual skills but, sometimes, considered without artistic or design relevance, losing its artistic and commercial value. This is due to the desire to abolish the hand-made aesthetic in favor of machine-made and the desire for a promising future leaving manual traditions, poverty, and misery behind (Borges, 31. 2011).

Today, we are experiencing a kind of renaissance and a well-deserved appreciation of artisanal production, driven among other factors by an awareness of sustainability. Artisanal work stands for the creation of pieces rich in details, unique and durable. It is a work made to be passed on from generation to generation.

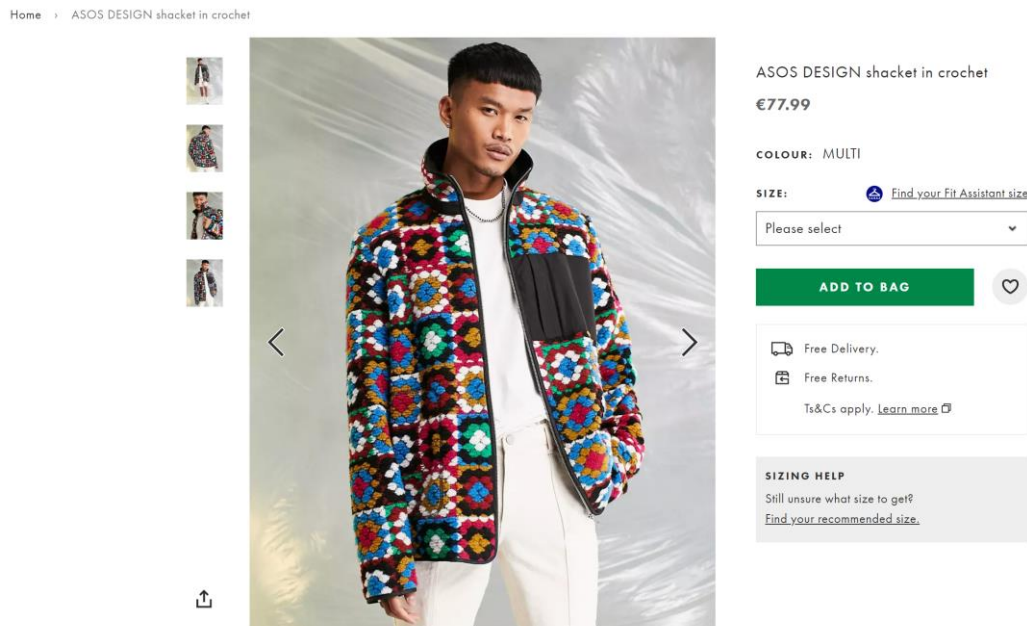
Traditional craftsmanship is also classified as Intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO (2022), “as Traditional craftsmanship is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO encourages artisans to continue to produce craft and to pass their skills and knowledge onto others, particularly within their own communities.”

Handcrafts have always been linked to the subsistence, but is a legacy and knowledge of high value, given the diversity of techniques, raw materials, manual skills, and artistic expressions that keep the traditions, identity and history of groups and communities alive.

It is almost impossible to think of means of production without technology and machinery. Undoubtedly, industrial production is more economical and makes it possible to meet the growing demand for consumer goods around the world.

Lately, we have been seeing more craftsmanship in fashion. Artisanal fashion is one that reconnects the production of clothing and accessories to human and manual work. And yet, fast fashion and ultra-fast fashion companies are faking the handmade aesthetics, taking advantage of what it represents.

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- High collar
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BRAND
This is **ASOS DESIGN** – your go-to for all the latest trends, no matter who you are, where you're from and what you're up to. Exclusive to ASOS, our universal brand is here for you, and comes in Plus and Tall. Created by us, styled by you.

SIZE & FIT
Model's height: 183cm/6'0"
Model is wearing: Size Medium

LOOK AFTER ME
Machine wash according to instructions on care label

ABOUT ME
Crochet: patterned with a handmade look

Lining: 100% Polyester, Main: 79% Polyester, 21% Acrylic.

Figure 13: Fast fashion with a handmade look. (Asos 2022)

While industrial products are made with perfection and precision, handmade products have personality, small variations or inconsistencies, each piece imprinting identity and cultural roots asserting its own individuality to the world.

Very few things are done completely by hand these days, but just because it is handmade, does not mean that it is going to add value to the piece. The conditions in which this handwork is done is a very important factor in a sustainable business model. I believe that the rescue of artisanal values is another attempt to shine the light on the workers. Campaigns like “Who made my clothes” from Fashion revolution have been actively campaigning to bring

awareness about the labor conditions in the fashion industry (Fashion revolution 2022).

At the same time, handmade involves a sense of exclusivity and awareness. After all, no piece produced by someone's hands will be exactly the same as another. This appreciation for slowing down means respect for the worker's time and nature. Here, there is no exploitation of resources because the products are produced on a low scale, but unfortunately, artisans are still very commonly exploited, copied, and underpaid.

The true value of handcrafted products is in appreciating the product for its intrinsic qualities, and not just for its function or appearance. Craftsmanship is about humanistic values. The advantage of handmade crafts is that it is appreciated not only as an object, but also a testament to the craftsman's skill. Machine-made products may exist disconnected from their makers, but handmade objects count for the person who created them. It is about the product's genuineness and the engagement with people, their culture, and the story behind the product and who produce it.

5.2 Artisanal and Its Emotional Values

There are several reasons that make us choose an outfit. It can be the type of fabric, the print, the fit, the brand, the price, among others. Other reasons are more subjective. What we aspire to be, how the clothes made us feel, what kind of memories came to mind when we tried it on. The clothes we wear are filled with meaning and memories over time. Clothes can bring back memories of moments, places we visited, people we were with. It is called "emotional memory" (or sensorial memory).

We find meaning and stories in objects that we choose to be part of our lives, reinforcing our identity and our place in the world.

“We attach many kinds of memories to objects in many ways, and we may keep or use certain objects almost all our lives. Objects are used to remember, reminisce, or remind of something that is important to us” (Hamari 2021, 17.) (Free translation).



Figure 14: Americana Vintage 1930s Quilt, just like my grandmother made for me (Foxtail quilting 2022)

As for handmade techniques, I believe that all of us, at some point in our lives, had contact with embroidery or knitting or any other textile artisanal technique. It could have been through our grandparents, parents, or even visiting places and

cultures different from our own. When I see a dress with an embroidery, what comes to my mind is my grandmother's tablecloth or memories of when my own mother taught me how to embroider, at 8 or 9 years old, sitting at the farm's veranda, on a rainy day. Automatically, the embroidered dress gains a new meaning to me, and my shopping is justified for this encapsulated emotional moment that that piece gave me.

Whenever I look at some patchwork, I remember the quilt my grandmother made for me when I was very little. And yes, I cherish my quilt, tablecloth and many other items that bring back many memories. As I also cherish the clothes that I made for my own baby, which I painted and embroidered myself, waiting for the day he will appreciate it and pass it on to his children.



Figure 15: Hand painted bed cover for my baby boy

With an increasingly hurried and digitized life, where the consumption of information and products is super agile, these subjective connections are not always appreciated, or even noticed, but these feelings brought by emotional and sensorial memories are what reconnect us with who we are, with our roots, our culture.

Orsola de Castro (2021,1) defends in her book *Loved Clothes Last*, that “judging by how many things are left unused and unloved, the less we know about the clothes we buy, the less we make an emotional connection and the easier it is to get rid of them.”

In my opinion, it is not just about giving value to the handmade, customized, or made-to-measure product, but what we can notice is a rescue of values, or nostalgia, factors that add more soul or meaning to our hurried lives, always racing and busy with daily chores. I believe it is the unconscious desire to reconnect to values and emotions that we are losing with the speed of this model of modern urban and digital life.

Sitting on furniture made of reclaimed wood, wearing some artisanal, locally made clothes from natural fibers, eating bread made by a local baker served in a ceramic handmade plate by a local ceramist, or drinking a local brewery’s beer, fulfills the role of repositioning us, in a way, to a place where our values are. It is to find satisfaction in things that are possible to us. It is as if we make these choices because we cannot make others. In fact, we are buying the story, or the ideal of the product and not just the product itself. Few people have the chance to abandon life in the big cities and go in search of growing their own food and sewing their own clothes, for as much as they would like to, so they buy from local farmers, or local businesses that they know are genuine in their values, or at least appear to be.

“We shouldn’t be measuring a garment’s value by its price tag, but by the purpose it has in our life. We should own it because we love it, and because we love it, we should want to keep it forever, consume it, wear it to death.” (de Castro 2021, 2.)

I certainly believe that the quality of the product is not linked just to its material composition, but also to this whole set of subjective factors. I believe that if an outfit makes me feel good, it also helps to improve my quality of life. By putting on an outfit that makes me feel more confident and prepared for life's challenges, such as a job interview or a project presentation, I will change my

attitude. My body language will change. What I wear can improve my self-esteem. It can help me to present myself to the world and express my identity and my values.

Designers work with inspiration and creativity, but also guided by the materials, functionality, and practicality of the product. But one of the key drivers of the design process is the emotions the product will spark and how those emotions translate into the consumer's connection and desire for the product. (Norman 2004, 5.)

