

# Fashion and Innovation

**Márta Kisfaludy**

Budapest Tech  
Doberdó út 6, H-1034 Budapest, Hungary  
e-mail: [kisfaludy.marta@rkk.bmf.hu](mailto:kisfaludy.marta@rkk.bmf.hu)

---

*Abstract: The link between fashion and innovation is showed from the point of view of a fashion designer, who did research work on this theme in her doctoral thesis. The author demonstrates some of the results expressed in her practical work.*

---

## 1 Introduction

In the theoretical research of my doctoral thesis, among others, I highlighted the basic definition of fashion as a whole and the driving force behind its development.

The design is continuously gaining importance in the development of the products so as to meet their various requirements, to produce high quality goods thus keeping and increasing our share in the market.

All these factors have become key elements of the development in the present economic and social situation.

The eternal demand for changing is the process that keeps fashion alive. The importance of fashion is well demonstrated by the large number of people involved in this branch of industry having historical roots.

Fashion senses the changes taking place in the world and response to them sensitively and immediately. These changes can be directly perceived in the way the individuals dress, giving unambiguous information about the wearers, their wealth, taste, age, national characteristics, etc.

The fashion shows the components of desire to belong to a certain group or to be different from it.

## 2 Effects Influencing Fashion

Prior to forming the concept of my masterwork it was essential to do research work on understanding the logic behind the operation of fashion.

Fashion is exposed to influences coming from all fields of life.

- 1 Social and economic situation
  - way of life, wealth, dressing habits, consumption, etc.
- 2 Protection of environment and health
  - climatic changes, protection of animals, environment friendly materials, sport, etc.
- 3 Political and legal environment
  - international agreements, etc.
- 4 Multicultural effects
  - historical and folk costumes, street-styles, etc.
- 5 Art
  - applied art, painting and sculpture, theatre, music, literature, etc.
- 6 Technological developments
  - new fabrics, intelligent textiles, new production and logistic procedures, etc.
- 7 Sexuality
  - blurred border between male and female dressing, etc.
- 8 Internet
  - presence of the global world.

The result of the above influences is the innovation itself expected by certain circles of fashion fans and when the late followers spread fashion widely, this process will regenerate the demand for new innovation.

The accelerating fashion multiplies the creation possibilities of the designers and they put aside their previous concepts and traditional design attitudes and directly combine characteristic costumes of historical ages and folk art with the street style as an expression of the global world.

It is not our goal any more to determine for the buyers what they should like or not, but to urge them to buy and to express their personality in this way.

Individuality and variability have key role in the design work which I experienced in my design work done for a garment manufacturing company.

Deep knowledge of the customers and their shopping motivations should be thoroughly known to realise the preparation of customised designs in small series in accordance with world trends.

The designers should always imagine their would be buyers, should know their latent demands as well, offering the buyers the possibility of creating their own image.

In the case of a ready to made collection a designer must have information of the international economic and fashion trends, the current position of the market, change of demand and supply, as well as that of the customer's habits and lifestyles.

In addition one have to be aware of requirements set by the company he or she works for, and technological background and possibilities of it.

As a designer having all the necessary information at hand, I make not only the designs of the collection, but I have to follow the whole technical production and until the final product is available in shops, as a competitive product.

As I really know the whole line I can interfere at any point of it, should any problem occur.

My work has been greatly supported by continuous innovation of technological facilities, such as newly developed fabrics, technological solutions and accessories, etc.

### **3 Freedom of Creativity**

In spite of the fact that even a 3-D interactive garment designing system has been developed for gaining garments properly fit to the individual body, I followed a classical method of innovation as an experiment made in my doctoral masterwork.

My method allows the wearer to freely create perfectly customised series of garments, as well.

The starting point of my masterwork was a capsule collection which was awarded by Grand Prix of the Hungarian Products, in 2003.

The collection included experimental and expandable models, produced by the garment manufacturing company, I've been working for since 1995.

Some of these models gave me further inspiration to my masterwork, like:

- the special interference coming from the layers of the transparent, black and white optically patterned stripes,

- the second one was the softness of the muslin fabric which is vitally important from the point of view of shaping of the forms,
- the third inspiration was the lengthy striped straps which decorate and bring together the different parts of buttons and other conventional solutions of closure,
- the fourth guiding principle was to create the delicate balance between symmetry and asymmetry,
- the fifth was the emphasising of the contrast of the black and white stripes by adding sheer black and white pieces.



The fabrics are of primary importance for me as they determine the form, style, colour and even the details applied.

