

EXPERIMENTS IN FASHION AND ART

About the project

Experiments in Fashion and Art is a project that aims to catalyse encounters between trans-disciplinary practitioners whose fields of reference are fashion and art. It accentuates the word “experiment” as an indicator of the focus on the process, research, and immaterial outcomes as much as material ones. It is imagined as a project in progress, which will change forms and formats, passing from discursive to performative, to exhibitive, and back. It will involve, infiltrate, and occupy different spaces and domains of contemporary art and fashion: institutions, markets, and independent scenes. It will seek to interweave research paths and positions spread across disciplines and geographies in order to map a phenomenon that is still somehow out of focus. Trans-disciplinary practices situated in the liminal field between fashion and art are numerous and diffused but remain scattered, poorly visible, and under-considered. However, they are the most vital, innovative, and propositive contribution to contemporary fashion discourse and productions. These practices occupy niche areas and often thrive within academic and educational institutions, but less often are included in the mainstream art institutions or the fashion industry. Can this gap be bridged? Is there a way to open channels through which these three domains can nurture each other?

Realisation and outcomes

Experiments in Fashion and Art is conceived as a project in progress, which should develop and unfold on the principle of the domino: each session should produce an idea, concept, or theme that would be a seed for the next session.

The first kick-off session would be an encounter, discussion, and occasion for brainstorming, leading to a second session with more performative and exhibitive features.

EVENT 1

CRITICAL FASHION:

CAN IT BE THOUGHT? SHOULD IT BE BOUGHT?

1. Kick-off conference

Working title:	<i>Critical fashion: Can it be thought? Should it be bought?</i>
Format:	Program of talks, lectures, screenings, and events on-site and online
Proposed dates:	5. - 7. June 2024
Site:	MACRO - Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome
Participants:	Curators, collectors, researchers, artists, designers
Curated by:	Dobriła Denegri
Promoted by:	ICA - Independent Cultural Association
Supported by:	International funding programs: Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport of the Republic of Austria Embassy of Belgium General Delegation of the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region, Rome Danish Art Foundation (TBC) Embassy of France - Institut Français Italy, Rome Embassy of Sweden in Rome (TBC) Swedish Institute (TBC)
In collaboration:	Fashion Studies Department, LA Sapienza University, Rome (TBC) NABA - The New Art Academy, Fashion Department, Roma Faculty of Design Arts, University of Technology, Bydgoszcz

Topics & Aims

Critical fashion: Can it be thought? Should it be bought?

Through its title, this set of encounters and conversations wants to address controversies and paradoxes connected with critical fashion practice and its relation to the market-driven logic of fashion production and consumption.

Experimental, research-oriented, and critical fashion-related practices produce content, meaning, and quest for alternatives to the dominant way fashion is conceived and produced.

Yet, they are situated aside or outside the fashion system. Sometimes, they find their “shelter” within art venues, sometimes in other “independent” domains, and primarily within academic and educational contexts. But they don’t find systemic sustain within art circuits; independent ones are precarious anyway, and educational contexts are becoming more corporate, so even there, the support is limited.

This set of encounters and conversations aims to address the notion of “critical fashion” from the position of educational institutions, putting the focus on an innovative and slightly subversive take on how future designers and creatives are to be formed.

It also wants to provide a first-hand outlook on curatorial and artistic experiences situated between art and fashion systems. Finally, it will seek to understand how this kind of practice can be sustained and collected and if there is space for a new form of galleries, showcase venues or institutions that could provide higher visibility, critical articulation, and a broader affirmation of this kind of fashion-related artwork.

The aim of this first informal conference, as well as other initiatives that will be realised within the conceptual frame of *Experiments in Fashion and Art*, is to provide the occasion for networking among like-minded creatives and establishing collaborations as regularly as possible. The second aim is the involvement of students and upcoming generations of creatives in discussing how the notion of fashion can be re-conceived and re-defined, taking as a point of departure the focus on the designer and design process instead of the brand narrative and product.

Program (work in progress)

5th of June 2024

15.30

Greeting & Introduction by Dobrila Denegri

16.00 - 17.00 - Session 1: *Critical Fashion: How to Teach it?*

Conversation with:

- Linda Loppa, founding curator, “Anarchive”, Polimoda, Florence
- Clemens Thornquist is Professor in Fashion Design at The Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås, Sweden

Moderator: Dobrila Denegri

17.00 - 18.00 - Session 2: *Beyond Clothes: Fashion Activism and its Platforms*

Conversation with:

- Iris Ruisch, director of the State of Fashion - Arnheim Fashion Biennial

- José Teunissen, director, AMFI - Amsterdam Fashion Institute of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam

Moderator: Dobrila Denegri

18.00 - 19.00 - Session 3: Presentation of artistic interventions and performances

- Manora Auersperg, lecturer, Department of Textiles - Free, Applied and Experimental Artistic Design, University of Applied Arts, Vienna
- Christina Raab, lecturer, KunstModeDesign - Herbststrasse - Higher Federal College of Fashion, Vienna

20.00 / 20.30

Collective dinner

6th of June 2024

15.00

Introduction by Luca Lo Pinto, director of MACRO and presentation of fashion-related exhibitions and programs held in the museum (Cinzia Ruggeri, BLESS, Fabio Quaranta, Anna-Sophie Berger...)

Premiere screening of the video by Anna-Sophie Berger

16.00 - 17.00 - Session 4: *Curating Inbetweeners*

- Matthew Linde, fashion exhibition-maker, researcher and writer

Lecture + Q&A

16.00 - 17.30

- Anna Sophie Berger - presentation of the work & conversation with Matthew Linde and Luca Lo Pinto
- Tenant of Culture (Hendrickje Schimmel) - presentation of the work & conversation with Dobrila Denegri and Jeppe Ugelvig

17.30 - 18.30

- Jeppe Ugelvig, curator, historian, and cultural critic

Lecture + Q&A

18.30 - 19.30 - Presentation of the new issue of VISCOSE Magazine & aperitif

7th of June 2024

15.30 - Session 5 - round tables and conversations (closed for public) stressing the questions around possibilities of fostering and supporting experimental fashion practices within education and the fashion industry (groups and specific topics yet to be defined)

Participants:

- Romana Andò, Associate Professor of Sociology of Communication and Fashion, Department of Fashion Studies, Sapienza University, Rome (TBC)
- Manora Auersperg, lecturer, Department of Textiles - Free, Applied and Experimental Artistic Design, University of Applied Arts, Vienna
- Ivana Conte, Creative & Academic Director, ILA - International Luxury Academy, Rome/ London
- Linda Loppa, founding curator, "Anarchive", Polimoda, Florence
- Diego Manfreda, Head of Department Fashion Design, NABA - the New Art Academy, Rome
- Szymon Owsiański, lecturer, Department of Design, Faculty of Design Arts, University of Technology, Bydgoszcz
- Christina Raab, lecturer, Kunst-Mode-Design - Herbststrasse - Higher Federal College of Fashion, Vienna
- José Teunissen, director, AMFI - Amsterdam Fashion Institute of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam
- Clemens Thornquist, Head of Fashion Design Department, The Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås

17.00 - 18.00 - Session 6: *Supporting and Collecting Experimental Fashion: How to Start?*

- Trino Verkade, Director, The Sarabande Foundation, London (TBC)

In conversation with Dobrila Denegri

18.00 - 19.00 - Session 7: *Fashion & Meaning Making*

Conversation between:

- Emanuele Coccia, philosopher (TBC)
- Alessandro Michele, designer (TBC)

20.30 / 21.00

Collective dinner