To understand this intrinsic value of what we wear is to value these bonds with our memories, our place and time in the world. It's also to value the production chain, the resources and the hands that made it possible for us to have that product in our hands.



Figure 16: Artist A\$AP Rocky arriving at the Met Gala 2021.

Shearer/WireImage/Getty Images

Met Gala has become a display for daring and bold fashion statements, so, last year, when artist A\$AP Rocky arrived at the Met Gala wearing a multi-colored quilt, he highlighted a new trend (Hills 2022).

All over the world, vintage family heirlooms have appeared in various fashion collections and on social media, gaining sustainable status due to the reuse

of scraps inherent in the patchwork technique and the use of second-hand parts. The appearance of A\$AP Rocky only confirms the rebirth of this technique as a modern expression of art and fashion. (Colinas 2022.)

It is important to emphasize the importance of developing quality criteria in production and finishing. Many of the old techniques are being revitalized and the good finish aims to offer the most demanding customers a quality product. A good example is natural dyeing, whose techniques are being researched and updated so that they do not fade and maintain their appearance with use, although small variations are inherent in the technique (Borges 2011).

5.3 Artisanal Contribution to Fashion

Even though handmade has no practical advantage, some people are glad to know that there is still this kind of traditional work being done. There are people who see beauty in the ability to perform a manual task. In other words, to value manual work, we cannot think in the purely practical terms of craftsmanship. The value of the handmade product lies in the quality and exclusivity of each piece. When done right, a handmade item brings a little romance to life.

It is not by chance that the great international high fashion-couture brands like Chloé, Valentino, Bottega Veneta, Fendi, Christian Dior and Dolce & Gabbana, Oscar de La Renta among many others have been bringing the best in terms of craftsmanship to the luxury ready-to-wear, displaying in their collection's various artisanal techniques, like knitting, crochet, patchwork, and sumptuous embroideries. They rely on skillful artisans to give a life to their amazing visions and inspirations.

We cannot simply compare the value of a fast fashion item with that of a handmade garment, but even fast fashion chains understood the values of the handmade, imitating handicrafts, trying to sell a more "natural" style by making a sustainable fake, pretending to some extent to be supporting slow fashion. It

is not by chance that many of them have been accused of cultural appropriation and greenwashing.

There are differences, in how the artisans are valued in developing countries from Latin America, Africa, and Asia compared to the developed ones. Artisans from the first group can hardly make a living with their crafts.

These subjects are the theme of the documentary *Fashionscapes: Artisans Guatemala*, that follows Livia Firth, among others Donna Karan, and Carmen Busquets as they travel to Guatemala, with the Pacunam Foundation to meet some of these artisans and to learn more about the history – and the future – of their craft. (*Fashionscapes: Artisans Guatemala* 2019).

In this same documentary the famous fashion designer Naeem Khan asks, “how do you take history and tradition and make it relevant for today so you can make it economically successful and provide for your artisans?” (Khan, 2019).

Naeem is well known for his luxurious, opulent, and intricate embroideries and applique techniques.



Figure 17: Naeem Khan New York Fashion Week – 2017 - Source: ImaxTree

Rebecca Van Bergen Founder and executive director of the nonprofit organization – NEST, explains that one of the challenges for this sector is how and how much the artisans are paid for?” (Van Bergen, 2019).

Initiatives like Nest are providing training to ensure they understand the value and calculate the price of their product. Their aim is “to bring industry and public awareness to the often overlooked and under-represented handworker sector” (Nest 2022).

Artisans from all around the world have been reviving traditions and playing an important role in local economies, especially in areas of economic disadvantage. According to Nest (2022), more than 300 million artisans work from home, predominantly women. These workers are usually ignored by labor laws and therefore excluded from social protections.

Cynthia Lawson of Deed Lab, Parsons' design school, says how necessary it is to "support the idea of promoting cultural appreciation rather than cultural appropriation through collaborations between designers and artisans" (Lawson, 2019).

She explains that cultural appropriation is when someone travels back and forth to the design studio and creates something that looks exactly like what they saw, but the original artisan and/or the community is not benefited in any way, either by learning, generating income or even media exposure (Lawson, 2019).

Initiatives involved in this documentary, like Nest, the Parsons Deed lab, which focus is on models that equally support poverty alleviation, artisan empowerment, and cultural preservation (Deed Lab 2022) and The CoutureLab coalition which mission is to promote sustainable practices and to improve the lives of artisans and creatives in Latin America, (Couturelab Coalition 2022) gives hope for a brighter future for the artisans connected with fashion businesses.

In Finland, Taito organization's mission is "to promote handicraft as a profession, a livelihood and a skill. (...) It offers entrepreneurs up-to-date information on the development of the industry and professional opportunities, as well as services to support business operations. The organization plays a key role in the marketing of handicraft products through its own shops and numerous sales events." (Taito 2022.)

Dutch trend analyst Li Edelkoort (2015) in her "anti-fashion manifesto" predicted in 2015 the idea that consumers will want to participate in the creation and design of what they wear, customizing and recycling their clothes (Edelkoort 2015).

Li was not wrong. Her prediction justifies the increasing interest for handmade techniques on platforms like Pinterest and Instagram. The Finnish Taito organization found in its research that the popularity of handicrafts seems to have only grown over the past three years. With the increase in spending time at home during and post corona pandemic, the handcraft has attracted new hobbyists. (Taito 2022.) (Free translation)

The same recent research points out that, among the main reasons of why Finnish people do handicrafts, almost half of those who enjoy handicrafts for its rewarding nature, relaxation, and an opportunity to be creative (Taito 2022.) (Free translation).

This research only confirms how handicrafts play an important role in modern Finnish society.

Almost everything we buy right now is made in a hegemony of sameness, so customizing and personalizing things to be particular different is a small but powerful act of sabotage – an antidote to wearing the same clothes as everyone else; your individualism shouting out to be seen. (de Castro 2021, 8.)

Brazilian stylist Isabela Capeto works under the 'Slow fashion' concept, producing a limited number of pieces richly crafted with ruffles, embroideries, surplus materials and emphasizing the idea of timeless clothes by ignoring launch calendars (UseFashion 2016). (Free translation)

The designer must be open to experimentation. As the principle of sustainable and artisanal fashion includes the full use of materials, leftovers, and customization, the experimental creative process is extremely important for the design of the collection. It is from these experiments that the brand's own style is defined and presented as a differential in the market. Based on this, the creation and production processes become as or more important than the product itself, since it carries the values and attributes of those who designed and produced the piece. If we stop to think about it, the materials are the same and are equally available to everyone. What will differentiate one brand from another is precisely how we use these materials. Are we repeatedly producing

the same that everyone else is producing? Or, have we been working with the best of our creativity, artistic and artisanal talent?

Isabela Capeto had to overcome some difficulties with her brand, but she managed to find a concept and motivation for her creations in slow fashion. "As there were still a lot of pieces left, I found a way to reuse everything: I dyed some fabrics, transformed others, but I managed to reuse everything," (Capeto 2015) she explains. (...) Now, for her, sustainable fashion has become as much a necessity as a pleasure and an endorsement within her eponymous brand.

"There is more importance and value in that. The whole world is paying more attention to sustainable solutions. I do it through reuse of materials, partnerships with NGOs, the embroiderers I hire (...) In my studio, it's all part of a new social responsibility", she explains. (Capeto 2015.) (Free translation)

Also, Nina Jatuli (18.10.2022), agrees that using artisanal techniques in creating unique pieces helps her to position her business into a creative niche, but yet, in her opinion, is very difficult in Finland, to find artisans that would do, for example, embroidery work. Though she would like to create some high-end pieces more often, the question is always going to be the price.

What Nina points out is the disconnection between fashion entrepreneurs and artisans in Finland. In her opinion, though Finnish people loves handcrafts, they are doing DIY handcrafts, like knitting woolen socks, something quite basic, but also functional. One factor that influences Finnish aesthetics the Scandinavian minimalism.

In Nina's (18.10.2022) opinion, "the Nordic and Scandinavian style of minimalism is the killer of ornaments and everything dazzling." With a very small Finnish population, and big part of them fan of minimalism style, makes very difficult for fashion designers to keep their business profitable producing crazy dazzling and flashy garments, even if they would want to.

This may explain why, in my very personal opinion, handcrafts have not been commonly used in Finnish fashion, though Finland has long and beautiful tradition in artisanal making.

New materials are constantly being produced and made available on the market. And more and more natural fibers such as grape, banana, pineapple, hemp, jute and a whole variety of vegan leather are being discovered and rediscovered and their use intensified, as is the production of organic cotton and silk.

The new consumer loves it all and still wants to have the pleasure of buying but is very well informed about human rights and environmental issues.

A pioneer when it comes to fashion and sustainability, Stella McCartney brought in her last show at Paris Fashion Week, a collection made of 87% conscious materials, vegan leather bags (grape and fungal mycelium) and the first outfit of regenerative clothing already presented by a luxury brand (Fashion revolution Brazil 2022).