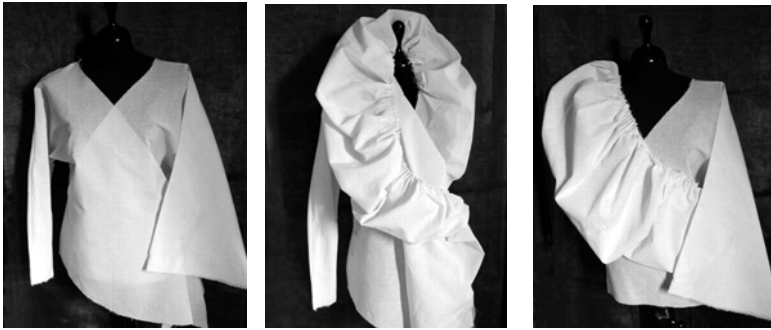
In contrast to many years' designing work of commercial approach, with my masterwork, I didn't have to follow the business aspects of manufacture-sale-price limiting the designers' creativity. My only consideration was to make the best use of the possibilities offered by my experiments. Going back to the early ways of wrapping up the body and the modelling on a dummy, instead of drawing sketches first, brought me variety during my work.

## 4 Process of Construction

My experiments started with cutting out large size geometrical patterns and then the work of making mock-ups began. As I have been designing jackets for years the idea obviously presented itself to try different variations of them along with the other trials using cotton fabric.

The experimental work resulted in a surprisingly large number of variations that gave rich inspiration not only for my masterwork but for future projects, too.

In the case of half-pieces of different forms I intentionally avoided all cuts and separate sleeves, and I used only developed patterns. In spite of the asymmetric layouts of the garment pieces, they were eye-catching, well balanced and only the width and quantities put a limit on my imagination.



Most of the mock-ups have been prepared from the original fabrics, but they offered a lot more variations than presentable.

The overlapped pieces of different length resulted in peculiar visual effects, like the interference of the crosswise stripes, or when the white half jackets partially cover the striped ones, or the soft drapes produce wave-like effects.



## 5 Feedback

My experimental models were not intended to be manufactured for sale, but perhaps they will live on.

A large number of combinations were photographed some of them clearly showed the properties of the fabrics as garments of exclusive products and proved to be attractive for being manufactured. So I offered them to the fabric printing company (Maya Rt. I bought the fabric from), and they presented some of the photos in the form of enlarged posters at a joint trend blocks at the Texworld Fair in Paris, in 2005.

My doctoral exhibition made it possible to present this work to the public and the professionals, as well. They expressed the opinion that these models can be worn

practically by all sorts of figures, due to their simple cuts, but sophisticated variability.

On the occasion of the 35 jubilee of Rejtő Sándor Faculty of Light Industry and Environmental Protection Engineering of Budapest Tech, some of my models were put on by the staff in a fashion show as a surprise for the guests invited, proving the wearability of my innovative collection.

### Conclusions

As a designer I consider it extremely important to make continuous analysis of economic and social situation, the motivations and identity of the group targeted, and the new trends, as well as to keep abreast with the latest technological innovation for creating new competitive ideas.

As a tutor my primary aim is to provide our students with all these kind of widely applicable knowledge.

### References

- [1] Kisfaludy Márta: „Az öltözképzés új aspektusai”, Omnibus edition - Térformálás- Tárgyformálás 1, A Magyar Iparművészeti Egyetem Mesterképzési (DLA) programján készített tanulmányok 1988-2000, pp. 88-93 o. További szerzők: Balázs Miklós Ernő, Balogh Zsolt, Bánsági Petra, Csepregi Sándor, Félegyházi András, Fodor Lóránt, Györgyi Adrienne, Gyurkó Éva, Harmati Hedvig, Kónya Kinga, László Marcell, Lőrincz Győző, M. Tóth Éva, Penkala Éva, Remete Kriszta, Zalavári József, Zobor László. Budapest, 2001, Terc Kereskedelmi és Szolgáltató Kft. Szakkönyv Üzletága
- [2] Kisfaludy Márta: „De hol itt az önmegvalósítás?”, Omnibus edition - Térformálás- Tárgyformálás 2, A Magyar Iparművészeti Egyetem Mesterképzési (DLA) programján készített tanulmányok 2000-2002, pp. 117-120 o. További szerzők: Balogh Zsolt, Bodnár Enikő, Dávid Hajnal, Egri Zoltán, Harmati Hedvig, Horváth Zoltán, Jakab Csaba, Jászai Alica Bush, Juhász István, Károsi Zoltán, Kemény Péter, Kónya Kinga, Koós Pál, László Marcell, Lázár Kata, Lisztes Gábor, Magyar Márton, Nagy Lajos, Polónyi Károly, Sallai Géza, Szegedi Csaba, Szöllőssy Barbara. Budapest, 2002, Terc Kereskedelmi és Szolgáltató Kft. Szakkönyv Üzletága
- [3] The author's own pieces of masterwork and garments of Kanizsa Garments Cooperative are published as well.