Beyond the Catwalk

‘The whole is greater than the sum of its parts’

Research book
Loes Wernsen
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Dress for success, dress to kill, dress to impress; fashion has a lot of functions! What you wear is who you are, what you stand for, and to which — social — group you belong. In our society, fashion has a meaning. Nevertheless, permanent fashion presentations in museums disappear. Although we find fashion important, and fashion exhibitions are beloved, museums choose to place fashion in their depots.

It was at the Hermitage Amsterdam, that I recognized that there is not an established culture in exhibiting fashion in the Netherlands. Yet, the fashion exhibition in the museum was beloved and the fashion exhibitions I visited were always full of people. That means that there is a need for fashion exhibition, yet how to create a fashion-exhibition-culture? That is the main question I will try to answer in this research.

Because people like to go to fashion exhibitions, it is strange that there are no longer permanent fashion presentations in museums in The Netherlands. In order to find out how to create a fashion exhibition culture, fashion and art are compared to one another in this research. How can they work together and what are the benefits of cooperation? This research will lead to a fashion exhibition concept that is applicable to many museums. It will move from one to another museum and therefore fashion will be exhibited permanently. This is the first important value of the concept: continuity. This research report will lead to a concept book for museums conservators: a book that will help them to create the fashion exhibition concept in their museum.

**summary**

In order to find out whether museum conservators are open to work with an exhibition concept rather than an already created and designed exhibition, I interviewed conservator of De Nieuwe Kerk and Hermitage Amsterdam Vincent Boele. He had never heard of a concept like this and was very enthusiastic about the idea. He thinks that museums find it interesting that they can make up their own story, which means that the exhibition is a reflection of the museum itself combined with fashion. Furthermore, I asked the opinion of former guest-curator of Tassenmuseum Hendrikje and art historian Jannie Polak about the concept. She thinks that the concept is interesting and fun.

By asking these people’s opinion, the answers about the role of fashion in the museum in world came across. Also Catharina Koerts’s (master student Museum-studies) research about fashion and museums was useful in answering the question about fashion collections and whether there is a need for a fashion museum from the view of conservators. Museums find it important to keep their own fashion collections, because they are composed with a vision, the vision of the museum. They are willing to lend the collection, yet not want to donate it to a special fashion museum. Besides that fashion is not presented permanently, there is another problem with fashion exhibitions. If you have seen one, you have seen all. That is probably a bit too strong, but fashion exhibition are not really diverse. We see them all time: Viktor & Rolf and Hussein Chalayan. The second important value of the fashion-exhibition-concept is therefore diversity.

Art opposite fashion, art combined with fashion, art versus fashion, art and fashion. In the research art – or museums – and fashion are continuously working together, battling, or combined. We see that they influence each other, and as soon they are combined new thinking arises. They communicate with each other; this leads to art and fashion having different meanings in different environments. Together with the trends global and local, commercial and non commercial, museums being platforms rather than institutes and pluralism, the third value of the concept is created: 1 + 1 = 3. A value that forms the red threat of the concept and the research report. It is the value 1 + 1 = 3 that inspires the vow of the concept.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts!
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The idea for this thesis is built on a year-long interest and enthusiasm for fashion and art. During my internship at the Hermitage Amsterdam, my two passions came together. It was the confirmation that my interest lies in combining fashion and art and the start of this thesis.

Fashion exhibition are beloved in The Netherlands, obviously because fashion is a reflection of culture. Fashion learns us about the way people live and used to live. It is a visual object that tells us about ones identity. That makes fashion interesting, in the past, now and in the future. It strikes that, in spite of the popularity of fashion, permanent fashion presentations in museums are disappearing. Museums own elaborate fashion collection, from historical costumes to contemporary conceptual fashion. Nevertheless, there is no place to exhibit it.

I love to visit fashion exhibition and long for a permanent presentation of fashion. Yet, diversity is important to me. I do not mind to see the same creation twice as long as it is presented in a total different way, in another environment, surrounded with different pieces; another place in the story of the exhibition.

This research is the basis for a fashion exhibition concept. A concept that helps museums to create a fashion exhibition in which fashion is combined with their own collection – whether it is a fashion collection or an art collection – and in their own environment. Museums collaborate with upcoming talent from the fashion world; the cultural sector combined with the fashion sector. A combination that will lead to innovative and inspirational ideas.