DeLeon argues that “New Luxury isn’t about price, it’s about culture, community, the values we share —aligning ourselves with brands who can help enhance that worldview” (DeLeon 2022).

The new luxury is sustainable. This new consumer doesn't care about the brand and doesn't want to dress like everyone else. He seeks to reinforce his identity with exclusive pieces. Therefore, what he appreciates in his purchase is the history of the piece.

Buying a soulful piece that was ethically produced generates a sense of collaboration, of belonging. It is the reaffirmation that our values are valid. To recognize on the values of a brand or product our own values, is very empowering, since that confirms that we are not alone in our ideals.

The requirements of this new luxury consumer are knowing the origin of the piece: where it was made, by whom, under what conditions, what stands for, and from what raw material it was produced.

“What people want now is a back history that has virtue, artisaness and ideally purity and organicness. Good people making good things in a virtuous way” (York 2018).

In Isabela Capeto’s opinion (2015), “People need to reinvent themselves and be more creative, reusing what they have, facing difficulties and, above all, exchanging information.” (Free translation).

As for Finland, the way that would enable the use of craft techniques in fashion, according to Nina Jatuli (10.18.2022), would be to add value by allowing the customer to get involved in the creative process, for example, offering a pre-order with the possibility for the customer to choose the colors, threads or patterns for his piece.

Perhaps involving the customer in the creative process is also a good way to raise awareness, not just about the entire production process, but also about the piece itself. Sustainability is also about what we already have, what fills our wardrobes, what we wear every day, how we take care of our clothes and how we dispose them of (de Castro 2021, 42).

Orsola de Castro, in her book, makes a strong statement already in the book’s title, reassuring that LOVED CLOTHES LAST. Throughout the book she supports and argues for the use of handmade techniques to repair and customize clothes to prolong their life. Clothes that are loved are well taken care of. They are washed carefully, mended, and repaired when needed.

5.4 Artisanal & Handmade - A Positive Trend

We already talked about authenticity, exclusiveness, richness in details, beauty, and how the cultural load adds symbolic value to fashion products. But undoubtedly, Artisanal aesthetic is never out of fashion. Seasons change, trends come and go, but the artisanal aesthetic always remains as one of the top trends. What changes is the technique of the season.

Year after year we have seen trends spotlight one technique after another. From tufting to embroidery, from embroidery to macramé. Every year “a new”

(same and ancient) technique rises to popularity and is introduced in social media platforms and displayed in fashion collections around the globe, endorsed by UNESCO or other local craft associations like TAITO. Not just in fashion, but also the home décor is revisiting handmade techniques. Artisanal is here to stay, (as it has always been.)

And if you still think that handmade looks like grandma's tablecloth, please, think again. Along with the revival of artisanal techniques, the aesthetic was also renewed. Today, handcraft can equally be as romantic, as it can be daring and bold. A good example is the Jungle - Megahood created for Jatuli, by me, using artisanal techniques, like hand painting and hand embroidery, with use of self-made embellishments and unusual materials, like embellishments made out of plastic bottles (see below).



Figure 18: Jungle - Megahood. Hand-painted and hand embroidered, by Ana Paula Hovi for Jatuli, with the use of unusual materials and self-made embellishments. Photo: Katri Lassila. (Jatuli 2021)

Artisanal aesthetic also extrapolated the textile limits and invaded art galleries and streets, reinforcing activists' groups, with their craftivism and yarnbombing movements, displaying cute and colorful protests and artistic expressions around the world, showing that the connections between threads, fabrics and we, women, are still strong. The way is the same, but the meanings are updated.



Figure 19: Textile art at the Yarn Bombing year event in Trivento, Italy. (Yarn bombing Trivento 2022)

In a more polemic approach, I dare to defend that another advantage of the artisanal fashion is the low cost. I am aware that the labor is expensive, so are sustainable materials, and to produce locally, etc. But, how else can we produce special, beautiful, and meaningful products if not with artisanal techniques? If we consider that one can buy a whole fabric roll and through artisanal techniques transform it into something very interesting and beautiful. The requirement is just time and skills. If one pays attention, they are going to find out that there are a lot of “basic” clothes on offer on the market. So, why produce one more of the same basic one? And there are a lot of techniques to choose from, and so many materials to create with, that it’s a pity not to even consider it. By producing a creative product that is different from all others, your

consumer will know that they will not find the same type anywhere else, so it is a very competitive differentiator.

But how to develop an artisanal fashion collection? Many fashion business entrepreneurs have a business talent, but not an artistic one. In this case there are many opportunities.

5.5 How To Get an Artisanal Fashion Collection

There are countless possibilities of incorporating handmade and artistic expressions in the fashion business, aligning contemporary styles and expressions with traditional techniques and forms. Handmade can be a great alternative for brands that are looking to differentiate themselves in a creative way.

There are many designers and fashion brands that have been using artisanal expressions for years in the core of their values and their business.

5.5.1 Artisanal Techniques – A World of Possibilities

“Where there's a will there's a way”

Unknown author

Another interesting way to add value to the business and offer a differential service for the customers is using artisanal techniques, promoting upcycling, customizations, tune-up, and repair workshops.

There is so much one can do with textiles. One can choose to handle the textile before sending it to a clothing factory. Other techniques can be applied in readymade pieces, and even in dead stocks.

One can manipulate textiles in so many ways. One can fold, rip, stitch, print, glue, paint, dye and/or wrinkle.

There is a whole world of embellishments, beads, stickers, heat transfers, fringes, rhinestones, crystals, glitter, thumbtacks, laces, cords, ribbons, readymade appliqués, dyes, paints, spray paints, blocks for prints, foils, etc.

The possibilities are endless. Every day, new materials that allow for the creation of new and exciting artistic expressions come to market.

Mending is trending!

5.5.2 Collaboration with Artists, Artisans, or Collectives

In high fashion, there have been many collaborations between the fashion houses and famous artists. Among others we can highlight here the collaboration between Louis Vuitton and Yayoi Kusama and Alexander Mc Queen and Damien Hirst (Elle Magazine).

Fashion and art have always been walking together. When we talk about art and fashion combined, perhaps the most famous garment is the Yves Saint Laurent - Mondrian dress for his autumn collection in 1965 (Geczy).

In my opinion, the slow fashion business model is a fertile soil for the use of artistic expression. Local artists can find themselves a new media in the local slow fashion business, making their art even more relevant to the community.



Figure 20: Mondrian dress by Yves Saint Laurent. Victor Virgile - Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture.

The British brand Gent London is one example of how to turn basic vintage timeless garments into art pieces, by working in collaboration with well-known artists, creating unique, high-end pieces. (Gent London, 2022.)

But the same concept can be applied in local markets. As already mentioned above, the slow fashion business can and should become a supporter of local artists and artisans. Through collaborations between artists/artisans and fashion entrepreneurs, both can benefit from it.

Entrepreneurs can gain relevance once they are promoting and revealing local talents. By promoting local artists and artisans, the business gains visibility and relevance in the local cultural scene. In addition, for both, business and artists, this collaboration can generate new opportunities in new markets and for new consumers.

5.5.3 Collaborations with Handcraft Associations and Social Programs

Commonly, Associations are organizations that support and promote the work of artisans and cultural traditions, stimulating their autonomy and their socio-cultural and economic development.

Many associations are happy to collaborate with designers and entrepreneurs, as these collaborations provide several new opportunities for their members.

After having their lives torn apart by the collapse of a mining waste dam, artisans and small producers from Minas Gerais, Brazil, got together in associations aiming to find economic solutions for the reconstruction of their lives. These associations were supported, curated, and mentored by the famous Brazilian fashion designer Ronaldo Fraga, who has Brazilian craftsmanship at the core of his style. The result of this project, “Minha casa em mim” here translated as “my home in me”, is the 2022 - Ronaldo Fraga’s fashion collection and home decor collection. In addition to hiring work from these artisans, Ronaldo also trained them in design and sustainability. The construction of this collaborative network enabled the redefinition of artisanal and agricultural products developed by the 175 people who participate in the project. This project reflects the potential of the region's artisans, nurturing the love for culture and rescuing knowledge and practices through the creative economy and local production. (Minha casa em mim 2022).



Figure 21: Ronaldo Fraga’s fashion show at São Paulo Fashion Week 2021, with collection done in cooperation with artisans from the project Minha casa em mim. (Minha casa em mim 2021)

Unfortunately, there are innumerable economically underprivileged groups, in situations of vulnerability, risk of poverty or social exclusion. But also, there are many ways to support and empower these groups, and many organizations and initiatives that facilitate the link between them and the entrepreneurs.

Simone Cipriani advocates that “Work is dignity” and “People want jobs, not charity.” Cipriani founded EFI in 2009. EFI stands for Ethical Fashion Initiative, nowadays a joint agency of the UN (United Nations) and the WTO (World Trade Organization). Since 2009, ETI has been linking top fashion talents with marginalized artisans, primarily women from East and West Africa, Haiti, and the West Bank. (Eco-business).

EFI offers Sustainability services, Sustainability products, Business development projects.

