THE DRAPING TECHNIQUE AS A CREATIVE PHASE IN THE FASHION DESIGN METHODOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The creation of fashion products demands, every time a larger involvement from the designers in all stages of the fashion chain, from the analysis of markets, to the spinning, weaving, production and distribution. The moulage technique opens a very vast field of possibilities in the creation of new products, with totally innovative and differentiated modelling. Methodological problems come up due to the way of making industrial garments: the creation on the three-dimensional body shape, its transposition for two-dimensional patterns, the evolution for the several sizes (the grading), the development of efficient technical records, the planning of the cut room and use of the fabrics with efficiency, and the choice of right technology for sewing at the industrial scale.

In this communication an approach to a new fashion design methodology which applies the draping technique is presented. This methodology is based upon the dynamic between conceptual design, detailed design and design research, integrated in such a way as to generate new product creation concepts, thus increasing their added value.

Keywords: Design methodologies, Fashion design, Moulage

INTRODUCTION

The market trends more and more point out for the globalization of the production chains, merchandising and for small market niches for high added value products.

With the globalization, there are a range of low cost products accessible due to masse production and fast distribution, but for some market niches exists a need for highly differentiated products, allowing the consumers to manifest their individuality and differentiation.

The emotional satisfaction of the clothing fashion consumers is one of the largest concerns of the designer, as well as creating profitable products for the industry.

The focus of the clothing design, has do be put on the product development for small series of industrial productions, with innovative features, high quality and, above all, highly differentiated, according to the needs and desires of the consumers, matching their expectations and offering them a high level of satisfaction.

The fashion clothing design is one of the most highly vulnerable areas of the design in general, because the life cycles of the products are every time smaller and the competition is every time larger. This makes all the efforts in the issue of innovation and development of new products to be seen with great expectation by the companies of the sector.

Methodologies are the fundamental tools in product conception, including all the design and production processes of developing clothing products. From creation, viability of production
until the introduction of the final product in the market, the methodology is present in such a way that the acceptance by the customers is analysed and is critical for the product life cycle. The creation of fashion products is very demanding for the designers, both textile and apparel designers. People working in the creative field are constantly required to come up with ideas to design schemes, rules and construction methods that are, at the times, complicated and restrictive. Creativity is often force into second place. Thus, we propose the idea of suggesting a simplified design methodology to use when time is short.

This communication presents a new approach to the fashion design methodologies for clothing, by applying the draping technique (moulage) as basis of the creation stage. The resulting approach or methodology is based upon the dynamics between conceptual design, detailed design and design research, integrated in such a way as to generate new product creation concepts, thus increasing their added value.

The draping technique, also referred as moulage, opens a vast field of possibilities in the creation of new products with total innovation and differentiated patterns. The advantages can be even more significant if this technique is applied to the development of customised and differentiated female clothing products. The moulage initially was used for creating exclusive products, with no industrial purpose, but what is proposed here is the creation of a method for industrial scale. The moulage (draping) is a technique that works de material directly on the body by wrapping it, taking the best benefit of the draping characteristic of the materials. Cloths wrapped around the body have been the basis of the dress of peoples all over the world for centuries. In many countries and cultures, it still is the main way of dressing, or at least an important aspect of ceremonial attire. For instance, richly decorated Saris are worn by women throughout the India sub-continent, it is probably the most elaborate garment consisting of just one piece of unstitched cloth. It is the art of wrapping a piece of cloth around the body [1].

For this research study, a multi-functional female garment was created through the draping technique, having in mind its development for industrial production. Therefore the research work is based on the analysis of the creation process of garments, flexible and capable to be modified by the user has she pleases to, or needs to, depending on the occasion. The draping technique has some advantages in its use. The first is related to creativity, for it can be considered as a sculpting technique, where the artist moulds the fabric on the body, defining the 3D form through the dialogue between its imagination and the behaviour of the fabric in the body. The draping technique presents itself as a tool that favours the innovation in the fashion area, as it can be seen in the works of Madeleine Vionnet and Madame Grés [2], who were masters in the generation of new garment forms, pattern making and creation of new volumes and shapes in garment construction. The second advantage is related to the technical garment construction. Once the pattern can be extracted from the direct contact of the fabric with the body, there can be a greater accuracy in the pattern making, thus enabling the product with a higher final quality.

DESIGN METHODOLOGIES APPLIED TO FASHION GARMENTS

The traditional fashion garment design processes [3] are based on the scheme presented in figure 1(a), were the design research is centred in the analysis of the fashion and market
trends, consumer studies (life style, ambitions, worries, tastes, desires), brand concept (when there is one), in the observation, inspiration, innovation and finally on the research of innovative garment production methods and processes.