This concept is meant for museum conservators and boards. I wrote the concept book towards them. Therefore, I focussed on this group in the research. I interviewed them, and not the museum visitors. Every museum who want to use this concept has a different targetgroup, they will research their target group themself, and combine it with the target group of the Beyond the Catwalk exhibition as explained in the concept book.
The first time I came in contact with the word ‘versus’, was after the death of Notorious B.I.G; Puff Daddy vs. Faith Evans. Notorious B.I.G. was a rapper from Brooklyn. He battled with another rapper, 2Pac. The war ended when both had been murdered. Puff Daddy – a good friend – and Faith Evans – his widow – sang the song “I’ll be missing you” as a tribute. I did not like that music. I did not know about the battle. I did not like The Notorious B.I.G.; I liked the ‘versus’.
I liked the idea of battling; two opposites against each other. Battling might be useful when thinking about how art and fashion are related two one another. To what degree is versus applicable to fashion and art? Are they battling, are they opposites, can they use one another? I’m interested in researching to what extent they are competing, and want to question their differences and similarities. Once we know the differences and similarities, we get insight in both the fashion and art world. It is good to know the benefits and disadvantages of art and fashion in order to create a fashion exhibition culture in The Netherlands. Museums in The Netherlands possess an elaborated fashion collection. Nevertheless, fashion is not presented permanently. This chapter will answer the question how we can use both worlds to create a fashion exhibition culture in The Netherlands? It also fences of both art and fashion so that we know what exactly we are talking about.

Fashion vs. Art

Open a contemporary fashion magazine, what do you see? Art. Fashion is no longer only about clothes, it is about experience. Fashion magazines use art to build this experience. Fashion magazines are very much inspired by art, and want to get into the realm of art. This began in the middle of the 20th century when Guy Bourdin, a French photographer of fashion and advertisements, started with a new kind of fashion photography. He introduced the power of the narrative, rather than the power of clothes. His pictures are very much inspired by surrealism, a movement in art between 1925 and 1940 featuring strange and mysterious narratives. Another example is Stephen Sprouse, the graffiti artist who designed a bag for Louis Vuitton. We can say that we no longer buy clothing; we buy more: a mood, a feeling, an image.

And what about art, is art also inspired by fashion? If we open an art magazine, do we see fashion? No, we do not see fashion. The art is the leading object, the narrative, the determiner of atmosphere. But can we conclude that art wants to keep fashion at a distance? No, we see that museums ask fashion designers as guest curators: Alexander van der Slobbe curate Gejaagd door de wind in 2009 for the Zuiderzeemuseum, Enkhuizen; Bob Verhelst, a Belgian artistic director in the fashion world was guest curator at Goddes in 2004 for MoMu, Antwerp; and Walter van Beirendonck, for diverse exhibitions – among others, Kiss the Future in 1998 for Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Museums are changing. We can see that museums like the way fashion attracts its public, and make use of fashion artists for their ability to design a narrative. We can see the way we experience the differences and similarities of both worlds. Although fashion is not always art, as we will see later on, they become close when we are looking at the way they are presented. Does it work the same for producers; do they use different tools to design a retail environment or an exhibition?
More and more, museums call in exhibition makers with a commercial background. Maarten Spruyt is a Dutch fashion stylist who is frequently asked to design an exhibition. Amongst others, he designed the exhibition *Vreemde Dingen* in 2007 in Museum Boijmans van Beuningen together with Walter van Beirendonk, and for Haags Gemeentemuseum *Haagse Hofmode* in 2007. “Emotions are central and crucial”, he says. Every painting or sculpture possesses a beauty within itself. Yet, the meaning, the way viewers interpret the work of art, changes simultaneously with the environment. According to Spruyt, “the most beautiful painting or image is not longer important in itself; it all depends on how the diverse worlds are coming together”.

An interesting example of combining art and fashion are the David Remfry drawings for Stella McCartney. Where she used the paintings for advertisement objectives, he used them for an exhibition in the Victoria & Albert Museum London under the title *Fashion into Art*. An interesting detail is that the drawings are not about clothes; they are about atmosphere, feeling, mood. Once fashion and art are working together, creative and innovative products arise.
Independent vs. Dependent

To what extent are fashion and art dependent on something or someone? Does the meaning of fashion change if there is no body to wear it? There is no doubt that the person who wears a piece of fashion adds something to it. The way he or she walks, looks, and appears, influences the meaning of the clothes. Yet, the opposite is also true: fashion adds something to the wearer. It is used to show ones identity. Therefore, we can say that fashion is not independent; it is body-dependent.