We don't need to go so far. The YLE News (2021) – “Union report: Migrants suffer lower pay, prejudice, discrimination in Finland”- article, a report made by TEK in 2021, found that in Finland, the unemployment rate among people of foreign backgrounds is 27.5, compared to a total unemployment rate of just 7.1 among Finns. A result of discrimination and prejudice in recruitment practices.

In addition to Taito, there are many projects in Finland that can become a good option for future collaborations.

Initiatives like Finnish Startup Refugees aim to provide solutions for the fast integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants, supporting employment and entrepreneurship (Startup refugees 2022).

Uusix (2022) is another project from the Social and Health Service of the City of Helsinki, that promotes rehabilitative work activities with the purpose to support life management and promote the return of clients to the labor market. They organize and offer many kinds of workshops like silk screen printing and weaving, among others and accept customized orders.

Some companies (and many Finnish companies also) choose to take their production to developing countries, especially regarding handmade. These initiatives are providing income and education to many people in poverty. This itself is a very broad subject. As already presented, there are many factors to be considered. There is a large number of associations that overlook the relations between entrepreneurs and artisans, as there are thousands of workers that, are surely happy to get a job to provide for their families. In my opinion, the important thing here is to find a good balance between profit and social entrepreneurship. Cheap labor is cheap for a reason, usually connected with economic and social inequality and disadvantage. So, if hiring the cheap labor makes it possible to run a business, that otherwise would not be possible if the product would be produced, for example, in Finland, then, provide for your

workers nice and healthy work conditions and fair payment. Make them valuable and appreciated, with real social benefits.

This model of social entrepreneurship also provides additional value to the product. When there is a true and authentic story behind the brand and its products, people come along, engaging in a meaningful relation that goes beyond the value of the garment itself. (Hall 2022).

5.6 Artisanal and Its Cost

A handmade piece costs more than an industrial one to be produced, and there are several factors that influence the composition of the price of craft work. But one factor that always comes to mind when considering handmade work is the time spent on the manual execution of each piece. In addition to the time spent, there is the size, quality of the work, materials used, and the degree of exclusivity of the piece.

It's sad, but true that in developing countries the use of artisanal techniques is more feasible and therefore, much more used in the fashion business since the cost of labor is so much lower, and it explains how many companies can offer their products with a competitive price on the market.

The disparity in the value of a handmade garment sold in developed countries, to the salary of an embroiderer, for example, makes this business model possible. But if we would consider Finnish labor laws, for example, the price of same garment immediately would position this same product into a luxury fashion niche, with a very high price, accessible to just a few.

An exclusive product requires a time of planning, creation, and design just like a serial production. The craftsman's experience and skills influence the final quality of the product, therefore in the price. It is also necessary to consider here, the expertise and know-how of the craftsman which has been achieved through

decades or years of studies and practice, to develop the service that they're offering. Handcrafted products are commonly very rich in detail, made with dedication and time. Big high fashion brands have been using skilled labor for decades, but between the small fashion entrepreneur and the craftsman there is still a big gap, specially here in Finland.

There are many ways to calculate the price of an artisanal work. As handmade costs are strongly based in time of execution and its price, the costs of the product will be calculated based on the time spent for creation of each piece. For some time, some artisans used the simple formula that multiply the costs of material per 2 or 3. This is a very imprecise formula, as it does not consider production time. Some materials are relatively inexpensive, and therefore, the final price of the piece would not be very realistic or would not meet the needs of the craftsman.

The more accurate for artisans to calculate the price of their product would be formula would be:

(material + worked hours + production expenses + profit) x (multiplication factor) (Fazfácil 2022). (Free translation)

On top of it, is very important to remember other costs, like the cost of shipping or delivery, taxes, and the retail commission.

To establish the value for the "worked hour", the artisan should calculate according to the artisan's month salary, or the desired month salary, in case he/she is a freelancer. Working eight hours a day, on working days, makes an approximate of 160 hours/ month. The hourly wage is the division of the desired salary by 160.

Production expenses are the cost of rent, electricity, phone bills, etc. These values must also be divided by the number of hours of production. The

multiplication factor is what makes it possible to give discounts for large sales, which generally end up offering lower prices to customers.

It is important to mention here that this formula is suitable for artisans. In the case of fashion businesses, some adaptations are necessary according to the structure of the business. Note that the value of the piece may not always be based on the time taken to make it. The trick is to find a balance between fair remuneration for the craftsman and a reasonable price for the companies' target group.

Considering that the worker will work a total of 40 hours per week, and for example, assuming that 70% of this total is dedicated only to manual work, it will be about 28 hours of manual work per week. Considering as an example, a manual work that takes 1 hour to be done, this same worker can make a maximum of 28 pieces per week.

Is good to mention here, that entrepreneurs can choose to make their collections entirely or partially with handmade products. If, for some entrepreneurs, 28 pieces per week is a small number, for others is a very good amount. Considering all the benefits already mentioned, 28 pieces per week, for one person to produce, is a number that is in my opinion, very attractive and worth considering.

To better understand the relation of artisanal techniques and the time spent to make those, I have dedicated a part of this thesis to technique experimentation and prototyping. From the experiments carried out in this thesis and from my own experience, I know that it is possible to make small artisanal interventions, spending a minimum of half an hour, which in the case of artisanal work is very little.

6 Benchmark

All over the world there are beautiful groups of creative people, designers, entrepreneurs, artisans, and their innovative and interesting business models with beautiful products on the market.

Consider this section not as a traditional benchmark, but more as a small display of companies that are working with a sustainable, artisanal, and artistic proposal. The idea is not to compare business performance or prices, but to show case and to learn from these examples. Some of these brands have been in the market for a long time, while others are just debuting their business.

All the information, as well as the photos are from the brand's own websites. Some information has been collected from articles as well.

Ronaldo Fraga

Country: Brazil

@fragaronaldo

Ronaldo Fraga is one of the most important names in Brazilian Fashion.

Ronaldo is a fashion designer, an artist, a thinker, an activist for the handmade, for sustainability and everything good and artistic in the world.

His collections are always part of something bigger, as for his unique way of instigating through telling stories, to promote reflections about our society and its values.

His creations are a mixture of functionality and poetry, sewn with a lot of humor and social criticism. Ronaldo is a provocateur, and his work reflects our time, making us think about the future.



Figure 22 and 23: Ronaldo Fraga- São Paulo Fashion Week (Photo: Zé Takahashi/ Ag. FOTOSITE)

Isabela Capeto

Country: Brazil

@isabelacapeto

Website: <https://www.isabelacapeto.com.br/>

I've been following Isabela for a long time. Isabela impersonate the joy and fun, of Brazilian identity, celebrating craftsmanship, colours, and textures. Isabela Capeto's fashion is like a work of art; handmade, always with embroidery and applications that make each look unique.

Isabela has gone through ups and downs in her career. With several stores throughout Brazil, and more than 47 direct employees, in 2007 Isabela sold its brand to a large fashion conglomerate. Seeing her style become massified and unhappy with the direction that the brand that bears her name took, after a couple of years, Isabela bought her company back.

Currently, she has only 4 direct employees. She does not have her own store, and she divides her workspace between a show room and an atelier. Through multi-brands it sells its production to Brazil and several other countries, such as USA and France.

The brand is proud to be 100% Brazilian, and works with few timeless collections per year, using sustainable materials and aiming at minimum waste, as they seek to use and reuse materials and decorations. It also works with fair payment of artisanal labour.



Figure 24 and 25: Isabela Capeto 2022

Zero Waste Daniel

Country: USA

@zerowastedaniel

Website: <https://zerowastedaniel.com>

Zero Waste Daniel is a New York based clothing designer, that work with pre-consumer textile waste, producing genderless accessories and clothes.

Working with fabric scraps that normally would be sent to landfills, he creates a modern and vibrant patchwork, appliqués, and also made-to-order pieces.



Figure 26: Photo Aidan Loughran (Tosone 2019), Figure 27: (Zero waste Daniel 2022)

CHERESHNIVSKA

Country: Ukraine

@chereshnivska

Website: <https://chereshnivska.com/>

CHERESHNIVSKA is a Ukraine- based unisex fashion brand which believes that design combined with artistic value and a sustainable practice will always matter.

Till 2024 50% of production will be made from recycled items. All our designs are available in very limited quantities.

The collection includes art prints and unique items made by creative director Anastasiya Rozava.

Some of the pieces have a made to order option, made from vintage and recycled materials. The brand also offers customization and considers the costumer's wishes of features of the figure. For example, sleeve length, mini, midi, or maxi design, and others.

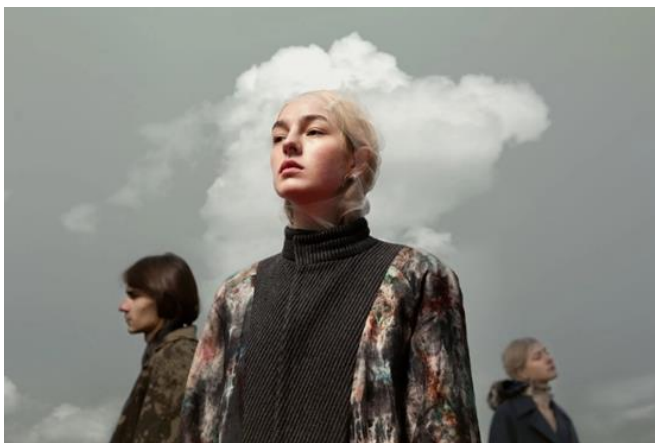


Figure 28 and 29: (Chereshnivska 2022).

