

Fashion on Display: An Introduction to Narratives and Practices

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will have acquired skills and knowledge related to fashion and socio-historical research within cultural institutions. Furthermore, students will be ready to study and consider the various possibilities of displaying fashion with a multidisciplinary approach.

Course contents

The course is based on the “why” and “how” of exhibiting fashion, exploring the dynamic intersection of fashion, art, and design. The importance of fashion within the cultural sector will be unravelled through various case studies, roughly from the 1970s to today. The aim is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the engaging possibilities that displayed fashion can offer, examining forward-looking themes such as politics of inclusion or the application of technological tools and best practices. Whether it is a garment from the past, a haute couture piece recently shown on a catwalk, or a speculative piece about the future of fashion design, the art of curating the setting and context in which these items are displayed enhances our understanding of the cultural system.

Teaching methods

The course will be held in person, structured in 5 lessons lasting 2 hours each. Students will be encouraged to engage actively in discussions to enhance learning. Taking pictures and recording the lesson is not allowed.

Teaching tools

The course will use PowerPoint presentations and various forms of online visual materials for teaching purposes. Interactive platforms such as discussion forums and quizzes will be used to facilitate engagement and self-assessment.

Suggested Readings/Bibliography

A curated list of reference readings will be provided during each lecture, allowing for further insights into the topics covered. Additionally, the slides will be made available to students on Teams after each class or at the end of the course. Below is a selected list of foundational books and articles essential for studying fashion display:

Books

- Riegels Melchior, Marie, and Birgitta Svensson (ed.), *Fashion and Museums: Theory and Practice*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Vänskä, Annamari, and Hazel Clark (ed.), *Fashion Curating: Critical Practice in the Museum and Beyond*, London: Bloomsbury 2017.

Articles

- Steele, Valerie. 2022. “Fashion Exhibitions: The Power of Communication”. *ZoneModa Journal* 12 (1):1-15. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2611-0563/14883>.
- Rossi, Valentina, Lara Marziali, Alberto Salarelli, and Francesco Zanichelli. 2022. “Communicating Fashion Through Virtual Exhibitions: 1972. Fashion, Design, History, a Case Study Carried Out at the Centro Studi Archivio Della Comunicazione (CSAC) of the University of Parma”. *ZoneModa Journal* 12 (1):103-18. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2611-0563/14909>.

Course Calendar and General Topics

TBC	History and Theory 1 - Fashion as Art - Fashion as Design
TBC	History and Theory 2 - Fashion as (Corporate) Cultural Heritage - Fashion as Visual Culture
TBC	Display - Where: Shop windows or Museums - How: Tools and props for exhibiting textiles - Why: Outcomes and social impact
TBC	Ephemerality - Documenting the catwalk - Fashion archives and archival materials
TBC	Future - Rewriting narratives of inclusion - Virtual museums and digital displays