“Dress is a form of visual art, a creation of images with the visible self as medium”³. According to Anne Hollander, author of Seeing through clothes, the visible self is indispensable in the definition of fashion. There is no fashion without the visible self. Also, José Teunissen (fashion professional) supports this definition and even broadens it. She says that the essence of contemporary fashion is that it defines the body and its relation to the individual and the surrounded reality⁴. Both Jose Teunissen and Anne Hollander understand fashion as a visual art rather than as a craft or a tool. Fashion is body-dependent; the body can be seen as the surrounding of a fashion piece. This means that the body can change the meaning of a piece of fashion. In exhibitions, a mannequin or doll has the function of the body and influences the meaning of the presented fashion piece. Therefore, the way of presenting fashion pieces is very important. Museum conservator Vincent Boele confirms this: “The way fashion is presented on the mannequin will influence the way people experience the clothing. If fashion is presented good, people can imagine themselves wearing it.”⁵

The collection Readings from Hussein Chalayan (spring/summer 2008) is an example of the influence of the surrounding on a fashion piece. In this case, it is not only the body that influences the fashion; the environment is an influencing factor as well. This collection was showed in the form of a movie by Nick Knight⁶. Models are turning around on a platform in a black background. Laser beams are reflecting on the Swarovski crystals attached to the clothes. The result is a game of beams. Fashion gets another meaning. It is no longer a dress with crystals, it is a continuously changing object that blazes red light into its environment. The creation is dependent on the beams. If there are no laser beams, the piece gets another meaning, returns to being a dress with crystals.

It is now clear that fashion is not only a piece of clothing. The meaning of fashion is dependent on the environment in the broadest way of sense. This conclusion is also applicable to fine art. As we have already seen, Maarten Spruyt said that there is no big difference between creating an environment for fashion or art. And the meaning of For the Love of God, an artwork by Damien Hirst, is completely different when it is not presented in a black box but next to the Girl with the Pearl Earring (Johannes Vermeer, circa 1665). Also, the environment influences the mood of the consumer. To see For the Love of God, you have to wait in line; this gives the artwork already certain importance before you have even seen it. The atmosphere influences the way people interpret the piece of art. This means that art is as dependent on its environment as fashion. The most notorious difference: where the body is part of the influencing environment in fashion, it need not be in the environment that influences fine art.

We have seen that fashion and art are both dependent on their environment. This is important to know once we are creating a culture in fashion expositions. Because, we now know that one fashion piece can have several different meanings when it is exhibited at different places. To keep fashion exposition diverse, it is not necessary to expose different pieces all the time as long they are combined with different pieces of art or in different environments. The communication between the fashion piece and its environment needs to change to keep diversity.
Art vs. Craft

During my first visit to Monte Carlo, in the early nineties, I passed by the Coco Chanel store at Allee Serge-Diaghile. This is the place where my fascination for the couture house Chanel started. Coco Chanel made me believe fashion is more than just a craft; fashion is an art.

Now, in 2010, I think fashion is an art because of the sophisticated concepts fashion houses nowadays create. For example, the Mobile Art Museum, a futuristic pavilion created by the architect Zaha Hadid. Twenty contemporary artists exhibit work inspired by the quilted bag from Chanel. Back then, in 1992, I thought fashion was an art because the clothes were so well constructed, cut and thought through. But aren’t these characteristics of a craftsman, a dressmaker? Let us now look into what the difference is between art and craft to fence off what we understand by fashion in this research.

Collins Cobuild knows the answer to my questions: “Art consists of paintings, sculptures, and other pictures or objects which are created for people to look at and admire or think deeply about.” Craft, on the other hand, is “an activity or job that involves doing something skillfully.” Can we conclude from this that the fashion designer is the artist and the dressmaker is the craftsman? Let us now look into what the difference is between art and craft to fence off what we understand by fashion in this research.

Denis Dutton, professor in Philosophy and Art states that “the concept of craft is historically associated with the production of useful objects; art, at least since the 18th century, with useless ones.” For fashion, this means that as long as it is wearable it is a craft. If it is not, it is art. Which consequently means that fashion is a craft, since it is always made to wear, not always publicly, but at least as a performance. You can also interpret it in another way: for fashion this means that as long the clothes are worn in daily life it is craft, if it is not made for daily use, it is art.

The British philosopher R.G. Collingwood listed a set of criteria that distinguish art from craft. He said that a craft always has an end product. “The result to be obtained is preconceived or thought out before being arrived at. The craftsman knows what he wants to make before he makes it.” In his views, all art is “an act in which the artist expresses his or her emotion in a moment of authentic self-realization. There is no accurate specification of the finished product. The end is not specifiable until it is reached.” This is an interesting viewpoint which combines emotion with the end product. If you already know what the end product is, you don’t have to create it; it already exists. For fashion this means that the one who creates (fashion designer) – whether he or she draws, moulds, sews or anything else – is the artist, the one who accomplishes the creation (the dressmaker) is the craftsman.

It is a complicated problem because there are different physical and emotional aspects playing their part. From the above we can conclude:

Art: An object – not necessarily a tool – that is not specifiable until it is finished. The object expresses the emotion of the artist and challenges people to look at, admire and think about it; experience it.