GaryGraham422

Country: USA

@garygraham422

Website: <https://garygraham422.com/>

American artist and fashion designer Gary Graham creates limited-run collections of women's clothing at his studio in upstate New York. Garments are made on-site using antique textiles, custom jacquards, and natural fiber wovens from domestic mills. GaryGraham422 is his site-specific project that allows space, history, and community to determine textile production and to inform the making of intimate collections. Narratives for each collection combine real stories with fictional characters to blur distinctions between past, present, and future in mysterious ways.

In 2018, GaryGraham422 relocated both his studio and store to the small town of Franklin NY and reconfigured his production as small-batch fabrication, with unique interventions to one-of-a-kind fabrics. The studio's rural locale has inspired new historical narratives and encouraged experimentation and the exploration of time-intensive techniques.



Figure 30 and 31: (GaryGraham422, 2022).

JATULI

Country: Finland

@jatuli_label

Website: <https://www.jatuli.com/>

Jatuli is a Helsinki-based clothing brand founded in 2010 by clothing designer Nina Jatuli.

Her collections flow from streetwear to unique evening dresses with surprising details and strong prints.

Jatuli work with a series production but also produce unique pieces, made to order and customized garments. Part of her production is made inside Europe and part in her own work room in Helsinki's design district, where she promotes customization workshops. During my internship in Jatuli, I had the opportunity to get to know the business concept and among other things, design and execute the "Jungle Mega Hoodie" showed in the picture bellow. The making of this piece gave me the idea for this thesis.

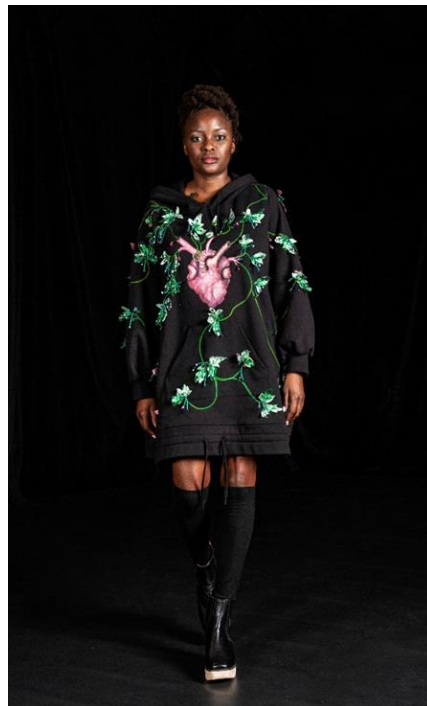


Figure 32: Golden Vipers (Jatuli 2022)

Figure 33: Katri Lassila (Jatuli 2022)

GENT LONDON

Country: England

@gentlondon_

Website: <https://www.gent.london/>

Gent London source high end vintage wear and work with renowned artist to upcycle and produce unique exclusive and one-off designs. GENT London aims to combines art's vibrance with iconic fashion, in a modern street style and contemporary language, reworking classic pieces. The idea is to offer something unique, wearable works of art.

With a sustainability and recycling efforts into consideration, Gent London works with vintage pieces, upcycled with new adornments, buckles and update stitching when is necessary.

A percentage of the sales is destined to organizations like CLIMATE which work aim to reduce the planet's CO₂ emissions.

Gent London debuted in London Fashion Week/2022.



Figure 34: Rich Simmons/Gent London (Gent London 2022). Figure 35: (Gent London 2022)

7 Creative Laboratory

This part of my thesis is dedicated to the experimental creative process. Experimenting with different materials and artisanal textile techniques, I'm aiming to gather a collection of surface designs suitable for a modern fashion collection and consider their applicability in fashion production.

This section is not intended to be a portfolio of my skills, nor is it a portfolio of techniques. The aim is not to create new and innovative techniques, but to explore new possibilities in handmade expressions, and to simulate a situation, where, if I would only have plain fabrics or plain basic readymade pieces, how I could make them interesting enough to create a fashion collection, using my skills, textiles, yarns, and embellishments as a resource. Consider it a creative laboratory of prototypes for future artisanal fashion production.

The experimentations will give me a good base to analyze the suitability, feasibility, and time consumption of these techniques for a future small series production. Knowing the time needed for making a single garment is a very essential factor for a fashion business, especially when making use of artisanal techniques, considering that the price calculation is commonly based on the time spent to make each piece, among other factors.

Note that the time required to design the piece is not considered. Here we are considering the making of the piece. The design can be as time consuming than the making itself but is not the subject of this experiment.

Some of these experiments will be applied on ready-to-wear pieces, presented later in this thesis.

In the spirit of this project, I decided to use just materials that I already have. Make no mistake here, I have a lot of materials. All collected and experimented through years of passion for textiles and their possibilities for visual expression.

Usually I look for inspiration, and I usually find it in a very interesting way, by putting attention to what has been moving, touching, and inspiring me lately. I think about what I would like to do, what kind of technique, or color I would use. And very often, out of nowhere I have a clear vision of the ready work. Sometimes this is a very hard process! It takes a while to get the vision. But it is even harder to make my work match with what I have already envisioned.

This time, my vision needs to be adapted to the materials I already have. So, here, my starting point is the available materials.

Usually, the argument used for not using artisanal techniques is that they are too time consuming. These experiments will help me to understand if the work is time consuming or if it is possible to consider it for a series production.

My goal is to create pieces spending different amounts of time, but a maximum of eight hours, the same as a one-day work. More than that, I would already consider a product suitable to the luxury market and not for series production.

As the starting point is the available materials, I have selected below some of them, as well as some other elements, that inspire me for their colors, or textures, or as visual aspects for this project.

7.1 Materials

The materials used are easily available from local craft shops, and not just for professionals.

- Fabric Satin cotton (white).
- Fabric 65% viscose – 35% linen (white and ecru).
- Bids, sequins, ribbons, silk cords, ribbons, and other embellishments.
- Embroidery yarns.

- EMO Printing ink.
- Marabu fashion spray.
- Dyeing materials (salt, soda, etc).

As I'm working with cotton and linen/viscose fabrics, my final pieces, or prototypes will be suited for a summer collection.

7.2 Artisanal Techniques

For these experiments, I'm using one or more techniques combined. There are so many techniques, but I concentrated my experiments on the techniques listed below:

Hand-painting

For this project, I worked with EMO Printing ink, and Marabu Fashion spray. I learned from experience, that it is always good to test a textile paint before using it. Some very good brands from other countries present a beautiful variety of colors but didn't react well with the water and/or soap in Finland.

With hand-painting it is possible to do fast abstract work, as it is also possible to do a very intricate figurative painting, although the texture and consistency vary according to the brand, altering the final result. Hand painting is also a great technique for upcycling and customization purposes.

I have been painting textiles by hand for quite some time. There are different hand painting techniques as nowadays there are many different brands of textile paints for different purposes. Some of them can be used with brushes, some for spraying, some for silk- screen printing. Lately many new materials have appeared on the market, offering new possibilities for fabric painting.

Embroidery

There are several ways to do embroidery. There are several types of embroidery machines, and it is also possible to work with conventional sewing machines. But here we are only considering the free motion embroidery done with a non-automated sewing machine and hand embroidery.

There are no limits when it comes to embroidery work. You can make a small detail, or an entire piece covered with all kinds of different stitches and materials. It is possible to work with threads, but also to add beads, sequins, laces, scraps of fabrics, etc. and even ornaments made from unusual materials like plastic bottles, like I used in Jatuli's Jungle Megahood.

The disadvantage of hand embroidery is that it is a very slow technique. But the time spent also depends on the embroiderer's practice. The positive side is that the embroidery can make a big difference in the piece even in a small detail.

I'm a big fan of embroidery, there are so many styles and possibilities to achieve, from traditional to the most modern and daring artistic expressions.

Appliqué, Patchwork and Textile Manipulation

Appliqué and patchwork are versatile techniques that allow the use of surplus, cut-outs, and remnant textiles for creating big or small surfaces, with possible combination with other technique interventions.

Textile manipulation is shaping textiles creating new textures and visual expression on them. By manipulating textiles, it is also possible to get three dimensional textures.



Figure 36: Patchwork using fabrics dyed with natural organic materials.

Dyeing

The process of dyeing varies from technique to technique, but in general all the techniques require some knowledge, preparation, and organization to execute, but the total amount of time spent is not much. Another advantage is that this technique can be used in plain or printed fabrics, or ready to wear pieces.

As TAITO selected dyeing with natural dyes the craft technique of the year 2022, I could not leave this technique out of my work (TAITO 2022).

