Space In Fashion Design – F² (Fabiani Fashion) Case Study

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Abstract

Citation: Devetak T. Space In Fashion Design – F² (Fabiani Fashion) Case Study. SEE J Archit Des. 2016 Dec 17; 2016:10027.
<https://doi.org/10.3889/seejad.2016.10027>

Keywords: space; fashion; architecture; maks fabiani; creative pattern cutting.

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Received: 19-Sep-2016; **Revised:** 20-Oct-2016; **Accepted:** 28-Oct-2016; **Published:** 17-Dec-2016

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Funding: This research did not receive any financial support.

Competing Interests: The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

These research inquiries into the transformation of complex architectural spatial objects into contemporary garments by implementing creative pattern cutting as an integrated part of the fashion design process. From the architecture design process, a creative process of generating ideas using the human body as the centre point of the creative process, and an understanding of the envelope around that space were implemented and researched in fashion design. A creative construction method evolved using the standard matrix of basic blocks and implementation of the sculptural work by creating three-dimensional paper garment forms. In this way, garment design is created inside - outside. The resulting garment forms visually articulate meanings arising from the architectural design works of Maks Fabiani regarding structure, historical context, content from within the premises and personal sensory experiences. The envisaged results are highly applicable, but, with a theoretical significance, they also open different views on a fashion design development process. The F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study was carried out in 2015 by the author Tanja Devetak.

Introduction

“I use the same approach to clothes as I did when I designed buildings. It is basic geometry: you take a flat form and revolve it in space.” [1]

Gianfranco Ferre

Fashion design and architecture have a common way of building new structures. They both use related language for developing creative results. Within modern architecture, there are architectural objects with complex forms similar to garments, though different in scale and their use of solid materials. As Coco Chanel said, “Fashion is architecture: it is a matter of proportions.” [1]

The aim of the F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study, which was carried out in 2015 by the author Tanja Devetak, is to examine links between fashion design and architecture in the context of understanding space and the central role of the human body in that space. The ideas of space, volume and movement were questioned through the concept of communicating between the body and the environment. The aim has been to explore the conceptual and material value of the relationship

between fashion design and architecture. In both disciplines, architecture and fashion design, the human body has a pivotal role. The human body is at the centre of the architectural and fashion design creative process and is a reflection of the designer's taste. We are continually surrounded and wrapped by architectural and garment-based products. The earliest humans used the same material for their shelter and their clothing. Even today, clothing and architecture are products that are constantly with and around us. Both professions create results that protect and shelter the human body. We are dressed at all times, and every direction we go, garments are literally with us. Similarly, in the modern concept of living, architectural interventions are inextricably linked to our everyday lives and movement. Outer space reflects our inner spaces. In fashion, clothing is considered as the “second skin”, in architecture instead of façade, we can call it the “third skin” [2]. We carry the “second skin” around, as opposed to the “third skin” which is not materially movable (although the visual structure of architecture constantly changes while we move around its spaces). There are exceptions, where fashion designers aim to demonstrate concepts of urban space and develop a garment's timeless quality. There are good examples, such as Lucy Orta's *Refuge Wear* from 1992/1993 (and its later interventions) of a rain

cape that can be transformed into a tent, and Yeohlee Teng's dress concept.

Beatriz Colomina [3] defines modern architecture as non-verbal communication between space and the society. However, if architecture generates ideas that include the human body as the focus point for design development, then architecture, as well as fashion design, must be defined through non-verbal communication between space, society and the human body.

Architectural practice, along with fashion design, responds to and reflects the individual and social environment. In both architecture and fashion design, space has the central position in developing specific forms. Through their visual articulation, both professions define voids that are limited by an envelope. The latter is seen as an outer contour shape using different textures. The interpretive perspectives of both disciplines become narrower in their reflection of the taste and identity of the individual and society at a certain period.