Hussein Chalayan, Maildress
Craft: A certain, preconceived and thought through object, which is made with the skills of a craftsman. The object fulfills the demands of the utensil in the best way. Fashion, therefore, can be both art and craft. If we use the just mentioned definitions, we can state that if fashion is made to wear, it is craft. An example is a tailor made suit. If it is made to show an emotion or experience, it is art. An example is the mail dress from Hussein Chalayan. A dress which can be sent by mail and look like an ordinary envelope, once you unfold the envelope a dress appears.

Nevertheless, it is difficult in fashion to decide when it is art and when it is craft, because fashion is always worn to show an emotion, to show ones identity. Beside this, all fashion (art and craft) is wearable, possibly not practical, but it is made for the body to wear it. Think about the Condomdress by Adriana Bertini, which Han Nefkens bought for the Centraal Museum in Utrecht in 2004; made for the body, not very practical in use. Art and craft have both the characteristic to be unique, unlike fashion we buy at a commercial shopping centre.

In that case fashion is mass-produced and neither craft nor art. The character of being unique that both art and craft possess, made them belong in a museum.

As a consumer, I encounter a big difference between retail and museums. If I go shopping, I enter a shop full of clothes, I have plenty of choice, hear music in the background – or even on the foreground. A salesperson comes to me and asks if she can help me. I make my choice, start changing clothes and buy; a pretty enervating activity. If I visit a museum, I experience the complete opposite: rest, silence, and uniqueness. No choices to make and no lovely salesperson. Now we realize a shop is nothing like a museum, it is good to think about the way they are designed.

Architect Maarten Spruyt, has a clear opinion about this: "There is no difference between commercial and cultural presentation. Both retail and an exposition are about atmosphere." An example of his work is the exhibition 15 jaar Marlies Dekkers in 2007 for Marlies Dekkers in the Kunsthal in Rotterdam. In this exhibition, as in his commercial work for Tommy Hilfiger, he tells stories and creates worlds; he creates experiences. I think he is right when he says that there is not such a difference in designing a shop or an exhibition.

The reason why there is no difference between designing a retail environment and an exhibition is that the important aim for both is to attract people. An example of a retail experience is the store of Viktor&Rolf in Milan, created by architect Siebe Tettero, who worked for, among others, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and Sotheby’s Amsterdam. The shop was built completely upside down. The floor was made the ceiling and the ceiling the floor. That is what attracts people, something they can discover and bewonder. Creating an experience, an atmosphere, is an important tool because it can evoke emotions and emotions make us feel alive. Therefore we see more and more stylists who used to work for commercial brands are asked to design exhibitions and vice versa.
An important thing to keep in mind is that retail stores have an important goal: “The more trade, the more money.” These shops need to sell many products at minor costs. They need to change their styling often; a consumer does not want to find the same experience as last month. For museums this is different. Museum exhibitions take about half a year. The better the presentation, the more visitors will come and the more money is earned. However, there is no discussion about presentation in general: good presentation is a requirement.

Conclusion

We put fashion and art versus each other and find out the similarities and differences, the way they influence each other. Because we did this, we want to know when fashion, art or craft is. Inspiration and emotion are determiners. Both art and craft have the characteristic to be unique that made them belong in a museum in contradiction to mass-produced fashion. A significant difference between fashion and art is that fashion is made for the body and art not necessarily. In other situations, art and fashion show similarities: they are both dependent of their environment, and creating an exhibition or shop is both about creating an experience.
Role of Fashion in the Museum world

What is the role of fashion in the museum world? In The Netherlands, fashion exhibitions are popular, they attract thousands of people. Nevertheless, there is no museum that exhibits fashion permanently and many museum boards are not aware of the value of their fashion collection. We have to know if there is a need for a permanent fashion exhibition in order to create a permanent fashion exhibition, a culture in exhibiting fashion.
Before we start talking about fashion in a museum, it is important to know what a museum is. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as: “A non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.”

For fashion heritage, this means that museums can play an important role; museums conserve costumes. They preserve fashion history. Besides this, being open for the society and its educational purposes are important to spread the knowledge of fashion, also in the future.

To get this message across, museums need to expose their own fashion collection and create fashion exhibitions with additions from other sources. The Gemeentemuseum in The Hague did this with the exhibition *Voici Paris*, in which their collection was combined with pieces of the 2009 show of Chanel and more contemporary and modern fashion pieces. The result was a complete exhibition about the fashion history as we know it today (from Poiret till Taminiau). Using conservation and presentation, museums can educate the public about fashion. Visitors will explore the different sides of fashion (art, craft, combination with different pieces of art) and not only the pieces we buy at a shopping street.