There are many possibilities for artisanal natural dyeing, using materials collected from nature or even from our kitchen. Mainly due to the variety of effects obtained with dyeing, I consider it a very interesting way of coloring plain fabrics or even customizing ready-to-wear garments and updating old ones.



Figure 37: Fabric scraps dyed with avocado, urucum, iron and reactive dye.

* Urucum, or annatto, is the fruit of the annatto (*Bixa orellana*), a tree native to tropical America. Urucum has been used for centuries (or millennia) by the Native Americans as a food condiment, as well as to dye different kinds of utensils, ornaments and skin painting for rituals and celebrations.

7.3 Gallery

Here are experiments with various types of techniques, as well as the time taken to make them.

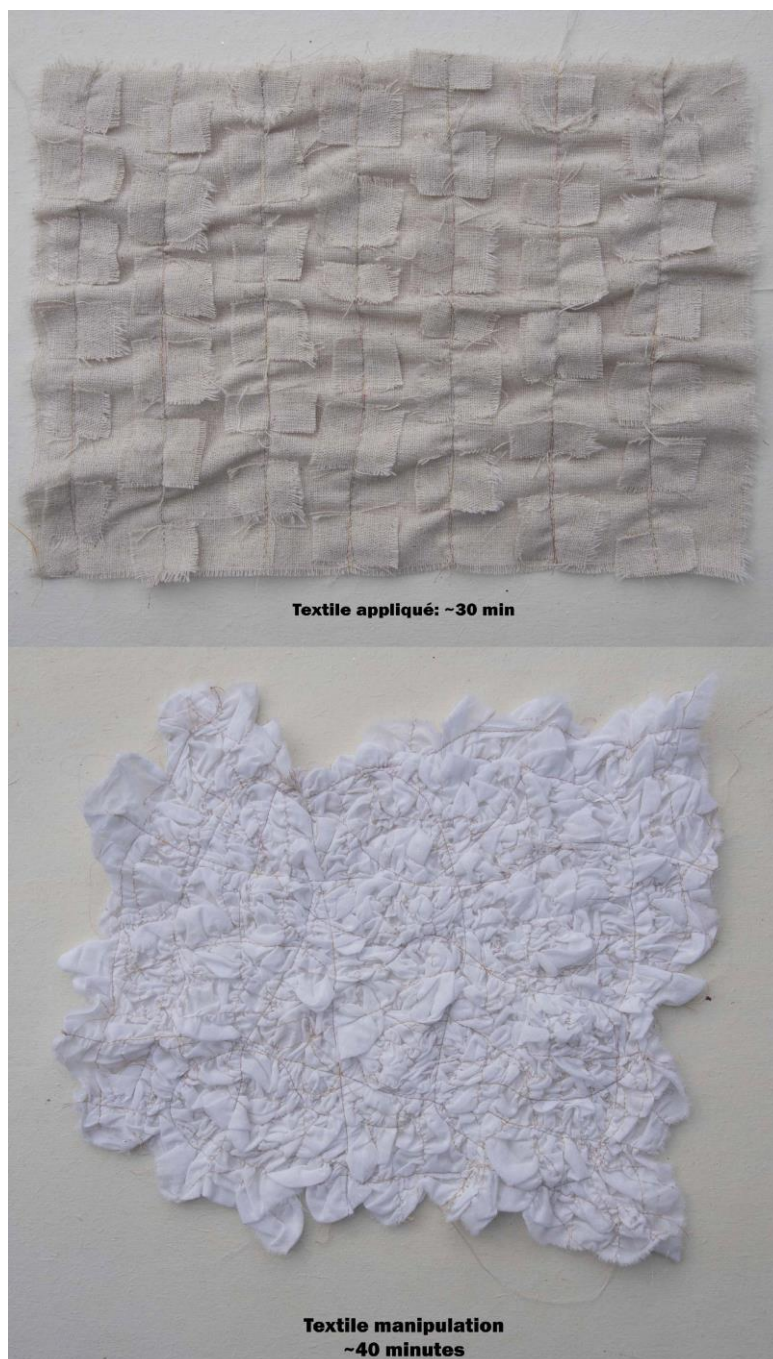


Figure 38: Experiments



Weaving and stitching satin cord on the fabric = ~ 40 min



Machine appliqué with hand embroidery = ~ 40 min

Figure 40: Experiments

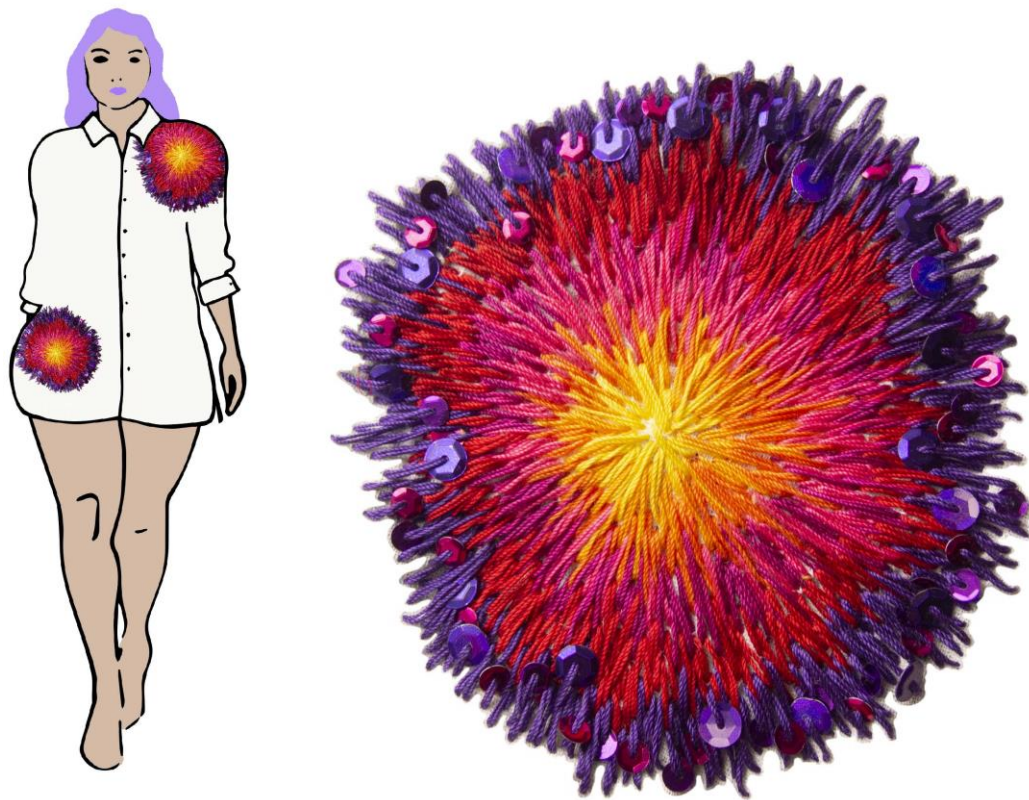


Appliqué: ~20 min



**Hand embroidered with fabric appliqué:
~50 minutes**

Figure 41: Experiments



Hand embroidery = ~ 3 h

Figure 42: Experiments



Fabric cut-outs and yarn pieces stitched = ~30 minutes

Figure 43: Experiments

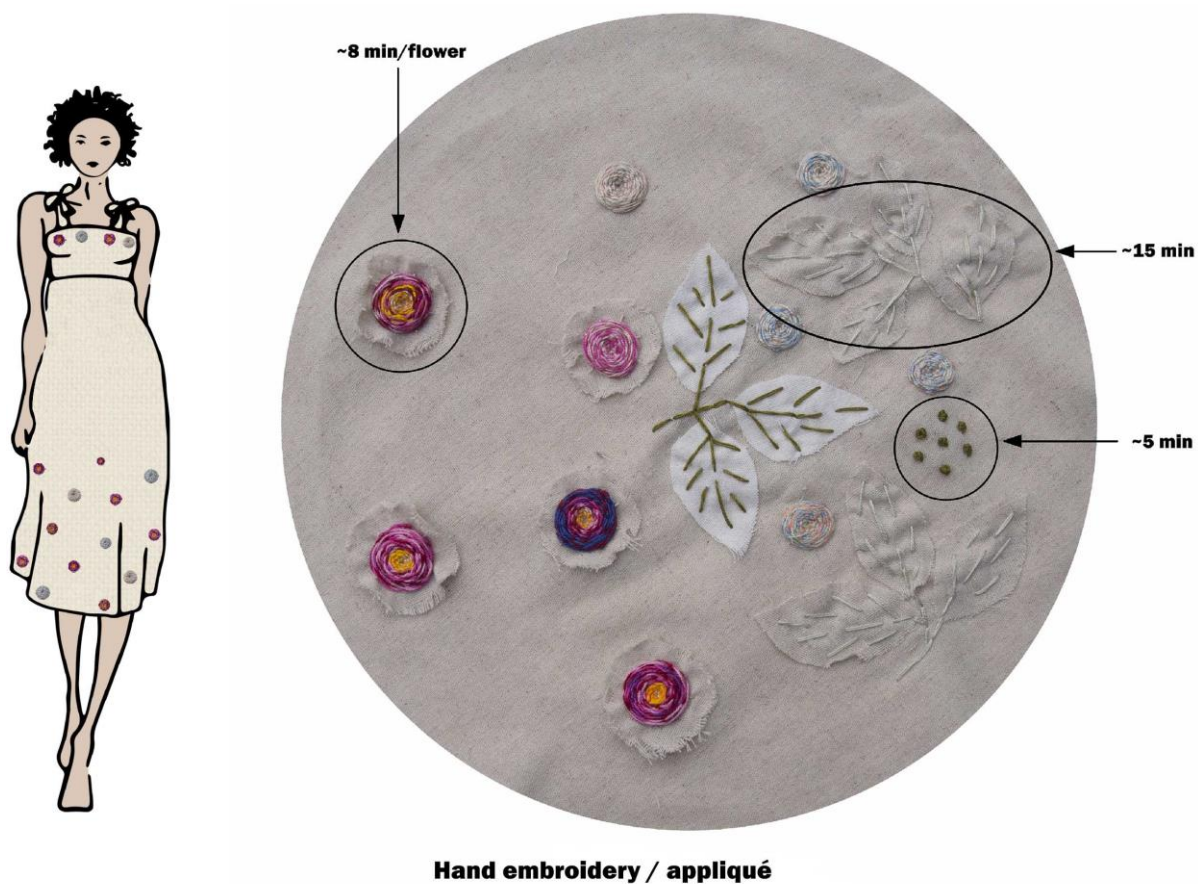
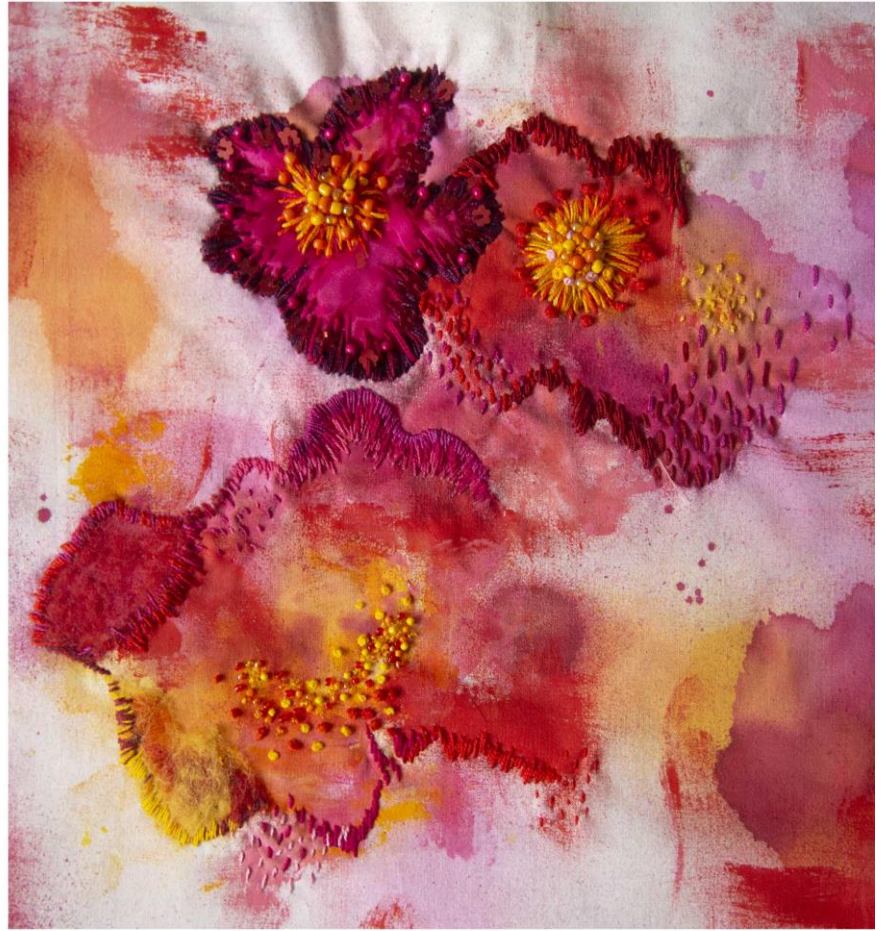


Figure 44: Experiments

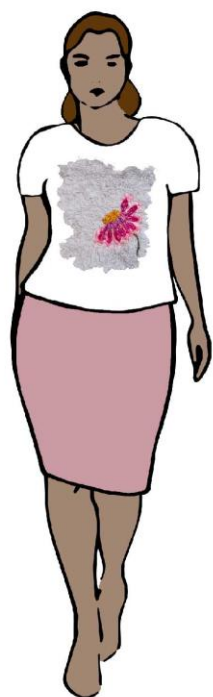


Abstract Hand painting and hand embroidery= ~6 hs

Figure 45: Experiments



Figure 46: Experiments



Textile manipulation + hand embroidery= ~1 h 50'



Hand embroidery= ~ 1h 15'



Figure 47: Experiments



Free motion stitching = ~1 h

Figure 48: Experiments



Textile appliqué = ~20'

Figure 49: Experiments



Textile manipulation (created with fabrics cutouts and left over of yarns, free motion stitching and water soluble stabilizer) + hand embroidery= ~4 hs

Figure 50: Experiments



**Textile manipulation (created with fabric cutouts and
leftover of yarns and free motion stitching) + hand
embroidery= ~1 h 40'**

Figure 51: Experiments



Hand painting with appliqué= ~4 hours

Figure 52: Experiments

7.4 Creative Laboratory's Discussion

This laboratory was very fruitful. the more I did, the more I wanted to do it, and I think the experiments alone would deserve an entire thesis. There are unlimited possibilities to create artisanal experiments, but, in the case of this thesis, a limited amount of time. Anyway, this project does not stop here. I can see countless possibilities to turn this project into a product, that as a textile designer I could offer to the market.

Working with the materials available, gave me limits, but also gave me a lot of inspiration to do projects that I would not think of otherwise. The laboratory also taught me how important it is to spend time in exploring the possibilities before starting the definitive work, as I usually do.

