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A SENSE OF **FASHION**

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ABSTRACT

As an expressive language, fashion design has an innate capacity to engage a full-gamut of sensorial responses. This research explores the contribution of synaesthesia to fashion design in an effort to highlight the positive aesthetic and intellectual impact of this integration. Such research advances my creative practice.

The method of realising garments which address synaesthetic principles is an extension of personal interest in synaesthesia, driven from both an experiential perspective and a desire to gain a greater understanding into theories in relation to challenging the senses in a contemporary fashion world. If fashion includes novelty as a crucial and desirable aspect, and can be defined as an ever evolving and self rejuvenating art form, then the energy and frivolity of these components in association with multiple sensory stimuli and response will expose the consequence of the study through design-work.

Recognition of the importance of sensory cross-overs in fashion design will reveal the quintessence of how humans position themselves and respond to a specific environment. If realisation of the senses is with regard to surroundings, and fashion becomes the surrounding which elicits multiple involuntary responses from stimuli, a conscious recognition has begun.

Traditional theories on the organisation of sense modalities speculate that humans perceive their world with five senses, the most dominant generally being sight. The combined effect of these senses creates the environment in which we inhabit. The visual and tactile senses have long been the focus of the fashion product but, of all the senses, touch is most key to our species (Ackerman, 1990). Sound, taste and smell have been under-recognised as providers of ceaseless information about our environment. The investigation into the notion that fashion and other sensory systems are not separate entities assists with establishing the links between sensory integration and fashion design. The emergence of the synaesthetic paradigm has highlighted a unity between the senses rather than the traditional hierarchy of favouring the visual. The research on synaesthesia relative to fashion design occupies a parallel position to neurological theory and allows synaesthetic investigation to be a pivotal determining factor towards my outcome.

I have engaged in critical self-reflection of my design process and production as a means of elucidating stimuli associated with multi-sensory perception.

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