Museums in The Netherlands own a lot of important fashion pieces. Most museums started their fashion collection from the moment they were found in the 19th and 20th century. Recently, museums also acquire fashion of contemporary designers. Han Nefkens takes an important place in building fashion collections for museums. With his H+F foundation he purchases contemporary fashion pieces on a yearly basis and makes sure that these pieces are being exhibited. Among others, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and Centraal Museum Utrecht own an extensive fashion collection. The problem of these foundations and museums is that they only buy a few pieces from a few designers. That means that the purchased pieces are often exhibited, with the result that one particular fashion piece can be seen at every fashion exhibition. An example is *The Fashion Show collection* (Fall/Winter 2007) of Viktor&Rolf that was exhibited in Utrecht, Rotterdam and Enkhuizen within two years. The only way to keep diversity is by combining it with a museum’s own identity and collection.
In spite of the lack of diversity in fashion exhibitions, exhibitions are popular in The Netherlands. They attract thousands of people. Already in the beginning of the 21st century, Viktor&Rolf and Hussein Chalayan attracted over 70,000 people to their exhibitions in the Groninger museum. More recently, The Art of Fashion, museum Boijmans van Beuningen, elicited an increase in the number of visitors. The exhibition attracted 40% more youngsters than other exhibitions and the number of visitors between the ages of twenty and thirty increased. It is clear that there is a fashion exhibition market and also the opportunity to exhibit fashion. Nevertheless, fashion exhibitions are rare.

Now we have seen that there is a need for a fashion exhibition and that museums possess beautiful fashion collections, the question remains what the reason is for not exhibiting fashion on a regular basis? Fashion exhibitions are largely dependent on the (art) value that museum management and conservators give to the subject. As long as museum boards do not see fashion as an important facet of culture, it will not be exhibited often.

Why not a fashion museum?

We have seen that there is a need for fashion exhibitions; why not create a fashion museum? Museums in The Netherlands own extended fashion collections, there are possibilities enough to exhibit these collections. However, permanent exposition of these collections is disappearing. Nevertheless, museum conservators see the importance of making the fashion collection public, and are therefore open to lend their collection to other museums. Yet, they do not want to donate it to one single museum dedicated to fashion. They are anxious to sacrifice their collection.

Another reason is that once the fashion museum owns a collection, it is hard to keep the exhibits diverse. Every museum has its own identity; the fashion collection of museums has an identity. These different identities make the fashion exhibitions diverse. Once you combine all collections in one museum, the different visions make place for one central vision. Catharina Koerts confirms this in her study and says that museum conservators do not want to lose the vision, the identity of their collection.

Furthermore, when there is only one central point of fashion exhibitions in The Netherlands, only people who are interested in fashion will visit this museum. If fashion is exhibited all over the country, also people who are not directly interested in fashion, yet in the museum that exhibits fashion in its environment, will visit the exhibition. This means that a fashion exhibition at different museums will attract different target groups. This is interesting for museums and for the fashion industry, because people come in contact with things they normally do not see. This can inspire them and make them enthusiastic about the subject. Thus, people who are interested in museums come in contact with fashion and vice versa. Koerts asserts in her study that museums are willing to combine fashion with other objects in order to keep diversity.

The last argument for not creating a fashion museum in The Netherlands is that Antwerp has a fashion museum: MoMu. Antwerp is relatively close to the Netherlands. The only possibility for a Dutch fashion museum to distinguish itself from MoMu, is that it exclusively has fashion of Dutch designers as an object.

Beyond the Catwalk

We have seen that there is need for a permanent fashion exhibition (not for a fashion museum) and that fashion exhibitions are popular. Vincent Boele thinks this too: “Fashion is of all times, all cultures. People will always be interested in it.”19 Museums can use the popularity of fashion. They can fulfill the role of extension piece for the catwalk. Fashion collections that are shown on the catwalk can not be seen in real life. FashionTV and Internet are possibilities to bring catwalk fashion to the public, yet to see fashion is a total different experience than to see it on screen. Especially the quality of fabrics can not be witnessed on screen.

Once museums fulfill the role of extension piece of the catwalk, they will attract people that normally not visit the museum. The museum becomes a platform for fashion designers to show their collections and for consumers to get inspired by fashion and the combination of fashion and art.

People like to buy fashion from designers, they want to buy a brand to create, support and bring away their identity, yet they do not want to pay much. Besides, when people visit a fashion exhibition, they want to dream about wearing the creations they see or at least witness the aura of the creations and the designer. Boele says: “As soon fashion is presented in such a way that it is exciting, that you can see that someone has worn it or someone
can wear it if it is about contemporary fashion, people can easy identify with the costume. People than like it to visit fashion exhibitions. If designers create a fashion piece, it does not matter whether it is something small or a whole outfit, based on the exhibition, these dreams can come true. People get the possibility to buy an image an aura of the exhibition and the designer in the museum shop. They will always remember the exhibition they visited when they are wearing that piece of fashion.