I think that artisanal techniques are a great resource that allow the creation of beautiful and one-of-a-kind products. There are so many materials and so many techniques that make it possible to create beautiful pieces using small quantities of materials, but with a lot of creativity and time. The attention paid to each piece produced, inherent in the slow fashion concept, can be easily translated into the use of artisanal techniques. Even with the same design, one piece will never be the same as another. Even color variations of the same design are easily achieved. In addition, many of these experiments would be suitable also for interior design textiles.

Though the focus of this thesis was not to work with upcycled projects, experimenting with surplus materials also opened a whole new world of ideas and possibilities for future projects. The use of surplus and cut-outs adds more value to the business.

As some of the techniques can be easily applied in readymade pieces, this project's concept can be turned into an upcycling and customizing workshop.

Do I still think it's possible to produce fashion collections with artisanal techniques, especially here in Finland? Of course, I do. I think the solution would be to outsource the production of the basic pieces and then carry out an

artisanal intervention after the pieces are ready. Also, I think it's a good way to refresh dead stocks.

I consider the use of artisanal techniques especially viable for small entrepreneurs who outsource production. In the case a of the micro-entrepreneur producing the collection her/himself, without the help of extra labor, I think it would be very difficult to produce a reasonable amount, unless the goal is to produce special unique pieces, at a high price for a luxury niche.

Considering that a good part of small fashion business in Finland is made of one person businesses, I believe the good way to incorporate artisanal techniques in their collections would be through collaborations.

Work with artisanal techniques is a matter of concept, sustainability and aesthetic choice more than a business orientation. Surely, it is not adaptable for all the fashion business models, but it could be part of special collections and collaborations every now and then.

8 Prototypes

Here are some of the artisanal techniques already applied in ready-made pieces.

8.1 T-Shirt

Technique: Embroidery chain stitch.



Materials:

- 100% cotton embroidery yarns

Total production time: ~ 1h 15'

Note: The embroidery was done on a ready-made t-shirt.

Figure 53: sketch



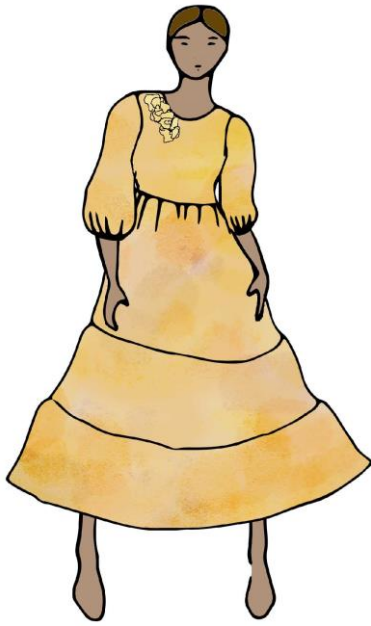
Figure 54: Experiment – embroidery on t-shirt.

8.2 Natural dyeing- Dress



Figure 55: Natural dyeing bundle / Fabric after opening the bundle- Pre-washing fabric.

Technique: Natural Dyeing



Materials:

- Urucum, curcuma, coffee beans and coffee powder, onion skin, cabbage, Mandarin, hibiscus flower
- 2.5 meters of white cotton fabric.