Then comes the product development phase, were several decisions are made in the definition of the silhouette, shape, lines, proportions, colours, textures, cut and study of production methods. In the prototyping phase the garment is developed having in mind the proportions, the three-dimensionality, the materials and the fabric draping. After adjustments an evaluation and technical production sheets are made.

In the method that we are developing there are major differences from the tradition method, one of which and perhaps the most important is that the research in design is not a static process, but continuous and interactive with the experimental product development process/phase (figure 1(b)).

The research in design in our approach is not depleted in the knowledge of the market, the consumer and the fashion trends; it also encloses a profound knowledge of the materials and their relation with the silhouette. It is a process that besides being a reflected process is also experimental and interactive, thus being a dynamic process.

As can be seen in the interactive method that we are developing (figure 1(b)), the design research phase exists in interaction with product developing and prototyping phases/processes. In this interaction, projected to be dynamic, issues related with formal research are worked experimental and dynamically with the silhouette, shapes, lines, proportions, colours, textures, cutting and the study of production methods and with the experimental developmental of the clothing item.

This process or phase ends only when the final product is achieved, completely finished, and at the same time, the knowledge for its industrial production is achieved.

The most significant difference between this and the traditional method is the achievement of a much solid knowledge on the materials, of the product itself and of its construction. Therefore the purpose is to build a sustainable base that allows an evolution in the sense to make more viable the development of this sort of products.

This approach to the development of fashion products combining some of the phases in the traditional process with the draping techniques, allows the assurance of the appearance of the final product both in aesthetic as in functional terms, for it is based on the knowledge of the
materials properties achieved through experimentation. In this way, it is possible to take a
greater advantage of the materials to be used and to build a knowledge database increasingly
larger in this domain.
The experimentation allows at the same time to reflect on the interaction of the binomial
material-silhouette in the shape of the finish product, exploring in a more dynamic way the
emotional creativity of designer, allowing an integrated innovation in the created products.

EXPERIMENTAL WORK

With the intention to develop this methodology for fashion products creation and to validate
this concept of dynamic research in design, a deep research work is being carried, which is an
integrant part of a master thesis in course.
The methodology that we intend to develop with this study also means to give a special
attention to the process of bi-dimensioning the products created through the draping technique
and its consequent gradation.

In adopting this method, several are the problems that still need to be studied and analyzed,
such as the adequacy of the artistic process of clothes construction with draping techniques to
the industrial production; how to make the scaling of these patterns; how to make a technical
sheet in a way that it’s intelligible in a clear and objective way; the form of presenting these
products to the final consumer, since their way of dressing is difficult to be visualized, and
consequently, it’s sale is harmed in this aspect; and last, but not least, the best way to
highlight the product at the point of sale.

During this process and from a technical point of view, the aim is to simplify the shape,
meaning the pattern design, in order to achieve line production goals and clothing with
controlled costs. For this purpose, some methods for simplifying the pattern designs must be
developed so that we can have a methodology suitable for the development of pattern designs
easy to use in an industrial plant, where workers are used to work with conventional clothes,
which mean traditional patterns.

In this process of simplifying the pattern design, practical issues will be addressed, such as:
• How to do the markings on the clothing item and on the patterns?
• How to simplify some seems that present themselves with a curve shape in the
  moulage clothing item?
• How to expose, to the technical staff, in a simple and clear way, the complexity of the
  items?
• How to simplify the clothing item, “cleaning it” without loosing its innovative
  expression, differentiation and design?

The product design research phase becomes essential throughout this project, since this is a
multi and interdisciplinary project it requires to the designer involved in it, a profound
knowledge of the materials, therefore demanding a complete understanding of the productive
processes as well as product management.
CONCLUSIONS

One of the great innovations that can generate successful products in the global fashion market is the development of new approach methodologies to the design process that enable the generation of new products, more creative and innovative. These can lead to products with high levels of market acceptance and that at the same time present a higher added value.

The return of the draping technique, or moulage, as an innovation tool will be a reality if, on the design process, the challenge of developing an accurate and precise way of preparing the flat patternmaking from the draped model is overcome. Then it will be possible to apply traditional industrial sewing techniques or even, in order to keep up with the accelerated technological advances, think of new techniques, such as seamless that point towards a technological revolution in clothing mass production.

Fashion designers need to be ever more creative to develop clothes with more innovation, with reduced production time, resulting in differentiated clothing items with low production cost and high profit edge for the companies. Many times the geniality lays in simplicity. If the fashion designer is able to develop completely innovative pieces, with few seems, comfortable, with high quality and aesthetically appealing, that will result in the consumer satisfaction as well as in the satisfaction of the people involved in its production. For, if we can produce a clothing item that has all the characteristics above mentioned, the production time will be reduced and consequently there will be an increase in the daily production and the companies profit will grow.
REFERENCES