Architecture in its emergency, use the principle of universality, which corresponds to the time frame of the long-term existence of each architectural work, unlike fashion, which is ephemeral in its incidence [2]. Maks Fabiani, the Slovenian architect and landscape designer, created architecture so sophisticated that it can be redesigned over the time according to the newly established needs of the user. In this contextual definition, his work approaches an understanding of the principles of designing for the user, something that is not only significant in contemporary fashion design but applies to design in general.

Differences between architecture and fashion design exist, which can be generalised as the following: (1) difference in scale; (2) temporal occurrence and existence; and (3) difference between materials used.

Space is the central notion in various activities. It is defined as a material term with a specific value and measurable dimensions, or as a term with an abstract value. Both such values are represented in architecture and fashion design. In architecture as in fashion design, the material value of space is considered as outer and inner space. Discussions on a substantive definition of space in architecture took place very late in the history, at the end of the 19th century. In fashion history, Cristobal Balenciaga worked with space "in between" in the 1950s. The material definition of space is an empty area between the different elements that define that space. Today, the importance of the meaning of space extends to issues of identity and belonging, and therefore forms an abstract meaning (of space) that reflects social, cultural, economic and historical contexts within fashion design and architecture. It connects to individual and collective identity. Clothing can be described as an envelope for the body while some see architecture as the body itself with an envelope. But if

we consider nature as the body, then architecture takes the position of the envelope around that body. Thus architecture is the building space around that body, rather than the design of a building with its body. By using the fashion principle, where clothing undergoes constant change in form due to body movements, architecture visually changes from the perspective of the human body as it moves within that space. In the conceptual viewpoint, architecture and fashion design are socially responsive (since humans build their social environment).

The human body has a pivotal role in fashion design and the creative architectural process. Fashion design and architecture are created to protect and shelter and include various forms of identity (individual and collective). Architects and fashion designers generate ideas that are transferred to three-dimensional structures. In fashion design theory, the basic components in creating a garment are generated according to the season, the location of intended use, chosen materials, construction methods, intended purpose, decorations, outcomes and the personal style of the fashion designer. Similar principles are also present in architecture. In creating its structural envelope, architecture borrows techniques from fashion design (e.g. pleating); fashion design, on the other hand, conducts research into more durable materials.

In the same way, Slovenian architect and landscape designer Maks Fabiani (1865 – 1962) designed a style of architecture that are reflections of the time and place in which they were created. He created and developed structures with unprecedented reflection on space and used many influences borrowed from various styles. His family environment was trilingual, German, Italian and Slovene. He studied in Vienna, where he became an assistant at the invitation of Otto Wagner. It is interesting that Otto Wagner examined the relationship between architecture and fashion design both in theory and practice. He was the first architect to receive a doctorate on urbanism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He taught ornamental drawing and architectural composition at the Technical University of Vienna. He gave up his academic career and moved back to his Karst homeland from Vienna. His work expresses specific appreciation of the tradition of local historic and modern styles. Functionalism and technical perfection were of utmost importance to him [4]. In this F^2 (Fabiani Fashion) case study, we have considered and incorporated the essential elements of his work and his broad understanding of architecture. His architectural reflections in some segments were, at the time, very bold and daring. The F^2 (Fabiani Fashion) case study is an enquiry into the transformation of Maks Fabiani's complex architectural and urban spatial solutions in contemporary versions of wearable garments; implementing creative construction within the creation of forms as an integrated part of the fashion design process. The

creative process for generating ideas - the human body as the centre point of the creative process and understanding of the envelope around the space - are the parallels between the fashion design and architecture design processes that have been researched and implemented in the F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study.