In August 2000 Modenatie Antwerp officially started. ModeNatie “symbolizes everything that is related to the anchoring of fashion in Antwerp as well as its place in and its appearance towards the international world of fashion”. It consists out of different institutes: Fashion and architecture bookstore, fashion museum MoMu, Flanders Fashion Institute, Fashion department Royal Academy of fine arts Antwerp and its fashion library. It is situated in the centre of Antwerp. This fashion presentation point benefits both economy and tourism of the city. Fashion stores are sitting close to ModeNatie, which makes this area a fashion area. Tourists are visiting Antwerp especially for this area. They shop in Antwerp instead of in their own town or country.

Amsterdam tries it with the fashion & museum district. Unfortunately, there are no collaborations between the PC Hoofdstraat (shopping district) and the museums. Yet, The Netherlands does their best, Arnhem wants to be the fashion town of the country and organizes Arnhem Mode Bienale at a two-yearly basis.

Conclusion

Fashion exhibitions are beloved. They attract a younger age group and a high amount of visitors. Fashion exhibitions will always be popular, because fashion is of all times and it represents culture. Yet, it has to fulfill the requirements: continuity, diversity, education, exploration and engagement. An exhibition is a better way to fulfill these requirements than a fashion museum. Because, all exhibitions in such a museum are made with the same vision. Besides, fashion collectors whether they are museum conservators or private collectors, do not want to extend their collections. Yet, they are willing to lend it because they see the importance of continuity in fashion presentation.
Engage, explore and learn

Now we have seen that there are many possibilities for fashion exhibitions and that there is a market for a permanent fashion exhibition, it is important to know what trends there are in society connected to museums and fashion. Trends show us what people find important in life at a certain time. They also teach us what is going on in society and in a particular sector. It involves social as well as economical aspects. This chapter gives insight in trends in society at the moment. Once we know which trends we have to take into account, we can find out what features the exhibition needs to posses in order to be successful.
Experience

People are eager to explore, learn and engage. Museums can play a central role in this. Museums are places to explore, they have all the tools to be an experience. Because art arouses a feeling, an artwork can be an experience itself. “A picture paints a thousand words”, is a well-known statement. An image is something that generates a certain feeling by the viewer, and is therefore a form of communication that is going further than words. In the first chapter we have seen that art has to do with emotions. Creating an experience is a way to stimulate emotions. An artwork is an experience itself when it calls up emotion. Museums now see this valuable aspect, they know that once they are using this and apply it at their exhibitions, people will have a never-to-forget experience.

Museum Branding Trends

Within the cultural sector, more precisely the museum world, there are several trends or shifts going on. Most importantly, museums shift from institutions into brands in which people play a role. Visitors are not longer partaking the exhibition; they now participate in it. Victoria&Albert museum London, does a good job in participation. They have broadened their experience online. They offer their community diverse online games and design tools. An example is: design your own tartan (Scottish checked pattern). They are active on different social media websites (Flickr, Twitter, YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook) and create competitions. The shoe design competition is a nice example of participation. Different age groups are asked to design a shoe, Jimmy Choo himself judged the creations, the winners got a place on the V&A website. This means that the public co-creates the experience. Besides this, collaboration is getting more and more important, museums are following the 1+1=3 trend. Later in this chapter, I will talk about this trend in depth.

Museums want to show and investigate more perspectives, more cultures. This is called engagement. They are interested in society and in what is going on in politics. According to the research of Catharina Koerts, the identity and commitment to location of a museum play an important role in creating and strengthen the relation between a museum and its community.

Museums also invite people from outside the museum world to curate exhibitions. In 2008, 88% of museums in the U.S.A invited guest curators. Although Europe does this less frequently than the U.S.A., it is also working with guest curators from different sectors. Examples are Alexander van Slobbe en Fransisco van Benthum for Gejaagd door de wind in 2009 at Zuiderzee museum Enkhuizen, and Loan Oei for Pracht en Kraal in 2007 at Tropenmuseum Amsterdam.

People are not only going to museums anymore, museums also go to the people. They want to be active outside their walls, physically and online. They become platforms instead of institutions and create a community by doing this.

Museums want to be active outside their own walls. They want to become platforms instead of institutions. For fashion, we could also say that they want to be a different kind of catwalk. The Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam fulfills an example function in this trend. The museum is closed for renovation, therefore they have started thinking about spreading their message in a different way. At first, they settled down in an anti-squat-building, later on they started to move around with a construction shed at different places throughout Amsterdam and at festivals. They also worked together with other museums like De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam in which they created the exhibition Heilig Vuur (a combination of modern art and religion – a combination of Het Stedelijk Museum and De Nieuwe Kerk).
Once museums become brands, it is also important to take into account how brands are developing. Brands are becoming tools for people, things people can work with and even help them, for example Google: it helps people to find information. Brands also have the ability to link organizations and worlds, to connect people and institutions. People can identify themselves with the identity of a brand; become a friend or fan of a brand. Facebook taps into this phenomenon in a good way. This social community website gives brands the possibility to build a community of fans.

