

EDITORIALS

TOWARDS A NEW SUSTAINABLE AND RELATIONAL PARADIGM FOR THE FASHION SYSTEM

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The contemporary fashion system currently stands at a critical crossroads, caught between the legacy of a linear production model—often referred to as ‘disposable’—characterized by exponential growth and profit maximization, and the urgent need to redefine its objectives in light of the multiple environmental, social, and cultural crises of our time (Raworth, 2017). This scenario has reinforced the awareness of the need to transition from a linear economy to a circular one (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013).

This transition can be built on three pillars inspired by the ethical and relational archetype of ‘care’: care for living beings (both human and non-human), for the environment, and for objects. In this sense, design is called upon to play a transformative role rooted in an ethics of responsibility (Tronto, 1993; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

In recent years, the fashion sector has undertaken numerous efforts to reduce its environmental and social impact through a variety of strategies: the adoption of natural, organic, and recycled materials (Fletcher & Tham, 2019), zero-waste design, the promotion of the slow fashion movement, and product traceability via blockchain (Rogerson & Parry, 2020). Additionally, artificial intelligence has been employed to forecast demand and optimize production processes (Caniato et al., 2020); tools such as the digital product passport (European Commission, 2022) and the application of ecodesign principles (Bocken et al., 2016) have also emerged. However, these practices often remain confined to incremental and sector-specific approaches, without challenging the dominant paradigm of unlimited growth. This context is further complicated by greenwashing practices and ethical compromises that undermine the credibility of ongoing transformations (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

Within this framework, new epistemological and design horizons are emerging: from reparative design (Fuad-Luke, 2022) to regenerative marketing (Tavanti, 2020), from the economy of sufficiency (Schneidewind, 2014) to post-industrial design (Tonkinwise, 2015). These approaches revolve around a redefined concept of prosperity, understood not as the accumulation of resources, but as relational flourishing, harmonious coexistence, and shared well-being. The *Prosperity Fashion* conference emerges from the recognition that transformation must be not only technical but above all cultural. Alongside

the digital and ecological transitions, a third and essential dimension must be addressed: the cultural transition. This involves a profound rethinking of lifestyles, values, and models of production and consumption (Vignoli et al., 2021). The conference thus positions itself as a critical space for imagining new relationships between fashion, economy, environment, and society. The challenge lies in overcoming fashion’s historical inclination toward the ephemeral and rapid consumption, and instead assigning it an active role in cultural and social transformation.

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