Material and Methods

Clothing construction is not only a technical discipline, but it has an active central role in the design. Typical clothing construction is based on a static matrix for a non-moving body. Rickard Lindqvist [5] lays the foundations of kinetic construction, which provokes fundamental relations in the creation of clothing: clothing/construction and clothing/body. His research results derive from his practical experience. He describes the construction of clothing at the Vivienne Westwood studio: "Iris alternates between draping on a tailor's dummy, drawing lines on the fabric at the cutting table, and looking at the dress while wearing it, she, in front of the mirror in the corner of the room. It is a physical act where she works just as much with her body as on the artificial body of the dress stand: taking a step back to inspect the garment from a different angle, adjusting the volume, back in front of the mirror, another adjustment, and so on. The pattern paper is not used at this stage; everything is made straight on and out of toilet. Later on, the dress will be taken apart, and the shapes of the different pieces will be transferred onto paper templates for further work on the details of the dress." [5] (Iris – Senior Pattern Cutter at the sampling studio of Vivienne Westwood). He concludes that it is possible, using that principle, to create clothing with interesting construction lines in such a way that clothing has a permanent interaction with the body. In the Vivienne Westwood studio, they design clothing, which in addition to the method mentioned above of design/construction also includes the standard matrix of basic blocks. The major trust in the studio is that "everything revolves around the body and not about garments or cut" [5]. The construction method described has been the starting point for research on the development of creative construction, which is at the core of the F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study. The creative construction enables clothing to be created using solid space between the body and the contours of the garment.

In designing clothing for the F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study, the creative design process ran in parallel with the construction process. Timo Rissanen [6] considers it important for the fashion designer to understand construction as an integral part of the design process. With the use of creative construction, empty solid spaces are created between

the body and clothing contour. Design elements (size, position, form) are developed about the conceptual layout of each selected architectural solution/feature.

Each selected architectural feature of Maks Fabiani has been implemented in the F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study with the following:

1. A creative construction method that enables the architectural visual identity to be transformed into clothing visualisation.
2. Developments of patterns that enable substantive interpretation of the selected architectural feature.
3. By understanding clothing as the communication object for delivering meaningful conceptual stories of architecture.

In developing a creative construction process, it is important to use the method of "carving" clothing out of the body. The starting point for the creation is the body. Each item of clothing is formed directly on the body; created from the inside out (a similar method to that applied by Geneviève Sevin-Doering (1999) in her work) [7]. The standard method of construction in which patterns are developed from the outside inwards is used as the basis for sculpting the final clothing form. By using creative construction and designing directly on the body, there is no clear division of cutting lines and darts e.g. the shoulder line or side line of the torso. Therefore, clothing items have cutting lines determined according to the design solutions of the final form. The F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study uses an approximation of the body, which differs from the standard design process using basic blocks. The construction process of the F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study includes designing the clothing by creating the form on a mannequin (inside out).

Creative and kinetic constructions are based on the development of the clothing from the body outside into space. In standard construction, marked lines are generated from the production method and the conventional layout of seams and darts. By combining the standard and kinetic construction methods, creative construction includes the creation of three-dimensional cut of the garment directly on the dressmaker's dummy.

The F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study uses an experimental method of research. The development of clothing forms was applied directly to the dressmaker's dummy without preliminary sketches or design development. In the first step, the process included the production of basic dress blocks with darts, which were modelled on the dressmaker's dummy and used as a base. Only front and back blocks were used, the sleeve blocks were omitted. The resulting paper from base was the basis for the design of the paper forms (Figure 1), which were made from the body outwards. Forms were sculpturally created and varied/modified.

Figure 1: Paper garment form

Results

The F^2 (Fabiani Fashion) case study used a selection of architectural objects by Maks Fabiani, specific historical contexts relating to the content within the premises, the personal emotional experience and the architectural construction. The creative construction method was used in the clothing design; using a combination of standard matrix basic pattern blocks and constructing directly on a dressmaker's dummy (three-dimensional paper form).

Figure 2: Krisper's House (Krisper House was built in 1901. The client was the lawyer, Valentin Krisper. The highlight of the house is the corner tower of the house with the protruding jutting roof. The facade is designed with stylized motifs); right external view

In the newly created paper forms, marked lines that respond to the resulting conceptual clothing design form were drawn. Two-dimensional pattern blocks were formed following the marked basic lines. Those formed two-dimensional blocks that later became the basis for manufacturing of the garment form. Each form was produced from a unique printed

pattern textile. The idea of a print pattern for each clothing item was generated from the building façade as an aspect of design, setting a visual identity for the rest of the building. Each architectural object was first defined by its visual and historical characteristics, according to observation and visual research on site or, in some cases where the premises no longer exist, by reviewing archival and other printed documents. The sculpturing of the paper forms directly onto the dressmaker's dummy was developed based on the selected characteristics for each of Fabiani's architectural objects.