**Trends in Branding**

Brands are multiple in form, they are pluralistic and look different in different places. This development follows the trend 'localization'. Starbucks is leader in this trend. "The new stores aim to reflect the local community more than the chain's regular stores currently did", 25 Said Tim Pfeiffer, senior vice president of Starbucks. The brand, opened a non-branded store: the bland colors will be banished to make way for bold colors, second hand furniture, community boards and work by local artists.

Both the fashion and museum world are longing for connection. The connection between commercial and non-commercial, between market and academy, between the Netherlands and foreign countries. All these connections can contribute to create a fashion climate in the Netherlands. Making connections brings us at the trend $1+1=3$. If you connect one and another, the sum can be more than two.

**Commercial + Non commercial = 3**

The commercial and non-commercial worlds hardly work together. Museums find collaborations with other museums or cultural organizations. For example combi-tickets, that can be found everywhere. Cultural organizations start to work together with commercial companies. A good example of this is collaboration between museums and media. For example the exhibition *Voici Paris*, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag has as media partner Glamour, a fashion magazine. This is a collaboration between commercial (1) and (+) non-commercial (1), the result is that media start writing about the exhibition, more people - also non-traditional museum visitors - hear about it and visit the exhibition (3). This is important in order to create visibility in society and to attract visitors. The most interesting and challenging goal of a fashion-exhibition concept is to create news, so that the media maintain writing and talking about it. For museums, the challenge is to approach different kind of media with their own target groups, in order to reach a lot of different people.
Globalism and localism are countertrends. Once globalization is a trend, people long for their own individual identity in the huge world they live and find this locally: Local products, local history and local participation including all kind of local events. People are bonded to the place they grew up or live in. Not only because they know the place well, but also because their memories of childhood and special events are there. We see this in the creations of Manish Aurora, an Indian fashion designer. He combines traditional Indian crafts like embroidery, appliqué and beading with Western silhouettes. Also Hussein Chalayan’s Ambimorphous collection is a distinct example. In this collection, Chalayan uses the traditional Turkish check.

If an exhibition is locally based, it means that it is located in a certain area at a certain period of time. Every city has its own identity and history, therefore the exhibition will change as it goes from one to another place. Museums find local identity important, according to the research of Catharina Koerts. To exhibit local products that can be seen by different people also out of the city gives The Netherlands the opportunity to profile itself as fashion country.

Conclusion

Trends in society tell us what is important in society at a certain time. To create a fashion exhibition culture the trend $1+1=3$ is essential: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Collaboration and connection are keywords in this trend. Besides this, there are several main shifts to keep in mind when making decisions. At first, museums function as platforms in which participation, engaging, education and inspiration are important. Besides, people value their local identity in our globalised world. This means, brands (thus museums) need to be pluralistic, need to behave like a chameleon and need to have the ability to adjust to the environment they are placed. In general, museums and brands need to offer places and things to inspire new thinking.
Conclusion

After years of interest in fashion and art, I finally researched and wrote down the things I am passionate about. The border section between the two, how they react and influence each other. Yet, the most exciting thing was to research how they can work together and make each other more worthwhile. My expectations came true: together they are strong. The museum goes beyond the catwalk!

Fashion and art are two different things. Yet, there are many similarities. It is all about mood, feeling, and image: it is about experience. Combining fashion and art results in the most interesting and innovative projects. Besides this, both are dependent on their environment. Once the environment of fashion or art changes, the meaning of the piece of art or fashion changes. The body is part of the environment of a fashion piece and therefore, has a special role in the fashion. There is no fashion without a body, while in art it is not necessarily part of the environment.

Fashion exhibitions are beloved in The Netherlands. In the last decade, they were responsible for a huge amount of visitors and also attract — in general — a younger public than traditional exhibitions. Nevertheless, fashion exhibitions are not presented on a regular basis. Foundations and museums possess huge fashion collections and are willing to lend them, yet not want to donate it to one special fashion museum. It is more interesting to show fashion in different museums than in a fashion museum, especially when it comes to diversity of presenting fashion. Every museum has its own vision on fashion and can combine fashion with its own collection. Therefore, moving fashion exhibitions will be more diverse than an exhibition in a permanent fashion museum.

Museums function as the extension place of the catwalk. Fashion shows are only presented to invited members. Fashion lovers can see the collections on the Internet or at FashionTV; yet, the quality and aura of the pieces can not be witnessed via these channels. Museums fulfill the need of observing the pieces in real, an advantage for the fashion lover. Yet, also an advantage for the museum, they will attract a new target group. Fashion designers can use this museum-catwalk to create awareness of their name and creations.