Preparation

- Preparation time: ~ 10 min – To prepare the fabric with mordant.
- Bundle making: ~ 40 min – to sprinkle the materials, fold, roll and tie the fabric into a bundle.
- Steaming time: ~ 90 min

Total production time: ~ 50 min + steaming and washing.

Figure 56: sketch

Note: Before the dyeing process, the fabric needs to be immersed in the mordant as preparation for the fabric to absorb the colors. After this, the bundle can be made using the chosen natural materials that will give colors to the fabric. Afterwards, the fabric is steamed and washed. This time for steaming and washing does not require human intervention since the washing can be done in a washing machine.



Figure 57: Experiment: Naturally dyed dress

8.3 Hand painted Dress

**Materials:**

- Fabric: 2 meters of 65% viscose – 35% linen
- EMO Printing ink
- Marabu Fashion spray

Technique: Free hand painting - (Painted on the readymade dress).

Total Production time: 1 hour 30 min

Figure 58: sketch

Note: With the piece ready, it is a little more complicated to paint., once it is necessary to paint small areas at a time and wait for it to dry before moving on to the next area. In this case, I made an abstract painting, which makes the process faster. The fact that the piece is ready makes it easier to understand how the piece will look after it is ready.

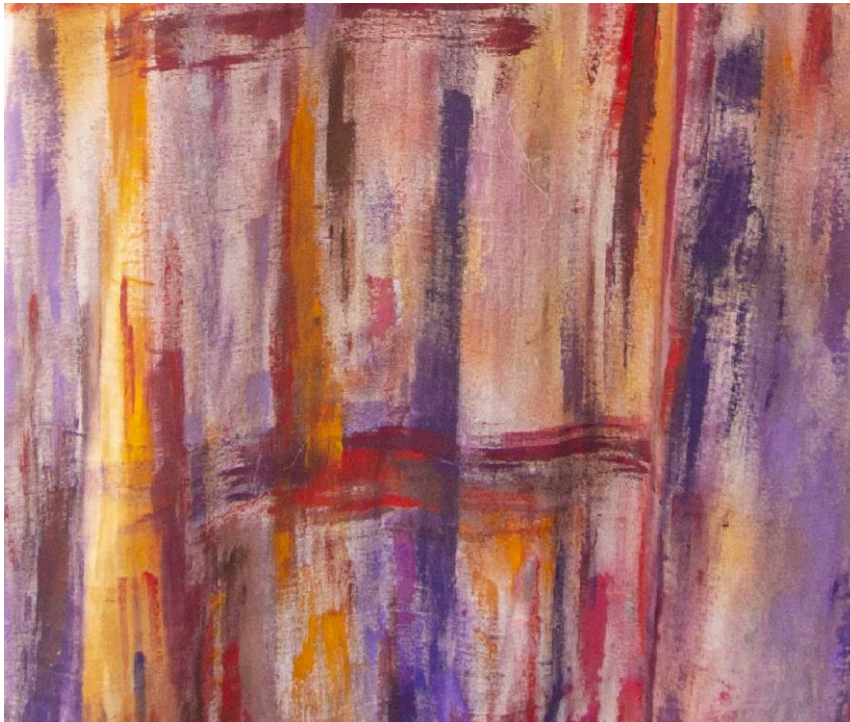


Figure 59: Experiments: Hand painting (detail)



Figure 60: Experiment: Hand painted dress

8.4 Spring Dress



Materials:

- Fabric: 2 ½ meter of 65% viscose – 35% linen
- EMO Printing ink
- Bids
- Embroidery yarns

Technique: Hand painting, embroidery, and appliqué

Total Production time: ~ 7 hours

Note: Painted on the readymade dress.

Figure 61: sketch

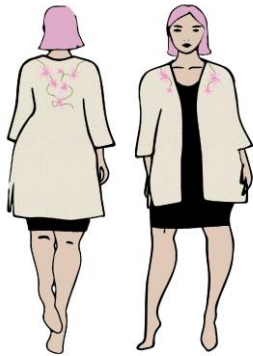


Figure 62: Experiments: Hand painted, embroidery and appliqué (Detail).



Figure 63: Experiment: Hand painted, embroidery and applique

8.5 Kimono



Materials:

- 2 meters of 65% viscose – 35% linen
- EMO Printing ink
- Bids
- Embroidery yarns

Technique: Hand painting + embroidery + appliqué

Total Production time: ~ 8 hours

Figure 64: sketch



Figure 65: Experiment: Hand painted, embroidery and appliqué.



Figure 66: Experiment: Hand painted, embroidery and applique

8.6 Shirt

Materials:

- Linen shirt
- EMO Printing ink
- Embroidery yarns

Technique: Free abstract hand painting + embroidery

Total Production time: ~ 4 hours

Note: Painted and embroidered on the readymade shirt.



Figure 67: Experiment: Hand painted and embroidery.

9 Conclusion

I have come to the end of these studies yet more motivated and passionate than when I've started. I have been learning a lot about textiles, but also about myself, about what inspires me, about my values as a person and as a designer.

This project opens a lot of possibilities for future projects, for instance, the development of collections and collaborations with fashion brands, design consulting and training for artisans, associations, and fashion businesses as well as workshops.

At the beginning of this project, I thought that the idea of my thesis was to argue for the sake of handmade things. As my long and living passion, all handmade things speak to my heart. I thought that the goal was only to fight for the embellishments and dazzling aesthetics with hope that some Finnish brand would listen to me (or read my work).

But, by compressing all the facts and the numbers around the textile industry together, I realize that it is more urgent to promote more sustainable practices, decreasing and avoiding the damages that our consumerism has created.

I have learned that sustainable fashion is the necessary goal, but a goal not easily achieved. Sustainability is a process made of many right everyday choices. Conscious consumerism needs to walk hand in hand with innovative solutions.

The manual making is above all a celebration of human talents, in a productive model where each piece produced carries with it the time and dedication of those who make it. It's like a manifesto against an industrial model of serial production focused on quantity and profit margins. Manual making is imbued with affectivity, kindness, and poetry and for it connects with its customers in a deeper level.

Demanding customers have always found sincere sustainable business proposals that aligns with their beliefs.

I come to the conclusion that the main factor to achieve an eco-friendly textile industry is creativity, of all kinds, sizes, and forms, everywhere.

Though, the negative impact caused by the textile industry in our planet is very shocking, it is also very inspiring to see so many beautiful initiatives worldwide.

There is usually a common behaviour of focusing our efforts just on what is around us, but this attitude can lead us to miss the chance to learn from great examples from around the world. People who are pioneers, in one way or another, are working with creativity, skill and, above all, the will to make the world a better and more beautiful place for all of us.

I see so much beauty in knowing that someone, with talent, creativity, and skill, has dedicated their time and work to produce something, for the need to express themselves through their art, to bring more beauty to the world and keeping tradition, heritage and manual skills alive. Is it not beauty that we so much appreciate and cherish?

I like to think that my thesis is an invitation extended to all creative minds. I propose, that when promoting a more sustainable fashion industry, that it be with great beauty, full of dazzling colourful details and made by talented and skilful hands.

Let's treasure our skills and our creativity! Let's treasure colours and textures!

The world is already full of basic stuff, so, let's go from Basic to treasure!

Background and Acknowledgments

I am a child of the 70's. I was born in Brazil, and I am also a Finnish citizen. I grew up in a beautiful place, surrounded by mountains, with exuberant nature in times of dictatorship and a very patriarchal society. I spent my vacations on the family farm, and to entertain me on rainy days, my beautiful and talented mother was very keen to teach me some useful skills. So, from a very early age, I have been very happy around yarns, needles, and fabric scraps.

Thankfully, the times have changed, and as the rebel that I am, I pursued my independence very early. At the University I have studied arts and technical drawing, but in the last year, among other reasons, I decided to accept a very good job opportunity. I have been successfully working in some of the biggest Brazilian (and the world's) media companies. But life had other plans for me and to make a long story short, I found a place to call home in Finland and I am now making my dream come true, graduating as a textile designer, here in Helsinki.

The knowledge passed to me by my mother, was cherished and developed through the years, and turned to a passion for art and all things handmade that is now part of my identity.

On what I consider my life journey to become a textile designer, I have met very special, talented, and passionate people that inspire me and ensure my belief that art is essential, and a better future is on our way.

I'm grateful and proud of my upbringing, and I see the world as a village, full of amazing people and great opportunities to learn and grow as a human being.

I am so grateful for the experience and the knowledge achieved with the support of my inspiring teachers.

As an immigrant in Finland, Metropolia has given me a sense of belonging, a place where I've been seen and appreciated for who I am and not just for where I come from, and for that I hold a deep and heart-warming gratitude to all the teachers and staff from Metropolia UAS, especially Tuiti Paju and Tiina Karhu.

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My love goes to all that supported me on this journey, and especially my family that has always supported, motivated, loved and believed in me. Thank you, guys!

This thesis is dedicated to Tobias and Heikki, who fulfil my life of joy and love!

Dad, I know, that wherever you are, you are very proud!

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