Figure 3: Bamberg's House. Bamberg's House was built in 1907. The client was publisher and printer, Otomar Bamberg. The forehead of the building is decorated with stucco work with floral motifs; right external view

Discussion

Transforming complex architectural and urban spatial objects into contemporary versions of wearable clothing, as in the F^2 (Fabiani Fashion) case study, by

implementing a creative construction method in the creation of forms as an integrated part of fashion design process, generates ideas, places the human body at the centre point of the creative process and implements understanding of the envelope around that space.

Figure 4: Hribar's House. Hribar's House was built in 1903. The client was the mayor of Ljubljana, Ivan Hribar. The house has a ground plan based on a square grid. The square is also the main modular feature of the facade. Fabiani created a spatial concept of repetitive modular elements; right external view

The developed creative construction method enables a process of creating two-dimensional pattern blocks from three-dimensional forms that are the result of a sculptural process that designs clothing items directly on the dressmaker's dummy. The developed creative construction method of creating two-dimensional pattern blocks from three-dimensional paper forms also enables the design of garment forms by those who have little knowledge of construction methods or poor drawing competences.

Figure 5: Miklošič Park. The regulated plan of Miklošič Park was created by Fabiani in 1899. Space was designed as a slightly raised platform treated in a combination of asphalt and white stone. The park was created between 1902 and 1908; right external view

In art history, architecture and fashion design have frequently used similar styles and had similar responses to creative requirements, especially from the 1980's onwards [3]. The parallels in the creation of

fashion design and architecture are surprisingly repetitive. Both professions create results that protect and shelter humans.

Figure 6: Jakopič Pavillion. The Jakopič Pavillion was erected in 1908. The plan for the pavilion was ordered by Slovenian impressionist painter, Rihard Jakopič. Due to the relocation of the (Ljubljana) railway line and the construction of the road underpasses, it was demolished in 1964. It had been the central gathering place for fine arts; right external view

In architecture and fashion design, space has the central position in developing specific design forms. In their visual articulation, both professions define voids that are limited by an envelope. The latter is seen as an outer contour shape with specific texture as well as an inner contour. Despite the difference in scale, materials used and temporal occurrence, the focus of both creative processes is the human body.

Figure 7: City Almshouse. The City Almshouse was built in 1901. Its plans were ordered by the mayor of Ljubljana, Ivan Hribar. This simply formed building was Maks Fabiani's first architectural realisation in Ljubljana. The interior includes a spacious staircase with highly designed details; drawing part of the plan

The F² (Fabiani Fashion) case study by the author, Tanja Devetak, shows that the architecture does not only provide fashion design with an inspirational background for the creative process. It also indicates the position of fashion design about understanding the emergence of architecture. Many will argue, that architecture is all about shaping space in which humans can freely move in contrast to fashion design that only creates an envelope around the space

that already holds the human body and therefore are not able to create space. Today, however, the importance of the meaning of the space extends from the material value of the space to issues of the identity and belonging, and therefore architecture and fashion design transcend the material value of their forms into an abstract meaning that reflects the social, cultural, economic and historical context of their existence. Many of those questions have been discussed and answered with the same conclusion by researchers such as Brook Hodge (curator at MOCA – Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles) and Bradley Quinn (the author of the book *The Fashion of Architecture*).

Contemporary fashion design moves from ephemerality to timeless understanding of elaborate architecture. The latter assumes a different understanding of form than fashion design (deviation from the square form). Fashion design and architecture complement each other in a contemporary concept of the creative process and in creating an interdisciplinary understanding of creativity.

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