In order create a concept for a fashion exhibition that is innovative and has potential, trends need to be implanted in the concept. Trends predict the future, not literally, but they give direction; they influence the conditions of the concept. Museums become brands, brands become a platform for people, a catwalk. People want to participate in exhibitions instead of partaking it. This means that only exhibiting is not enough anymore, museums need to deliver a total experience; they need to shift from institutions to platforms. Function as a platform for people to explore, learn and engage. Social media and Internet application are important; these are means to reach the total experience. Brands — and museums — are also tools to build ones identity, because people feel that they belong to something, they belong to a community. The participation trend is still in process and in an early stage in the cultural sector, it is important for museums to tap into this trend as soon as possible in order to fulfill the need of the consumer soon. Another trend is collaboration. Collaboration is a trend that both the cultural and commercial sector needs to keep in mind, to use ones expertise leads to meaningful project.

Being pluralistic is an important quality nowadays. Every identity need another way of education and entertainment. It is important that an exhibition functions like a chameleon, and adjusts to the place it is presented, behaves according the norms and values of this place. Nevertheless, it has to be careful not to loose its identity. This trend is related to the trend localization. People are longing for their local behavior in a globalized world.

“Offering places and things to inspire new thinking and putting the muse back in into the museum.”
Wolff Olins
We have seen the most useful trends for a fashion exhibition concept. Most of them are related to the foremost important trend connection: $1 + 1 = 3$. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Connection leads to meaningful, creative and innovative concepts. Besides this, it attracts different target groups and takes care for combined expertise from different worlds.
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Chapter 1. Versus, Art vs. Fashion - David Remfry for Stella McCartney via www.vam.ac.uk

Chapter 1. Versus, Independent vs. Dependent – Collection *Readings*, Hussein Chalayan, via www.flickr.com
Chapter 1. Versus, Independent vs. Dependent – *For the Love of God*, Damien Hirst, postcard
Chapter 1. Versus, Independent vs. Dependent – *Maildress*, Hussein Chalayan from The Art of Fashion
Chapter 1. Versus, Independent vs. Dependent – *Condomdress*, Adriana Bertini, own material

Chapter 1. Versus, Museum vs. Shop – Maarten Spruyt for Marlies Dekkers: 15 jaar Marlies Dekkers, own material
Chapter 1. Versus, Museum vs. Shop – Maarten Spruyt for Hilfiger Denim, own material
Chapter 1. Versus, Museum vs. Shop – V&R shop in Milan from Vreemde Dingen, Surrealisme en Design

Chapter 2. Role of fashion in the museum world, front - Mode Bienale Arnhem 2009, own material
Chapter 2. Role of fashion in the museum world, fashion in museum – Chanel collection spring 09, exhibition *Voici Paris* Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, own material
Chapter 2. Role of fashion in the museum world, fashion in museum – Collection *The Fashion Show*, Viktor&Rolf, own material

Chapter 2. Role of fashion in the museum world, Beyond the Catwalk – Website Modenatie Antwerpen via www.modenatie.com

Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn: front – Exhibition *In her Shoes*, Modemuseum Hasselt via www.auxpaysdes-mireilles.wordpress.com
Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn; museum branding trends – Hong Luu for Shoe design competition Victoria & Albert Museum London via www.vam.ac.uk
Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn; museum branding trends – construction shed of Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam via www.flickr.com
Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn; trends in branding – Facebook page Tate Modern http://www.facebook.com/tategallery?ref=Search&sid=691771857.4203176165..1
Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn; commercial + non-commercial = 3 – Glamour magazine, Issue March 2010
Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn; commercial + non-commercial = 3 – Manish Aurora via www.flickr.com
Chapter 3. Engage, explore and learn; commercial + non-commercial = 3 – Collection Ambimorphous, Hussein Chalayan via www.flickr.com

Justification of images
Sources

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Beyond the Catwalk provides a research about the dynamic border section between fashion and art. How they inspire each other and how combining art and fashion causes innovative concepts. Or, as John Galliano once said: ‘At art school in Britain you mix with photographers, fine artists, sculptors, and art and fashion historians. It was an amazing catalyst for all of us.’

This research is the basis for a concept book for museum conservators. The book guides them through the process of creating the Beyond the Catwalk fashion exhibition concept. A permanent fashion presentation that maintains diversity: it combines fashion with a museum’s own collection: the story of the exhibition changes as soon as the exhibition changes from one to another museum.

About the author
This research is the final project of Loes Wernsen. It shows her yearlong interest for art, museums and the ‘art-side’ of fashion. This research illustrates who she is and what she wants to reach in her professional life.
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